CONNECTIONS

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL

TWENTY YEARS OF SUBSTANTIVE IMPACTS ON SECURITY AND DEFENSE DISCOURSE

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AND TODOR TAGAREV

Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes

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Editorial

Twenty Years of Substantive Impacts on Security and Defense Discourse

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Abstract: Over the past twenty years, *Connections* has been instrumental in informing and shaping security and defense policy debates within the Partnership for Peace community and beyond. This issue includes updated versions of some of the articles that have had the highest academic and policy-making impact.

Keywords: Partnership for Peace, security policy, defense, international security.

In this special edition of *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, we proudly present a collection of our most popular and widely read articles of the last two decades, each a testament to the journal's enduring commitment to excellence in the field of security studies. This compilation not only reflects the evolving landscape of global security but also highlights the critical insights and innovative perspectives that our authors bring to the forefront of academic and policy discussions.

Over the years, *Connections* has established itself as a cornerstone for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to deepen their understanding of complex security challenges. The articles chosen for this issue have resonated with a diverse audience, sparking debates, informing strategies, and influencing the direction of security studies as a discipline. They cover a broad spectrum of topics, including emerging threats in cybersecurity, the intricacies of international relations and conflicts, the impact of technological advancements on national defense strategies, and the pressing need for sustainable security strategies against a wide array of risks.

The selection process for this issue was guided by readership data and feedback from community and editorial board, ensuring that the featured articles not only represent the pinnacle of academic achievement but also address the most pressing issues facing the international community today. Each piece was chosen for its relevance, rigor, and contribution to the field, embodying our mission to foster a deeper understanding of security issues and encourage a dialogue that transcends borders.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our authors, whose expertise and dedication have enriched the pages of *Connections* and advanced the field of security studies and the work of the Partnership for Peace Consortium. Their work continues to inspire and challenge us, pushing the boundaries of what is known and expanding the horizons of what is possible.

To our readers, we offer this issue as a reflection of your interests and concerns. Your engagement and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the journal's direction and ensuring its relevance in a rapidly changing world. We hope that this collection of articles not only serves as a valuable resource but also sparks further reflection, discussion, and research in the pursuit of global security and peace.

As we look to the future, *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* remains committed to providing a platform for rigorous scholarship and critical discourse. We are excited about the opportunities to explore new perspectives, confront emerging challenges, and contribute to the development of effective and sustainable security solutions.

Thank you for joining us on this journey, and we invite you to delve into the pages that follow, where the most pressing security issues of our time are examined, analyzed, and discussed. Let us continue to connect, learn, and work together towards a more secure and peaceful world.

Disclaimer

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Research Article

Hybrid Warfare Revisited: A Battle of 'Buzzwords'

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Abstract: Hybrid warfare is the most common term used by commentators to describe the complexity and multifaceted character of contemporary warfare. Hybrid warfare refers to coercive methods of strategic competition that take place below the threshold of conventional military conflict and is usually applied to the blend of military and non-military methods of warfare employed by the West's principal adversaries, Russia and China. The term hybrid warfare has evolved from an essentially military concept to one that potentially embraces all the instruments of state power. Hybrid warfare remains an ill-defined and contested term, and there are many other buzzwords, such as irregular warfare, hybrid threats, and gray zone aggression, that are used to describe the same phenomenon. This article examines the evolution of thinking on hybrid warfare and these related concepts. It highlights the challenges that scholars and practitioners have faced in trying to define and apply these terms in the policy environment in a manner that promotes common understanding and strategic coherence.

Keywords: warfare, strategic competition, NATO, Russia, China, United States.

Introduction

Until the Russian Federation's seizure of Crimea in March 2014, the subject of hybrid warfare was largely of interest only to military analysts. Subsequently, the term entered the wider security policy domain in the West, and all manner of hostile Russian activities were characterized as hybrid warfare. Increasingly, "hybrid" has also been used to describe operations by China in the South China Sea, Iranian proxy warfare, and North Korea's machinations on the Korean peninsula. In the process, hybrid warfare evolved from an essentially military concept to

one that potentially embraced all the instruments of state power. The topic has also generated a significant quantity of academic literature and policy papers over the years. But hybrid warfare remains an ill-defined and contested term, being often used as a catch-all to characterize contemporary war. The status of the term hybrid warfare reflects the continuing challenge of capturing the complexity of conflict in the 21st century, a phenomenon that involves a multiplicity of actors and blurs the distinctions between different lethal and non-lethal forms of warfare and even between traditional notions of war and peace.

This article updates and develops the author's earlier *Connections* 2016 piece, "Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare."[1] It offers further analysis on the evolution of thinking on the subject, particularly in the context of strategic competition. It also examines related concepts that academics, practitioners, and commentators frequently use to describe the character of contemporary warfare. These notably include irregular warfare, hybrid threats, and gray zone aggression, although many other terms exist. To add non-Western perspectives, the article contains synopses of Russian and Chinese approaches to hybrid warfare. The final section offers preliminary observations on the character of the war in Ukraine. Like its predecessor, this article tries to "make sense" of the current terminology being used to describe the character of contemporary warfare and the extent to which the term hybrid warfare and related concepts assist our understanding.

There are multiple definitions of hybrid warfare. However, the author favors the one proposed by General Ben Hodges, former commander of the U.S. Army in Europe. It offers an appropriate blend of earlier and post-2014 uses of the term and retains the coercive foundation of the concept:

> Hybrid warfare is the blending of conventional warfare, irregular warfare, and the use of other capabilities such as cyber, disinformation, money, and corruption in order to achieve a political outcome that is always backed up by the threat or the use of conventional weapons.[2]

The Origins of the Hybrid Warfare Concept

In 1999, eminent strategist Colin Gray stated that "wars can be waged between conventional regular armies, between regulars and irregulars, and between irregular opponents."[3] Gray's thinking reflected the common, traditional Western approach that defined warfare as large-scale, organized violence and made a clear distinction between war and peace. Perspectives started to change in the

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1   James K. Wither, "Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 15, no. 2 (2016): 73-87, http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/Connections.15.2.06.

2   Ben Hodges, "Lt-Gen Ben Hodges on the Future of Hybrid Warfare," *CEPA*, April 8, 2021, accessed October 24, 2022, https://cepa.org/article/lt-gen-ben-hodges-on-the-future-of-hybrid-warfare/.

3   Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 159.

2000s as a result of the armed conflicts that followed "9/11." By 2006, Gray conceded that the "The convenient binary distinction between regular and irregular warfare is much less clear in practice than it is conceptually … when regular forces adopt an irregular style of war, and when irregular warriors shift back and forth between open and guerrilla warfare, the distinction can disappear." [4] Along with terms such as asymmetrical, irregular, and non-conventional warfare, hybrid became a common way to describe the changing character, if not nature, of warfare. Before 2014, military specialists considered the brief war between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006 as the conflict that most fitted contemporary definitions of hybrid war. Hezbollah surprised the Israel Defence Forces with its sophisticated combination of guerrilla and conventional military tactics and an effective strategic communication campaign. Definitions of hybrid warfare at the time emphasized the blending of conventional and irregular approaches across the full spectrum of armed conflict. The most influential contemporary definition was produced by Frank Hoffman:

> … different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder, conducted by both sides and a variety of non-state actors.[5]

A mix of state and non-state military forces and the use of propaganda had been a feature of wars since ancient times. Hybrid warfare, as defined in the 2000s, was hardly a new phenomenon.[6] A report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office in 2010 concluded that "hybrid warfare was not a new form of warfare." [7] However, the integration of conventional and irregular methods of warfare arguably distinguished contemporary hybrid wars from their historical forms. Traditionally, conventional and irregular operations, such as operations by partisans and regular forces on the Eastern Front in the Second World War, took place concurrently but separately. Operations by irregular fighters were also normally secondary to campaigns by conventional military forces.

Analysts also used the term asymmetrical warfare to reflect efforts by state and non-state opponents of the United States to find ways to advance their strategic objectives without confronting America's conventional military power.

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[4] Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Orion Books, 2006), 199.

[5] Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007), 8, https://www.potomac institute.org/images/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf.

[6] For a detailed analysis, see Peter R. Mansoor, "Hybrid War in History," in *Hybrid Warfare: Fighting Complex Opponents from the Ancient World to the Present*, ed. Williamson Murray and Peter R. Mansoor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[7] Loretta Sanchez, Jeff Miller, and Adam Smith, "Hybrid Warfare," GAO-10-1036R (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, September 2010), accessed October 24, 2022, https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-10-1036r.

"Unrestricted Warfare," published by two People's Liberation Army (PLA) colonels in 1999, offered a blueprint for asymmetrical warfare against the United States. Among the book's proposals were non-kinetic methods of warfare that later became part of the hybrid playbook, such as media disinformation, economic coercion, and computer hacking.[8] As targeting an opponent's vulnerabilities rather than playing to their strengths is simply a smart strategy, there was skepticism about the usefulness of the term. Strategist Hew Strachan, for example, complained that asymmetrical warfare was being applied too loosely to every form of armed conflict that was not a conventional interstate war.[9] The theory of Fourth Generation Warfare also featured in contemporary debate.[10] A prescient element of this concept was the role that emerging technology could play in the cognitive sphere of future wars, when networked media and the Internet could be used to shape policymakers and public opinion in a targeted state to undermine its will to fight. Mark Galeotti later described this form of non-kinetic warfare as "a war on governance" that manipulated public grievances and mistrust, societal faultlines, and disputed government legitimacy.[11] Like much else discussed in this article, there were Cold War historical precedents for such a strategy. And Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu had discussed the potential of subversion to shape the battlespace as long ago as the fifth century BC. His treatise "The Art of War" contained the famous aphorism "subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence." [12] This remains a fundamental objective of hybrid warfare.

Hybrid Warfare in Ukraine 2014

Russia's campaign in Ukraine in 2014 was a major catalyst for change in Western thinking and triggered a surge of analysis on the implications for Western security.[13] Scholars and security analysts labeled Russian strategy and tactics "hybrid warfare," although some queried the novelty of the concept.[14]

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[8] Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999), accessed November 5, 2022, https://www.ooda loop.com/documents/unrestricted.pdf.

[9] See for example Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, December 2013), 82.

[10] See for example Tim Benbow, "Talking 'Bout Our Generation? Assessing the Concept of Fourth Generation Warfare," *Comparative Strategy* 27, no. 2 (2008): 148-163, https://doi.org/10.1080/01495930801944685.

[11] Interview by Octavian Manea with Dr. Mark Galeotti, "Hybrid War as a War on Governance," *Small Wars Journal*, August 19, 2015, accessed October 24, 2022, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/hybrid-war-as-a-war-on-governance.

[12] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translated by Samuel B. Griffith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 41, 77.

[13] For sources see Wither, "Making Sense of Hybrid Warfare."

[14] See for example Geraint Hughes, "Little Green Men and Red Armies: Why Russian 'Hybrid War' Is Nothing New," Research Blog, *Defence in Depth*, King's College London, March 14, 2016, https://defenceindepth.co/2016/03/14/little-green-men-and-red-

In Crimea, Russia mounted a covert operation using locally stationed troops, special operations forces (SOF), and proxies. Concurrent military maneuvers masked the operation in Crimea, and Russian troops and proxies rapidly seized control in an essentially bloodless campaign.[15] Crimea was a successful military operation, but it was the use of supporting non-kinetic methods of warfare that attracted the most interest from observers and led to the operation being labeled "hybrid."[16] Russia's tactics included an aggressive disinformation campaign that portrayed the new government in Kyiv as a fascist junta, electronic warfare attacks on Ukrainian security services' communications, the sponsorship of civil unrest, economic coercion by Gazprom, and the use of proxy forces. Russia's strategic disinformation campaign also successfully manipulated Ukrainian and Western perceptions, fostered confusion and distrust, and crippled effective crisis decision-making. However, given Ukraine's particular vulnerabilities in 2014, the wider applicability of Russia's tactics was exaggerated. In the case of later operations in Eastern Ukraine, it soon became apparent that Russia's overall campaign was characterized by a series of largely improvised approaches rather than a coherent overarching strategy.[17]

Discussion of hybrid warfare stretched the concept further than earlier definitions, explicitly emphasizing non-military approaches that focused on psychological, informational, and cyber operations conducted below the threshold of what traditionally constituted warfare. The 2015 Military Balance, for example, defined hybrid warfare as:

> the use of military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign, designed to achieve surprise, seize the initiative and gain psychological as well as physical advantages utilizing diplomatic means; sophisticated and rapid information, electronic and cyber operations; covert and occasionally overt military and intelligence action; and economic pressure.[18]

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armies-why-russian-hybrid-war-is-not-new/; and Bettina Renz, "Russia and 'Hybrid Warfare'," *Comparative Politics* 22, no. 3 (2016): 283-300, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201316.

[15] Michael Kofman et al., "Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine," Research Report RR-1498-A (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2017), xi, accessed October 20, 2022, https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1498.

[16] See for example: Ralph D. Thiele, "Crisis in Ukraine – The Emergence of Hybrid Warfare," ISPSW Strategy Series, May 2015, accessed October 20, 2022, www.files.eth z.ch/isn/190792/347_Thiele_RINSA.pdf; and Stephen Blank, "Russia, Hybrid War and the Evolution of Europe," *Second Line of Defense*, February 14, 2015, https://sldinfo.com/2015/02/russia-hybrid-war-and-the-evolution-of-europe/.

[17] Michael Kofman and Matthew Rojansky, "A Closer Look at Russia's 'Hybrid War'," *Kennan Cable*, no. 7 (Wilson Center, April 2015), 5, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/kennan-cable-no7-closer-look-russias-hybrid-war.

[18] "Editor's Introduction: Complex Crises Call for Adaptable and Durable Capabilities," *The Military Balance* 115, no. 1 (2015), 5, https://doi.org/10.1080/04597222.2015.9 96334.

Such descriptions of hybrid warfare went beyond Hoffman's military-focused definition to one that embraced the wider strategic threat environment to include many elements of typical inter-state strategic competition. Hoffman himself was critical of these broader uses of the term and reaffirmed his opinion that hybrid warfare should be distinguished from non-violent forms of conflict.[19]

Russian Hybrid Warfare

Russian operations in Ukraine significantly influenced the emerging Western concept of hybrid warfare. However, much initial thinking was based on a misinterpretation of the work of Russian military analysts, as the Russian concept of hybridity in warfare differs significantly from that in the West.

Western misconception began with an article by the Russian Chief of the General Staff, General Valery Gerasimov, in 2013. His analysis of modern warfare appeared to offer a blueprint for the subsequent Russian operations in Ukraine. Gerasimov described contemporary warfare as "blurring the lines between the states of war and peace" and involving:

> the broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian and other non-military means, supplemented by civil disorder among the local population and concealed armed forces.[20]

He claimed that non-lethal approaches might prove more effective than military force because they could create social upheaval and promote a climate of collapse. Gerasimov was not the only Russian military analyst to put an operational emphasis on information and psychological warfare,[21] but it was primarily his thinking that led to speculation that Russia had embarked on a new strategy characterized by a shift from military force towards non-lethal methods of warfare. However, from Gerasimov's perspective, contemporary hybrid warfare (*gibridnaya voyna*) was not invented in Russia but rather represented a Western stratagem employed to destabilize states like Russia that stood in the way of U.S. dominance.[22] Even events such as the "Color Revolutions" and the "Arab Spring"

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[19] Frank G. Hoffman, "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict: Gray Zone and Hybrid Challenges," *PRISM* 7, no. 4 (2018), 40, https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/prism/prism7_4/181204_Hoffman_PDF.pdf.

[20] Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science in Prediction," *Military-Industrial Kurier*, February 27, 2013, available in English in Mark Galeotti, "The Gerasimov Doctrine and Russian Non-Linear War," *In Moscow's Shadows Blog*, July 6, 2014, accessed October 24, 2022, https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/.

[21] See, for example, Col. S.G. Chekinov and Lt. Gen. S.A. Bogdanov, "The Nature and Content of a New-Generation War," *Voyennaya Mysl'* (*Military Thought*), no. 10 (2013), 13, https://www.usni.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Chekinov-Bogdanov%20Miltary%20Thought%202013.pdf.

[22] See, for example, Ofer Fridman, "Hybrid Warfare or Gibridnaya Voyna? Similar, But Different," *The RUSI Journal* 162, no. 1 (2017): 42-49, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2016.1253370; and Mason Clark, "Russian Hybrid Warfare," *Military Learning*

were viewed as hybrid forms of warfare employed to advance American interests.

In 2020, a report from the U.S. Institute for the Study of War criticized the tendency to view Russian approaches to hybridity as conducted below the level of conventional war. The report described this viewpoint as "dangerously wrong" as Russia included a considerable conventional component in its theory and practice of hybrid war.[23] In later statements, Gerasimov himself appeared to clarify his thinking, emphasizing that the effective application of non-military measures in operations ultimately relied on military force.[24] A recent article on Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine provides further insight into Russian doctrine. The authors argue that Russian military analysts viewed this action, at least as initially conceived, as the use of conventional military force to achieve specific military-political objectives below the threshold of war.[25]

Mark Galeotti maintains that there are two distinct forms of Russian non-linear or hybrid war. One strand employs non-kinetic tools such as information operations and subversion intended to demoralize and divide Western states and their partners, in effect, a modernized version of the Soviet Union's Cold War concept of "Active Measures." The other involves tactics to undermine an opponent's legitimacy, will, and capacity to resist prior to violent intervention, including the use of military force, a concept more akin to the hybrid military-political war against Ukraine.[26]

Hybrid Threats

Academic misgivings about terminology did not prevent NATO and the European Union (EU) from embracing the term hybrid warfare, or more particularly, hybrid threats, to classify what was viewed as an emerging, systemic security challenge to democratic states after 2014. Although the terms hybrid warfare and hybrid

    and the Future of War Series (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, September 2020), 16-17, https://www.understandingwar.org/report/russian-hybrid-warfare.

23 Clark, "Russian Hybrid Warfare," 8. See also Keir Giles, "'Hybrid Warfare' and Russia's Ground Forces," NIDS International Symposium "A New Strategic Environment and Roles of Ground Forces," January 30, 2019, pp. 79-92, http://www.nids.mod.go.jp/english/event/international_symposium/pdf/2018/e-05.pdf.

24 Michael Kofman et al., "Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts," *Center for Naval Analyses*, October 2021, 27, accessed November 21, 2022, www.cna.org/reports/2021/10/russian-military-strategy-core-tenets-and-concepts.

25 Roger N. McDermott and Charles K. Bartles, "Defining the 'Special Military Operation'," Article Review, Russian Studies Series, 5/22, NATO Defense College, accessed October 25, 2022, https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=777.

26 Mark Galeotti, "(Mis)Understanding Russia's 'Two Hybrid Wars'," *Eurozine*, November 29, 2018, accessed October 25, 2022, https://www.eurozine.com/misunderstanding-russias-two-hybrid-wars/.

threats are frequently used synonymously by European analysts,[27] policy documents normally refer to hybrid "threats" rather than hybrid "warfare." Overall, there has been insufficient effort to differentiate between the two terms, although Sean Monaghan has made perhaps the most definitive and useful distinction:

> Hybrid threats combine a wide range of non-violent means to target vulnerabilities across the whole of society to undermine the functioning, unity, or will of their targets, while degrading and subverting the status quo. This kind of strategy is used by revisionist actors to gradually achieve their aims without triggering decisive responses, including armed responses.

> Hybrid warfare is the challenge presented by the increasing complexity of armed conflict, where adversaries may combine types of warfare plus non-military means to neutralise conventional military power.[28]

Elisabeth Braw has made a similar distinction. She suggests that the term hybrid warfare applies when conventional military force is employed alongside non-military tools, while broader campaigns to weaken a country's resilience through a range of largely non-kinetic means are better described as hybrid threats.[29]

NATO's strategic thinking has evolved from an earlier focus on hybrid as a mix of regular and irregular forms of warfare to a more comprehensive approach that includes non-military challenges. These threats were discussed prominently in NATO's "Reflection Process" report in 2020,[30] and their significance is evident from the Alliance's most recent definition of hybrid threats:

> Hybrid threats combine military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups and use of regular forces. Hybrid methods are

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[27] See, for example, Mikael Weissmann, "Hybrid Warfare and Hybrid Threats Today and Tomorrow: Towards an Analytical Framework," *Journal on Baltic Security* 5, no. 1 (2019): 17-26, https://journalonbalticsecurity.com/journal/JOBS/article/40/info; and Niklas Nilsson et al., "Security Challenges in the Gray Zone: Hybrid Threats and Hybrid Warfare," in *Hybrid Warfare: Security and Asymmetric Conflict in International Relations*, Bloomsbury Collections, ed. Mikael Weissmann, Niklas Nilsson, Björn Palmertz, and Per Thunholm (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

[28] Sean Monaghan, "Countering Hybrid Warfare Project," Information Note, MCDC Countering Hybrid Warfare Project, March 2019, 3, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840513/20190401-MCDC_CHW_Information_note_-_Conceptual_Foundations.pdf.

[29] Elisabeth Braw, *The Defender's Dilemma: Identifying and Deterring Gray-Zone Aggression* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, March 2022), 9. Frank Hoffman makes a similar distinction – see Hoffman, "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict," 39.

[30] NATO, "NATO 2030: United for a New Era," Analysis and Recommedations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General, November 25, 2020, 45-46, accessed November 8, 2022, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf.

used to blur the lines between war and peace and attempt to sow doubt in the minds of target populations.[31]

Both NATO and the EU recognize that hybrid threats involve the full range of tools of national power. However, institutional approaches differ on the range of threats and the emphasis to be placed on non-kinetic challenges. A Hybrid COE report, for example, treats hybrid threats as a political concept, defined as: "… unacceptable foreign interference in sovereign states' internal affairs and space."[32] The EU External Action Service and the EU's Joint Framework for Hybrid Threats use similar definitions. These perspectives illustrate that the EU's hybridity threat focus is on coercive statecraft rather than on violent conflict.[33] Arguably, this suggests an understandable reluctance to militarize activities that are a normal feature of strategic competition in international politics. Some commentators have expressed concern that the liberal use of the term "warfare" may broaden the range of activities considered belligerent and potentially lower the threshold for escalation.[34]

Differences in perspective are inevitable, given the nature of bureaucratic politics and the complexity of the issues involved. However, they complicate the development of a common understanding by policymakers of contemporary security challenges and efforts to build the necessary resilience to address them. To date, there remains no unambiguous definition of hybrid warfare/threats and the meaning of the terms continues to evolve.[35] NATO's latest strategic concept does not mention the term hybrid warfare, nor does it offer a definition of hybrid threats, though the description of these threats suggests that the Alliance now leans towards the use of hybrid to denote primarily non-kinetic challenges.[36]

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[31] Quoted in "NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats," *NATO*, accessed November 4, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm.

[32] European Commission / Hybrid COE, *Landscape of Hybrid Threats: A Conceptual Model* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the EU, 2021), 10, accessed November 6, 2022, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b534e5b3-7268-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1.

[33] Dick Zandee, Sico van der Meer, and Adája Stoetman, "Hybrid Threats: Searching for a Definition," in *Counterig Hybrid Threats: Steps for Improving EU-NATO Cooperation*, Clingendael Report (The Hague, The Netherlands: The Clingendael Institute, October 2021), pp. 6-29, https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2021/countering-hybrid-threats/2-hybrid-threats-searching-for-a-definition/.

[34] See, for example, John Raine, "War or Peace? Understanding the Grey Zone," *IISS*, April 3, 2019, accessed November 9, 2022, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2019/04/understanding-the-grey-zone.

[35] Zandee, van der Meer, and Stoetman, "Hybrid Threats: Searching for a Definition," 9; and Ewan Lawson, "We Need to Talk About Hybrid," *The RUSI Journal* 166, no. 3 (2021): 58-66, 59-61, https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2021.1950330.

[36] "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept" (NATO, June 2022), 3, accessed November 4, 2022, https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html.

Irregular Warfare

American scholars have supplied much of the literature on hybrid warfare, and officials have frequently used the term. However, irregular warfare is the term often used in the U.S. to indicate what is described above as hybrid threats and warfare, as well as conflict in the gray zone.[37] Analysts recognize that the range of different terms used to explain essentially similar phenomena does not help the overall quest for definitional clarity and understanding. Writing in 2016, Antulio Echeverria expressed concern that the mix of terminology created "a wealth of confusion that has clouded the thinking of policymakers and impaired the development of sound counter-strategies."[38] Recently, David Ucko and Thomas Marks claimed that the range of "jargon" illustrated the U.S.'s continuing difficulty in comprehending irregular warfare, arguing that: "The terminology belies a struggle to overcome entrenched assumptions about war – a confusion that generates cognitive friction with implications for strategy.[39] The U.S. Joint Staff's curriculum guide for irregular warfare also acknowledges that a mix of similar concepts and confusion over terminology can act as an obstacle to clarity when teaching the concept to military students.[40]

  Prior to the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS), irregular warfare focused primarily on the challenge posed by violent non-state adversaries. The term was defined in the Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept of 2010 as "…a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy over the relevant populations."[41] The 2018 NDS officially downgraded terrorism and insurgency as national security priorities in favor of inter-state strategic competition. The Irregular Warfare Annex, released in 2020, announced a shift in priorities from fighting global extremist organizations to countering nation-state peer competitors. Irregular Warfare was redefined in this document as "a struggle

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[37] See, for example, David H. Ucko and Thomas A. Marks, *Crafting Strategy for Irregular Warfare: A Framework for Analysis and Action*, Strategic Monograph, 2nd edition (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, September 2022) https://ndu press.ndu.edu/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3163915/crafting-strategy-for-irregular-warfare-a-framework-for-analysis-and-action-2nd/; and Seth G. Jones, "The Future of Competition: U.S. Adversaries and the Growth of Irregular Warfare," *CSIS*, February 4, 2021, accessed November 7, 2022, https://www.csis.org/analysis/future-competition-us-adversaries-and-growth-irregular-warfare.

[38] Antulio J. Echevarria, *Operating in the Gray Zone: An Alternative Paradigm for U.S. Military Strategy* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Press, April 2016), 1, https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/425/.

[39] Ucko and Marks, *Crafting Strategy for Irregular Warfare*, 3.

[40] U.S. Joint Staff, "Curriculum Development Guide for Irregular Warfare," Office of Irregular Warfare and Competition, Directorate for Joint Force Development (J-7), June 3, 2022, 7.

[41] U.S. Department of Defense, "Irregular Warfare: Countering Irregular Threats," Joint Operating Concept, Version 2, May 17, 2010, 9, accessed November 7, 2021, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joc_iw_v2.pdf?ver=2 017-12-28-162021-510.

among state and non-state actors to influence populations and affect legitimacy." [42] The crucial focus on the competition for legitimacy remained, but the word "violent" was notably absent. Ucko and Marks have suggested that the new definition may indicate "a subtle but meaningful shift that looks likely to shape future doctrine." [43] But they also warn against demilitarizing the concept and losing sight of the essential character of irregular warfare regardless of how it is defined – the element of covert or overt coercion.[44] The term irregular competition has already been mooted as an alternative to irregular warfare,[45] which might assist cooperation with civilian agencies that view a concept described as "warfare" beyond their remit. Nevertheless, given America's traditional reliance on militarized responses to foreign policy challenges, such a change would likely prove challenging in practice.[46]

The 2022 U.S. NDS is dominated by a discussion of Integrated Deterrence, a full spectrum strategy to address the range of military and non-military threats confronting American security. But in terms of characterizing the threat, the strategy document makes the most frequent reference to hostile gray zone activities, defined in the NDS as "coercive approaches that may fall below perceived thresholds for U.S. military action." [47] In view of the discussion above, it is not clear whether "gray zone" or "irregular" warfare will provide the frame of reference to address strategic competition in the future, but definitional confusion seems set to continue.

Gray Zone Aggression

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) defines gray zone challenges as follows:

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[42] U.S. Department of Defense, "Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy," 2020, 2, https://media.defense.gov/2020/Oct/02/2002510472/-1/-1/0/Irregular-Warfare-Annex-to-the-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.PDF.

[43] Ucko and Marks, *Crafting Strategy for Irregular Warfare*, 10.

[44] Ucko and Marks, *Crafting Strategy for Irregular Warfare*, 10. See also David H. Ucko and Thomas A. Marks, "Redefining Irregular Warfare: Legitimacy, Coercion, and Power," *Modern War Institute*, October 18, 2022, accessed November 8, 2022, https://mwi.usma.edu/redefining-irregular-warfare-legitimacy-coercion-and-power/.

[45] See, for example, Jeremiah C. Lumbaca, "Irregular Competition: Conceptualizing a Whole-of-Government Approach for the United States to Indirectly Confront and Deter State and Nonstate Adversaries," *Military Review* (July-August 2022), accessed November 15, 2022, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/July-August-2022/Lumbaca/.

