UNDERSTANDING STRATEGIC ADAPTATIONS: SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014

Editors:

Hennadiy Maksak, Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”
Richard Q. Turcsányi, Strategic Policy Institute – STRATPOL; Mendel University in Brno
Maryna Vorotnyuk, Central European University

This publication by the Strategic Policy Institute – STRATPOL and the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” is an attempt to deconstruct conceptual and policy shifts currently occuring in the international security environment. The main analytical departure point was to study strategic adaptations triggered after 2014, with the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. It offers an overview of the security policies of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, then resorts to analyzing the cases of selected states and organizations ranging from global players such as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, United States, United Kingdom, China, to regional states such as Poland, the Slovak Republic and Romania. The methodology of this study is based on the content-analysis of selected states’ and entities’ main strategic documents, which were updated to reflect the new perception of threats these states and organizations face.

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Strategic Policy Institute – STRATPOL

Address: Štúrova 3, 81102 Bratislava, Slovakia
Website: http://stratpol.sk/
E-mail: office@stratpol.sk
Phone: +421 908 893 424
Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” is a network-based non-governmental analytical centre working in the field of foreign and security policies. It is a recognized Ukrainian think tank which conducts research on foreign policy, diplomatic service, international relations and security issues, and provides information and consulting support for public authorities, civil society organizations and educational establishments. It strives to enhance participation of the expert community in a decision-making process in the spheres of foreign policy, international relations, and public diplomacy.

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Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”

Website: http://prismua.org/
E-mail: info@prismua.org
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INTRODUCTION

The publication “Understanding Strategic Adaptations: Security Strategies and Policies after 2014” is a product of the intellectual endeavour of a dozen international experts invited by the Strategic Policy Institute – STRATPOL (Slovakia) and the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” to deconstruct conceptual and policy shifts currently occurring in the international security environment. The main analytical departure point was to study strategic adaptations triggered after 2014, with the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict. The term “strategic adaptation”, mainly coined to reflect a set of measures undertaken by the North Atlantic Alliance in order to maintain the credibility of its deterrence capabilities and its collective defence guarantees, has been extrapolated here in a wide number of cases and is understood as a set of measures being undertaken by states to enforce their defence capabilities and reorganize their security sectors.

The rationale of this publication is to trace the developments in “security-speak” and “security-do” of the actors. It offers an overview of security policies of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, then resorts to analyzing the cases of selected states and organizations ranging from global players such as the United States, United Kingdom, China, European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to regional states such as Poland, the Slovak Republic and Romania. Thus, this research seeks to provide interesting comparative material about the ways states exercise their security policies in the current political state of art.

Adding discursive/linguistic element to the analysis, in our opinion, provides insight into the paradigm societal life revolves around, how threats are constructed, and which issues are securitized. Discursive practices are informative about power and opposition in security construction, normative grounds security policy is built on. Different discursive strategies can be instrumentalized by political actors in different ways to represent the political realities and legitimize certain security responses. Discursive struggles taking place in a given state can be a telling indication of alternative visions of different segments of society on how to exercise security, who the referent objects of security are and where the threats in collective imaginary stem from.

The idea was to look at the discursive struggles taking place in chosen states and organizations after a cardinal change of the security environment after
the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014 and consequent onset of Russia-sponsored conflict in Donbas. Through the study of discourse attempts were undertaken to see to what extent the threat of Russian revisionism was actualized in public discussion and whether this discussion paved its way into actual policy-making, including through shaping strategic documents.

The methodology of this study is based on the content-analysis of selected states’ and entities’ main strategic documents, which were updated to reflect the new perception of threats these states and organizations face. The authors strived to study the palpable changes in the security discourse of the key political players of the selected states. They looked into the shifts in the policies, searching for indicators of how the states altered/enhanced their security. The chapters were structured according to a unified outline where:

Part 1 of each chapter discusses the revision of key strategic documents (National Security strategies, White Papers, Military doctrines, Cyber or Information Security Strategies et al., according to the given state’s or organization’s strategic tradition) with a special focus on the (re)definition of threats and goals of security policy;

Part 2 studies changes in security discourses of political actors (such as heads of states, governments, political parties represented in parliaments, and public) about the changing security architecture and the direction of their country’s strategic adaptation;

Part 3 focuses on states’/organizations’ strategic adaptations – transformations of security policies after 2014. Here the authors benchmarked the performance of the security sectors against several criteria such as weapons procurements, armed forces modernization plans, military expenditures, redeployment of troops, major national and multinational exercises, update of contingency planning, streamlining of cooperation between different parts of security sector etc.

We would like to thank the International Visegrad Fund whose financial support made this publication possible. We hope that this publication can serve as a tangible contribution to a more informed debate about states’ strategic adaptations to a new security environment.

Editorial team
Section 1

CHANGES IN THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT
Résumé

Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014 took place in the situation of autocratic decision-making, to be more precise, this military and political decision was made by one person, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. All procedures and documents legitimizing this decision were adopted post factum in retrospect. Those Russian strategic documents that were in force at the moment of occupying Ukrainian territories did not allow for possible violations of territorial integrity of neighbouring states in order to resolve the problems of the state’s own security. However, after the illegal annexation of Crimea, followed by negative international reaction to this act of aggression Russian strategic documents were reconsidered. So, for example, among other things influence aspects of Russian security institutes in order to eliminate the threats posed to the Russian state on the sovereign territory of foreign states were included into them or made actual.

They were shaped the discourses of “besieged fortress” and “national traitors” (“fifth column”), with their main mission to create and maintain in the public conscience the emotional atmosphere of foreign threat and no-alternative necessity to reach a total mobilization of civil and political loyalty in order to survive “in the hostile world”.

The main steps taken to strengthen the security of the Russian state included reinforced counteractions to the threats to the ruling regime coming from Russian society (more control over social and public sphere), forming the National Guards service as an institute of increased level of loyalty to the President of the Russian Federation, growing military contingent (the Southern Military District) at the borders with Ukraine and