[46] See, for example, Robert M. Gates, "The Overmilitarization of American Foreign Policy: The United States Must Recover the Full Range of Its Power," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2020), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-02/robert-gates-overmilitarization-american-foreign-policy.

[47] U.S. Department of Defense, "National Defense Strategy of the United States of America," 2022, 6, https://www.defense.gov/National-Defense-Strategy/.

An effort or series of efforts intended to advance one's security objectives at the expense of a rival using means beyond those associated with routine statecraft and below means associated with direct military conflict between rivals. In engaging in a gray zone approach, an actor seeks to avoid crossing a threshold that results in open war.[48]

Like other terms identified in this article, "gray zone" is a loose and ill-defined concept. Gray zone has been used to represent a phase of a conflict, an operating environment, and a tactic. However, it is generally accepted that ambiguity is a defining characteristic of gray zone activities as they can be hard to recognize and attribute and are almost always denied by perpetrators. A primary challenge for policymakers is to decide what constitutes "routine statecraft" and "direct military conflict," as the boundaries of the gray zone are hard to delineate in practice.

After 2014, hybrid warfare was widely used to describe hostile activities that blurred the distinction between peace and war. However, Michael Mazarr was among the first to distinguish "gray zone strategies" from hybrid forms of warfare. Mazarr argued that hybrid warfare, as usually defined, referred to the use of violence to achieve political objectives and was therefore "closer to a variety of conventional warfare than a true alternative to it."[49] Contemporary gray zone strategies, on the other hand, employed traditional, non-lethal tools of rivalry and statecraft made more effective by new technologies. Mazarr likened gray zone activities to George Kennan's concept of Political Warfare, which envisaged measures short of war being employed in strategic competition with the Soviet Union.[50] Like Mazarr, Elisabeth Braw distinguishes between hybrid warfare, which involves "the persistent use of military force," and what she terms gray zone aggression, defined as "… hostile acts outside the realm of armed conflict to weaken a rival country, entity or alliance."[51]

Braw's examples of gray zone aggression include a range of activities, such as Chinese investment in cutting-edge technology companies, which she acknowledges is "far from traditional national security thinking."[52] Seth Jones also lists a range of Chinese activities, such as influence operations on university campuses and even attempts to censor Hollywood, that questionably qualify as national

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[48] Melissa Dalton et al., "By Other Means – Part 2: U.S. Priorities in the Gray Zone," A Report of the CSIS International Security Program (Center for Strategic and International Studies/ Rowman & Littlefield, August 2019), 2, https://defense360.csis.org/by-other-means-part-ii-u-s-priorities-in-the-gray-zone/.

[49] Michael J. Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict* (Carlisle, PA: USAWC Press, 2015), 44-46, accessed November 10, 2021, https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/428/.

[50] Mazarr, *Mastering the Gray Zone*, 48-51.

[51] Braw, *The Defender's Dilemma*, 10-11.

[52] Braw, *The Defender's Dilemma*, 12.

security threats.[53] Malign business activities and coercive attempts to gain influence by foreign powers should certainly be an area of concern for targeted states. But there is a danger that including too broad a range of measures as examples of gray zone aggression strips the term of practical utility and makes it difficult for governments to prioritize the most urgent non-kinetic security challenges. A complicating factor is that malign gray zone activities are often legal, which means they do not necessarily trigger an appropriate response from security officials. China uses its official social media presence to assert its influence around the world and push specific narratives on sensitive issues such as human rights and COVID-19.[54] Whether this activity constitutes normal strategic communication, hostile gray zone aggression, or both is a matter of judgment.

Authoritarian adversaries of the West have capitalized on liberal democracies' media freedoms, open civil societies, and private sector economies, which make them particularly vulnerable to gray zone tactics. Russia employs a mixture of cyber operations, espionage, covert action, and disinformation against Western countries. Russian attempts to weaken its rivals have not changed since Soviet times, but advances in computing, information technology, and processing have greatly increased their reach and effectiveness. Mark Warner, Chair of the U.S. Senate's Intelligence Committee, observed that "social media has allowed Russia to supercharge its disinformation efforts ... where propaganda and fake news can spread like wildfire." [55] Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election represents the highlight of its disinformation campaign against the West. Fabricated stories on social media, hacks of Democratic Party information systems, and the release of stolen files and emails created doubt and confusion and exacerbated societal divisions.

Russia's cyber operations have also become increasingly sophisticated, being tailored to specific objectives in targeted states. The NotPetya virus unleashed in 2017 was intended to cause maximum disruption as part of Russia's ongoing hybrid war against Ukraine. This attack injected malicious code into automated Ukrainian tax preparation software, which impacted operations by banks, hospitals, energy companies, airports, and government agencies. By contrast, the SolarWinds supply chain intrusion in the U.S. in 2020 was more typical of cyber operations against Western states. The purpose of the attack was espionage. The SolarWinds company was not the primary target. It was simply the means to gain access to U.S. government systems. A RAND study examining Russian gray zone

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[53] Jones, "The Future of Competition."

[54] BBC Monitoring, "China's Public Diplomacy on Twitter and Facebook," 2021, 8, https://www.academia.edu/80483985/Chinas_public_diplomacy_on_Twitter_and_Facebook.

[55] "Return of Global Russia," Speech by Senator Mark Warner to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 1, 2018, accessed November 11, 2022, https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/blog?ID=F2851C9D-3E4A-4F85-A54E-92F1B747360C.

competition in Europe distinguished between "everyday" actions, namely propaganda, disinformation, and influence operations, and the direct threat or use of violence, such as the attempted coup in Montenegro in 2016.[56] This distinction is broadly similar to Galeotti's arguments above regarding the twin-track approaches of Russian hybrid warfare.

China's approach to gray zone aggression is less militarized than Russia's. As the world's leading trading nation, China has a more extensive range of non-kinetic tools to wield. The gray zone provides China with multiple opportunities to expand its power and influence through activities as varied as the construction and militarization of islets in the South China Sea, cyber hacks to steal scientific research from Western institutions, and predatory business practices.

Since 2003, China has adopted the "Three Warfares" (*san zhong* zhanfa) doctrine, which incorporates elements of *Unrestricted Warfare*, the Communist Party's revolutionary traditions, and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*.[57] The first element of *psychological warfare* seeks to disrupt an opponent's leadership decision-making capacity by deception or intimidation. The frequent intrusions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone, for example, are intended to weaken the Taiwan government and people's resolve to resist China's demands. The second element, *legal warfare*, uses domestic law as the basis for China's claims in international law. China rejected the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea's ruling on its claims in the South China Sea, asserting its historical legal rights instead. The final element, *media warfare,* is employed to shape domestic and international public opinion in support of psychological and legal warfare. Consequently, China conducts a massive digital media operation to manipulate public opinion throughout South-East Asia. Like the Russian military, the People's Liberation Army regards information dominance as crucial to its military strategy. Three Warfares doctrine serves this larger strategic concept while avoiding escalation to conventional warfare.[58] It is perhaps the perfect example of a gray zone stratagem.

China is by no means the only state to employ economic coercion. For instance, the recent decision by the United States to impose export controls on

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[56] Stacie L. Pettyjohn and Becca Wasser, "Competing in the Gray Zone: Russian Tactics and Western Responses," Research Report RR-2791-A (RAND Corporation, 2019), Chapter 4, https://doi.org/10.7249/RR2791.

[57] Doug Livermore, "China's Three Warfares in Theory and Practice in the South China Sea," *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, March 25, 2018, https://georgetown securitystudiesreview.org/2018/03/25/chinas-three-warfares-in-theory-and-practice-in-the-south-china-sea/.

[58] Livermore, "China's Three Warfares;" and David Knoll, Kevin Pollpeter, and Sam Plapinger, "China's Irregular Approach to Warfare: The Myth of a Purely Conventional Fight," *Modern War Institute*, April 27, 2021, accessed November 15, 2022, https://mwi.usma.edu/chinas-irregular-approach-to-war-the-myth-of-a-purely-conventional-future-fight/.

semiconductors and related manufacturing equipment to China has been described as an "economic war." [59] But economic coercion has become a particularly prominent instrument of Chinese foreign policy,[60] being used to punish states, such as Australia, that challenge its policies.[61] China's Belt and Road Initiative is more ambiguous. It offers positive inducements to governments that lack access to international funding while, at the same time, providing China with potential influence over their domestic politics and access to natural resources and strategic facilities. More than other areas of Chinese foreign policy, its economic activities blur the threshold between robust statecraft and gray zone aggression.

Gray Zone Warfare

Defining the threshold between gray zone aggression and direct military conflict presents both analytical and practical challenges, especially as coercive military activities are a regular feature of gray zone tactics. Prior to the invasion of Ukraine, Russia used military deployments and provocative exercises to coerce Ukraine and intimidate European states. China's Maritime Militias frequently employ forceful methods against foreign fishing boats to back Chinese territorial claims in the South China Sea. Military operations classified as "gray zone" are sometimes hard to distinguish from outright warfare. Some scholars have described Russian military operations in Eastern Ukraine and violent campaigns by jihadist groups in the Middle East and Africa as gray zone conflicts.[62] Although Iran's conventional forces are relatively weak, it has nevertheless successfully employed proxy forces in violent conflicts throughout the Middle East to advance its strategic interests. Iran has even been described as the "quintessential

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[59] Eric Levitz, "Biden's New Cold War Against China Could Backfire," *Intelligencer*, November 14, 2022, https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2022/11/biden-economic-war-china-chips-semiconductors-export-controls.html.

[60] Bonnie Glaser, "How China Uses Economic Coercion to Silence Critics and Achieve Its Political Aims Globally," Testimony before the Congressional Executive Commission on China, December 7, 2021, accessed November 14, 2022, https://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/how-china-uses-economic-coercion-to-silence-critics-and-achieve-its-political-aims.

[61] Ashley Townshend and Thomas Lonergan, "Australia Must Adopt Unorthodox Options to Disrupt China's Grey-Zone Threats," *The Guardian*, September 28, 2021, accessed November 13, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/commentisfree/2021/sep/28/australia-must-adopt-unorthodox-options-to-disrupt-chinas-grey-zone-threats.

[62] See for example Hoffman, "Examining Complex Forms of Conflict," 36; and David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Fighting and Winning in the 'Gray Zone'," *War on the Rocks*, May 19, 2015, accessed November 10, 2022, https://warontherocks.com/2015/05/fighting-and-winning-in-the-gray-zone/.

gray zone actor whose entire modus operandi is influenced by this particular way of war." [63]

During the Cold War, the superpowers sought to pursue their rivalry while avoiding a direct armed conflict that could have raised the risk of nuclear war. But plenty of wars occurred around the world during this period; many were exploited as proxy wars by the superpowers as they juggled to achieve strategic advantage. Proxy warfare has returned in the new era of strategic competition, although it is no longer just a binary-state activity. Proxy warfare has been defined as: "(armed conflicts) …in which belligerents use third parties as either a supplementary means of waging war, or as a substitute for the direct employment of their own armies." [64] The secretive and indirect use of state military and irregular forces, which nowadays can include private military companies, "hacktivists," and criminals, is a feature of the violent edge of the gray zone and belies attempts to define the "zone" only in terms of non-kinetic coercive measures.

The words "war" and "warfare" are routinely applied beyond their original, primary association with politically motivated, organized violence. Governments often use the word "war" when describing internal or external threats to their power. Terms such as economic warfare, cyber warfare, or lawfare complicate efforts to distinguish between war, conflict, and competition in international politics. The lack of consensus among Western analysts that coercive actions in the gray zone constitute warfare is not surprising, but the West's adversaries appear to have no such doubts. President Putin has declared on several occasions that Russia is in a civilizational war with the West, and Russia's political and military leadership regards non-kinetic tactics as an important element of warfare. China's "Three Warfares" strategy is intrinsically a form of warfare, and the PLA conducts gray zone operations that can be fully integrated into conventional military strategy and tactics. Iran wages a persistent asymmetrical war against its principal enemies, Israel and the United States. Several analysts subscribe to the view that gray zone aggression is a form of warfare, although none would suggest that a military response is always appropriate or necessary.[65] George Kennan arguably accepted this principle back in the 1940s when he referred to the

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[63] Michael Eisenstadt, "Iran's Gray Zone Strategy: Cornerstone of Its Asymmetrical Way of War," *PRISM* 9, no. 2 (2021): 77-97, 78, accessed November 10, 2022, https://ndu press.ndu.edu/Journals/PRISM/PRISM-9-2/.

[64] Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy's Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Eastbourne: Sussex Academic Press, 2012), 2.

[65] See, for example, Mark Galeotti, *The Weaponisation of Everything: A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022), 18; Ucko and Marks, "Redefining Irregular Warfare;" Arsalan Bilal, "Hybrid Warfare – New Threats, Complexities and 'Trust' as the Antidote," *NATO Review*, November 30, 2021, accessed October 24, 2022, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/11/30/hybrid-warfare-new-threats-complexity-and-trust-as-the-antidote/index.html; and Raphael S. Cohen et al., "The Future of Warfare in 2030: Project Overview and Conclusions," Research Report RR-2849/1-AF (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020),

containment strategy of Political Warfare as "the logical application of Clausewitz's doctrine in time of peace." [66] Some contemporary scholars have also invoked Clausewitz when discussing hybrid threats. Sean Monaghan, for instance, argues that hybrid aggression targets the government, the people, and the military – all three elements of Clausewitz's famous "trinity" on which governments depend to retain and wield power.[67]

A Hybrid Perspective on Russia's War in Ukraine

Many commentators assumed that the gray zone would remain the main arena for strategic competition.[68] Russia's attack on Ukraine in February 2022 has challenged this paradigm. Richard Hass, President of the Council of Foreign Relations, has described Russia's war in Ukraine in game-changing terms:

> Russia's aggression has upended many assumptions that influenced thinking about international relations in the post-Cold War era. It has ended the holiday from history in which wars between countries were rare. It has hollowed out the norm against countries' acquiring territory by force.[69]

It is too soon to tell whether Hass' assumptions are correct. But the war is likely to provide scholars and policymakers with plenty of material to analyze for years to come. Naturally, much discussion has focused on conventional warfighting and the possible use of nuclear weapons, but the conflict also continues to be viewed through the lens of hybrid warfare.[70] Russia has combined its conventional military operations with cyber, disinformation, and economic warfare campaigns intended to undermine the ability and will of the Ukrainian govern-

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13-14, accessed November 15, 2022, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2849z1.html.

[66] George Kennan, "Policy Planning Staff Memorandum," May 1948, accessed November 15, 2022, http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/65ciafounding3.htm.

[67] Monaghan, "Countering Hybrid War Project," 3.

[68] See, for example, Kevin Bilms, "Gray Is Here to Stay: Principles from the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance on Competing in the Gray Zone," *Modern War Institute*, March 25, 2021, accessed November 9, 2022, https://mwi.usma.edu/gray-is-here-to-stay-principles-from-the-interim-national-security-strategic-guidance-on-competing-in-the-gray-zone/.

[69] Richard Haass, "The Dangerous Decade: A Foreign Policy for a World in Crisis," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2022), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/dangerous-decade-foreign-policy-world-crisis-richard-haass.

[70] See, for example, Scott Jasper, "Can Russian Hybrid Warfare Win the Day in Ukraine?" *The National Interest*, October 7, 2022, accessed November 19, 2022, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/techland-when-great-power-competition-meets-digital-world/can-russian-hybrid-warfare-win-day; Manoj Joshi, "The Russia-Ukraine War: Ukraine's Resistance in the Face of Hybrid Warfare," *Observer Research Foundation*, June 6, 2022, accessed November 2, 2022, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/ukraines-resistance-in-the-face-of-hybrid-warfare/.

ment and people to resist. Beyond Ukraine, Russia has intensified its disinformation and propaganda efforts in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, achieving some success in deflecting blame for the war. Cyberattacks have continued, notably against Lithuania and Estonia during the summer of 2022, and Putin has used the threat of nuclear escalation as psychological warfare to pressure the West into restricting the weaponry it sends to Ukraine. The degradation of Russian military forces in combat has already prompted speculation that Russia's leaders will put even greater emphasis on hybrid forms of warfare in the future.[71]

There is no shooting war between Russia and NATO, but both are actively engaged in hostile operations below this threshold. Economic sanctions are the West's principal gray zone weapon, and the U.S. and its allies imposed unprecedentedly severe sanctions against Russia after the start of the war. These were described by *The Economist* as "high risk economic warfare"[72] and by Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, as a "total hybrid war" against his country.[73] Russia has responded to sanctions by exploiting its energy leverage over Europe. Gas supplies have been dramatically reduced with the apparent aim of creating painful energy rationing during winter that will persuade European states to pressure Ukraine to negotiate.[74] Acts of sabotage, widely attributed to Russia but not proven, on the Nord Stream pipelines in September have demonstrated the vulnerability of critical infrastructure and raised the stakes for the West.[75] Russia has mounted surveillance of oil and gas installations and transatlantic, undersea communications cables; cables close to Svalbard and the Shetland Islands were recently severed in suspicious circumstances. U.S. cyber-security officials also claim that Russia has pre-positioned cyber assets ready for major attacks against Western critical infrastructure targets.[76] Transatlantic cables and

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[71] Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Michael Kofman, "Russia's Dangerous Decline: The Kremlin Won't Go Down Without a Fight," *Foreign Affairs* (November/December 2022), https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/russia-dangerous-decline; Ucko and Marks, "Redefining Irregular Warfare."

[72] "A New Age of Economic Conflict," *The Economist*, March 2, 2022, https://www.economist.com/leaders/a-new-age-of-economic-conflict/21807968.

[73] Cameron Jenkins, "Kremlin Official Says West Has Declared 'Total War' on Russia," *The Hill*, March 25, 2022, accessed November 16, 2022, https://thehill.com/policy/international/russia/599722-lavrov-says-west-has-declared-total-war-on-russia/.

[74] Peter Clement, "Putin's Risk Spiral: The Logic of Escalation in an Unraveling War," *Foreign Affairs*, October 26, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/putin-risk-spiral-logic-of-escalation-in-war.

[75] Melissa Eddy, "Pipeline Breaks Look Deliberate, Europeans Say, Exposing Vulnerability," *The New York Times*, September 28, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/27/world/europe/pipeline-leak-russia-nord-stream.html; Richard Milne, "Damaged Baltic Sea Pipelines Put Western Powers on Alert for Sabotage," *Financial Times*, September 29, 2022.

[76] Marcus Willett, "The Cyber Dimension of the Russia-Ukraine War," *Survival* 64, no. 5 (October-November 2022): 7-26, quote on p. 21, https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2022.2126193.

other vital infrastructure represent strategic vulnerabilities should Putin choose to escalate, although a deliberate strike against them would risk crossing the threshold to open war with NATO. Writing in *The Observer*, Simon Tisdall describes Russia's activities as "non-military hybrid warfare" with the intention "…to harm, confuse, frighten, enfeeble and divide target states while maintaining plausible deniability."[77]

Many analysts have categorized the conflict as a proxy war.[78] As discussed above, proxy warfare has characterized many recent armed conflicts where states seek to influence the outcome of a war in another country without direct military involvement. America and its allies have supplied billions of dollars worth of military and economic aid, including weapons, training, intelligence, and cybersecurity expertise in support of Ukraine's war effort. The United States has officially denied it is involved in a proxy war, but as Secretary of Defense, Lloyd Austin, acknowledged in April 2022, the U.S. has broader goals than simply assisting Ukraine to defend itself. According to Austin, "we do want to make it harder for Russia to threaten its neighbors, and leave them less able to do that."[79] As during Cold War proxy wars, both Biden and Putin have so far abided by the often tacit "invisible rules" intended to prevent dangerous escalation to a direct military conflict.[80]

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[77] Simon Tisdall, "Unseen and Underhand: Putin's Hidden Hybrid War Is Trying to Break Europe's Heart," *The Observer*, October 23, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/oct/23/unseen-and-underhand-putins-hidden-hybrid-war-is-trying-to-break-europes-heart.

[78] Eliot A. Cohen, "America's Hesitation Is Heartbreaking," *The Atlantic*, March 14, 2022, www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/ukraine-united-states-nato/627052/; Sam Winter-Levy, "A Proxy War in Ukraine Is the Worst Possible Outcome – Except for All the Others," *War on the Rocks*, March 28, 2022, accessed November 21, 2022, https://warontherocks.com/2022/03/a-proxy-war-in-ukraine-is-the-worst-possible-outcome-except-for-all-the-others/; Hals Brand, "Russia Is Right: The U.S. Is Waging a Proxy War in Ukraine," *The Washington Post*, May 10, 2022, www.washingtonpost.com/business/russia-is-right-the-us-is-waging-aproxy-war-in-ukraine/2022/05/10/2c8058a4-d051-11ec-886b-df76183d233f_story.html; Dov S. Zakheim, "Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Has Sparked a Proxy World War," *The Hill*, November 18, 2022, accessed November 21, 2022, https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3739744-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-has-sparked-a-proxy-world-war/.

[79] U.S. Department of Defense, "Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Holds a News Conference Following Ukraine Defense Consultative Group Meeting, Ramstein Air Base, Germany," Transcript, April 26, 2022, accessed November 21, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3011263/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-holds-a-news-conference-following-ukrai/.

[80] Liana Fix and Michael Kimmage, "What If the War in Ukraine Spins Out of Control? How to Prepare for Unintended Escalation," *Foreign Affairs*, July 19, 2022, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/ukraine/2022-07-18/what-if-war-in-ukraine-spins-out-control.

Conclusion

The discussion above illustrates that policymakers and scholars of warfare are confronted by a variety of different, but overlapping terms, often used synonymously to describe similar phenomena. The term hybrid warfare has been rightly criticized for being ill-defined, ahistorical, and applied to elements of inter-state strategic competition that can questionably be described as warfare as traditionally understood. Alternative terms discussed here, such as irregular warfare, hybrid threats, and gray zone aggression, have been subject to similar criticism but, like hybrid warfare, are also commonly employed by analysts and practitioners. The plethora of buzzwords can create confusion and misunderstanding, which may negatively impact the development of coordinated, focused, and effective responses to the range of threats posed by the West's authoritarian adversaries. While establishing common terminology and definition to characterize contemporary warfare would be helpful, it should be obvious from the discussion above that this would probably prove impossible in practice.

Although it remains a disputed term in academic discourse, hybrid warfare continues to be employed by practitioners and commentators as an established term to describe the blended character of contemporary warfare. Despite valid arguments about overly broad and ambiguous terminology, the debate on hybrid warfare and other related concepts has provided a useful framework to challenge the traditional, Western binary distinctions between peace and war and conventional and irregular warfare. Analysis of these terms has provided crucial insights into how modern state and non-state actors exploit and integrate kinetic and non-kinetic methods of warfare to pursue their strategic objectives. The discussion has helped develop greater awareness of the coercive behaviors employed by adversaries that exploit the West's vulnerabilities in the competitive space between statecraft and open warfare. The effectiveness of these tactics has been amplified by developments in cyber, informational, and economic methods of warfare that have arguably permanently altered the notion of what constitutes force in international politics. Most significantly, the concept of hybrid warfare has awakened Western states to the need for comprehensive approaches to national security that go beyond traditional defense institutions to embrace both military and civilian governmental agencies, civil society, and private sector organizations.

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The views expressed are solely those of the author and do not represent official views of the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, participating organizations, or the Consortium's editors.

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Research Article

Ensuring Democratic Control of Armed Forces – The Enduring Challenges

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Abstract: Armed forces constitute the foundation for the defense and security of their societies. They protect against external threats and, when required, provide coercive power. As a corporate body, they play a prominent role in the ordering of the nation's affairs, in the development of national security policy, and in the allocation of national resources. Their role is guided by a single principle: their subordination to democratically elected political leadership. This democratic control ensures they serve the societies they protect.

This article identifies the key elements needed to ensure effective democratic control. It examines the role of the executive in the organization and employment of the armed forces and the legislature in providing oversight and accountability. The tensions in defining competence and responsibility where the political and military worlds and perspectives intersect are alleviated in the process of fusion, collision, or reconciliation at all levels, from policy to operations. Democratic control must reflect societal developments as in the influence of information technology or the impressive "genderization" of defense and security. Two decades of transition in Europe have shown that democratic control is a process in which each country adapts the basic principles to its own circumstances.

Keywords: democratic control, parliamentary control, security sector reform, governance, accountability, transparency, oversight.

Introduction

The expression "the democratic control of armed forces" (herein referred to as DCAF) is generally understood as the subordination of the armed forces[1] to those democratically elected to superintend a given country's affairs. In its fullest sense, it means that all decisions regarding the defense of the country—the organization, deployment, and use of armed forces; the setting of military priorities and requirements; and the allocation of the necessary resources—are made by the democratic leadership and scrutinized by the legislative body in order to ensure popular support and legitimacy. This ensures the ultimate aim that armed forces serve the societies they protect and that military policies and capabilities are consistent with political objectives and economic resources.

DCAF should be seen as a part of, and a reflection of, the broader relationship between the armed forces and their respective societies. It is not a fixed state but a process that evolves over time in response to specific circumstances of time and place. It is an essential element in times of both peace and war. It provided the basis for the stability that underpinned the fundamental changes in Europe during the past three decades. But it has equal relevance to the more challenging circumstances of war, as in the ongoing war in Ukraine. This is not the place to comment on the war itself. However, in the context of this article, it is important to note the relevance of the norms and standards inherent in DCAF for the role and behavior of armed forces. The experiences of other new democracies during their transitional phase, albeit under less rigorous circumstances, will help Ukraine meet the requirements for its full integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

DCAF's Rise to Prominence

During the Cold War, the term DCAF evoked little discussion or debate beyond academic circles. In most NATO countries, it was largely taken for granted, as attention focused on the potential use of armed forces in countering the threat of Soviet aggression. With the end of the Cold War, the question of DCAF suddenly increased in prominence. A veritable cottage industry sprang to life around it through workshops, seminars, and conferences, which, along with studies and articles by academics and practitioners, cluttered the market. A new research center was created in Geneva dedicated specifically to the issue.[2]

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1   The definition of "armed forces" can be problematic. This article will refer to forces under the supervision of Ministries of Defense. However, in many countries, there are a variety of forces that bear arms and do not fall under the authority of the MOD – for example, police, internal security forces, or para-militaries. It goes without saying that all security forces should be democratically accountable irrespective of subordination.

2   The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) was created on the joint initiative of its first Director Teddy Winkler and his Deputy Philip Fluri with the aim of providing focused research and much needed coordination of the disparate activities underway in the field.

There were a number of reasons for the sudden surge of interest in the question of the democratic control of armed forces. First and foremost was the transition that was taking place throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) as former Communist countries began to develop the democratic institutions and practices that are the hallmarks of Western societies. It soon became apparent during this transitional period that the armed forces were one of the residual elements of the old regime that had to undergo fundamental change. Accustomed to civilian single-party control and a privileged position in terms of resources and status, they had to be subsumed under and made responsible to the democratic processes being put in place.[3]

The issue became more pressing when NATO made clear that DCAF was one of the conditions the Alliance would be looking for in assessing the potential of prospective members. Prominent among the objectives of NATO's Partnership for Peace initiative were the facilitation of transparency in defense planning and budgeting and assistance in ensuring democratic control of defense forces.

As a result, many would-be members and other partners looked to the Alliance for advice and assistance as to what steps they should take. Here, they encountered a central paradox. While NATO placed considerable emphasis on DCAF, no single model existed within the Alliance by way of example. For historical and cultural reasons, each member has adopted a different approach to the issue that defies the elaboration of a "one size fits all" formula. A series of NATO brainstorming sessions within the PfP framework shed considerable light on the various components of DCAF. However, these efforts shed light equally on the many variations that existed. The difficulty of reaching a single definition became even clearer. An agreement that "we know it when we see it, or rather we recognize when it does not exist" was about as close as these sessions came to a consensus. As one Alliance participant noted, "As soon as we get close to agreeing on criteria, one of us has to leave the room."

This reflected the dilemma facing the Alliance and would-be members alike, and affected other NATO "criteria" – the problem of assessing when countries had reached the level judged necessary for Alliance membership.[4] For the aspiring member states, the absence of a specific model had both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, they were exposed to a variety of advice, not always consistent, as to the appropriate steps they needed to take. On the other

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[3] The national standing of the armed forces varied greatly from country to country, depending on historical experience. In Poland and Romania, the military was held in high standing, while in Hungary and the Czech Republic this was not the case. However, irrespective of their national standing as a corporate group, several national militaries were repositories of old thinking and represented an obstacle to successful democratization.

[4] The Alliance was always careful to stress that there was no fixed or rigid list of criteria for inviting new members; readiness for membership would be a political judgment based on all relevant considerations.

hand, they were able to select from this advice and adapt it to their own needs and circumstances.

This focus on DCAF coincided with a period of wholesale change for the armed forces of Alliance members – changes that had consequences for the relationships of armed forces with their societies. The armed forces of all NATO countries were in transition as they restructured, reorganized, and generally reduced away from Cold War military structures and troop levels; several moving from conscript to all-volunteer armies. The roles and missions of these forces were also changing as they increasingly engaged in Crisis Response Operations (CROs), missions that placed new demands on the military. Furthermore, the development of new information technologies was impacting the way armed forces operated and, by way of a seemingly omnipresent and all-pervasive media, how they were perceived to operate by the public at large.

Collectively, these factors represented a new environment and a new set of challenges to which the armed forces needed to respond. These adjustments, in turn, influenced the role of the militaries in their respective societies, demonstrating that the broader context of civil-military relations, of which DCAF is a part, is a continuously evolving process.[5]

These two developments—democratization in CEE and the impact of the new security environment—gave DCAF its relevance and prominence during this period. Most Alliance countries had the appropriate mechanisms in place to absorb and adjust to changes in the new environment. However, for countries of CEE, life was slightly more problematic. They had to cope with these changes while at the same time developing the procedures, expertise, and attitudes of cooperation necessary to ensure effective democratic control of their armed forces. Most difficult of all, they had also to overcome the legacy of the past. This was a formidable challenge, but one they met in eventually becoming fully fledged and fully contributing members of the Alliance.

The Essential Conditions for DCAF

While no single model was on offer, the intense discussion surrounding DCAF saw the emergence of broad guidelines concerning the basic elements that should be present in one form or another to ensure democratic control. These are:

1. Legal and constitutional mechanisms clarify the relationships between the head of state, the government, parliament, and the armed forces in terms of the division of authority, command, and subordination in both peacetime and the transition to war. In addition, these mechanisms establish the roles of the relevant institutions and the status and rights of the armed forces.

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5 For a thorough survey of writings in this field see Peter D. Feaver, "Civil Military Relations," in *The Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 2 (June 1999); and Rosa Brooks, "The US Civil –Military Relations in Crisis?" *Parameters* 51 (2021).

2. An appropriate mix of military and civilian personnel within the MOD (including a civilian Minister of Defense) to ensure that military expertise is situated in the appropriate political context and military infrastructure is economically sustainable.

3. Effective parliamentary oversight to ensure democratic legitimacy and popular support.

4. Maximum transparency and openness, including independent research institutes and active and inquisitive media.

5. Armed forces at ease with their role in society.

These elements are easy to define on paper. Making them work in practice, however, is another matter. Successful implementation rests on the respective roles of the executive and the legislature and the relationship between them. It rests equally on the relationship of both bodies with the armed forces. But above all, it depends on the appropriate division of responsibility and competence between the political and military sides. Developing the trust, confidence, and mutual respect on which these relationships depend lies at the heart of effective DCAF.

Why Defense Is Different

In all areas of government, a degree of tension between the executive and the legislature is inevitable in view of their respective functions. There must be a division of power and responsibility that, on the one hand, ensures effective action by the executive without a potentially dangerous accumulation of power and, on the other, ensures popular support through legislative involvement but without risking paralysis of action. Establishing this balance between "efficiency" and "democracy" is crucial to ensuring effective government and is particularly salient to the field of defense. The need to establish such a balance is both more important and more difficult in the field of defense than in other fields of activity. Defense is not just another spending department. It brings with it certain characteristics and qualities that complicate the relationship between the executive and the legislative bodies and increase the inherent potential for friction between the two branches.

There are several reasons why defense makes these relationships more difficult. The first is that defense concerns the security of the nation and involves decisions to commit lives and expenditures for the nation's defense. Decisions of this magnitude impose an additional burden of responsibility on the political leadership to get things right and ensure that decisions and policies enjoy popular support.

The second reason is that in any society, the military assumes a special and distinctive position as the principal possessor of weapons. Furthermore, the military also represents a highly organized and disciplined group, knit together by traditions, customs, and working habits, but above all by the need to work together and to depend on each other in times of crisis and conflict – a dependence

that can literally mean the difference between life and death. Such dependence builds strong bonds and loyalties and requires a degree of cohesion and group identity that few other professionals can claim. It is these qualities—discipline, dedication, and loyalty—that make the military profession different and, in some ways, distinct from society.

There are those who argue that the changing nature of war and societal trends are mitigating these differences. This is not the place to discuss this issue in detail, except to suggest that these values continue to constitute the core of "soldiering" and characterize the personal interactions that make the military function in most Alliance countries.

There is an additional dimension to the military profession that should be taken into account. The highly organized and structured character of military life tends to give the military profession a rather straightforward and uncomplicated view of the world, a view that contrasts and is often at odds with the more complex and, by comparison, apparently "murky" world of politics. Concepts of concession and compromise, essential to the balancing and reconciliation of competing interests in domestic and international politics, do not mesh easily with the clarity and directness of assessment and decision that are essential characteristics of an effectively functioning military. This can lead to widely divergent perceptions of the same problem and can represent a source of friction between military and political actors.[6] At a minimum, such friction is constrained to grumblings in the officers' mess over the doings of "our political masters." At the most extreme, it can lead to military interference with, or defiance of, the government of the day. When such episodes have occurred, it has frequently been because the military men have suggested allegiance to a higher calling—the nation, the constitution, the people—than the transient government of the day.[7] Most of

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[6] For a glimpse of this difference in perception between the commander in the field (or in this case at sea) and the political leadership see the comments of Admiral Sandy Woodward, Commander of the Falklands Battle Group approaching the Falklands: "None of our plans seem to hold up for more than twenty four hours, as Mr. Nott (Defence Minister) footles about, wringing his hands and worrying about his blasted career." In Admiral Sandy Woodward with Patrick Robinson, *One Hundred Days: The Memoirs of the Falklands Battle Group Commander* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1992).

[7] See, for example, the well-known statement by General Douglas MacArthur "I find in existence new and heretofore unknown and dangerous concept that the members of our armed forces owe primary allegiance or loyalty to those who temporarily exercise the authority of the Executive branch of government rather than to the country and its constitution which they are sworn to defend." Quoted in Telford Taylor, *Sword and Swastika: Generals and Nazis in the Third Reich* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1952). From Russia, in a similar vein: "I have never served Tsars or Commissars or Presidents. They are mortal men and they come and go. I serve only the Russian state and the Russian people, which are eternal." General Lebed, quoted in the *Financial Times*, September 6, 1994.

During the first of the summer schools for CEE parliamentarians organized in the mid-1990's by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in conjunction with the George C. Marshall Centre in Garmisch, there was considerable discussion of the question of

our governments have, at some time in their history, experienced problems with a "turbulent military." Several Alliance members—Turkey, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, for instance—have experienced such problems in the not-too-distant past.

Today, none of the established democracies have serious worries about this score. The respective roles of the military and civilians are well established and understood – although, as will be seen later, there are some areas where the dividing line is increasingly blurred. Rather, the principal significance of democratic control lies elsewhere. It rests principally in the fact that in any society, the military represents a strong corporate body capable of exerting considerable influence over policy and the allocation of resources. The strength of this position is underpinned by the familiar refrain that the first task of government is the defense and security of the nation.

In summary, the aim of democratic control is to ensure that the armed forces and their requirements occupy an appropriate place in the nation's priorities, that they do not absorb an undue proportion of the national resources, nor exert an undue influence on the development of policy.

For these reasons, it is important to ensure that the defense function is organized and managed in a way that maximizes military professionalism and efficiency but also guarantees political control and popular support. There is an additional dimension that makes this a difficult goal to achieve. There is a tendency for the military to believe that military things are best left to the military professionals. This is understandable, as the business of the armed forces is to prepare for conflict and the potential loss of life. This makes the intrusions of outsiders or non-professionals a sensitive issue.

This aspect will be discussed in greater detail below. It is sufficient here to emphasize three points. First, there are certainly many areas that are rightfully the preserve of the military professionals who spend their time studying and perfecting the business of war and the management of the armed forces. Second, however, at some stage, these military activities must come under the scrutiny of the political leadership to ensure that they are consistent with and reflect political aims and priorities. Third, implicit in this situation in which the military accepts the primacy of politics, is the responsibility of the political side to ensure that it exercises informed judgment.

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whether there were ever circumstances under which the armed forces have the right to intervene internally: for example, to "save" democracy, as when the army in Algeria prevented a slate of elected Islamic fundamentalists from taking power, or when there are competing democratic institutions, as was the case when President Yeltsin used the Russian army against the Parliament. While it was agreed that there was never any justification for intervention against democratically elected authorities, it was evident that gray areas arose when the democratic legitimacy of the government itself was in question. This issue also raised questions regarding to whom armed forces pledged their oath of allegiance.

The Role of the Executive

The executive of any nation comprises the democratically elected or appointed leadership, whether president or prime minister, or both, plus the permanent cadre of civil servants and military officers. It is responsible for assigning defense its appropriate place in the nation's priorities, adjudicating between competing claims, and ensuring that defense requirements are consistent with political goals and economic resources. In other words, the executive is responsible for seeing the "big picture" and for defining the national strategy within which defense must be situated. The executive is normally responsible for the decision to go to war (with legislative approval) and for the strategic command and control of any conflict. Clarity, both of responsibility and in the line of authority, is obviously crucial.

Within the executive, the Ministry (or Department) of Defense, together with the general staff, is responsible for the hands-on organization and management of the defense establishment and for the operation of the armed forces. This includes responsibility for the deployment and employment of armed forces, the development of strategy and doctrine, defense plans and budgets, personnel policy, and education, training, and equipping of troops. The Ministry of Defense has to reconcile military requirements with real-world political and economic constraints and arbitrate between the various services. The Ministry must also establish the degree of autonomy of the armed forces and the degree of intrusiveness of political supervision.

The Political-Military Interface

The key element of democratic control lies in the point at which the political and military worlds and perspectives intersect. When there is a fusion of interests, then all is well. However, the more challenging situation is when there is a collision rather than a fusion. Then the question is, which prevails? The answer will almost inevitably be a balance of the two, depending on the circumstances and what is at stake. This interaction and the resulting process of adjustment, adaptation, and eventual reconciliation takes place at all levels of defense and security activities, from policy to operations.

In looking at the role and responsibilities of the executive, there are three broad areas where political and military interaction is of particular interest: the question of command, the use of civilians, and the dividing line between military and political competence and responsibility.

Command

The first area of importance is the question of clarity in the arrangements for command of the armed forces in peace and in war.[8] It goes without saying that responsibility for the decision to go to war must be clearly and unambiguously

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8 It is self-evident that the need for clarity of command has a particular relevance in the field of nuclear weapons.

defined and that, where possible, this should be vested in a single individual, albeit subject to the agreement of the legislative body. In presidential-parliamentary systems, it is critical that the role of the President vis-a-vis the Prime Minister should be clarified. Likewise, there should be no doubt regarding to whom the chief of staff reports or the line of authority. This, again, is easier said than done. No matter how tightly drafted, constitutions and legal frameworks frequently leave room for interpretation, particularly by forceful personalities.

Even the American Constitution, much admired for the simplicity of its language and the clear separation of powers, has not escaped unscathed. Under the Constitution, the President is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, but Congress has the power to declare war. These definitions have left open the possibility for disputes over authority for those conflicts that fall short of a formal declaration of war yet require the deployment of American forces and sometimes the loss of American lives. U.S. forces have been deployed frequently by the President without the express authorization of Congress.[9] Despite the War Powers Resolution, the debate continues and has echoes in Congressional strictures on the deployment of U.S. forces in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and on the use of military force against Iraq. This is not a comment on the merits of the arguments but merely to indicate that even in well-established democratic systems, differences arise over who has responsibility for the use of armed forces.

Likewise, the French Constitution, which gives the president special powers for the security of the nation and the government responsibility for the management of defense, also leaves room for uncertainty, particularly in a period of so-called "cohabitation," when the president and government represent different parties. This was evident at times during the period of cohabitation between President Chirac and Prime Minister Jospin.

There were several cases in Eastern and Central Europe when presidents attempted to interpret their roles as commander-in-chief and to develop special relations with the armed forces, circumventing the Government and the Ministry of Defense. An example of this occurred in Poland during the early period of transition when then-President Walesa attempted to assert his prerogatives over those of the government. During a meeting in 1995 with then-President of the NATO PA, Karsten Voigt, President Walesa stated that his own role as commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces was a sufficient condition to satisfy the requirements of democratic civilian control. This proposition was diplomatical but firmly refuted. This problem was resolved by the adoption of a new Polish Defence Law and Constitution, although the President still retained considerable powers.

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9   See Louis Fisher, "Congressional Checks on Military Initiatives," *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no. 5 (Winter 1994-95): 739-76; and Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and John B. Ritch III, "The War Powers at a Constitutional Impasse: A 'Joint Decision' Solution," *Georgetown Law Journal* 77, no. 2 (December 1988).

Role of Civilians

The second area of potential disagreement concerns the role of civilians in the Ministry of Defense (MOD). A standard feature of most Western democracies is that the minister of defense comes from a civilian background. There are several reasons for this, notably the fact that a civilian is considered better equipped to take account of broader policy issues and influences and is better able to defend the MOD's turf in the competition for resources. This is not to say that military personnel cannot bring the same qualities to bear to the position of defense minister. However, most experience suggests that a civilian background is more appropriate to cover the full range of tasks required of the position.

Similar questions of competence concerning the interchangeability of civilians and military occur regarding the role of the former in ministries of defense. Most, but not all, Western ministries of defense employ a large number of civilians to work alongside military officers in the organization and operation of the ministry. Using civilians has clear advantages, as they bring skills in administration, management, and finance that military professionals frequently do not possess. However, many civilians also work in policy areas that take them into the military territory and where friction can occur without the careful delineation of boundaries.

The use of civilians frequently surfaced as an issue in CEE countries during the early days of the democratic transition. Most Partner CEE states, reacting to Western urgings, rather rapidly produced "civilians" in their defense ministries. However, most of this personnel were in fact former military officers. This was partly due to the dearth of civilian expertise available in post-Communist countries but also to the residual belief in the military's primacy in defense matters.

The respective roles of civilians and uniformed personnel raise the broader issue of whether service life produces an exclusively military approach that lingers in post-service life to influence integration and involvement in civil society. Discussion of this issue lies beyond the scope of this article. Clearly, much depends on the individual's ability to integrate. Many military professionals make the transition to civilian policy positions (at NATO, for example) without apparent difficulty. However, the broader answer is that it is important to maximize the particular skills of both the civilian and the military, professional or retired, and ensure that they complement and reinforce each other.

The Political-Military Dividing Line

This raises the third and central issue – the question of identifying the division of competence and responsibility between political and military actors. This, again, is an issue that permeates all aspects of DCAF. Are there areas that are purely military, where the military should be allowed to get on with their business unimpeded by political interference? Common sense suggests that the answer is yes, that there are areas, such as the development of doctrine and tactics, and the education and training of armed forces should be left to the military professionals. Likewise, in conflict situations, it would appear obvious that the handling

of operations should be governed by professional military judgment. However, practice and experience tell a different story and suggest that few military areas are free from some form of political interference or oversight.

The final verdict has to be that all military actions are accountable at some stage to the political side. But this begs the question: at what stage should the political side exercise direct influence? Or, to put it more directly, when should political judgment and authority take precedence over that of the military? This is not an easy line to define, and there are a number of areas where it easily becomes blurred. The following are examples of areas where political and military interests often collide.

Rules of Engagement (ROE)

ROEs are guidelines for the military in carrying out their mission that define their scope of action, taking full account of the political context. These cover a wide range of activities, from strategic to operational, and frequently give rise to friction between the military and political sides. At the level of grand strategy, the competing tensions between military and political requirements are best illustrated by the Cuban missile crisis. The American military sought to establish the line at which Soviet ships had to stop beyond the range of MiG fighters from Cuba, but that would have reduced the decision time for Soviet leadership. The political requirement to provide the Soviets more time—which increased the risk to U.S. forces—won the day.

Admiral Sandy Woodward, leading his Task Force towards the Falklands and uncertain about the interpretation of the ROEs he had been given, provides a graphic description of a Commander's frustration: "The picture is gloomy. The politicians are probably going to tie my hands behind my back and then be angry when I fail to pull their beastly irons out of the fire for them."[10]

In the same vein, the Commander of British Forces in the Gulf War, General Sir Peter De La Billiere, when facing the dilemma that his own ROEs to deal with potentially threatening Iraqi aircraft were much more restrictive than those of the American forces with whom he was deployed, responded: "The politicians are ducking and weaving, and trying to avoid the real decisions they are there for. They love section-commander-type decisions, like organizing uniforms or deciding on the British Forces' radio. ROE matters, where the future conduct of the war and their own and the government's position could be in question, they avoid if at all possible."[11]

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[10] Admiral Woodward with Robinson, *One Hundred Days*, provides further comment on the question of ROEs: "I realized that considerable local amplification of ROEs was central. I was sure they made excellent sense of the political interface in Whitehall, but they were sometimes less than crystal clear in the front line, where there was no time for debate as to the subtleties implied but not stated."

[11] General Sir Peter De la Billière, *Storm Command: A Personal Account of the Gulf War* (London: Harper Collins, 1992).

The experience in Bosnia during the UNPROFOR period was replete with examples of the frustration of military commanders on the ground with the ROEs given them by New York. NATO's own peacekeeping operations in the Balkans, while a quantum improvement on UN operations, were also challenged by adapting to National ROEs, which were frequently more restrictive than those of the overall force.

Multinational Operations [12]

ROEs are part of a larger problem posed by multinational operations, whether of peace support or peace enforcement, which require a delicate balancing of military and political considerations and imply further blurring of their respective roles. In peace support operations, many of these problems on the ground stem from the reluctance of nations to cede more than tactical control to the force commander and to retain a final veto over decisions they do not like.[13] However, these operations also present entirely new challenges to armed forces, particularly in requiring the military to adopt a more political role. From the force commander to the soldier at a checkpoint, the requirement for acute political sensitivity to local conditions and the consequences of specific courses of action are overwhelming. The need for personal initiative and judgment is ever-present.[14]

The complications involved in multinational operations become even greater when fighting is involved. The NATO campaign in the former Yugoslavia provided a classic example of the interplay between political and military considerations in the conduct of such operations. Again, NATO commanders talked of fighting with their hands tied behind their backs, in particular referring to the initial targeting in the air operations and the refusal by the political leadership to consider a ground option because of concerns over public support.[15] Multinational operations blur even further, therefore, the dividing line between the military and

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[12] For an insightful and informed analysis of the constraints imposed by multinational operations see the chapter on "NATO Operations" by Nicholas Williams, former NATO IS Head of Operations for Afghanistan and Iraq, in *Research Handbook on NATO*, ed. Sebastian Mayer (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023).

[13] KFOR and SFOR Commanders frequently complained of the unwillingness of some nations to implement their decisions, particularly on the redeployment of forces. This experience was repeated frequently during the NATO operation in Afghanistan with some countries imposing strict caveats on the use of their forces.

[14] This new form of military involvement led to the creation of specialist Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) officers in most European armed forces. Field visits to NATO forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo demonstrated the considerable pride felt by the soldiers of all nations in helping local communities recover from the trauma and damage of war. Military commanders believe that rotation cycles should ensure that specialist military competences are not degraded. In other words, the dismissal of these activities by some elements of the media as "doing the dishes" after the real military work has been completed, was misplaced.

[15] For an excellent description of the operation in Kosovo and the problem of reconciling political and military requirements in such operations see General Wesley K Clark,

political areas of responsibility and competence. Likewise, the trend to a more educated military, which encourages greater political awareness, diminishes the traditional distinction between the military and the political sides. The classical military response to questions of a political nature, frequently heard during the Cold War—"I'm just a simple soldier; that's a question for my political masters" (and it was always a misleading statement)—will be heard far less.

The post-Cold War missions have required the military to act in a more political sense; their very nature implies the need for greater political sensitivity to military operations. At the same time, new communications technologies and the role of social media mean that almost all military activity is now within political reach and scrutiny. These developments will have direct consequences for DCAF and for all aspects of civil-military relations.

Procurement

The procurement of military equipment offers another example of potential friction between political and military perspectives. Frequently, military considerations on the most appropriate choice of systems are made subordinate to economic, industrial, and political considerations. Examination of the purchase of almost any major weapons system will tell the same story: the final choice is rarely decided on purely military requirements. The result is that the military frequently feels aggrieved that they have not received the optimum equipment.

The Military and Society

Finally, there is the quite separate issue of whether military life should reflect the standards of society, for example, in the employment of women or the acceptability of homosexuals. Debates in the United States and the United Kingdom initially demonstrated reluctance on the part of the defense world to move in accordance with these societal changes, raising the question of the degree to which the political side should insist on policies that the military believes are inimical to their effectiveness.[16]

During the last decade, one of the most significant and much-needed changes in the defense and security environment has been the "genderization" of defense and security policy, often under "Women, Peace and Security" initiatives,[17]

Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).

[16] For an insightful discussion of these issues, see Christopher Dandeker, "On the Need to Be Different: Military Uniqueness and Civil-Military Relations in Modern Society," *RUSI Journal* 146, no. 3 (June 2001).

[17] This change was catalyzed by the launching of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000. For a fuller discussion of the widespread involvement of women in defense and security see also "Women on the Path to Peace," *The World Today* 79, no. 1 (Chatham House, February/March 2023), https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2023-02. NATO demonstrated its commitment to gender equality and the gender lens by creating a Committee on Gender Perspectives.

and the now widespread acceptance of the need to integrate gender perspectives in all aspects of defense and security policies. In most Alliance countries, women now serve in all branches and at all levels of their armed forces. However, the rebalancing of gender goes well beyond employment in the armed forces. Women are now prominent in the field of analysis, development, and implementation of policy,[18] ending the era of male domination in the defense and security world.

A related societal issue concerns the direct involvement of military personnel and civil servants in politics. In most Alliance countries, military personnel are not encouraged to be involved in politics. In the UK, they are positively discouraged. For example, "In the United Kingdom, it is regarded as a breach of professional ethics to express opinions in public about matters which are politically controversial or show preference for one political party."[19]

This is not the case in all countries. The German army, with its concept of "*Innere Führung*"—a soldier has the same rights as a citizen—takes a very different approach, one that derives from its immediate past and the determination that never again will the German army operate at a remove from society. There is also the question of the rights of soldiers to belong to unions or associations that guarantee or protect their well-being or whether this is incompatible with the very nature of the military profession, with its emphasis on discipline, reliability, and unquestioning obedience. Again, different countries take different positions on these difficult issues.[20]

Each of the areas mentioned above merits detailed study; of necessity, this article has only been able to scratch the surface. The object of the discussion here has been to indicate the potential areas of friction inherent in the roles of the military and political sides in the management of defense and also to show that the different interests and perceptions of the respective actors will continue to give rise to tensions that will require persistent adjudication and balancing.

The Role of Parliament

Before examining the role of parliaments in influencing the development and implementation of defense, two general remarks are appropriate. First, in an ideal world, the role of a parliament would be not just to support the executive but also to impose its own personality and to influence the development and

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[18] See Women In International Security (WIIS), https://wiisglobal.org/, and its multiple networks.

[19] Presentation by Anthony Cragg, NATO Assistant Secretary General (on secondment from the MOD) to the NPA Seminar "Democratic Accountability of Armed Forces," Prague, April 1995.

[20] For an overview see the report on "Right to Association for Members of the Professional Staff of the Armed Forces," Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Document 9518, July 15, 2002, http://www.assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?FileID=9808.

implementation of policy.[21] However, in practice, many parliaments have ceded their powers of initiative to the executive. This is particularly true of defense and security policy, where there is a widespread acceptance that defense and security lie appropriately within the prerogative of the executive. Frequently, parliamentary influence lies in the constraints that it is able to impose on the executive, that is, in its ability to change or reject proposals or rather in its ability to say no. Second, many of the characteristics of defense described earlier as inhibiting or complicating the work of the executive apply equally to the work of parliaments, sometimes even more pronounced.

The importance of parliaments for defense should be self-evident. No defense policy can endure without the support of the public it is formulated to protect. As the elected representatives of the people, parliamentarians are at the heart of the democratic system. They represent the populace from whom armed forces are drawn and whose taxes pay for their upkeep. Parliaments perform a dual function in the sense that they must both influence and reflect public opinion. It is their task to explain and justify the military expenditure, in addition to explaining to their constituents why military personnel is deployed "overseas" and why such deployments may result in loss of life.

In this respect, it is worth noting that the context in which public support for defense, the maintenance of armed forces, and the consequent defense expenditure have been changing.[22] In the absence of the direct threat present during the Cold War, armed forces were increasingly preoccupied with crises and conflicts that demanded forces for power projection and rapid deployments.

There are two immediate consequences. First, these missions are very demanding in terms of personnel and the means to transport and sustain them. Many Alliance countries suffered from overextension as a result of the deployments in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan. Second, the nature of some operations makes timely consultation with parliaments extremely difficult. These trends also have implications for public support. Many of these conflicts are "remote" in the sense that they do not appear to present an immediate threat to national security. Yet, the media ensures that the suffering involved is brought directly into the homes of the public. This leads to the much-debated "do something" factor. While, for the most part, the public appears to support the use of their armed forces in such situations, it is never clear to what degree this support will be sustained in the event of casualties. This is a difficult calculation for both

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[21] The role of parliaments in defense and security cannot be divorced from the role of parliaments in general. For a discussion of the decline in parliamentary influence over the budget process, see the proceedings from "Holding the Executive Accountable: The Changing Role of Parliament in the Budget Process," Palais du Luxembourg, Paris, January 24-25, 2001 – an international symposium for chairpersons of parliamentary budget committees.

[22] It remains to be seen what impact Russian aggression in Ukraine will have on public support in Alliance countries for defense and the accompanying defence expenditures.

policymakers and politicians. Hence the need to engage parliamentary support as early as possible.

If the importance of parliaments to defense is indisputable, there is less agreement on the role they should play. Given the challenging nature of defense and its characteristics, the term control in the context of parliament's role is not appropriate.[23] Rather, the key issue is how much influence parliaments should endeavor to exert over the development of the defense budget and the organization and operation of the armed forces. With what degree of detail and intrusiveness should parliamentarians scrutinize defense?

There is, of course, no single model. Alliance parliaments exert varying degrees of influence in different ways. The basic distinction to be drawn is between those who exert direct influence through formal powers of consultation and decision and those whose influence is applied indirectly through their ability to hold the executive accountable, albeit after the fact.

At one end of the spectrum is the U.S. Congress, which, because of the U.S. Constitution and the separation of powers, plays an influential role in the development of the U.S. defense budget. Congress holds the Department of Defense accountable, often in excruciating detail and in a manner described by some, particularly those on the receiving end, as excessive micro-management.

In the initial years of the democratic transition, the U.S. Congress was often seen as the model for those who sought real legislative input into the defense planning process. However, two factors quickly became apparent: Congressional powers are not easily replicated, as they are obviously a product of, and specific to, the U.S. Constitution, which has been in place for over 200 years. Further, they require substantial supporting infrastructure in the way of committee staff, experts, and supporting organizations and, while representative of the people, consume substantial resources.

At the other end of the spectrum is the British Parliament, whose direct oversight consists of voting on the defense budget as a global figure once a year, plus various debates. The government does not have to obtain parliamentary approval for specific expenditure decisions, which rests firmly in the hands of the executive. Again, this relationship is a function of British history and the development of a strong executive depending on a highly professional and relatively insular civil service.

The function of the British Parliament and its Select Committee on Defense has to be seen in a different context. It plays a major role in informing public

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[23] In the initial discussions of DCAF and specifically the role of parliaments the term 'control' was subject to lengthy discussions. In the overall context of DCAF control was seen to signify the subordination of the military to civilian political leadership—particularly important for post-communist societies—to which the term democratically elected was added. But control was not seen as an appropriate description for the role of parliament itself.

opinion and making defense more transparent through focused hearings and reports.[24] Likewise, the National Audit Office, which reports to Parliament, keeps the government on its toes via in-depth assessments of various programs, looking specifically to see that expenditures have been used effectively.

Most other parliaments exert considerably more direct influence over defense than the British but fall short of the Congressional model. The German Bundestag, along with the Dutch and Danish parliaments, offer more nuanced models, as they enjoy formal consultative powers on issues such as equipment purchases and force deployments.

Within this overall distinction of direct and indirect influence, parliamentary activity can be grouped into three broad areas: accountability, oversight, and transparency.

Accountability

All parliaments hold their government accountable through the annual voting of necessary funds, whether this is the end of a long process of examination as in the U.S. model or merely formal endorsement as in the British case. Whatever the model, the "power of the purse" requires every government to explain and justify its expenditure demands. Accountability is also achieved through hearings or the establishment of special committees to look into specific issues. Examples of the latter were the investigation by the Canadian Parliament into the conduct of Canadian soldiers in Somalia and the inquiry by the Belgian Parliament into the events that led to the deaths of Belgian peacekeepers in Rwanda.[25]

Oversight

The crucial issue is the degree to which oversight translates into real influence over the decisions of the executive. Parliamentary authorization is an important instrument of influence. In many countries, parliamentary authorization is required for the purchase of major weapon systems, which, in effect, equates to participation in the decision.

Several parliaments have the constitutional requirement to be informed on the deployment of forces abroad, and a few have the right to participate through formal authorization. The proliferation of new missions has increased the demand for parliaments to be kept informed on a more time-sensitive basis and to

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[24] For a frank assessment of the rather passive role of the British parliament in the defense budget process see the presentation by Bruce George, then Chairman of the Select Committee on Defense, at the Rose-Roth Seminar "Armed Forces in Democratic Societies," Herstmonceaux Castle, July 23-26, 1966.

[25] See Donna J. Winslow, "The Parliamentary Inquiry into the Canadian Peace Mission in Somalia" (paper presented at the Fourth PCAF Workshop on Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight, Brussels, July 12-14, 2002). See also the commission of inquiry by the Belgian Senate, December 6, 1997, on the murder of Belgian peacekeepers in Ruanda.

be consulted on the terms of deployment.[26] This further tests the balance between democracy and military efficiency, likewise the use of force in conditions short of war – for example, during the air campaign in the former Yugoslavia or the operation in Afghanistan.[27] However, in all Alliance countries, parliamentary support is a precondition for involvement in such contingencies regardless of the formal powers of consultation. Most parliaments also have the responsibility to ratify treaties, including, obviously, NATO enlargement.

The real question is how far parliaments should intrude into the making of defense policy and the operation of the armed forces. For example, should they be informed or consulted on operational matters? On the development of strategy and doctrine?[28] On procurement decisions? Again, the question arises regarding the dividing line between things military and political. Common sense suggests that there are many areas where parliament should not be directly involved in telling the military how to do their business. In these areas, as noted earlier, the term control is considered inappropriate. However, parliament should be kept fully informed through regular and timely consultation.

Moreover, all areas of defense activities should be open to parliamentary oversight and scrutiny. This offers enormous scope and a wide range of activities for parliamentary attention, for example, building integrity and combating corruption in defense[29] or overseeing defense industries.[30] These activities are all vital in their own way to the effective functioning of defense and security, and all can be influenced by the transparency offered by parliamentary scrutiny.

In the final analysis of the relationship between the executive and parliament, the executive should have the flexibility to exercise power responsibly but must always be mindful that parliament is watching.

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[26] For a comparative review of the powers of parliaments in PSO's, see Hans Born and Marlene Urscheler, "Democratic Accountability and Parliamentary Oversight of Multinational Peace Support Operations" (paper presented at the fourth PCAF Workshop on Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight, Brussels, July 12-14, 2002).

[27] Special forces from a variety of NATO members, including Denmark, Norway, Germany, Canada, and the UK, took part in the US-led post-9/11 operations against Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in what were highly sensitive operations. It is unclear how many of these parliaments were consulted on the participation of their forces – highlighting the dilemma of reconciling timely appropriate consultation and military effectiveness.

[28] Several new parliaments initially attempted to micromanage their armed forces, even contributing to the writing of military doctrine. This intrusion was a result of the suspicion with which the military was seen during that period rather than a realistic assessment of what was feasible and appropriate.

[29] "Building Integrity in Defence," DCAF Parliamentary Brief (Geneva: DCAF, 2015), https://e731hasugp.preview.infomaniak.website/publication/parliamentary-brief-building-integrity-defence/.

[30] Todor Tagarev, "Parliamentary Oversight of National Defence Industries in NATO Countries," in *Parliamentary Oversight of National Defence Industry*, ed. Grazvydas Jasutis, Teodora Fuior, and Todor Tagarev (Brussels, Geneva: NATO Parliamentary Assembly and DCAF, 2022), 23-40, https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/ParliamentaryOversightNationalDefenceIndustry_EN.pdf.

Transparency

Parliamentary debates and reports help make the defense more transparent and increase public awareness of defense. They play an important role in building the public consensus essential for defense. Parliamentary work on defense should form an important part of a general security environment and the creation of a defense community in which security is freely and openly discussed and ceases to be the property and prerogative of a few.

The discussion of the role of parliaments would not be complete without a mention of their role in the broader context of civil-military relations. Parliamentarians form a natural link between the armed forces and the rest of society. Many parliamentarians have particular connections through having military facilities or defense industries in their districts or because they themselves have a military background. In addition, defense committees are frequently active in looking after the welfare and rights of soldiers.

What, then, are the obstacles to effective parliamentary involvement? Whatever the model and degree of involvement, parliamentary effectiveness depends on parliamentarians being well-informed and knowledgeable. Once again, however, the unique characteristics of defense make the acquisition of the required competence problematic. As a subject, defense has always lent itself to both secrecy and exclusivity – secrecy in the sense that the provision of adequate information has often been limited for reasons of national security. With the passing of the Cold War, this factor has become less inhibiting, but confidentiality still tends to limit the flow of essential information to a qualified few. Frequently, the executive is unwilling to make available desired information on the grounds of its sensitive nature. Membership in international organizations such as NATO is often used as a reason to withhold information due to the rules of the organization, which inevitably work at the level of the most security-conscious members. Parliaments deal with the issue of confidentiality in different ways. Most operate on a "need to know" basis while noting that it is usually the executive that decides on the need! Some hold closed hearings to satisfy the requirement of confidentiality. Others provide security clearances for specific individuals.

Exclusivity in the sense of military sensitivity to civilian intrusion into its "territory" has already been discussed. This sensitivity is frequently more pronounced towards parliamentarians because of their perceived lack of expertise. In some instances, this is understandable because, from the military professionals' point of view, "uninformed" interference can have far-reaching consequences for the lives of service personnel. Likewise, the executive branch as a whole is frequently resistant to parliamentary involvement in defense and security. However, the unwillingness of the executive to cooperate with parliament is misplaced and ultimately counter-productive. It is misplaced because it is contrary to the spirit of democracy. It is counter-productive because, no matter how irritating parliamentary scrutiny can be, parliamentary support is indispensable. Cooperation with parliaments is, as the Americans would say, a "no-brainer."

A successful working relationship between the three components of democratic control—the civilians, the military, and the legislators—depends on the various parties respecting the competence and professionalism of the other. However, developing this competence and understanding takes time and effort. Both are usually available for civilian and military professionals, but not so for the parliamentarians whose responsibilities oblige them to deal with a range of competing domestic pressures. Moreover, in a few countries, are there many electoral votes to be won in being a defense and security or foreign policy expert. Nevertheless, defense is not some black art comprehensible only to a small elite. With the appropriate supportive infrastructure, parliamentarians can develop the competence and expertise necessary to exercise responsible judgment in holding the executive to account.

The Supportive Infrastructure

Effective parliamentary involvement in defense and security is best achieved with the help of a supportive infrastructure, which should include qualified staff to offer reliable and informed advice on government submissions, research departments, independent institutes to provide in-depth and objective analysis, and critical and inquisitive media. Parliaments should have access to multiple sources of information and independent counsel so they are not forced to rely on or automatically accept government submissions.

Interparliamentary organizations form an important part of this supportive infrastructure. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA) has long been a transatlantic forum for parliamentary dialogue and a source of education, information, and experience for its members.[31] As such, it has played a significant role in assisting legislators to become more effective in influencing their national defense policies through their parliaments and in holding their executives to account. During the Cold War, it constituted an important vehicle in building public support for NATO but also, in the views of most members, holding the Alliance to account by criticizing as well as supporting. As the North Atlantic Treaty makes no mention of a legislative body, in effect, the NPA constitutes, de facto if not de jure, NATO's interparliamentary arm.[32] However, it has taken many years for all member countries and the organization itself to appreciate the value of a collective parliamentary dimension as an essential element in the Alliance framework and develop the links and relations that recognize that role.

The NPA is a policy-influencing rather than a policy-making body. The nature of NATO's inter-governmental decision-making process based on consensus

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[31] The NPA was initially created in 1955 as the North Atlantic Assembly on the initiative of Alliance legislators themselves who felt the Alliance needed a legislative and democratic dimension. The name was changed in 2008 to more closely reflect that aim. It has a small 30 person Secretariat based in Brussels and distinct from NATO itself.

[32] See the author's presentation "The Role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly" to the Fourth PCAF Workshop on Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight, Brussels, July 12-14, 2002.

means that the contribution of its interparliamentary counterpart lies primarily in creating greater transparency of Alliance policies and contributing to the development of an Alliance-wide consensus. As already noted, to the degree that parliamentary influence can be brought to bear on NATO's collective policy process, this is best exerted through national parliaments. Nevertheless, NPA members expect that in developing Alliance policies, NATO's member governments acknowledge the collective parliamentary voice as expressed in Assembly debates, reports, and resolutions.[33]

From 1989, the Assembly's role expanded through the integration into its work of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. This "outreach"[34] program included special seminars on issues of particular topical or regional interest, a training program for parliamentary staff, special cooperative arrangements with Russia and Ukraine, a Mediterranean parliamentary dialogue, and a New Parliamentarian's initiative. The object of this activity was to demonstrate the Assembly's commitment to the democratic process underway in Eastern and Central Europe and to the eventual integration of partner countries into the Western community. At the practical level, these activities have also served to strengthen the democratic process by sharing legislative experiences, both the strengths and the weaknesses.

The parliaments of the three Baltic States were among the first to associate with the NPA from the moment they regained their independence. The first Rose-Roth seminar was held in Vilnius in December 1991, in what were still dark and uncertain days, with Russian occupation forces showing little inclination to return home. This was followed by similar seminars in Riga and Tallinn. Participation allowed NATO parliamentarians to see firsthand the problems facing the new democracies. It also allowed them to witness the impressive progress in political, military, and economic terms being made in all three countries – progress that culminated in full membership of NATO and the European Union.

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[33] Just as a NATO policy is one supported by all 30 members, so a NPA policy position is one supported by all its members, agreed and presented through one of its resolutions. This can be a less than-precise product due to the infrequency and relative brevity of NPA meetings. Hence the value of these meetings lies primarily in the debates and discussions rather than a final policy position.

[34] The Rose-Roth Initiative·was named after the two members of the U.S. Congress who initiated the program and secured the necessary funding through USAID. It was based on a recognition of the complexity and magnitude of the problems facing new democracies in developing effective democratic institutions and a determination that the NATO PA could help. For a detailed account, see the Assembly publication on its 50th Anniversary – NATO Parliamentary Assembly, *50 years of Parliamentary Diplomacy* (Brussels, 2005).

The Transition Countries

Needless to say, the obstacles confronting the establishment of DCAF norms were even more challenging in newly independent countries undergoing transition than those mentioned above. The transition increased the magnitude of the challenges.[35] In several areas, the problems were worse. All transition countries faced a similar legacy due to their Communist past. However, each had its own specific characteristics that made the pace of change different. The Baltic States, for example, had to start from scratch in developing their own armed forces. This meant that they did not have the enormous challenge facing the others of the need to reduce and restructure bloated military establishments, nor the need to deal with a top-heavy and frequently recalcitrant officer corps. Yet, no one started with a blank sheet of paper. They, like the others, had to deal with the most burdensome Communist legacy of all—mentality and attitude—and the difficulty of inculcating a sense of initiative and responsibility. This was probably the greatest problem in putting in place the necessary mechanisms for democratic control and then making them work.

Most of the aspirant countries succeeded in developing the appropriate mechanisms, practices, and procedures for effective DCAF. During this process, it became evident that building the trust and confidence on which effective DCAF is based takes time. It cannot be achieved overnight because it means changing well-entrenched attitudes and habits. Problems and shortcomings will inevitably remain. But that is also true in member countries because the relationship between the armed forces and society constantly evolves.

Conclusions

This article has emphasized the centrality of relations between the executive and the parliament and between the military and political sides in providing effective DCAF. In Alliance countries, the tensions inherent in these relations have been absorbed through custom and practice. They have become an essential element in the dynamic of democratic government. Likewise, the same process is underway in the countries that have made the transition to democracy. This will surely be the case for Ukraine as it emerges from the ongoing war of aggression by Russia on its territory. The lesson from past experience is that irrespective of circumstances, each country has to manage this process in its own way. The final goal is the same: finding an appropriate place for defense and the military in our respective societies. In achieving this goal, ideas and experiences can be shared. But the precise route chosen will be determined by forces and influences felt at home.

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[35] For a thoughtful analysis of the experiences, problems, and progress made by four parliaments, see David Betz, "Comparing Frameworks of Parliamentary Oversight: Poland, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine," paper presented to a seminar on Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Croatia, Zagreb, October 26, 2001.

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Research Article

Competing Strategies: The Russian Federation vs. the European Union and the United States through Georgia and Ukraine

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Abstract: This article analyzes the shaping and transformation of the post-Soviet security thinking of Georgia and Ukraine in the context of the post-Soviet Russian foreign policy in the near abroad, often designated as a *legitimate sphere* of Russian influence, and the competition between Russia and the EU and the US in the region. After the Rose Revolution of Georgia and the Orange Revolution of Ukraine, these two countries' independent/pro-Western orientation became the main issues securitized by the Russian Federation. Correspondingly, the preservation of territorial integrity became the top security issue for Georgia (since the early 1990s), and it became so for Ukraine after the Crimean occupation (March 2014) and the renewed armed hostilities across the entirety of Ukraine since February 2022. The changes in the internal politics of these countries were transposed into the international competition between Russia and the EU/US, expressed through the clash of "Sovereign Democracy" and "Color Revolution" paradigms for the future of post-Soviet states in the 2010s and transformed into active military measures in Ukraine since 2020s and through the so-called creeping annexation of Georgia since 2010s. Practically, these are the tools of maintaining the Russian influence on the one hand and opposing the Western values and power influence, supported firstly by the European Neighborhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership projects and secondly by granting candidate status to Ukraine in 2022. Russia's military actions against Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014-2023), a response to the soft power applied by the West, aimed at the creation of buffer zones in the shape of "frozen conflicts," which could be used as indirect leverage in the hands of the Russian Federation to block the Western aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine.

Keywords: Georgia, Russia, Ukraine, European Union, United States, European Security, foreign policy.

Introduction

This article analyzes the construction and transformation of the post-Soviet security thinking of Georgia and Ukraine in the context of the post-Soviet Russian foreign policy in the near abroad, quite often designated by high-ranking Russian officials as the *legitimate sphere* of Russian influence. It presents the panorama of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet period across the former Soviet Union (FSU) space from the early 1990s till the present, where the independent and pro-Western orientation of Georgia and Ukraine are the main issues securitized by the Russian Federation. Correspondingly, maintaining territorial integrity became the top security concern for Georgia (since the early 1990s) and for Ukraine after the Crimean occupation by the Russian Federation and the subsequent developments in Eastern Ukraine and beyond since February 2022. Therefore, it could be argued that the post-Soviet Russian and Georgian/Ukrainian security thinking (after the Velvet Revolutions) represents a zero-sum game. The security thinking of Georgia and Ukraine is related to their foreign policy choices of joining the Western political-economic and military blocks (the EU and NATO), which annoys Russia as this will detach these two countries from its orbit—the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)—and will erase the buffer zones with the EU and NATO.

The study will explore the main lines of Russian foreign policy since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, based on Orthodox Geopolitics, as a legitimizing narrative for its authentic sphere of influence across the FSU area on the one hand and the narrative of the victimization of Russia and Russians by the West after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, on the other. These paradigms fall within the offensive[1] and defensive realism,[2] construing the picture of Russia fighting against its status of a second-ranked country downgraded after the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union. In this respect, the evident clash between the Western liberal democracy and the Russian orthodoxy in the foreign policy of the Russian Federation will be deconstructed in some detail. The Rose and Orange revolutions of Georgia and Ukraine, followed first by the Association Agreement (AA) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and secondly with the candidate status in the EU, are considered as the main problems securitized by the Russian Federation, while seen by Georgia and Ukraine as a chance to leave the Russian geopolitical axis. Paradoxically, the Russian-Ukrainian war brought Ukraine closer to the West (EU and US), which, alongside the military-economic support, materialized in granting the EU candidate status to the country in 2022 amid the brutal military conflict with Russia. On the other hand, Georgia seems to have peaceful and normalized relations with Russia, "thanks" to the policies of the ruling Georgian Dream party and its informal governor, ex-Russian tycoon Bidzina Ivanishvili. Under the charges of

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[1] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001).

[2] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979).

the oligarchic and corrupt government of Bidzina Ivanishvili and his party, Georgian Dream, Georgia failed to receive the EU candidate status in 2022. Hence, there are legitimate concerns among the political establishments in Brussels and Washington that Georgia is gradually moving closer to the Northern orbit, attested by the failure of building the Anaklia deep sea port on Georgia's Black Sea coast and the rejection of the document brokered with the mediation of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, between the governing and opposition political parties on the continuation of normal domestic politics in Georgia.

The article will reflect on Russia's reactions to emerging changes in the near abroad since the early 1990s through the Velvet Revolutions till the wars on Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014/2023. The second part of the study will contextualize the main transformation lines of Russian foreign policy in its near abroad in the process of Georgia's and Ukraine's aspiration toward EU/NATO membership. In this respect, the article will point to the main tools through which Russia successfully blocks this process. Last but not least, the study will place Russian-Georgian and Russian-Ukrainian conflicts within the wider prism of the post-Soviet contradiction between Russia and the West. The article concludes by highlighting, for each interaction of various actors mentioned above, each country's security thinking and motivation at different times.

Russian Reaction to the Changes in the "Near Abroad"

The advance of the national-liberation movement into power in Georgia in the early 1990s and the victory of the pro-western forces in the post-Velvet Revolution periods in post-Soviet Georgia and Ukraine (the early 2000s) were defined by Moscow as a triumph of nationalists in Tbilisi and Kyiv. Correspondingly, Kremlin securitized the discussions on national minorities in Georgia (Abkhazians and South Ossetians) and the Russian-speaking population of Eastern Ukraine. If the imminent threat of the East-West partition of Ukraine was avoided in the 1990s, Georgia witnessed two conflicts in minority-populated autonomous provinces during 1992-1993 and a full-scale war with Russia in 2008. The Civil War of the early 1990s and the secessionist conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia forced Georgia to join the CIS in exchange for stabilization of the country and freezing conflicts over 20 percent of the country's territory. Unlike Georgia, and although Ukraine managed to avoid the bloody start of the post-Soviet transition in the 1990s,[3] the *Maidan Revolution* and the *Revolution of Dignity* of 2014 brought the country into chaos and war in Eastern Ukraine, with the Russia-supported secessionist drive in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, preceded by the fully-fledged Russian occupation of Crimea. The price of ending the war, as Putin promotes throughout the FSU area, comes at a high cost for Ukraine—negating its pro-Western aspirations. Both Georgia and Ukraine persist in their desire to

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[3] A range of explanations could be found for this – starting with the legacy of elites and ending with their balancing politics towards Russia and the EU.

join the EU and NATO. However, the actual progress for each of them so far is signing the Association Agreement and various formats of cooperation with NATO, emerging as interim steps to gaining a Membership Action Plan (MAP).[4]

What is the main problem for Russia here? Firstly, the fact that the "Soviet Union merely transposed the Russian Empire to the twentieth century, and state-building efforts of Russian leaders, such as Putin, are similarly hostage to such pre-determined paths [...] Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union both resulted in a similar blend of authoritarianism, militaristic expansion and defensive paranoia."[5] The Rose and Orange Revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine alarmed Moscow. These were the very first signals of the future eastward expansion of the EU and the US interests. The term "Sovereign Democracy" entered the political lexicon as Moscow's response to the pro-democracy "color revolutions" in the post-Soviet states.[6] There is a man behind the term Sovereign Democracy – former deputy prime minister and close adviser to Putin, Vladislav Surkov, who outlined his thinking in *The Nationalization of the Future: Paragraphs pro-Sovereign Democracy*, which could be summarized as: "The striving for political wholeness and centralized power, the idealization of goals and the personification of politics" [...] "Russia was governed by a ruling class with a strong patriotic vision of the country's development and undoubtedly it drew on the long tradition of national self-affirmation against real and perceived enemies."[7] Thus, the clash of the two mutually exclusive ideologies, the liberal democracy of the West, promoted in the near abroad of Russia through the Velvet Revolutions, and the "Sovereign Democracy" of Russia, is quite apparent.

Undoubtedly, the Velvet Revolutions, which started in Serbia and stretched across the FSU area, including Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, were an alarm signal for Moscow. Russia was further irritated by the recognition of the independence of Kosovo, which clearly demonstrated the failure of the Kremlin's Orthodox paradigm. Russia was unable to lend a hand to Serbia back in 1999-2000 during the NATO bombing. The Velvet Revolutions were the events that triggered a gradual transformation of Russian foreign policy into an openly aggressive stance towards its near abroad. On April 18, 2014, during his address to the Russian Parliament, President Putin justified the annexation of Crimea by citing the humiliation Russia had suffered due to many broken promises by the West, including the alleged promise not to enlarge NATO beyond the borders of reunified Germany. He stressed that "for 20 years the narrative of the alleged 'broken promise' of not enlarging the NATO eastward is part and parcel of Russia's post-Soviet

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[4]   The existence of external constraints which lead to the EU's and NATO's caution in their enlargement policy need to be recognized as well.

[5]   Christopher Leigh, "Back to the Future? Pre-Soviet History and Political Thought in the Putin Era," in *Post-Soviet Politics: Politics, Foreign Policy and Strategic Competition,* October 3, 2013.

[6]   Leigh, "Back to the Future?"

[7]   Leigh, "Back to the Future?"

identity."[8] As Bruce Riedel, Senior Fellow and Director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, admits, "Vladimir Putin's strategic goal is to undo the results of the defeat of the Soviet Union that the CIA's secret support for the Afghan mujahedin accomplished in 1989 [...] for Putin it was the 'greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century'."[9] Similarly, in 2009, Gorbachev himself recalled that "the Western Germany, the United States [...] pledged that after Germany's reunification in 1990 'NATO would not move a centimeter to the east',"[10] whereas in 2007 during the Munich Security Conference, Putin stressed: "it turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders and we [...] do not react to these actions at all."[11] In a broader perspective, if Russia's real intentions in 2008 were masked by the pretext of minority protection in the Tskhinvali Region (formerly referred to as South Ossetia during the Soviet era), as President Putin claimed at that time, the aggression in Ukraine in 2014 and 2020-22 was an act of revenge, by Putin himself, for past humiliation.

The Russian Revenge: Blocking Georgia and Ukraine on the Way to EU/NATO?

Russian *revenge* has two dimensions: practical and ideological. The former is neatly highlighted by NATO's Defence Planning Committee: "Russia's ability and intent to undertake significant military actions without much warning, represents a far-reaching threat to the maintenance of security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic zone,"[12] whereas the latter is succinctly summarized by Aleksandr Dugin, who writes about the clash of civilizations and the danger that Russian orthodoxy faces in the modern age, linking the Catholic expansion to NATO expansion:

> Here the geopolitical sense is more complex. Catholicism symbolizes Europe, the same way as Orthodoxy symbolizes Russia. The provoked conflict hinders the development of Russian-European relations [...] Who stands to gain from this? Neither Europe, not Russia, nor the Vatican, nor the Russian Orthodox Church. Only the U.S. does. We are for dialogue with Catholicism: but in this case there is no dialogue but provocation, analogous to NATO's eastward expansion.[13]

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[8] Michael Rühle, "NATO Enlargement and Russia: Myths and Realities," *NATO Review*, July 1, 2014, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2014/07/01/nato-enlarge ment-and-russia-myths-and-realities/index.html.

[9] Justin Lynch, "Putin's Machiavellian Moment," *The Weekly Wonk*, July 24, 2014, accessed September, 2014, http://weeklywonk.newamerica.net/articles/putins-machia vellian-moment/.

[10] Andreas M. Bock, "Too Blind to See the Threat We Pose to Russia ...," *European Union Foreign Affairs Journal*, no. 3 (2014): 45-56, 50.

[11] Bock, "Too Blind to See the Threat We Pose to Russia ...," 50.

[12] Bock, "Too Blind to See the Threat We Pose to Russia ...," 52.

[13] Leigh, "Back to the Future?"

Russia became particularly insulted due to the decision of a number of former Soviet republics or "allies" in Eastern Europe to join NATO and the EU (two very different "creatures" in Russian eyes in terms of threat perception and acceptability) and due to US support of pro-Western governments in countries such as Georgia and Ukraine.[14] The Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Rose Revolution in Georgia brought to power elites who envisioned the future of their respective countries in the EU and NATO. Precisely because the two organizations' respective enlargement processes are not intended as anti-Russian projects, they are open-ended and—paradoxically—are bound to be perceived by Russia as a permanent assault on its status and influence.[15] This is the main security threat to the Russian state: with the incorporation of Georgia and Ukraine into the EU and NATO, the so-called "buffer zones" between Russia and the West will disappear and the military block will border Russia itself.

Thus, if the August War of 2008 was a Russian attempt to stop Georgia's aspiration from joining NATO and the EU, or at least to transform it into a more vague promise for the future, the attack on Ukraine in 2022 reveals Putin's true desire and his broader intentions. If, during the inception phase in 2014-2015, the war with Ukraine could be seen as "a reunification of Russian lands and Russian souls, mirroring the process of German reunification in 1990 and [...] a national reconstruction entailing some sort of revisionism of the post-Soviet geopolitical settlement,"[16] the large-scale aggression launched in 2022 was evidently aimed at changing the regime in Kyiv. The two cases of military drive of the post-Soviet Russian foreign policy in Georgia (2008) and in Ukraine (in 2014 and 2022 in particular) could be seen as revenge for the humiliation of Russia in the early 2000s and cementing its influence in the legitimate zone of its strategic interests termed as the Near Abroad. Considering the fact that the NATO bombing campaign over Serbia was seen as a catastrophic humiliation in Russian foreign policy circles, Putin is now intent on reasserting Russian strength and gaining respect on the world stage.[17] There is no argument against the claim that in 2008, Russia attempted to use Kosovo's de-facto independence after the NATO intervention as a justification for obtaining international recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. During the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, Putin sent a clear message that he was prepared to use military force to promote foreign

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[14] Thanos Dokos, "How the EU Got It So Wrong in Ukraine," *Friends of Europe*, April 24, 2014, https://www.friendsofeurope.org/insights/how-the-eu-got-it-so-wrong-in-ukraine/.

[15] Rühle, "NATO Enlargement and Russia."

[16] Roberto Orsi, "The Irreversible Crisis of the Ukrainian Experiment," *Eurocrisis in the Press Blog* (London School of Economics and Political Science, May 12, 2014), https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2014/05/12/the-irreversible-crisis-of-the-ukrainian-experiment/.

[17] Leigh, "Back to the Future?"

policy objectives.[18] Obviously, the occupation of Crimea and Abkhazia/ South Ossetia are relatively similar developments and newly emerged problems in qualitative terms, but undoing their results would be much harder in Crimea than in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, considering the Russian co-ethnicity in the area. However, this will depend on the decisiveness of the western countries to withstand the Russian Federation's new military policy towards its near abroad. For the moment, the Russian Federation is concentrated on consolidating its power in the so-called Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk (LNR) Peoples' Republics in Eastern Ukraine, as with the Western/ US support to Ukraine the aim to capture Kyiv and impose the pro-Russian regime under Victor Yanukovich (as it was assumed) became unrealistic.

The main Russian objective—the creation of buffer zones between the Russian Federation and the EU/NATO member states—is achieved successfully through creating frozen, or what would be frozen conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine, respectively. In the meantime, the drive of Georgia and Ukraine towards effective membership in the EU and NATO is "blocked." As the experience of some countries demonstrates, there is a long run between the EU candidate status and the actual EU membership, whereas with the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO directly, the mechanism of the Membership Action Plan [MAP] was officially removed and off the table. From now on, any reference to the MAP as the only path to joining NATO is utterly hypocritical. Either one is ready for NATO or not! The reference to angering or provoking Russia would be utterly hypocritical as well! NATO's credibility will be tested by its commitment to admit Georgia and Ukraine any time soon. This will also be a top challenge for the US policymakers in the wider region of the South Caucasus, with Georgia on its priority list, as the other two countries of the region—Armenia and Azerbaijan (plus Belarus on the Eastern border of the EU)—have made a clear choice for the Russian orbit in military and economic terms.

The August War of 2008 and the Ukrainian Crisis of 2014/2022 should be considered in this context. According to Vicen Cheterian, international competition was the main cause of the August War and the main source of instability in the Caucasus – a result of "increasing engagement (and competition), both military and economic, between the two major powers – the United States and Russia."[19] This holds true for the later developments in Ukraine, which became the main competitive battleground between the Russian Federation and the West: the imposed sanctions, military deployments, and economic aid to Ukraine are the testimony to the above-mentioned statement.

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18 Dokos, "How the EU Got It So Wrong in Ukraine."

19 Vicken Cheterian, "The Big Re-freeze – Has the Regional Balance of Power Merely Cooled into a Different Configuration?" (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), accessed May 17, 2011, http://www.iiss.org/programmes/russia-and-eurasia/about/georgian-russian-dialogue/caucasus-security-insight/vicken-cheterian/the-big-re-freeze/.

The Case of Georgia

I would argue that it was not the developments of the pre-August 2008 in particular that brought the change to the conflict zones of Georgia, but rather the premeditated activities of all actors, resulting in changes in their external allegiances. A broader pretext of the August War could be constructed, stretching its roots back to 2001. "What really changed the situation was the change of administration in Russia the following year. Vladimir Putin came to power and gradually instituted policies to punish Georgia, end Abkhazia's isolation, and change the balance of power in the conflict," de Waal claims.[20] Ronald Asmus adds that "Moscow had little interest in a resolution of these conflicts which could have allowed Georgia to go to the West even faster,"[21] thus supporting the idea that the openly declared pro-western, pro-EU, and pro-NATO course of the Rose Revolution government was particularly alarming for Moscow and Russia could not tolerate encirclement by the NATO member states. According to Asmus, the August War was the start of a long chain, which was not only directed against Georgia or targeted at a regime change in the country; rather, it was aimed at undermining European security: "an increasingly nationalist and revisionist Russia was also rebelling against the European system that it felt no longer met its interests and had been imposed on it during a moment of temporary weakness."[22] The August War was not a problem of Georgia itself, but a testing ground for the future actions in Europe, as "through the August War Russia managed to win out over its more powerful competitors in its most volatile and vulnerable borderland – the Caucasus frontier."[23]

Russia did not even hide its intentions at that time. Dmitry Rogozin, the Russian envoy to NATO, mentioned that "as soon as Georgia gets some kind of prospect from Washington [in terms] of NATO membership […] the next day, the process of real secession of these two territories from Georgia will begin."[24] This is an indirect testament to the claim that Russia was comfortable with the status of the frozen conflicts as there were no real aspirations towards the Euro-Atlantic structures on the part of Georgia. As soon as Saakashvili's government openly embarked on a pro-western path with the aim of bringing more security to the country, looking for possible solutions to Georgia's secessionist troubles through

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[20] Thomas de Waal, *The Caucasus: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 166.

[21] Ronald D. Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World: Georgia, Russia, and the Future of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 4.

[22] Asmus, *A Little War that Shook the World*, 4.

[23] Ronald G. Suny, "Russia has Taken on Its Powerful Competitors for the First Time Since 1991" (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2011), accessed May 17, 2014, http://www.iiss.org/programmes/russia-and-eurasia/about/georgian-russian-dialogue/caucasus-security-insight/ronald-suny/a-watershed-in-east-west-relations/.

[24] David J. Smith, "The Saakashvili Administration's Reaction to Russian Policies Before the 2008 War," in *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*, ed. Svante E. Cornell and S. Frederick Starr, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center (New York: Routledge, 2009), 125.

western institutions, the need for immediate action in the conflict zones against the Georgian government became clear for Moscow. The resolution of these conflicts was the main prerequisite for Georgia's membership in NATO. Hence, playing the secessionist territories against Georgia would bring Russia its desired goals – to counter the pro-western, anti-Russian aspirations of the government of Georgia. Military intervention was the final measure undertaken by the Russian Federation against Georgia. The attitudes of the current Georgian Dream government toward Russia and the West—zero problems with Russia and stumble (over) its way towards the Euro-Atlantic structures—with heightened anti-Western rhetoric from the side of the far-right groups of Georgia, is in the best interests of the Russian Federation until it is preoccupied with the war in Ukraine. Russia is active in Georgia through its policy of creeping annexation beyond the Administrative Boundary Lines (ABLs) in the Tskhinvali Region, constantly creating problems for the population living in the nearby villages, whereas the reaction of the central Georgian authorities is passive, short of informing the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia and tabling the issue at the Geneva International Discussions on Georgia.

The Case of Ukraine

A similar reasoning could be valid for Russia's actions in Ukraine. The following aspects are listed as the main motivations: "foreign policy concerns, especially worries about Ukraine building closer ties with Europe in general and NATO in particular, are behind Kremlin policy toward Ukraine."[25] The tabled Association Agreement (AA) and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), followed by the Revolution of Dignity and the change of the government in Kyiv, became the first alarm for Moscow in 2013, pushing Moscow to capture Crimea and then to extend its warfare activities in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 following to the parliament unseating president Viktor Yanukovych on February 22, 2014. It could be argued that the quick action of Russia, first in Crimea and later in eastern Ukraine, was conditioned by the surprising success of the *Maidan* and the advancement of the Eastern Partnership Program to the Association Agreement, which Russia saw as a stepping stone to organizations such as the EU and NATO, whose eastward expansion was seen by Russia's security establishment as a major threat.[26] However, some experts blame the EU itself for granting Russia "free reign" over Ukraine. In this respect, they point to the personal friendship between Gerhard Schröder and Vladimir Putin, leading the latter to yield to the international deal for the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, transporting natural gas under the Baltic Sea from the Russian Vybord directly to the German gas hub in Greifswald, which effectively bypassed Ukraine

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[25] Timothy Frye, "A Tale of Two Russian Narratives," *Perspectives on Peace & Security* (Carnegie Corporation of New York, August 2014), https://perspectives.carnegie.org/us-russia/a-tale-of-two-russian-narratives/.

[26] Robert McMahon, "Ukraine in Crisis," *Council on Foreign Relations*, updated August 25, 2014, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-crisis.

and leads to its possible geopolitical instability (materialized with great punctuality).[27] In this context, could one argue for a clash of the two security matrices—of the EU and Russia—in the process of shaping energy security diversification projects running across the FSU countries – Georgia and Ukraine? And if this is so, how can the liberal democracy promotion projects of the EU/US withstand the Russian energy and military policy? The developments of 2022 in Ukraine and the change of the cabinet and chancellor in Germany totally changed the balance in favor of EU vs. Russia – starting with the negation of certification of the Nord Stream gas pipeline from the side of the EU and activation of the leading European countries to reduce their dependencies on the Russian energy commodities, primarily through increasing the gas flow from Azerbaijan.

Different Timing, Similar Outcomes

In this respect, what are the ensuing problems for Georgia and Ukraine locally and for the EU/US internationally? Firstly, there is the issue of territorial integrity. The key to resolving the border violations lies with the Kremlin. In seeking a way out of the civil war and constant defeats in the war in Abkhazia, Georgia joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in December 1993. Afraid that Russia would recognize the independence of secessionist regions, Georgia more or less paid tribute to Russia's interests until 2008 by accommodating internal and external policies. Likewise, Ukraine was initially ready to consider options of joining the Eurasian Economic Union if this would secure peace in Eastern Ukraine. However, due to the negative experience, Ukraine and the European countries did not trust Russia. Just like Georgia in the 1990s, they currently have a bad and a worse choice between a deeply frozen conflict at the border of Europe or a total erosion of the European security system. The developments since 2022 make the former scenario a realistic one, where Russia successfully manages to securitize national minorities in its near abroad in service to its foreign policy interests – Abkhazians and South Ossetians in Georgia and Russians in Ukraine. The alleged motives of the early 1990s—protecting national minorities in a neighboring county, Georgia—were cemented into the national security concept. The same policy line is applied to Ukraine in 2022 in terms of granting Russian citizenships to the inhabitants of the occupied territories: Russia will defend its citizens in any part of the world through any means necessary. To this end, Putin initiated changes in the security concept note of the Russian Federation. Thus, the free actions of Russia in its near abroad bring some constraints to the EU's choices to lend a hand to its partners in the former Soviet Union area. Nevertheless, since 2022, the EU's determination to support Ukraine economically and militarily, with the leadership of the United States and Great Britain,

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[27] Orsi, "The Irreversible Crisis of the Ukrainian Experiment."

ultimately changes this EU policy line, and the ongoing transformation in its domestic and foreign policies signals a gradual transition from the "Quiet Superpower"[28] into a more active player in global politics.

Collision of the Russian and the Western Paradigms

Georgia and Ukraine are not Russia's primary objectives; rather, they are tools for gaining leverage over the West. This clash between Russia and the West was not the case in 2008 and 2014, or the open aggression against Ukraine since 2022, but the expression of the broader post-Soviet contradiction of two main paradigms: orthodoxy or Orthodox geopolitics for the FSU area, promoted by Russia, and the spread of liberal democracy and western values, promoted by the EU and the U.S. Qualitatively, these are the tools of maintaining the Russian influence on the one hand and exerting Western values and power across the FSU area on the other. Russia is successful in transferring "ethnic" problems beyond its borders – Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the 1990s and Chechnya in early 2000, whereas the August War of 2008 signaled a shift in Russia's foreign policy approach – a direct intervention where necessary, repeated in the case of Ukraine of 2014 at a small scale and in 2020-23 as a full-blown policy of the Russian Federation.

As a counter-narrative, the West suggested an umbrella of European values for those who would share it, proposing tools for political rapprochement, such as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EP). Although these tools triggered Georgia and Ukraine to adopt successful foreign policy driven by cultural values, which gradually led them to depart from the Russian Orthodox camp, they have some limitations. Namely, they do not provide new partners and would-be members protection from Russian aggression, as demonstrated in 2008 and 2014 in the cases of Georgia and Ukraine, respectively. The leadership of the US assumed during 2021-2022, and the activation of the EU added to the security dimension and turned the EU into an active security player on its Eastern flank. In addition, this drive of detachment from Russia became a "mental revolution" for Georgia, as declared by Saakashvili. Immediately after 2014, a similar kind of separation seemed difficult for Ukraine due to its ethnic diversity; it was fully realized by 2020-2022. Nevertheless, one overall conclusion can be made: through its wars in Georgia and Ukraine, Russia eroded the foundations of the Russian Orthodox camp, meaning that relations between Russia and Ukraine would never be the same after this crisis. Nevertheless, it presented a serious challenge to the modern system of European security.

Still, this is not only an ideological and political problem. The above-described intervention of Russia in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrates that Russia could easily shift from applying soft power to hard power when it deems it necessary

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28 Andrew Moravcsik, "Europe: The Quiet Superpower," *French Politics* 7, no. 3/4 (September-December 2009): 403-422, https://doi.org/10.1057/fp.2009.29.

for the protection of its foreign policy interests. Russia will not tolerate the possibility of losing influence over the FSU member states. It will maintain it either through soft or hard power, as demonstrated in the gas wars with Georgia and Ukraine following the Velvet Revolutions of 2003 and 2004 (soft power) and through the military interventions in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014/2022 (hard power), respectively. It could be claimed that these are not only problems for Georgia and Ukraine, as Russia plays across the vulnerable European periphery through these crises. In turn, the EU found itself unable to foresee the real desires of Russia in the August War, and therefore, got the so-called Ukrainian crisis, later transformed into the Russian-Ukrainian War, which is the second military inter-state conflict in Europe after the Balkan Wars of the 1990s if we consider the 2008 Russian-Georgian War as the first one. From the experience of the initial years of the Russian aggression, the West, both the EU and the United States, acted more firmly against the Russian second invasion of Ukraine and provided significant military and economic support to Kyiv, transforming Ukraine into a vast buffer zone between Russia and the West.

Conclusion

The transformation of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet period in the near abroad and the subsequent developments in Georgia and Ukraine demonstrate some important similarities. These are mainly issues that became represented and, later, securitized in both Georgia and Ukraine. These include Geogia's territorial integrity and independence in the early 1990s and independent foreign policy choices since the 2000s. Following the Rose Revolution, in particular, Georgia became threatened by Russia within the framework of its post-Soviet foreign or strategic interests in the near abroad. The same problems emerged for Ukraine after 2004 when Ukraine's foreign policy choices became securitized by Russia, in 2014 – when the division or partition of Ukraine became a real problem for the country, and since 2020 – with the start of Russia's open and direct intervention in Ukraine.

In this context, the erosion of the Russian Orthodox paradigm is apparent: after the events of 2008 in Georgia and 2014/2020 in Ukraine, Russia could not hope for the success of the Orthodox card, but it is questionable whether this can be altered through military means. Arguably, the wars of 2008 and 2014 could be seen as reactions to the success of the Velvet Revolutions that encircled the Russian Federation in the region. The wars were aimed at altering the changing international realities in Russia's near abroad. As for the domestic "market," the Kremlin proposed the concept of "sovereign democracy" as an alternative paradigm to the liberal democracy project promoted by the West and reinforced with the idea of fighting against Banderists and neo-Nazi groups in Ukraine. In addition, the wars mentioned above were not revenge for the Velvet Revolutions—a sign of the rude interference of the West in Russia's near abroad—but the reactions to Russia's international humiliation. The humiliation began with

German reunification, continued through the precedent of Kosovo and concluded with the EU's eastward expansion to Ukraine's borders.

Thus, the Russian military confronted the West's applied soft power in the strategic countries of the Eastern Partnership – Georgia and Ukraine. Russia's drive was aimed at creating buffer zones in Georgia and Ukraine by initiating "frozen conflicts," which could be used as indirect leverage in the hands of the Russian Federation to block the progress of Western aspirations in those two countries. The fact that both the EU and NATO are neither ready to provide meaningful tools for the resolution of these problems, nor accept any new member with territorial problems within the state or with another state is a testament to the regrettable reality: Russia has an *indirect veto right* on the EU's and NATO's expansion policy in its near abroad (the process of NATO accession of the Nordic countries sends some counter signals) and no longer tolerates Western expansion through political tools. Russia's use of military action to exercise its interests became visible through emerging security challenges at the borders of the EU, where "termination of the eastward expansion of NATO may serve as a bargaining chip."[29] Whatever the final outcome, it is evident that the geopolitical and security challenges are at the top of the EU's current agenda in its eastern neighborhood and will have to cope with the increasing rhetoric of the Russian Federation regarding the non-feasibility of the UN and the post-WWII world order. This world order is Western-centered and does not accommodate the legitimate interests of the other global players in contemporary politics, such as Russia and the BRICS in general. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has been accompanied by an intensification of Russian rhetoric, especially in the context of the Sino-Russian diplomatic nexus. At least on a rhetorical level, the two states are now attempting to formulate an ideological prerequisite and a united geopolitical front to directly challenge the existing international order.[30]

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[29] Andreas M. Bock, "Too Blind to See the Threat We Pose to Russia*,*" 53.

[30] Angela Stent, "Russia and China: Axis of Revisionists?" (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, February 2020), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FP_202002_russia_china_stent.pdf.

Research Article

NATO and Anthropogenic Strategic Security

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Abstract: By employing historical institutionalism, this article argues that anthropogenic risks (i.e., climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic) serve as a critical juncture for NATO in reorienting its sustainability strategies in response to climate fluctuations and potential insecurity arising from resource depletion. During the Cold War, NATO's main objective was to deter threats from states, mainly the Soviet Union. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Alliance turned to non-state actors (e.g., Al-Qaida, Somali pirates, and Russian hackers). Then, climate change and COVID-19 emerged as global security risks from natural, environmental phenomena. NATO had incrementally sought to address the threats from climate change, but COVID-19 served as an impetus to acknowledge insecurity caused by neither states nor non-state actors. The pandemic represented the Alliance's first significant mobilization of military assets on a regional (i.e., European level), for a sustained period, in response to a unique risk. Based on this experience, NATO needs a sustainable strategy to acknowledge anthropogenic risks and to prepare for future climate-related fluctuations and insecurity.

Keywords: climate change, non-traditional threats, threat multiplier, historical institutionalism, critical junctures.

Introduction

In the summer of 2021, Greece experienced the highest average temperature increase since the late 1980s. Over 125,000 hectares of forest and arable land were burnt, almost 4.5 times the average size of the area destroyed from 2009

to 2022.[1] Neighboring Turkey and Italy suffered as well from the 2021 Mediterranean wildfires. The same year, Turkey lost 1,700 square kilometers of forest, the worst wildfire season in the country's history.[2] Wildfires in Italy destroyed at least 50,000 acres.[3] Forest fires are a natural phenomenon key to regenerating national resources. Still, the intensity of these natural disasters due to climate change will destroy these environmental carbon sinks that will not be sustainably replenished if such summer disasters continue unabated.

Military forces played a crucial role in helping governments deal with these natural disasters linked to climate change. For example, during this Mediterranean-wide crisis, Turkey and Greece received air support from other North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, while the Italian government mobilized the army to aid firefighters in extinguishing wildfires in the southern region of Calabria.[4]

Climate change emerged as an anthropogenic threat caused by increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Pandemics are caused by increased human encroachment on natural habitats, exacerbated by unsustainable deforestation or exploitation of wildlife. Precedents like these raise the question of how anthropogenic risks are "securitized" conceptually, as well as in the implementation of policy.

This article will explore the role and readiness of NATO and its capacity to integrate anthropogenic risks (i.e., climate change and pandemics) into the Alliance's *modus operandi*. The central research question of this study is: Can NATO reinvent itself to adapt to anthropogenic risks as it did during critical junctures in the past (e.g., the end of the Cold War and the September 11 attacks)? The study will examine scientific literature of relevance with particular emphasis on Ulrich Beck's concept of "risk society" and historical institutionalism. The article will review the Alliance's experience dealing with anthropogenic risks affecting its member and non-member states. Moreover, the article will analyze NATO's adaptive mechanism by examining climate change-related internal organizational changes in the Alliance and external effects on its strategy.

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1   Statista, "Area Burned by Wildfires in Greece from 2009 to 2022," August 22, 2022, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1264709/area-burned-by-wildfire-in-greece/.

2   Mert Ozkan and Ezgi Erkoyun, "Turkish Wildfires Are Worst Ever, Erdogan Says, as Power Plant Breached," *Reuters*, August 4, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/fire-near-turkish-power-plant-under-control-local-mayor-2021-08-04/.

3   Center for Disaster Philanthropy, "2021 International Wildfires," October 25, 2021, https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disasters/2021-international-wildfires/.

4   Angela Giuffrida, "'All That's Left Are Ashes': Italian Communities Count Cost of Wildfires," *The Guardian*, August 13, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/13/all-thats-left-are-ashes-italian-communities-count-cost-of-wildfires.

Anthropogenic Risks: A Non-traditional Planetary-scale Threat Multipliers

While humans have influenced their environments since pre-modernity, this influence has grown exponentially with the onset of the Industrial Revolution. A rise in human population and economic activities has led to unsustainable resource depletion, particularly affecting planetary environmental systems via increased GHG emissions.[5] In addition, climate change can exacerbate pre-existing political tensions and vulnerable socio-economic structures, resulting in a lack of food and water and flooding coastal inhabitation, leading to conflict or migration.[6] In the case of fragile states, this can lead to a complete collapse of public order, the emergence of civil unrest, and riots.

The pandemic is also a risk with threat multiplier potential. The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) tested the limits of global cooperation, forcing societies to operate in the context of radical uncertainty. COVID-19 exposed multiple loopholes in the system of international solidarity by underpinning global partnerships and governance.[7]

The academic conceptual securitization of natural threats began in the last twenty years.[8] Beck's concept of a "risk society" can be seen as a starting point, which he defines as a "systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself."[9] Climate change is a direct consequence of modernity and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.[10] Climate change is a unique threat because it does not affect individual parts of the international system but rather a planetary system. Moreover, it is a cross-border issue caused by anthropogenic activity but is not human-controlled. Lastly, it undermines the current sense of security, such as the notion of

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[5]   Will Steffen et al., "The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration," *The Anthropocene Review* 2, no. 1 (2015): 81-98, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019614564785; Will Steffen et al., "Trajectories of the Earth System in the Anthropocene," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115, no. 33 (August 2018): 8252-8259, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1810141115.

[6]   John Podesta and Peter Ogden, "The Security Implications of Climate Change," *The Washington Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2007-08): 115-138, http://muse.jhu.edu/article/224705.

[7]   Göran Tomson et al., "Solidarity and Universal Preparedness for Health after Covid-19," *BMJ* 372, 59 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1136/BMJ.N59.

[8]   Michael C. Williams, "The Continuing Evolution of Securitization Theory," in *Securitization Theory: How Security Problems Emerge and Dissolve*, ed. Thierry Balzacq (London: Routledge, 2010), 212-222, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203868508.

[9]   Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publishing, July 1992), 21.

[10] Adam Burgess, Jamie Wardman, and Gabe Mythen, "Considering Risk: Placing the Work of Ulrich Beck in Context," *Journal of Risk Research* 21, no. 1 (2018): 1-5, https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2017.1383075; Beck, *Risk Society*.

a safe, confined, predictable space (i.e., national territory) that can be protected from outside influences.

Traditional realist or liberal-based security studies have had difficulties reconciling climate change with state-centric studies, precluding climate change from being addressed in the realm of national defense.[11] The body of literature that has examined climate change in the context of securitization has remained very broad, general, and anecdotal.[12]

Other works examine climate change as an independent variable that has a causal impact on international and national security. Homer-Dixon empirically tested the link between violent conflict and environmental degradation, arguing that environmental scarcity originating from the unsustainable depletion of renewable resources (e.g., water) increases the likelihood of conflict.[13] Joshua Busby examines how climate change has the potential to generate insecurity in countries that have poor governance and capacity to deliver services, exclusive political institutions that reward in groups, and where foreign assistance is blocked or ineffectively distributed.[14]

In Beck's interpretation, climate change is a societal risk, a threat on a planetary scale.[15] Climate change will not equally affect all countries. Developing countries near the equator will experience higher-than-average temperature increases and have fewer resources to mitigate the impact than developed countries of the global north. Nevertheless, climate change has already resulted in abnormal and unpredictable weather patterns. Across different countries, heat waves are forecast to increase in potency and duration, impacting diverse countries differently at different times.[16]

The impacts of pandemics were felt beyond the health sector. The global standstill caused by constant quarantines between 2020 and 2021 has pushed millions more into poverty, initiated a global recession, disrupted food supply chains, halted different types of travel, and caused an overall decline in sustainable human development worldwide.[17] Future pandemics are likely due to in-

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[11] Marc A. Levy, "Is the Environment a National Security Issue?," *International Security* 20, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 35-62, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539228.

[12] S.C. Lonergan, ed., *Environmental Change, Adaptation, and Security* (Amsterdam: Springer, 1999), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-011-4219-9.

[13] Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[14] Joshua W. Busby, *States and Nature: The Effects of Climate Change on Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

[15] Burgess, Wardman, and Mythen, "Considering Risk."

[16] Cameron Harrington, "The Ends of the World: International Relations and the Anthropocene," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44, no. 3 (2016): 478-498, https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829816638745.

[17] UN Statistics Division, "How COVID-19 Is Changing the World: A Statistical Perspective, Volume II" (New York: Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, 2020), https://unstats.un.org/unsd/ccsa/documents/covid19-report-ccsa_vol2.pdf.

creased exposure to animal zoonotic pathogens, related to humanity's unsustainable desire to acquire more resources, such as hunting exotic animals and converting rainforests into farmland.[18] The pandemic is an outcome of modernity. It undermined ontological security, questioning whether global or national institutions could offer protection from threats emanating from natural phenomena.

The literature primarily studies NATO through international relations alliance theory.[19] Historical institutionalism and its temporal concepts of path dependency and critical junctures provide a framework to analyze NATO's response to anthropogenic security challenges, which threaten the international organization itself, as well as pose a threat to NATO's member states. Seth A. Johnston examines the Alliance's historical institutionalism and critical junctures, stating that "the critical juncture framework allows for two other possible outcomes in institutional analysis, namely continuity in NATO (i.e., the preponderance of stability over change) and the adoption of non-NATO alternatives for organizing cooperation among States."[20] Johnston also writes that "internal adaptation concerns changes to the bureaucratic or organizational structure of the institution, while external adaptation relates to changes in the institution's output and impact on its environment."[21] This article adapts Johnston's framework to analyze its potential to respond to climate change.

NATO and Historical Institutionalism in Practice

NATO has adapted on several occasions since its inception in 1949. The original purpose of the Alliance was to provide classical military deterrence against the Soviet army and, later, the Warsaw Pact. However, when that threat vanished with the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO experienced several critical junctures that made the organization adapt and better respond to the challenges of the post-Cold War reality.

Twelve states signed the North Atlantic Treaty establishing NATO in 1949 in response to the Soviets successfully testing the atomic bomb that year. When the Warsaw Pact was dissolved in 1991 and Socialist Yugoslavia's bloody disintegration began, NATO announced its readiness to support peacekeeping activities in the region. NATO conducted its first major crisis-response operation in Bosnia

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[18] Edward C. Holmes, "COVID-19 – Lessons for Zoonotic Disease," *Science* 375, no. 6585 (March 2022): 1114–1115, http://doi.org/10.1126/science.abn2222.

[19] Anand Menon and Jennifer Welsh, "Understanding NATO's Sustainability: The Limits of Institutionalist Theory," *Global Governance* 17, no. 1 (2011): 81-94, https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-01701006; Celeste A. Wallander, "Institutional Assets and Adaptability: NATO after the Cold War," *International Organization* 54, no. 4 (2000): 705-735, https://doi.org/10.1162/002081800551343.

[20] Seth A. Johnston, *How NATO Adapts: Strategy and Organization in the Atlantic Alliance since 1950* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, February 2017), 3.

[21] Johnston, *How NATO Adapts*, 21.

and Herzegovina. The NATO-led Implementation Force was deployed in December 1995, followed by the NATO-led Stabilization Force, which ended in December 2004.[22] Several years later, NATO bombarded the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (consisting of Serbia and Montenegro) to compel its withdrawal from Kosovo. It was the first time it had used military force against a sovereign state without the United Nations' approval.

The only time NATO invoked Article 5 was after the September 11 attacks on the United States.[23] Its International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan constituted the first major operation outside Europe or the North Atlantic, combatting the Taliban and a transnational non-state actor, Al-Qaida.

After Hurricane Katrina struck the south of the United States in August 2005, causing many fatalities, widespread damage, and flooding, the American government requested food, medical and logistics supplies, and assistance moving these supplies to stricken areas. In September 2005, the North Atlantic Council approved a military plan to assist the United States, which consisted of coordinating the movement of urgently needed equipment and supporting humanitarian relief operations. This was the first-ever weather-related disaster relief operation conducted by NATO. In 2007, after Estonia suffered from a series of severe cyber-attacks conducted by Russian hackers, NATO created its first cyber defense policy and established the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (COE) in Tallinn.[24]

Operation *Ocean Shield* sought to deter piracy off the coast of Somalia, facing off against a maritime non-state actor, Somali pirates. The deployment sought to protect NATO's member states' economic interests on the open seas, as it collaborated with China, Japan, Russia, India, and South Korea.

During the Libyan war of 2011, the Alliance had its first official mission in the Middle East.[25] Under Operation *Unified Protector*, NATO initially implemented an arms embargo and a no-fly zone. It used all means necessary, short of foreign occupation, to protect Libyan civilians and civilian-populated areas from the armed forces of Muammar al-Gaddafi. For the first time, NATO deployed alongside Arab countries, including Jordan, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

Between 2014 and 2019, NATO joined the international coalition targeting the Islamic State. The coalition was committed to tackling the terrorist organization on all fronts using military resources. Still, it was also tasked with dismantling its networks in member states and countering its global ambitions.

The case of NATO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates how the Alliance could reutilize an existing infrastructure for a natural emergency,

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[22] NATO, "Operations and Missions: Past and Present," June 14, 2022, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm.

[23] Stanley R. Sloan, *Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

[24] NATO, "Operations and Missions: Past and Present."

[25] "How NATO Is Shaping up at 70," *The Economist*, March 14, 2019, www.economist.com/special-report/2019/03/14/how-nato-is-shaping-up-at-70.

buttressing this article's argument that it could do the same in the face of climate emergencies. Responding to health emergencies was vital to NATO militaries before the COVID-19 pandemic. An integral part of all conflicts is transport and care for the wounded. During the engagement of ISAF in Afghanistan, NATO medical facilities were at the disposal not just of its staff but of the locals as well, a good number of whom unfortunately would have been wounded in NATO-Taliban clashes or by NATO forces inadvertently.

The Chiefs of Military Medical Services in NATO is the senior body for providing military-related medical advice within the Alliance and is responsible for developing and coordinating medical matters.[26] NATO has a Medical Medicine COE based in Hungary, providing member states with training and coordination support.[27] In 2019, the Alliance had not prepared for a pandemic on the scale of COVID-19 since health-related human security strategies were the individual responsibility of each member state rather than being articulated in a common Alliance strategy.[28]

By the time the World Health Organization officially declared COVID-19 a pandemic in early March 2020, NATO member states such as Italy and Spain had already endured the onslaught brought about by the virus.[29] The pandemic imposed new pressures on member states' public health systems and societies. In the case of Italy and Spain, their public health systems were entirely overwhelmed by the number of patients they received. The pressure had caused severe shortages of medical equipment. Therefore, Italy and Spain asked NATO for help. The Czech Republic delivered 10,000 protective suits and 90 respirators to Spain.[30] Turkey airlifted medical aid packages (consisting of personal protection equipment, disinfectants, and 450,000 masks) to Spain and Italy.[31] In the case of Luxembourg, the Alliance provided field hospital tents with 200 beds to treat COVID-19 patients and strengthen Luxembourg's capacity to respond to the pandemic.[32]

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[26] NATO, "Military Medical Support," June 2, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49168.htm.

[27] NATO, "Military Medical Support."

[28] Thierry Tardy, ed., "COVID-19: NATO in the Age of Pandemics," NDC Research Paper (Rome: NATO Defense College, 2020), https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=11.

[29] Betsy McKay, Jennifer Calfas, and Talal Ansari, "Coronavirus Declared Pandemic by World Health Organization," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 11, 2020, www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-coronavirus-cases-top-1-000-11583917794.

[30] Martin Bentham, "Italy and Spain Trigger Emergency NATO Plan to Boost Medical Kit," *The Evening Standard*, March 30, 2020, https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/italy-and-spain-trigger-emergency-nato-plan-to-boost-medical-kit-a4401591.html.

[31] NATO, "Coronavirus Response: Turkish Medical Aid Arrives in Spain and Italy," April 1, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174826.htm.

[32] NATO, "Coronavirus Response: NATO Supports Luxembourg, Increasing Hospital Capacity," March 31, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174783.htm.

NATO leveraged different cooperation channels to manage the pandemic. In Italy, NATO staff worked with a local 3D printing startup to convert snorkeling masks into emergency ventilator masks and help Italian hospitals reduce medical equipment deficits.[33] As a part of NATO's Strategic Airlift International Solution Programme, Ukrainian Antonov cargo planes delivered 48 tons of medical material to help Slovakia to combat COVID-19.[34] The Alliance provided ventilators donated by the NATO stockpile to hospitals in Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.[35]

The scientific arm of NATO was very active from the early days of COVID-19. The Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Program collaborated with various scientists and research institutions to find innovative solutions (e.g., developing tools for rapid diagnosis) that would contain the spread of the virus.[36] The Alliance worked with its member states and partner countries to share knowledge and provide aid. For example, through project PROMEDEUS, the SPS Program helped Mauritanian Civil Protection improve pandemic management and coordination among various governmental and non-governmental actors addressing this issue.

Like climate change, a pandemic is a natural phenomenon exacerbated by modernity or anthropogenic causes.[37] The relationship between climate change and conflict is multidimensional and context-dependent. The pandemic only heightened climate-fragility risk, stressing states with strained socio-economic systems.[38] The COVID-19 pandemic can be observed as a test of governments' abilities to manage compound risks like climate hazards, which could be of the same magnitude as the COVID-19 pandemic. In sum, the Alliance evolved to conduct peacekeeping, execute humanitarian aid operations, fight cyber terrorists, and provide aid in response to natural disasters. In 2020, NATO added health security to this list. This evolution equipped NATO with the necessary ability to address security concerns arising from natural and environmental phenomena.

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[33] NATO, "Coronavirus Response: NATO Allies Cooperate with Private Sector and Academia, Making 3D Printing an Essential Contribution in the Fight against COVID 19 Pandemic," April 1, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_174797.htm.

[34] NATO, "Allied Plane with Medical Supplies to Fight Coronavirus Crisis Arrives in Slovakia," March 25, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/photos_174530.htm.

[35] NATO, "NATO and COVID-19," March 25, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/174592.htm.

[36] NATO, "NATO and COVID-19."

[37] Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Amar Causevic, "NATO and Collective Environmental Security in the MENA: From the Cold War to Covid-19," *Journal of Strategic Security* 13, no. 4 (2020): 28-44, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5038/1944-0472.13.4.1804.

[38] Beatrice Mosello et al., "Spreading Disease, Spreading Conflict? – COVID-19, Climate Change and Security Risks" (Berlin: adelphi, 2020), https://www.adelphi.de/en/publication/spreading-disease-spreading-conflict.

Anthropogenic Risks as NATO's Next Critical Juncture

Except for Hurricane Katrina and COVID-19, the aforementioned critical junctures were human-induced threats. Hurricane Katrina in 2005 introduced environmental security on NATO's security radar. Between 2008 and 2009, Secretary Generals de Hoop Scheffer and Rasmussen heavily emphasized the importance of raising the prominence of climate change within NATO's *modus operandi*.

Climate change was first mentioned in the 2010 Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security document.[39] The Security Environment section of the report briefly states:

> Key environmental and resource constraints, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity, and increasing energy needs, will further shape the future security environment in areas of concern to NATO and have the potential to significantly affect NATO planning and operations.[40]

After 2010, addressing climate change was institutionalized within NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD).[41] Through the ESCD, NATO was able to build stronger partnerships with various international organizations, perform crucial strategic assessments of emerging security challenges, and develop new policies.

The consequences of the 2010 Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security document were visible in 2014 when the Alliance adopted the Green Defense framework. The framework provides a basis for integrating environmentally friendly solutions for defense. Smart Energy Teams advised NATO on lowering fuel and electricity consumption by proposing various energy-efficient solutions.[42] Additionally, Lithuania established the NATO Energy Security COE, tasked with conducting research on the Alliance's energy[43] transformation and reduction of fossil fuel use.[44] Based in Bulgaria, the Crisis Management and Disaster

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[39] Duncan Depledge and Tobias Feakin, "Climate Change and International Institutions: Implications for Security," *Climate Policy* 12, sup01 (2012): S73-S84, https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2012.728794.

[40] NATO, "Strategic Concept 2010" (Lisbon, November 2010), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm.

[41] Amar Causevic, "Facing an Unpredictable Threat: Is NATO Ideally Placed to Manage Climate Change as a Non-Traditional Threat Multiplier?" *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 16, no. 2 (2017): 59-80, https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.16.2.04.

[42] Amar Causevic, "Facing an Unpredictable Threat."

[43] For example, according to the research from Brown University, if it was treated as a country, the Pentagon would be ranked 55th on the list of the world's largest carbon dioxide emitters. More information available in Neta C. Crawford, "Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War" (Providence: Brown University, Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, 2019), https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/ClimateChangeandCostofWar.

[44] Julijus Grubliauskas, "NATO's Energy Security Agenda," *NATO Review*, May 9, 2014, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2014/05/09/natos-energy-security-agenda/index.html.

Response COE provides training and education related to security concerns arising from natural disasters.

In 2015, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly[45] adopted Resolution 427 on Climate Change and International Security, recognizing climate change as a non-traditional threat multiplier affecting security "in areas of concern to the Alliance [… with] the potential to significantly affect NATO planning and operations."[46]

According to historical institutionalism, the ESCD represents a change in NATO's bureaucratic and organizational structure.[47] By 2020, NATO took further steps to acknowledge climate change. In January 2021, Secretary General Stoltenberg acknowledged the security implications at the Sciences Po Youth and Leaders Summit, saying, "NATO's responsibility is to address the security consequences of climate change."[48] Climate change was also central to the 2020 Munich Security Conference agenda. Its Expert Group of the International Military Council on Climate and Security issued the "World Climate and Security Report 2020," articulating a role for national, regional, and international security institutions and militaries to adopt climate resilience strategies. The report emphasized that these security institutions must integrate climate knowledge and training within their institutions to prepare for future climate change threats.[49]

The Alliance approved an ambitious Climate Change and Security Action Plan to include climate change concerns in NATO's political and military agenda in 2021. In essence, the action plan advocates that NATO: 1) increases cross-institutional awareness about climate change; 2) includes climate change in its operations (e.g., civil preparedness, defense planning, capability delivery, training, and exercises); 3) contributes to the mitigation of climate change; and 4) strengthens climate change-related bilateral and multilateral cooperation.[50] In the summer of 2022, the Alliance published its first "Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment" report advocating for the structural adjustment to NATO's defense and security strategy.[51]

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[45] NATO's consultative inter-parliamentary organization consisting of 266 delegates from all member states.

[46] NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "Resolution 427 on Climate Change and International Security" (Brussels: NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2015), https://www.actu-environ nement.com/media/pdf/news-25462-resolution-otan-2015.pdf.

[47] Johnston, *How NATO Adapts*.

[48] NATO News, "NATO Secretary General at Sciences Po Youth and Leaders Summit," *YouTube*, January 18, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kcva85RoASk.

[49] International Military Council on Climate and Security, *The World Climate and Security Report 2020*, February 13, 2020, https://imccs.org/report2020/.

[50] NATO, "NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan," June 14, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_185174.htm.

[51] NATO, "NATO Releases Its Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment," June 28, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_197241.htm.

By the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, the Alliance issued a new Strategic Concept, declaring climate change as a threat.[52] Climate change was mentioned once in the 2010 document. More than a decade later, in the 2022 Strategic Concept, it was addressed 13 times. Furthermore, at the Madrid Summit, it was announced that Canada would host NATO's Climate Change and Security COE, which would serve as a platform for both military and civil sectors to develop, improve, and share knowledge on the security impacts of climate change.[53]

Pandemics were not mentioned in Strategic Concept 2022, even though COVID-19 was still a threat by the time of the Madrid Summit.[54] There is a broad reference that the Alliance will work on increasing capabilities to better respond to, among other issues, health emergencies. Furthermore, the 2022 Strategic Concept is vague regarding how climate change preparedness will be integrated into NATO's *modus operandi*. Climate change is seen as a potential threat that will destabilize international security without articulating how it will address the impact of climate change on both NATO member states and the regions surrounding the Alliance, such as the Middle East.

NATO member states have already suffered from climate change-induced impacts (e.g., the 2002 Dresden floods, the 2003 and 2018 European heatwaves, the 2005 Hurricane Katrina, and the 2021 Mediterranean wildfires). For the time being, anthropogenic risks have been acknowledged by international organizations like NATO. The Alliance can deal with anthropogenic risks. The future will tell if the NATO members have the continued political will to work with this military institution to adopt institutional-level strategies to deal with a challenge that is not material and does not involve conventional military threats.

Conclusion

Anthropogenic risks (i.e., climate change and pandemics) have already changed the global security landscape. Further rise in sea level and increase in temperature can generate natural disasters capable of severely damaging vital infrastructure and disrupting global commodities supply. Future pandemics could be deadlier than COVID-19, and which cause significant social and economic disruption on a scale sufficient to paralyze modern societies.

NATO, founded as a collective defense alliance in the Cold War's early years, has evolved into an organization capable of executing different non-traditional

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[52] NATO, "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept," adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid, June 29, 2022 (Madrid, 2022), https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf.

[53] Government of Canada, "NATO Climate Change and Security Centre of Excellence," June 30, 2022, https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/nato-otan/centre-excellence.aspx?lang=eng.

[54] NATO, "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept."

military tasks. It has the potential to do more, though, and serve as a tested institutional body that can divert assets from the world's largest militaries to implement preventive climate mitigation strategies.

With the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, arms buildup will ensue among the belligerents. While NATO members will also increase their conventional military capabilities, it would be wise to consider a more sustainable strategy of allocating budgets and resources to prepare for the ensuing insecurity exacerbated by climate fluctuations.

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Research Article

Turkey's Caucasus Policies, 2000-2022

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Abstract: The emergence of newly independent states in the Caucasus at the end of the Cold War presented challenges to Turkey while enlarging its role. The collapse of the Soviet Union removed the century-old Soviet/Russian threat, simultaneously creating a power vacuum on Turkey's borders. While Turkey had traditionally avoided involvement in regional politics, it has since been drawn into the volatile new politics of the region. In this environment, Turkey became an important actor in the region due to its strong historical ties, the attraction of its geographic position linking the region to Europe, and its economic, political, and security relationships with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Over the past thirty years, Turkey has become one of the prominent players in a region where its involvement has again increased recently after the Second Karabakh War. Although its re-engagement with Armenia is progressing slowly, and geopolitical changes and economic and political conditions in the region are unlikely to stabilize for some years, it is evident that Turkey will continue to create new networks of interdependency between Ankara and the regional capitals.

Keywords: Turkey, Caucasus, interdependence, geopolitics, international competition, energy resources.

Introduction

The end of the Cold War, marked by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, brought challenges and opportunities for both regional and global powers in the early 1990s. While a power vacuum was created in the Caucasus with the disappearance of the USSR and the emergence of the newly independent states, Turkey felt the urgency of new openings in its foreign and defense policies holding advantages from its geostrategic location bordering the region. As the Caucasian countries have completed their third decade as independent

states and the geopolitics of the Caucasus have evolved substantially, the main lines of Turkish policy towards the region that emerged in the first half of the 1990s have not changed much, though adapting to various geopolitical challenges along the way. In a sense, the main policy trajectories of Turkey in the Caucasus have proven quite resilient despite multiple challenges, showing qualities of a complex understanding of regional dynamics. Thus, if one needs to understand the current Turkish policy towards the region, the analysis should start from the basic parameters developed earlier.

General Parameters of Turkey's Approach to the Caucasus

First of all, Turkey has strongly endorsed the sovereignty and independence of all Caucasian countries since their independence. This included calls for reinforcing their political institutions, building up their economic welfare, international autonomy, and internal social accord. Rather than being simple rhetoric, this was seen as a strategic priority for Turkey's Caucasian policy, closely related to the fears emanating from the competition of external forces for influence over the region and the fact that any instability there could have easily spilled over into Turkish territory. It has been clear that Turkish decision-makers had assumed that if these countries could be empowered enough to resist outside pressures and interventions, then Turkey's historical, political, economic, and strategic pull would gently push them toward Turkey's orbit.

As independent countries, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia create a buffer zone between Turkey and its historical rival in the Caucasus: Russia. For centuries, it was Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union that posed threats to the Ottoman Empire and, later, to Turkey. At the end of the Cold War, for the first time in history, Turkey no longer shared a land border with its big northern neighbor. Turkey believed that the best way to reinforce this position was to support the independence, stability, and territorial integrity of the newly independent Caucasian states. It was understood that, as long as these states could keep their freedom and political stability, it would be difficult for Russia to have an overbearing influence over them near the Turkish border.[1] Thus, Turkey opposed, more or less until the 2010s, moves from Russia to stage a political comeback to the region, either through socio-economic inroads it had been able to develop or in the form of Russian soldiers on Turkish borders. The fact that Russia has nevertheless managed to do both in recent years highlights the weaknesses of Turkey's position in the region as much as Russia's abilities.

There has also been an understanding that the stability of the Caucasian countries bordering Turkey would directly affect its security and stability. There

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[1] Mustafa Aydın, "1990-2001 Kafkasya ve Orta Asya'yla İlişkiler [Relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus, 1990-2001]," in *Türk Dış Politikası: Kurtuluş Savaşından Bugüne Olgular, Belgeler, Yorumla [Turkish Foreign Policy: Facts from the War of Independence to the Present, Documents, Comments]*, ed. Baskın Oran (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları, 2002), p. 406.

is an acute realization that if any of the Caucasian countries slide into instability, it could, if not spill over into Turkey, easily affect Turkey's trade and transport relations with many countries in the east. It became apparent during the early 1990s that, even if Turkey did not wish to be involved in regional conflicts, it was almost impossible to be completely aloof from the developments as many Turkish citizens had Caucasian ancestry, thus fostering continued interest in the region. The Turkish public had developed a strong sense of kinship, especially in the case of Azerbaijan.

The Turkish perspective emphasizes that the territorial integrities of the Caucasian countries are intertwined with power politics in the region. Turkey's approach to disputes involving Acaria, Abkhazia, and Ossetia in Georgia, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, is firmly rooted in its foreign policy stance against altering the borders of sovereign states. This position stems from the understanding that, should the boundaries of any country in the neighborhood change by force, it might easily trigger a chain reaction that could engulf the whole region, thus endangering Turkey's borders.

Another key priority for Turkey has been to establish itself as an energy and transport hub, with a primary focus on facilitating the transportation of Caspian oil and gas to Europe. This initiative involves utilizing the Ceyhan port for shipments and various pipelines, as well as fostering air travel via Istanbul airports. Notably, Turkish Airlines was the first international carrier to launch regular direct flights to regional capitals, remaining a popular choice for air passengers heading to Western destinations. Additionally, the involvement of a Turkish-operated Batumi Airport, along with Turkish Airlines using it as a hub for Turkish passengers traveling to and from nearby towns without requiring passports, represents an innovative approach to regional cooperation.

On the other hand, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) and TANAP gas pipelines, as well as Blue Stream (I and II) and Turkish Stream natural gas pipelines from Russia and all the other regional connections (Turkmen, Iranian and Iraqi gas) are aimed to make Turkey a regional energy player. However, Turkey has not been alone in the competition. Many have seen the pipelines as critical factors in securing and maintaining influence throughout the region in addition to financial gains. As the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict made the Armenian route unrealizable early on, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have become strategic partners in pipeline politics. Thus, Turkey's hope that such connections would create interdependences in the region that could strengthen Turkey's standing in this troubled neighborhood has proven accurate in the long run.

The development of bilateral relations also has had vital importance to Turkey to enhance its regional influence. It was calculated that linking to the region as much as possible would bring Turkey strategic and economic gains and inroads not only in the Caucasus but also in Central Asia, increasing its prestige in the region and the broader world politics. Upon establishing closer bilateral ties with regional countries, it became evident that Turkey shared many com-

monalities not only with Azerbaijanis but also with Georgians and Armenians, more so than previously perceived.

Nevertheless, Turkey's relations with Armenia and its stance on the Abkhazian and Southern Ossetian conflicts have been influenced by historical legacies. Despite Turkey's immediate recognition of Armenia's independence upon its declaration, the establishment of diplomatic relations has been hindered due to historical factors such as the events of 1915, border recognition issues, and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Concerning conflicts within Georgia, Turkey's approach has been shaped by the significant population with origins in the North Caucasus—up to 6 million Turkish citizens—who remain politically influential and highly engaged.

In its approach to the region, another crucial factor for Turkey to consider is the position and policies of the Russian Federation. Despite a period when Russia was momentarily less involved in the Caucasus, its "near abroad" policy, declared at the end of 1993, signaled ongoing interests in the former-Soviet states of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Russia's subsequent economic and political resurgence ultimately repositioned it in the regional dynamics.[2] On the other hand, in the 1990s, Turkey had the support of the West, especially the US, but did not possess adequate economic resources and political power to compete with Russia. Consequently, Turkey became more aware of the risks of confrontation and shifted towards emphasizing the benefits of cooperation and coexistence with Russia since 1994. This shift was accompanied by a growth in trade and political connections. This realization, coupled with Turkey's cooling of relations with its traditional allies—the US and the EU countries—resulted in moves to normalize its relations with the Russian Federation in the early 2000s. When Turkey's attention moved to the broader Middle East and Africa with the Arab uprisings and following instability on Turkey's borders, this eventually led in the 2010s to the wavering of Turkey's Caucasian focus and increased Russian presence and influence in the region.

A prior objective was to encourage the economic, political, social, and security sector transformation of the Caucasian countries and their integration into the wider European (western) structures. This was believed to pave the way for Turkey's enhanced presence in the region and, leveraging its economic strength, position Turkey as a more influential regional player. Although this was also proved viable as Turkey had become the biggest trade partner of both Georgia and Azerbaijan and an important trader for Armenia, even though the land border between them remained closed, Turkey could not sustain it in the long run except with Azerbaijan. Moreover, Turkey's moving away from its traditional allies and developing its cooperation with Russia also affected its posi-

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[2] İdil Tuncer, "Rusya Federasyonu'nun Yeni Güvenlik Doktrini: Yakın Çevre ve Türkiye" [The New Security Doctrine of Russian Federation: Near Abroad and Turkey], in *En Uzun Onyıl, Turkiye'nin Ulusal Güvenlik ve Dış Politika Gündeminde Doksanlı Yıllar* [The Longest Decade; 1990s in Turkey's National Security and Foreign Policy Agenda], ed. Gencer Özkan and Şule Kut (Istanbul: Büke Yayınları, 2000), 435-460.

tion in the region, as part of Turkey's attraction for the regional countries was its connection to the West.

The Policies of the First AKP Government in the Caucasus

Despite expectations to the contrary, the fundamental framework of Turkish policy towards the Caucasian states remained unchanged following the Justice and Development Party's (*AKP – Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) rise to power in November 2002. However, subsequent domestic and global developments soon influenced the government's priorities and stance towards the region.

In the immediate aftermath of the change of government in Turkey, there were questions about the commitments of the new leadership towards the region and speculations that it would not be as strongly predisposed towards closer relations with the Caucasian and Central Asian republics as their predecessors because of their holistic Islamic rhetoric. Indeed, instead of highlighting the historical and cultural ties with the regional countries, the AKP governments shifted Turkey's focus to developing economic relations.[3] Moreover, the apparent non-interest of the AKP towards the region was soon exacerbated by the intense agenda of the government with international developments such as the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, Cyprus-related discussions, the referendum on the Annan Plan in 2004, the start of full membership negotiations with the EU in 2005, continuing PKK terror with transborder movements, as well as multiple domestic political crises that began with the candidacy of Abdullah Gul for the presidency in April 2007 leading to early general elections in July 2007 and culminating in a closure case against the AKP at the Constitutional Court, which took another eight months to resolve. Amid the intensifying domestic political crises, the government refrained from making assertive foreign policy moves, including those towards the Caucasus, until the end of 2008.

However, once these multiple crises were somewhat contained and especially after the August 2008 War between Georgia and Russia, which once again reminded Turkey of the volatile nature of the region, the AKP government began to pay closer attention to regional developments. It came with its initiative regarding the future of the Caucasus: The Caucasus Stability and Economic Cooperation Platform, bringing together Turkey and Russia with the three Caucasian states. Although it was not an altogether new idea, the Platform initiative was the only proposal with a long-term view and region-wide approach. Almost impossible to realize due to realities on the ground, it nevertheless provided the necessary basis for Turkey's opening to Armenia in 2009.

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[3]   R.T. Erdoğan's visit to Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan in January 2003 even before becoming prime minister was cited as proof of his interest in the region. See Mevlut Katık, "Turkish Party Leader Seeks Favor in Central Asia," *EurasiaNet*, January 14, 2003, https://eurasianet.org/turkish-party-leader-seeks-favor-in-central-asia.

In the meantime, AKP's Caucasian policy was also affected by ideas raised by the then Foreign Policy Advisor of the Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, to the effect that Turkey should have its own "neighborhood policy" based on "zero problems with neighbors" and "region-based foreign policy" principles. Once these ideas were formulated towards the middle of the first AKP government, they signified a new understanding of Turkey's foreign policy, refocusing it on regional matters from 2006 onwards. Due to the abovementioned international and domestic developments, these ideas were not put into practice until after the July 2007 general elections.

Even before that, the only area in which there was some movement was the government's interest in the energy area. It pursued an active policy to bring alternative resources to Turkey for both Turkish consumption and transiting it to Europe. The idea of Turkey becoming a "regional energy hub" was given prompt support, and Turkey undertook policies designed to strengthen its connections to Caspian resources through Georgia and Azerbaijan. In addition to the realization of BTC and BTE pipelines, Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan finalized and signed a framework agreement in 2007 to construct a Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railroad connection between them,[4] bypassing Armenia and linking Turkey with these countries as well as Central Asia. This critical initiative and the completion of the BTE natural gas and BTC oil pipelines had effects on regional development and security going far beyond the energy and transportation sectors.[5]

In the meantime, the BTE gas pipeline became operational in March 2007 with the delivery of gas from Shah Deniz of Azerbaijan, effectively ending Georgia's gas dependency on Russia and providing an alternative source to Turkey. Natural gas destined for Turkey was initially diverted to Georgia, in agreement with Turkey, when Georgia was experiencing gas shortages due to its heightened tension with Russia and the latter's retaliation by stopping gas delivery in the winter of 2007.

In addition to the advantages the project brought to the three countries' relations and their strategic importance to each other, it also showed an important alternative route for gas transportation to Europe. It enabled Turkey to start dreaming about becoming an energy corridor. Turkey was also encouraged by the construction and operation of the BTC oil pipeline, which became operational in 2006, even before the BTE. Another pipeline project that captured the world's attention at the time was the *Nabucco* project linking the natural gas resources of Azerbaijan and possibly Iran, Iraq, and Turkmenistan to Europe. Although an intergovernmental agreement was signed between Turkey, Austria, Bulgaria, and Hungary and witnessed by the representatives of

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4   Güncel Haberler, "Bakü-Tiflis-Kars Demiryolu Canlanıyor [Baku-Tiflis-Kars Railway Canal]," September 19, 2007, Http://www.haberler.com/baku-tiflis-kars-demiryolu-canlaniyor-haberi/.

5   Massimo Gaudiano, "Can Energy Security Cooperation Help Turkey, Georgia, and Azerbaijan to Strengthen Western Oriented Links?" NATO Defense College Academic Research Branch, Research Note No. 5, June 2007, 1-2.

other countries on July 13, 2009, providing a legal framework and highlighting the intention of these countries to build the pipeline,[6] Turkey then also signed an agreement with the visiting Russian premier Vladimir Putin on August 7, 2009, also witnessed by the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi[7] to start a feasibility study on Turkish economic zone in the Black Sea regarding the South Stream gas pipeline project, which many considered as a direct competitor to proposed *Nabucco* line. While Turkey, as a result of all these projects, was able to position itself successfully once again between the energy-producing countries of the East and energy-hungry countries of the West by the middle of 2009, both the Nabucco Project and the South Stream Project were canceled, to be replaced by the TANAP (The Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline), which became operational in 2018 and linked to TAP (Trans-Adriatic Pipeline) in 2020, and the Turk Stream that also became operational in 2020.

Repositioning of Turkey's Policies in the Caucasus after August 2008

The August 2008 crisis affected Turkish policy towards the Caucasus in multiple ways and forced it to reconsider its approach. The conflict showed clearly that the "frozen" conflicts of the Caucasus were not so frozen and could ignite at any moment. Given the heavy military procurements of involved parties, simply waiting for the problems to solve themselves was not an option. Moreover, Russia clearly indicated its intentions regarding regional hotspots in case of opening the second round of warfare. Turkey eventually recognized that unless it took an active role and managed to pacify the region, the Caucasus would swiftly succumb to instability and neglect, which would not align with Turkish interests in politics, economics, or security.

Although Turkey's bilateral economic and political relations with Azerbaijan and Georgia continued to improve, its overall Caucasian policies seemed convoluted by the developments beyond Turkey's control. Turkey and Georgia had formed the skeleton of gas and oil pipelines, offering alternatives to routes passing through Iran or Russia. By providing more secure alternative routes for Europe and the US and contributing to the region's stability, the development of bilateral relations between Turkey and Georgia in every field has been supported by the West. Besides their political relations, the economic relations between Turkey and Georgia have improved rapidly. Turkey became the most significant trade partner and the second biggest investor in Georgia, leading to a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries in 2007.[8] The movement of

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[6] "EU Countries Sign Geopolitical Nabucco Agreement," *EurActiv*, July 14, 2009, https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/news/eu-countries-sign-geopolitical-nabucco-agreement/.

[7] "Yüzyılın anlaşmaları imzalandı [Contracts of the century signed]," *HaberTürk*, August 7, 2009.

[8] "Free Trade Agreement between the Republic of Turkey and Georgia," https://trade.gov.tr/data/5b9111f813b8770becf1e74b/3084ba862ac8810125184a17da1112da.pdf.

people between the two countries was enhanced by lifting the visa requirement for 90-day stays in 2007 and the opening of the Batumi airport, which was built and operated by a Turkish company as a domestic destination for Turkish citizens.

While economic and political relations between Turkey and Georgia continued to improve, the uneasy situation in Georgia caused by the Abkhazia dispute stayed unresolved and somewhat tainted their relations. Even though Turkey continued to support the territorial integrity of Georgia, it also pushed for a peaceful resolution of the dispute. However, the existence of both Georgian and North Caucasian origin Turkish citizens complicated Turkey's stance, creating suspicions on both sides, thus preventing repeated Turkish attempts to develop a platform for a peaceful resolution to bear fruit. Moreover, Turkey faced an increasingly volatile home ground as both Georgian and North Caucasian diasporas living in Turkey became vocal in their demands, forcing Turkey to become even more cautious in its dealings with Georgia.

The August 2008 crisis exposed the weaknesses and limitations faced by Turkey concerning these problems. When Georgia and Russia engaged in hostilities, Turkey found its policy options limited on three grounds. First of all, Turkish citizens of Georgian and North Caucasian descent lobbied the Turkish government, each side seeking Turkey's support for their respective causes. Secondly, Turkey found itself caught between its strategically important partner Georgia and economically and politically important neighbor Russia. The territorial integrity of Georgia was important to and was propped up by Turkey for various political, strategic, psychological, and historical reasons. At the same time, Russia had become Turkey's significant trade and political partner. Thirdly, Turkey was squeezed between the demands of its newly emerging partner, the Russian Federation, and long-term allies, the US and NATO countries. With the multitude of pressures, Turkey's initial response to the crisis was relatively subdued. However, it later became somewhat more active, especially with Prime Minister Erdoğan's direct involvement and the Platform idea he proposed. Although the concept did not advance significantly, it laid the groundwork for a potential reconnection between Turkey and Armenia.

Armenia has been the only Caucasian country with which Turkey's bilateral relations, up until very recently, did not show big improvement. While there was an understanding on both sides to develop ties in the early 1990s, it was replaced by the mid-1990s with suspicion and distrust due to regional and domestic developments on both sides and the historical baggage that the two countries bring into their current relationship. As a result, the land border between them remained closed, and diplomatic relations were not established.

On the other hand, the problematic relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan, alongside its isolation from the enhanced cooperation in the region, have been negatively affecting the economic recovery of Armenia. Deteriorating conditions sent many Armenians to seek employment in neighboring countries. As a result, even though the land border remained closed, some forty thousand Ar-

menians came to Turkey by the end of 2006 for employment.[9] By the end of 2007, Turkish officials were regularly quoting 70 000 as the figure regarding Armenian citizens working illegally in Turkey.[10]

Under these circumstances, the political relations took an exciting turn when newly elected Armenian president Serzh Sarkisyan invited President Abdullah Gul to watch the football match between the Turkish and Armenian national teams played in Yerevan on September 6, 2008. President Gul's acceptance of the invitation and later his travel to Yerevan in the first-ever visit of a Turkish Head of State marked a watershed in Turkish-Armenian relations, raising hopes for reconciliation and providing the necessary political push for the long-time secretive talks between Turkish and Armenian officials to normalize the relationship. The initiative seemed to pave the way to the April 22, 2009, Turkish-Armenian framework agreement toward reconciliation. The brief statement posted on the websites of both Turkish and Armenian foreign ministries said that "the two parties have achieved tangible progress and … have agreed on a comprehensive framework for the normalization of their bilateral relations."[11]

However, the Azerbaijani reaction to the potential opening of the Turkish-Armenian border without any progress on the Karabakh issue generated a strong backlash in Turkey. This led Prime Minister Erdoğan to halt developments during his visit to Baku on May 13, 2009, and announce that Turkey would not move forward to open its land border with Armenia unless the latter ceased its occupation of Azerbaijani territory. When Turkey and Armenia were set to announce on August 31 that they had reached an agreement on two protocols, intending to sign them in due course, it appeared that Turkey might be able to clarify its position to Azerbaijan. Consequently, the Azerbaijani responses were more subdued this time, and Turkey signed the protocols on October 11, 2009. However, it was made clear inside the country that the Turkish Parliament would not try to force the ratification of the protocols. The majority opposed such a move unless positive developments were seen toward resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute.

Although relations with Azerbaijan briefly soured over Turkish moves towards Armenia, the overall relationship bounced back after the non-ratification of the protocols, eventually reaching a stage that could be classified as a strategic partnership. Not only do BTC and BTE pipelines and the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku

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[9] As reported in the *Economist*, November 17, 2006.

[10] http://www.cagdaskitap.netteyim.net/haber/Siyaset/turkiyede_kac_kacak_ermeni_ isci_var-haberi-11356.html and www.milliyet.com.tr/2006/11/18/siyaset/siy09.html.

[11] Charles Recknagel, "Turkey, Armenia Announce Framework for Normalizing Ties," *Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty*, April 23, 2009, http://www.rferl.org/content/ Turkey_Says_Agrees_Framework_For_Ties_With_Armenia/1614312.html; and Mary Beth Sheridan, "Turkey and Armenia in Broad Accord," *Washington Post*, April 23, 2009, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/04/22/AR200 9042203888.html.

railroad make the two countries strategically connected, but economic relations and mutual investments have also become substantial.

Turkish-Azeri relations have also expanded into education and cultural fields. Azeri students pursue education in Turkey, and young diplomats receive training in Turkey through the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Turkey strongly supported the re-introduction of the Latin alphabet in Azerbaijan, preparing and sending textbooks, thus bringing the two countries' use of the "Turkish" language even closer. Turkish television channels enjoy significant viewership in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, Azerbaijan hosts 15 middle schools and 11 high schools supported by direct Turkish investment, along with a university in Azerbaijan that was established with Turkish contributions. These cultural initiatives foster closer public relations, complementing and strengthening political ties.

Impact of the Second NK War and Turkey's "Return" to the Caucasus

The 44-day war over Nagorno-Karabakh in September-November 2020 has implications for Turkey's Caucasian policies, especially concerning Armenia and Azerbaijan. First, it marks a comeback and jolting activity for Turkey to the region after many years of inertia.

The post-war changes in the region have allowed Turkey to redefine its role in the area. Turkey became an eager player in July 2020 and has become an integral part of the truce between Armenia and Azerbaijan, signed on November 10, 2020. While the current status quo highlighted Russia's role in the region as a peace broker and an important political actor, it also empowered Turkey as the main balancing power to the potentially threatening position of the Russian Federation in the future. While Russia has positioned its military forces, serving diverse roles, in each Caucasian country after 30 years, it has established an incredibly delicate status quo fraught with risks.

While various ideas related to regional cooperation are being discussed, it may be premature to offer a definitive assessment. However, it is reasonable to assume that if any projects aimed at reopening closed trade routes and facilitating the movement of goods in the region materialize, Turkey stands to gain from them, given its economic positioning and connections beyond the region.

Turkey's support of Azerbaijan during the Second Karabakh War extended beyond its traditional political and broader security support to Azerbaijan in the conflict with Armenia. As such, Turkey earned much respect and gratitude from Azerbaijani society, potentially leading to increased cooperation in international affairs and economic projects. It certainly provided an opportunity to intensify and deepen their existing relationship, collaboration, and strategic partnership. Beyond this, Turkey's current positioning in the region, and especially its military presence on the Azerbaijani territory, albeit small, alleviates some of the fears and annoyance in the Azerbaijani society for hosting Russian peacekeeping forces after so many years, thereby helping to calm the situation.

The war, ending with Azerbaijan gaining its occupied territories back, has also removed one of the obstacles preventing Armenian-Turkish normalization. In the previous round, when the two countries moved for reconciliation with the signing of the Zurich Accords in 2009, Azerbaijani objections and the Turkish public's sympathy for them prevented Turkish leaders from going ahead with them. In the end, the Turkish Prime Minister at the time, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, declared that Turkey would not move to normalize its relations and open its land border with Armenia as long as the Azerbaijani territories remained under occupation. As this issue was removed by the end of the war, it opened the way for Turkish-Armenian normalization, and as a result, the two countries have since moved ahead with bilateral talks. The current expectation from Turkish, Armenian, and international sources is that these talks would eventually lead the way to gradual normalization, that is, establishing diplomatic relations and opening land borders. Other tentative moves have already been implemented, such as re-establishing regular air connection, allowing trade to resume through third countries, and opening air spaces to their national airways. If these moves achieve aimed normalization of relations as expected, this would finally complete Turkey's connection to all the Caucasian countries, potentially paving the way to further regional cooperation and development.

Although Turkish leaders were eager to rehash and promote one of the earlier regional security cooperation ideas in the 3+3 format (i.e., bringing the three Caucasian countries with Russia, Turkey, and Iran in a security organization), and received support from Russia, it would be too optimistic to expect such an idea taking off the ground given the current regional and international environment. One of the main obstacles is the absolute disdain Georgia has for such an idea that could eventually bring it together with what it sees as the country occupying its territories, i.e., Russia. There also exists distrust of Azerbaijan to Iranian intentions, the unresolved issue of Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia, yet to be tackled Armenian-Turkish historical baggage, and Russia's current war with Ukraine and its potential implications for the region.

Nevertheless, even if the ideas for further regional economic integration, political engagement, and security cooperation did not turn out as expected, it is a fact that for the first time since the end of the Cold War and the independence of the three Caucasian countries that Turkey has an opportunity to have cordial relations with all of them, augmented with enhanced security, political, and economic relations with Azerbaijan, and strong connections through shared interests in terms of existing energy and transport lines, trade and security cooperation with Georgia. Furthermore, proposed transport connections and linkages, if realized, would allow the deepening of its ties to all three countries. The future will reveal whether Turkey could finally leverage all these opportunities for its benefit and be able to contribute to further stabilization of the region.

Conclusion

Turkey's policies regarding the Caucasus have gone through various stages and ups and downs since the end of the Cold War. While the century-old Soviet/Russian threat to Turkey's security has disappeared with the collapse of the USSR, the vacuum created by this departure became a breeding ground for potential risks and threats on Turkey's borders. Even if Turkey's initial vision and optimistic approaches towards the region in the early 1990s proved somewhat unrealistic, its effects set the tone for Turkish policies.

The emergence of independent republics in the Caucasus was a significant turning point in Turkey's regional role and policies. It has become one of the crucial players in a region where it previously had only a marginal involvement. Although the existing tensions in the area will continue to be contributing factors for Turkish security planning and several challenges still need to be tackled before the region can function in stability, Turkey will no doubt try to play a role in regional developments through multi-layered policy openings. Whether Turkey will be successful in its new opening and recent retuning of its policies towards the region is still an open question and will depend on various regional and international developments, sometimes beyond the control of Turkey or the regional countries. In this limited opportunity environment, by creating innovative solutions to regional problems and putting the region into a broader context, Turkey can widen the geography where stable countries cooperate in multilateral conventions and their bilateral relationships. If successful, their positive results would multiply impact, just as negative consequences will have repercussions in a much wider area.

Disclaimer

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Research Article

Sovereign or Global Internet? Russia and China Press for Cybercrime Treaty: An Update

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Abstract: Under the guise of combating cybercrime, two radically different visions of cyberspace compete for attention on the international stage: a free-flowing model of cyberspace that democracies have championed is now challenged by a so-called sovereign model. Counter-democratic initiatives to reframe cyberspace in strictly national terms are underway with the likely result of decreased cooperation and increased risks of conflict and cybercrime.

Keywords: Cybercrime, cyberspace, sovereignty, cooperation, conflict.

The digital frontier, celebrated by many since its inception as a bastion of free speech and worldwide connectivity, is now at a major crossroads between two widely divergent perspectives that will impact the future of cyberspace and future prosperity. The first, which may be described as the open cyberspace model championed by idealists and democracies, is increasingly in confrontation with a restrictive "sovereign" internet paradigm, favored by authoritarian governments. As the debates about the future of cyberspace play out, the gap between these views is being exploited by cybercriminals whose exploits—and the damage they cause—have now been widely recognized in national security strategies worldwide.

The flow of information—the lifeblood of our modern global systems—is imperiled. Governments and national critical infrastructures are coming under in-

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creasing cyber attacks; doubling by one account and with no end in sight.[1] Increasingly, cyberspace is being seen as a ferment for global malaise, as cybercriminals exploit vulnerabilities with little fear of repercussions and states hide behind attribution challenges despite technical attribution becoming more available and widely promoted.[2] With hacks occurring almost every 39 seconds for internet-connected devices, the scale of the threat is undeniable. The stakes are high; if cybercrime is not addressed, public faith in governmental security assurances may further erode, and economies may be damaged. Public anxiety is evident with, for example, more Europeans concerned about attacks against national governments.[3] Furthermore, an estimated one-third of Americans will face some cybercrime this year, highlighting the urgent need to tackle both criminal and state-sponsored digital threats.

Public trust in national governments and international systems is challenged on multiple fronts. By the OECD's measure, as of 2022, there is an even split between those who trust government and those who do not, with younger people having even lower levels of trust.[4] An entry on the International Monetary Fund's public website aptly describes the lack of trust in the global order, with particular attention paid to four factors: the reaction to globalization, financial crises, technology and AI, and the rise of populism.[5] In this light, Russian disinformation campaigns accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic, serving to destabilize trust further,[6] and China stands accused of further amplifying the chaos as it continues a wholesale theft of state secrets and intellectual property as well as disinformation campaigns.

Moscow and Beijing appear largely immune to name-and-shame strategies or accusations of cyberattacks and espionage, such as with the SolarWinds

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1 Jonathan Reed, "High-impact Attacks on Critical Infrastructure Climb 140 %," *Security Intelligence*, June 26, 2023, https://securityintelligence.com/news/high-impact-attacks-on-critical-infrastructure-climb-140/.

2 Jake Sepich, "The Evolution of Cyber Attribution," *American University*, April 19, 2023, https://www.american.edu/sis/centers/security-technology/the-evolution-of-cyber-attribution.cfm.

3 Thomas Macaulay, "Spate of Cyber Attacks in Europe Increases Concerns about Government Defenses: The Public Sector Is a Growing Target for Cybercrime," *TNW*, November 9, 2022, https://thenextweb.com/news/cyber-attacks-european-governments-increase-concerns-public-sector-defenses.

4 OECD, "Trust in Government," https://www.oecd.org/governance/trust-in-government/.

5 David Lipton, "Trust and the Future of Multilateralism," *IMF*, May 10, 2018, https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2018/05/10/blog-trust-and-the-future-of-multilateralism.

6 "Disinformation and Russia's War of Aggression against Ukraine: Threats and Governance Responses," *OECD*, November 3, 2022, https://www.oecd.org/ukraine-hub/policy-responses/disinformation-and-russia-s-war-of-aggression-against-ukraine-37186bde/.

breach, which the United States formally attributed to Russia.[7] Meanwhile, the authority of like-minded Western countries has been affected by leaks of foreign espionage,[8] news reports of mass surveillance,[9] weakening encryption,[10] and general opacity on a wide range of emerging technological and policy challenges from facial recognition to artificial intelligence.

A Vision of the Future, Grounded in the Present

Since at least 2016, Russian disinformation efforts have been a subject of deep concern for many governments and researchers around the world. These campaigns of political warfare, sometimes referred to in the security community by the phrase "active measures," have been employed by Russia for decades.[11] But with the advent of social media and the internet, their costs have shrunk while their reach and potential impact have been vastly amplified. In the era of COVID-19, disinformation has taken center stage in numerous news and policy discussions. Notably, Russian-driven disinformation efforts have consistently promoted misleading narratives about the virus via suspect news platforms and supposed think tanks.[12]

Into this dynamic mix comes the work of cyber saboteurs of many stripes, from hacktivists to those in the service of intelligence agencies. Recently, NATO itself has become the target of political hacks, with damaging leaks of internal documents.[13] Manipulating the narrative through theft and leaking of select information or targeting vocal minorities for exploitation has become a new norm.

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[7] Sean S. Costigan, "Charting a New Path for Cybersecurity after SolarWinds." *Diplomatic Courier*, January 4, 2021, www.diplomaticourier.com/posts/charting-a-new-path-for-cybersecurity-after-solarwinds.

[8] Patricia L. Bellia, "WikiLeaks and the Institutional Framework for National Security Disclosures," *Yale Law Journal* 121, no. 1448 (2012), April 2, 2012, Notre Dame Legal Studies Paper No. 12-59, https://ssrn.com/abstract=2033207.

[9] Zygmunt Bauman et al., "After Snowden: Rethinking the Impact of Surveillance," *International Political Sociology* 8, no. 2 (June 2014): 121-144.

[10] Aaron Brantly, "Banning Encryption to Stop Terrorists: A Worse than Futile Exercise," *CTC Sentinel* 10, no. 7 (August 2017): 29-33, https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CTC-Sentinel_Vol10Iss7-10.pdf.

[11] Jolanta Darczewska and Piotr Żochowski, *Active Measures. Russia's Key Export*, Point of View 64 (Warsaw, Poland: OSW Centre for Eastern Studies, June 2017), https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/point-view/2017-05-30/active-measures-russias-key-export.

[12] Ben Dubow, Edward Lucas, and Jake Morris, *Jabbed in the Back: Mapping Russian and Chinese Information Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic* (Washington D.C.: Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), December 2, 2021), https://cepa.org/comprehensive-reports/jabbed-in-the-back-mapping-russian-and-chinese-information-operations-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/.

[13] A.J. Vicens, "NATO Investigating Breach, Leak of Internal Documents," *CyberScoop*, October 3, 2023, accessed October 5, 2023, https://cyberscoop.com/nato-siegedsec-breac/.

In turn, democratic governments have categorized the variety of information campaigns visible today by using the rubric MDM, for misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.[14]

In the United States, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's 2023 *Annual Threat Assessment* makes clear the cyber threat posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC): "China probably currently represents the broadest, most active, and persistent cyber espionage threat to U.S. Government and private-sector networks. China's cyber pursuits and its industry's export of related technologies increase the threats of aggressive cyber operations against the U.S. homeland ... China almost certainly is capable of launching cyber attacks that could disrupt critical infrastructure services within the United States, including against oil and gas pipelines, and rail systems." [15]

As of this date, Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine has not gone the way Russia intended and that has taken significant energy away from its cyber attacks elsewhere. As the *Annual Threat Assessment* puts it, "Ukraine war was the key factor in Russia's cyber operations prioritization in 2022. Although its cyber activity surrounding the war fell short of the pace and impact we had expected, Russia will remain a top cyber threat as it refines and employs its espionage, influence, and attack capabilities. Russia views cyber disruptions as a foreign policy lever to shape other countries' decisions."

With cyberspace becoming a focal point for national security, impacting governments, businesses, and individuals globally, it is evident that a comprehensive cybercrime treaty might appear to be a step towards safeguarding all peoples. Russia presented its updated proposal for a United Nations Convention aimed at Ensuring International Information Security to the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Security of and in the Use of Information and Communications Technologies (OEWG) on March 7, 2023.[16] The Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on information and telecommunications in the context of international security is a United Nations (UN) initiative. As of the date of this article in September 2021, the OEWG has been a forum for discussing the peaceful use of ICTs and the prevention of conflicts stemming from their use. Member states of the UN, including Russia, have participated in the OEWG to share their views on norms, rules, and principles of responsible behavior in cyberspace.

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[14] Canadian Centre for Cyber Security, "How to Identify Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation," ITSAP.00.300, February 2022, https://www.cyber.gc.ca/en/guidance/how-identify-misinformation-disinformation-and-malinformation-itsap00300.

[15] *Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community* (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, February 6, 2023), https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2023-Unclassified-Report.pdf.

[16] "Updated Concept of the Convention of the United Nations on Ensuring International Information Security" (United Nations, 2023), https://docs-library.unoda.org/Open-Ended_Working_Group_on_Information_and_Communication_Technologies_-_(2021)/ENG_Concept_of_UN_Convention__on_International_Information_Security_Proposal_of_the_Russian__Federation.pdf.

Russia argues that a legally binding treaty is necessary due to perceived deficiencies in existing international law. However, several countries, including Sweden, South Korea, Colombia, Austria, and the United States, hold the view that no such gaps exist. Instead, these countries assert that what is needed is a more precise interpretation and clarification of the existing body of international law. Further, these states argue that should the nine-page Russian proposal garner support within the United Nations, it has the potential to erode the accountability of state actions in cyberspace and pose a significant threat to digital human rights. [17]

A Cloud of Uncertainty

Historically, Russia's perspective on international cybersecurity often diverges from that of many Western nations. Moscow has long advocated for a "sovereign internet" and has supported measures that emphasize state control over information flow.[18] The Russian proposal for a global cybercrime convention reflects this viewpoint and may emphasize state sovereignty in the cyberspace domain. Nonetheless, Russia's active intervention and abuse in Ukraine stand in stark contrast to their own stated diplomatic overtures.[19]

On November 18, 2019, a United Nations committee passed a Russia-backed cybercrime resolution by a vote of 88 to 58, with 34 countries abstaining. Russia's successful vote set up an "Open-Ended Working Group" to examine cybercrime and methods to prevent it. While this development benefits from sounding potentially progressive, it has direct negative consequences for the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime[20] and existing mechanisms for improving the fight against cybercrime, international and national legal efforts, as well as long-term foreign policy impacts in many areas beyond cyberspace.

Notably, the Budapest Convention remains the only convention on cybercrime. However, it remains under sustained pressure from Russia and its foreign policy partners that argue its very existence is an effort to violate their sovereignty. (Note that the Budapest Convention is open to the accession of countries that are not parties to the Council of Europe and is expressly designed for international cooperation to tackle cybercrime.)

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[17] Isabella Wilkinson, "What Is the UN Cybercrime Treaty and Why Does It Matter?" *Chatham House*, August 2, 2023, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/08/what-un-cybercrime-treaty-and-why-does-it-matter.

[18] Timmy Broderick, "Russia Is Trying to Leave the Internet and Build Its Own," *Scientific American*, July 12, 2023, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/russia-is-trying-to-leave-the-internet-and-build-its-own/.

[19] Mercedes Page, "The Hypocrisy of Russia's Push for a New Global Cybercrime Treaty," *The Interpreter*, March 7, 2022, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/hypocrisy-russia-s-push-new-global-cybercrime-treaty.

[20] Council of Europe, "Convention on Cybercrime," Treaty No. 185, Budapest, November 23, 2001, www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/185.

The Russian proposal for a global cybercrime convention, as well as Russia's eagerness to further the "Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security"[21] may be best understood as primarily political moves to strengthen the Russian goal of establishing "the system of international information security."[22] The system the Kremlin seeks to achieve would be based on a "Convention on International Information Security," with the United Nations and the International Telecommunications Union assigned to play major roles. Moreover, this Russian conception leans on strong, even absolute, state sovereignty, which undermines and overrides international obligations the state may have or be interpreted to have.[23]

Concomitantly, Russian arguments for creating a so-called sovereign internet (known as *RuNet*) stress several aspects of security by autonomy. The objective of a separate Russian internet was outlined in the 2017 information security doctrine[24] as "developing a national system of the Russian Internet segment management." The context of this ambition being "of ensuring information security in the field of strategic stability and equal strategic partnership" implicitly but effectively refers to the perceived information security threat from the United States. The purpose of the "national segment of the Internet," as it is also called, was to protect information as such and secure Russian critical infrastructure in the event of threats to the stability, security, and functional integrity.

Additionally, some foreign policy experts in Russia justify the goal of Russian-to-Russian traffic within territorial borders through the use of financial arguments: by this reckoning, the cost of international routing may, in the future, become too expensive.[25] Likewise, the demand to pre-install Russian software to "track, filter, and reroute internet traffic"[26] can be read in the contexts of information security, critical infrastructure protection, and boosting national re-

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[21] United Nations Office for Disarmaments Affairs, "Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security," https://www.un.org/disarmament/ict-security/.

[22] "Basic Principles for State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Field of International Information Security to 2020," approved by the President of the Russian Federation on 24 July, 2013, accessed September 29, 2020, http://en.ambruslu.com/highlights-in-russia/basic-principles-for-state-policy-of-the-russianfederation-in-the-field-of-international-information-security-to-2020.html.

[23] Alena Epifanova, "Deciphering Russia's 'Sovereign Internet Law': Tightening Control and Accelerating the Splinternet," *German Council on Foreign Relations*, January 16, 2020, https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/deciphering-russias-sovereign-internet-law.

[24] *Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation*, Approved by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 646, December 5, 2016.

[25] According to discussions with Kaspersky experts, currently only 2 % of Russian-to-Russian traffic crosses its national borders.

[26] "Russia Internet: Law Introducing New Controls Comes into Force," *BBC*, November 1, 2019, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50259597.

search and development markets.[27] Demonstrably, widening the coverage of federal (Roskomnadzor's) enforcement mechanisms from routing traffic to all ITC devices also increases political and informational control over individuals.

By weaponizing diplomatic processes, Russia continues to threaten the ethos of an unrestricted internet, hinting at a darker future of a segmented cyberspace dominated by a few influential nations.[28] While technological approaches differ, Russia and China are working in parallel to enforce what many experts maintain is a dystopian, state-control view of cyberspace on the world. This means exercising policies that are in stark contradiction with the democratic order and undercutting the framework of global economic order and commercial interests over the long term.

A new international legal instrument on cybercrime would also duplicate existing work and preempt the conclusions of the open-ended intergovernmental UN expert group (IEG)[29] to conduct a comprehensive study of the problem of cybercrime and responses to it by member states. Furthermore, there is no consensus on the scope that such a new treaty on cybersecurity would have. In addition, Western nations appear to recognize that such a process might also divert efforts from national legislative reforms and current capacity building, essentially throwing a wrench into domestic efforts to curb cybercrime.

In Want of a Progressive Vision for Cyberspace

To effectively push back on counter-democratic initiatives, the West needs to undermine one of the three pillars in the Kremlin's strategy: the general distrust towards ICTs, the insufficiency of existing international law, or the existential threat narrative. Another way to increase resilience in cyber discourse is to identify shared national interests and objectives across camps and continents, such as through the Framework for Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace[30] and the Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace.[31] Notably, some experts main-

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[27] For an opposite view see Alexandra Prokopenko, "Russia's Sovereign Internet Law Will Destroy Innovation," *The Moscow Times*, April 21, 2019, www.themoscowtimes.com/ 2019/04/21/russias-sovereign-internet-law-will-destroy-innovation-a65317.

[28] Rishi Iyengar, Robbie Gramer, and Anusha Rathi, "Russia Is Commandeering the U.N. Cybercrime Treaty," *Foreign Policy*, August 31, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/ 08/31/united-nations-russia-china-cybercrime-treaty/.

[29] The IEG is the main process at the level of the United Nations on the issue of cybercrime.

[30] "Joint Statement on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace," United States Department of State, September 23, 2019, https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-advancing-responsible-state-behavior-in-cyberspace/ and "Eleven Norms of Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace," Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, April 7, 2021, https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/aktuell/ newsuebersicht/2021/04/uno-cyber-normen.html.

[31] "Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace – Paris Call," https://pariscall.interna tional/en/.

tain the West has not been particularly successful in its efforts to convince and engage states outside its perimeter.[32]

To advance, the West needs to prepare for treaty negotiations as one possible future. Preparing for that worst-case scenario, it should be possible to find new openings to avoid it. In this critical period, it is paramount for democratic countries to unite, re-establish cyberspace standards, and advocate for a cohesive vision for the digital world before it splinters beyond repair.

Disclaimer

About the Author

Sean S. Costigan – see the CV on page 6 of this issue, https://doi.org/10.11610/ Connections.22.1.00

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[32] Sally Adee, "The Global Internet Is Disintegrating: What Comes Next?" *BBC*, May 15, 2019, www.bbc.com/future/article/20190514-the-global-internet-is-disintegrating-what-comes-next.

Research Article

More than Survival: The Role of al-Shabaab Secret Service, *Amniyat*, in Information-Gathering

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Abstract: The article examines the development and employment of the al-Shabaab secret service, *Amniyat*, in its fight against African Union troops and security forces in Somalia. It first elaborates on the historical background of the terrorist group, which may serve as an introduction to understanding the roots of the organization and how its resurgence is tied to the effective management of Amniyat. The governance structure and intelligence activities of the terror group are also scrutinized. The study then analyzes the capacities and capabilities of the al-Shabaab intelligence apparatus, highlighting the elements that have contributed to its efficiency. In light of the growing importance of intelligence and counter-intelligence, the development of a secret service proved to be crucial for the survival of the terrorist group. Over the last decade, not only has al-Shabaab survived but also managed to thrive, presenting a number of obstacles to better-equipped multinational forces and the international community. Even if al-Shabaab were to be defeated, Amniyat could outlast its dissolution and may be "reborn" in various entities or merge into a criminal network.

Keywords: Amniyat, al-Shabaab, intelligence, security, Somalia.

Introduction

Building and rebuilding well-functioning security structures is never easy.[1] Security and stability are the most fundamental components of viable societies and are especially important in war-torn countries, where it is much harder to

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1   Omar Dewachi, *Ungovernable Life: Mandatory Medicine and Statecraft in Iraq* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017).

achieve sustainable development. While there has been massive investment in securitization and state-building as well as political, diplomatic, and technical support to Somalia, state institutions cannot tip the balance in their favor and make visible progress.[2]

One of the most significant factors standing in the way of securing peace is the presence of al-Shabaab. Although it is not rare for a terrorist organization to remain operational in its first year, finding groups that survive longer than ten years is more challenging. This is due to their encountering a diverse set of constant threats from the direction of intelligence services and law enforcement agencies.[3] As a result, they would decline and come to an end after the loss of their influential leaders or start functioning non-violently as a political body.[4] If their attacks are not planned precisely, and their activities are not communicated in a well-thought-out manner, terrorist organizations may not survive. Not only has it remained active, but al-Shabaab has also managed to take up the fight against African Union troops and security forces in Somalia for over a decade now.

Although intelligence agencies have a central role in the struggle between the Somali government and the terrorist organization, there has not been much research on al-Shabaab security architecture.[5] This study begins with the historical background of the terrorist group, which may help us comprehend the development of the organization and how its resurgence is tied to the effective management of Amniyat. Before moving on to provide an analysis of the capacities and capabilities of the intelligence apparatus of the terrorist group, the article also scrutinizes the al-Shabaab governance structure and intelligence activities.

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[2] United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the World Bank, *The Somalia Security and Justice Sector Public Expenditure Review* (Washington, January 2017) https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/644671486531571103/pdf/Somalia-Security-and-justice-sector-public-expenditure-review.pdf.

[3] Blake William Mobley, "Terrorist Group Counterintelligence," PhD dissertation (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 2008), https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553096/mobleyBlake.pdf.

[4] Audrey Kurth Cronin, "How al-Qaida Ends: The Decline and Demise of the Terrorist Group," *International Security* 31, no. 1 (2006): 7-48.

[5] There are only a handful of comprehensive studies on the security structures of al-Shabaab, including Mohamed Haji Ingiriis, "Insurgency and International Extraversion in Somalia: The National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) and Al-Shabaab's *Amniyat*," *African Security Review* 29, no. 2 (2020): 125-151, https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2020.1740752; Gábor Sinkó and János Besenyő, "Comparison of the Secret Service of al-Shabaab, the Amniyat, and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (Somalia)," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* (2021), https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2021.1987143, and Zakarie Ahmed nor Kheyre, "The Evolution of the Al-Shabaab Jihadist Intelligence Structure," *Intelligence and National Security* 37, no. 7 (2022): 1061-1082, https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2022.2095599.

The study adopts a qualitative research approach and applies numerous methods, including studying United Nations (UN) reports, Somali field interviews, document content analyses of open source, peer-reviewed academic works and journals. The objective of the study is to enrich the growing literature on terrorism, intelligence, and security studies in the Somali context. The regionalization (or even globalization) of its activities resulted in al-Shabaab now posing a security threat to Africa and Europe.[6] After remaining undefeated for over a decade, a new approach may be needed to deal with the situation in conflict-stricken Somalia. Due to the increased importance of security, a thorough analysis of the activities and operation of Amniyat may pave the way for making sense of the Somali conflict dynamics.

Historical Background of al-Shabaab

Somalia is considered one of the least developed countries in the world. The situation is further complicated by the fact that various militant groups have targeted it for several decades. After the fall of the Siad Barre regime at the beginning of the 1990s, there was a high degree of disorganization and lawlessness in the country. Al-Qaeda attempted to fill in the emerging power vacuum and establish an Islamist state in the Horn of Africa. It also started providing financial support, firearms, and training to the insurgency party of al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI).[7]

However, the division of al-Shabaab in the early 2000s brought a major change. While having a political front would have been adequate for the group's soft liners, its hardliners could not settle for less than the extension of Sharia to "Greater Somalia." [8] As a result, the latter allied themselves with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU)—which had taken control of large areas in south-central Somalia by the end of 2006—and launched an armed resistance campaign against the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia.[9] While the ICU was eventually ousted by the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and Ethiopian troops, al-Shabaab managed to become its most dominant splinter group as a consequence of capitalizing on the Ethiopian military occupation to rally support.

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[6]   For more information on the Islam movement, see Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

[7]   In the beginning of the 21st century, al-Qaeda provided training in Afghanistan to many high-profile al-Shabaab members, including Aden Hashi Farah, Ibrahim Hajji Jamma and Mukhtar Robow.

[8]   Somalis were driven by the idea of "Pan-Somalism," believing that all different territories and clans needed to be unified for the Somali state to possess enough power to be able to become more dominant than the prevailing clan system.

[9]   Background information on the Ethiopian military intervention in Somalia can be found in Ken Menkhaus, "Somalia: They Created a Desert and Called it Peace (building)," *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 120 (2009): 223-233, https://doi.org/10.1080/03056240903083136.

Initially, at the outset of the invasion in 2006, both the Somali population and diaspora helped al-Shabaab and gathered intelligence on the Ethiopian forces' movement[10] and provided financial assistance and foreign fighters to the group.[11] In addition, the insurgency was funded by influential Islamic leaders whose support contributed to the increased recruitment of jihadists.[12] By this time, Somalia had been a war-torn country for over 30 years, so al-Shabaab was able to convince young Somalis to join the organization, offering them a way out of the quagmire and an environment in which they could feel useful.[13] Although the terrorist group was only informally linked to al-Qaeda until 2012, its advisors' expertise and public relations are thought to have been utilized before that, too.[14] Consequently, by mid-2008, al-Shabaab had exercised control over south-central Somalia and was able to push back the TFG, the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF), and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) peacekeepers in Mogadishu. Within a short time, the terrorist group had become a dominant player in East African affairs.[15]

Later on, however, al-Shabaab was unable to push forward and drive the TFG and AMISOM peacekeepers out of the Somali capital. They also suffered heavy defeats from the forces of the African Union since the latter had more advanced equipment. Between 2008 and 2011, al-Shabaab weakened militarily and was plagued by conflicts with local clans, who blamed the group for many of their casualties.[16] On top of that, locals were continuously alienated from the organization due to greater fear, a growing number of civilian casualties, and the group's strict interpretation of Sharia.[17] When al-Shabaab was designated as a

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[10] Field interviews conducted in Mogadishu in September-October 2017, see Ingiriis, "Insurgency and International Extraversion in Somalia."

[11] Roland Marchal, "The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab al Mujaheddin in Somalia," Research Report (SciencesPo, CERI, 2011), https://spire.sciencespo.fr/hdl:/2441/5ncvgncesl8n4a0rpg5k3c1j5p/resources/art-rm2-1.pdf.

[12] United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)," S/2010/91 (UN, March 2010), 31, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/report-monitoring-group-somalia-pursuant-security-council-resolution-1853-2008.

[13] More than two-thirds of the Somali population is made up of young people.

[14] For more information on public relations support provided by al-Qaeda to al-Shabaab, see Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "The Strategic Challenge of Somalia's Al-Shabaab," *Middle East Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (2009): 25-36.

[15] Péter Kiss-Álmos, János Besenyő, and István Resperger, *Szomália: Országismertető [Somalia: Country Profile]* (Budapest: Honvéd Vezérkar, 2014).

[16] Christopher Anzalone, "Al-Shabab's Setbacks in Somalia," *CTC Sentinel* 4, no. 10 (October 2011): 22-25, https://ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/CTCSentinel-Vol4Iss106.pdf.

[17] Human Rights Watch, "Somalia: Al Shabaab Attack Indefensible: Mogadishu Bombing Shows Price Being Paid by Civilians," October 5, 2011, https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/05/somalia-al-shabaab-attack-indefensible.

terrorist group by the United States in 2008, the Somali diaspora also cut back its support.

The 2011 Somalia famine led to the further decline of the reputation of the organization after the al-Shabaab Emir, Ahmed Abdi Godane, stated they would not allow foreign food aid to enter Southern Somalia. Not only did the group deny the existence of a famine, but they also did everything to make sure locals in the south were not able to get their hands on the aid.[18] The militants retreated from the Somali capital since a conventional war with the better-equipped AMISOM troops drained them financially. While it might be stated the international community won a major victory, al-Shabaab's withdrawal could have been of a strategic nature, signaling the group's return to guerrilla warfare. The port cities of Baraawe and Kismayo generated substantial revenues for al-Shabaab,[19] thus losing them had a great financial and strategic impact on the insurgency and prompted them to become overly involved in criminal activities under the guise of businesses' and clan elders' taxation.[20]

In addition, there were internal disputes within the leadership of al-Shabaab, which were exacerbated by the increased number of conflicts between Godane and his opponents.[21] The emir was criticized for striving to be a dictator, while making strategic mistakes (e.g., involvement in fighting against Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ), a paramilitary group with moderate Sufis) and disregarding basic principles of al-Shabaab (e.g., the summary execution of "true Muslims"). Godane felt he had to use pragmatic and brutal ways to suppress his opponents and the reputation of al-Shabaab needed to be improved. These factors might explain the 2012 merger with al-Qaeda.[22] As a result of the purge, the group became more compact but less limited, which proved beneficial in waging an asymmetric war against the TFG and AMISOM forces with suicide attacks, IEDs, and hit-and-run tactics. In this way, the terrorist organization was able to create the most favorable conditions for war.

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[18] Ken Menkhaus, "No Access: Critical Bottlenecks in the 2011 Somali Famine," *Global Food Security* 1, no. 1 (December 2012): 29-35, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2012.07.004.

[19] It is estimated that al-Shabaab generated 35-50 million dollars yearly from port revenues and an additional 30-60 million dollars from "taxes" on businessmen in Somalia. For more details, see Barbara Starr, "U.N. Report: Al-Shabaab is Raising Millions Illegally in Somalia," *CNN World*, August 5, 2011, https://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/08/05/somalia.al.shabaab.report/.

[20] As a consequence of Amniyat increased capability and its ability to continuously learn from its mistakes, al-Shabaab has since taken a tactical move and started extorting money.

[21] Godane's decision to suspend the Shura—which functioned as a forum for settling disputes collectively by mediation—definitely contributed to internal divisions within al-Shabaab.

[22] Therefore, pledging allegiance to al-Qaeda did not serve operational purposes. However, it was meant to solidify ideological links between the organizations and increase the strength of al-Shabaab.

However, al-Shabaab suffered operational and symbolic losses in the early 2010s as well.[23] Probably the most crucial setback for the group was the killing of Godane in a US airstrike in 2014. It was believed that the former emir was the glue holding together the organization, and in the absence of strategic planning, a power struggle could have emerged that would fragment or disintegrate the group. Contrary to the belief of the international community, the successor of Godane, Ahmed Umar (better known as Abu Ubaidah), exerted tight control over al-Shabaab from the beginning, keeping the group largely unified.[24]

Since then, al-Shabaab managed to increase its capabilities and capacities in Somalia and the neighboring territories. It has become an efficient, predictable, and consistent terror group that could cater to the security needs of the locals much better than the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS). While some of their top members were killed and the international community has made various bilateral and multilateral efforts to defeat al-Shabaab, the terrorist organization is holding its reins on large areas in western, southern, and central Somalia.[25] The intelligence apparatus has played an instrumental role in the asymmetric strategy of the group, and al-Shabaab's strong reliance on the fearful Amniyat network definitely contributed to the resurgence of the organization.

Amniyat

The organizational structure of al-Shabaab is well-defined, with the emir being in charge of all operations and the only person authorized to make decisions on his own. He is responsible for the functioning of the advisory and executive councils that assist and execute the strategies of the group. Furthermore, several specialized departments deal with administrative and military affairs, justice, propaganda, security, taxation, etc.[26] The three independent security bodies of the organization are Hesbat, Jabhat, and Amniyat.[27] While Hesbat—with the help of its religious police—implements Sharia in the territories under al-Shabaab con-

[23] Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor, "US Confirms Death of Somalia Terror Group Leader," *The Times of Israel*, September 5, 2014, https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-confirms-death-of-somalia-terror-group-leader/.

[24] Claire Klobucista, Jonathan Masters, and Mohammed Aly Sergie, "Al-Shabab," Backgrounder, *Council on Foreign Relations*, updated May 19, 2021, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab.

[25] Christopher Anzalone and Jason Warner, "Al-Shabaab," *Oxford Bibliographies*, updated June 23, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199743292-0303.

[26] Some of these departments include Jugta Ulus (quick reaction force), Mukhabarad (intelligence service), Iclaam and al-Kataib (media offices), Zakawaat (tax collection and taxation), and Mutafajirad (suicide missions unit with two subdivisions: Amaliya Istishhad (suicide bombings) and Amaliya Inquimas (suicide assaults)).

[27] National Counterterrorism Center, "Counter Terrorism Guide: Al Shabaab" (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2022), https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/al_shabaab.html.

trol, and Jabhat—with individuals responsible for communication, explosives, logistics, medicine, and the media—carries out high-level operations with military units assigned to different regions,[28] Amniyat is the *de facto* intelligence unit.

According to a 2013 UN report, the al-Shabaab secret service is "structured along the lines of a clandestine organization within the organization."[29] Nobody is aware of the other's identity, and tasks and penetrations remain unlikely due to the strong ties between the members. Capacities and roles define the nature of work. Most operatives work part-time, making apprehending agents challenging for the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA). Although the exact origins of Amniyat are not known, the establishment of the intelligence apparatus in the 2010s was regarded as a quite radical shift from the group's tactics. Yet, now it seems to have been linked to modernizing efforts in the terrorist organization's planning and operations.[30] Amniyat is largely independent of other departments within al-Shabaab, which is attested by having its separate financial and logistics network and a clear chain of command.[31] Throughout the years, it has performed as an efficient tool in identifying potential targets and mapping out vulnerabilities, thereby contributing to an uncertain security environment in Somalia.

It is the most dreaded, integral, and organized branch of al-Shabaab, which directly reports to the emir.[32] It seems Amniyat uses intelligence and counter-intelligence to provide critical analysis of their opponents' vulnerabilities. After verification, information is sent to the top commander, who may decide to forward it to the emir for further use. The secret service recruits its members from the rank of the group's fighters; however, the most important recruitment pool is the locals, who are approached based on recommendations from reliable and paid informants.[33] While an increasing number of women find safe shelters, relay messages, and provide food, most of their operatives are educated young men affiliated with the clans of dominant al-Shabaab members.[34] Amniyat fulfills various roles within the organization, as it is first and foremost in charge of (counter)

28 Nor Kheyre, "The Evolution of the Al-Shabaab Jihadist Intelligence Structure."

29 United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia," S/2013/413 (UN, July 2013), 7, https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/report-monitoring-group-somalia-and-eritrea-pursuant-security-council-resolution-2060.

30 Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, "Radicalisation and al-Shabaab Recruitment in Somalia," ISS Paper 266 (Institute for Security Studies, September 2014), https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/Paper266.pdf.

31 United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea," 13.

32 Harun Maruf and Dan Joseph, *Inside Al-Shabaab: The Secret History of Al-Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018), 90.

33 Carlos Revilla Arango, "Insurgent Counterintelligence," *Studies in Intelligence* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1968): 39-54.

34 United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea," 57.

intelligence operations. It is also the operational body of the group and, as such, executes small and large-scale attacks using grenades, bombs, hit-and-run tactics, and organized assassinations.[35]

In the past, al-Shabaab conducted more low-profile operations but has since begun to carry out attacks against frequented restaurants, UN compounds, and the Somali Supreme Court, which are not only deadlier but have higher visibility.[36] Although they used to set their sights on local targets, the terrorist organization is now more active regionally as well.[37] Some of their most infamous operations include the 2010 suicide bombings in Kampala, Uganda, the 2013 Westgate shopping mall attack in Nairobi, Kenya, and the 2015 Garissa University College attack in Garissa, Kenya. Amniyat indirectly contributes to al-Shabaab being able to execute these attacks by the forced recruitment, intimidation, and murder of government officials, security agents, local journalists, and business people. The presence of the intelligence unit is extremely inconvenient to the Somali government and AMISOM troops, but it is also threatening to foreign agencies and aid organizations.

It was Godane who prioritized investment in the secret service after the group had withdrawn from Mogadishu in 2011. He liked to think about Amniyat as his own counter-intelligence apparatus, which was used as a tool to preserve al-Shabaab's integrity and achieve his personal goals.[38] Increasing the capabilities and capacities of the secret service served a dual purpose, as the emir could keep regional and sub-commanders in check, and more importantly, he was able to get rid of his opponents.[39] Then Amniyat operatives had to gather intelligence and induce fear in the local population and jihadists by all means necessary, such as imprisonment, intimidation, or even assassination of their relatives or close friends. In case of unsuccessful defection, the traitor was either jailed or killed,

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[35] Ken Menkhaus, "Al-Shabab's Capabilities Post-Westgate," *CTC Sentinel* 7, no. 2 (February 2014): 4-9, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/al-shababs-capabilities-post-westgate/.

[36] A "well-chosen target" has the potential to gain supporters, specify the interests of the terrorist group and may even contribute to the reduction in the cost of attacks. For more information, see János Besenyő, "Low-cost Attacks, Unnoticeable Plots? Overview on the Economical Character of Current Terrorism," *Strategic Impact* 62, no. 1 (2017): 83-100, http://real.mtak.hu/83718/1/low_cost_attacks_unnoticeable_plots_overview_on_the_economical_character_of_current_terrorism.pdf.

[37] Peter Bergen, Bruce Hoffman, and Katherine Tiedemann, "Assessing the Jihadist Terrorist Threat to America and American Interests," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 2 (2011): 65-101, https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2011.538830.

[38] Amniyat was responsible for eliminating internal threats and enforcing loyalty. For more information, see Matt Bryden, "The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity?" A Report of the CSIS Africa Program (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies, February 2014), https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/140221_Bryden_ReinventionOfAlShabaab_Web.pdf.

[39] Hassan M. Abukar, "Somalia: The Godane Coup and the Unraveling of Al-Shabaab," *African Arguments*, July 2, 2013, https://africanarguments.org/2013/07/somalia-the-godane-coup-and-the-unraveling-of-al-shabaab-by-hassan-m-abukar/.

which instilled another layer of fear in the secret service members and discouraged potential defectors.[40]

In addition to performing administrative, military, and intelligence-related tasks, Amniyat is responsible for the management of internal justice within al-Shabaab. The secret service operates designated prisons and courts where they hold show trials against alleged conspirators and spies. It also plays an active role in the observation of civilian behavior, and if needed, Amniyat could enforce laws and policies. Thus it is also a supervisory body that oversees various departments and communicates with the leadership of al-Shabaab. The jurisdiction of the intelligence apparatus is quite extensive, functioning outside the judicial system of the terrorist group.[41] Besides, severe punishment could be imposed on its own members, especially if their involvement in espionage for the FGS or the West is proven right. Religious commitment, toughness, and hatred towards foreign troops were characteristics Amniyat operatives needed to be able to prioritize to demonstrate loyalty to the emir.[42] While they were undoubtedly feared, they also enjoyed the benefits of higher reputation and salaries, which made serving as a member of the intelligence apparatus a great honor.

Due to the fact that security and secrecy are of paramount importance to Amniyat, it is absolutely essential the intelligence unit is separate from the rest of the organization. While al-Shabaab's secret service is an organization within the organization, various subdivisions with code names and autonomy have been set up to make the group even more secure.[43] Their responsibilities range from preventing leaks to ensuring that members cannot share classified information with enemy forces if they are captured and interrogated. It was a rather prescient measure, especially considering the offensive of AMISOM troops between 2012 and 2015 that resulted in the retreat of al-Shabaab to Jubaland. Nevertheless, the informants of the intelligence apparatus remained in the heavily populated areas of Somalia, providing intelligence to Amniyat.[44]

The secret service has since installed its operatives practically everywhere in the country. It is believed they have gathered intelligence in foreign diplomatic

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[40] Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group* (London: Hurst, 2013).

[41] In cases of spying, Amniyat was able to circumvent the Sharia courts of the terrorist group. However, if a high-ranking commander was convicted of spying, it was the Shura that dealt with it. See Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, pp. 84 and 87.

[42] Maruf and Joseph, *Inside Al-Shabaab*, 90.

[43] Amniyat structure is believed to be organized in the following way: Central command; Regional commanders; Finance and logistics support units; Intelligence collection units; Grenade attacks/ assassination squads and Suicide operations squads. See United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea," 57.

[44] Michael Horton, "Reclaiming Lost Ground in Somalia: The Enduring Threat of al-Shabaab," *Terrorism Monitor* 15, no. 15 (2017): 8-11, https://jamestown.org/program/reclaiming-lost-ground-in-somalia-the-enduring-threat-of-al-shabaab/.

missions and managed to infiltrate government offices, African Union headquarters, and even the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA).[45] Although the infiltration is often downplayed, it is important to highlight Amniyat's involvement in both offensive and defensive counter-intelligence activities. As a former NISA officer reasoned, "due to the increased level of infiltration by al-Shabaab operatives into our government agencies, we have noticed a rise in the number of attacks."[46] Therefore a linear connection appears to exist between the number of al-Shabaab agents installed in government offices and attacks against FGS.

While frequent rivalries exist between the two intelligence apparatuses, their intelligence activities seem interconnected.[47] Although Amniyat is much more focused on external intelligence and spends a considerable amount of time monitoring and investigating their adversaries' intelligence activities, they are also continuously working towards recruiting informants from the Somali government. They have realized their value for the terrorist group and would go the extra mile to have the human resources needed for conducting successful operations. For instance, Amniyat operatives would drive around in luxury cars without license plates the same way NISA agents do in the hope of blending in and getting closer to potential government informants.[48]

Recognizing how dependent al-Shabaab core members had been on clan politics and the destructive effects of inter-clan rivalries in offsetting organizational cohesion, the emir and his inner circle chose to implement a two-stage plan. Except for their technical expertise, foreigners were considered nothing more than "unnecessary liability" and were either killed or expelled so that Godane could retain local support.[49] The terrorist group was then restructured along the lines of the Somali clan system, which operates through influence and consensus rather than through a centralized and formal hierarchy. As a result, the organization's commanders and sub-commanders were given more responsibility in appointing junior officials and recruiting infantrymen. On top of that, organizing

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[45] "Car Bomb Rocks Mogadishu Hours after Somalia Cabinet Announcement," *The New Arab*, 2017, https://english.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2017/3/21/car-bomb-rocks-mogadishu-hours-after-somalia-cabinet-announcement.

[46] Former senior NISA official, interviewed in February 2020 – see Nor Kheyre, "The Evolution of the Al-Shabaab Jihadist Intelligence Structure."

[47] For more information on the interconnectedness of NISA and the National Security Service (NSS), see Gábor Sinkó, "Different Times, Same Methods: The Impact of the National Security Service on the Operations of the National Intelligence and Security Agency," *Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies* 1, no. 1-2 (2021): 112-123, https://jceeas.bdi.uni-obuda.hu/index.php/jceeas/article/view/6.

[48] Field interviews conducted in Mogadishu in May-September 2015, April-August 2016 and September-October 2017, See Ingiriis, "Insurgency and International Extraversion in Somalia."

[49] Gaining an increased level of public support to bolster Amniyat activities was also needed and it was facilitated by adequate recruitment.

and executing joint small-scale terror attacks have become a possibility for the group's commanders.

However, Godane knew that decentralization of power could only come at the expense of Amniyat, whose reach and dominance had to be strengthened so that the intelligence apparatus could keep a tight rein on al-Shabaab commanders.[50] There seemed to be a fundamental contradiction between the terrorist group and its leadership because while the former, like clans in Somalia, was decentralized, the latter reflected high centralization. Besides, only the current emir could hold Amniyat accountable for their deeds. As it was also a local insurgency, al-Shabaab was aware of the importance of its active involvement in clan politics. As a matter of fact, the senior members of the organization have mediated between Somali sub-clans and rival clans many times, which paved the way for al-Shabaab to be able to consolidate its power in the country.[51]

Due to the fact that it interprets Islam in a strict, Salafist way, al-Shabaab needs to overcome an increasing number of obstacles in achieving local support. Nevertheless, the provision of a higher degree of predictability and security[52] is a significant advantage for the terrorist group. It could be especially important in a place where such factors had not been taken for granted for more than 30 years. Although their methods are radical and their punishments are harsh, the jihadists are also consistent, which sets them apart from the FGS.[53] Somalis never quite know the tax rates they are expected to pay to the SNA and AMISOM forces. There are additional problems, including confiscation of products and imposition of taxes on several occasions. On the other hand, the organization only makes a one-time collection of taxes, and merchants receive a receipt of payment for travel within territories controlled by al-Shabaab.[54] While attacks and ambushes on traders are commonplace in areas administered by the Somali government, local insurgents and bandits avoid open confrontation in the southern parts of the country. This contributes to an increased sense of security, which the locals greatly value.

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[50] Daniel Maxwell and Nisar Majid, eds., *Famine in Somalia: Competing Imperatives, Collective Failures, 2011-2012* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[51] Horton, "Reclaiming Lost Ground in Somalia."

[52] As one Somali remarked: "The good that they do is that you cannot be robbed in the street in Mogadishu, actually, the part they control... You can walk openly with a lot of money, if you are not a target [of al-Shabaab]. So, they do policing. They protect against thieves, they protect property, they do guard." Interview conducted by Michael Scheldrup in Nairobi, August 13, 2010. – see Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia*, 84.

[53] Omar Faruk and Max Bearak, "If I Don't Pay, They Kill Me: Al-Shabab Tightens Grip on Somalia with Growing Tax Racket," *The Washington Post*, August 30, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/if-i-dont-pay-they-kill-me-al-shabab-tightens-its-grip-on-somalia-with-growing-tax-racket/2019/08/30/81472b38-beac-11e9-a8b0-7ed8a0d5dc5d_story.html.

[54] Harun Maruf, "In Somalia, Businesses Face 'Taxation' by Militants," *VoA*, December 3, 2018, www.voanews.com/a/in-somalia-businesses-face-taxation-by-militants/4684759.html.

Nonetheless, not only predictability and security are present but fear too, which is induced in the Somali population and the members of the terrorist group. Clan elders not respecting al-Shabaab authority, businessmen unable to meet deadlines with their payment, or individuals believed to have conspired against the group may all fall victim to Amniyat that would detain, imprison or execute them depending on the severity of their actions. Amniyat operatives found guilty of bribery, embezzlement, or misconduct would also not be immune to strict punishments. As a consequence of Somalia being at war for several decades now, there is a rather low bar for good governance, which in turn creates more opportunities for terrorist organizations. So far, al-Shabaab has managed to make good use of Amniyat. Provided this trend—coupled with the group's ability to provide increased predictability and security and its capability to gain local support—continues in the future, we have all reasons to believe they will thrive in the long term.

Conclusion

The study has explained the development and employment of the al-Shabaab secret service, Amniyat, in its fight against African Union troops and security forces in Somalia. Over the years, the terrorist group has become a dominant player in Somali security and politics. With the use of covert operations, counter-intelligence measures, and its capability to gather intelligence, the organization has taken advantage of the vulnerabilities of the Somali government. The latter has, in turn, attempted to defeat al-Shabaab through taking pre-emptive measures against the group's terror attacks, the prosecution of jihadists, and responding militarily, but they did not manage to be successful due to a lack of capacity both in technological and human terms. The intelligence apparatus of the FGS, NISA, also failed to excel in intelligence-gathering and could therefore not improve its effectiveness.

On the other hand, Amniyat is more capable than other Somali security forces. This may partly be explained by the technically savvy strategists of the group. It seems to be a highly advanced and well-equipped intelligence unit with regard to security as well as making its strength widely known. However, it is also the most feared part of the terrorist group, which is infamous for carrying out suicide attacks and being responsible for detentions, imprisonments, and assassinations. While al-Shabaab lost territories, Amniyat retained its tactical capabilities, especially in urban centers, which is attested by the organization's covert operations and its ability to function effectively in AMISOM-controlled areas. The secret service may even become deadlier in the future since, as it lacks political and/or clan backing and territorial authority, its sole purpose is to ensure al-Shabaab survival.

Even if the organization is eventually defeated, it is important to remember that Amniyat was created "with the intention of surviving any kind of dissolution." [55] Constant warfare and state collapse have characterized Somalia for the last 30 years, with armed groups rising and falling all the time. Nonetheless, due to taxing local businessmen, having secret agreements with Somali politicians, and most importantly, the increased efficiency of Amniyat, dangerous parts of the terrorist group may outlast its dissolution and may be "reborn" in various entities or merge into a criminal network. Gaining or losing territory will decide if al-Shabaab will likely innovate strategically or organizationally. [56] They would either increase tax rates in the territories controlled by the group or expand the scope of the intelligence apparatus. Be that as it may, differentiating between the risk of violent extremism in Somalia and al-Shabaab is essential because the former may survive the latter.

Disclaimer

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[55] United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea," 7.

[56] Strategic innovation may be exhibited due to al-Shabaab gradual resemblance to a criminal network, while operational innovation may be visible in Amniyat's expansion.

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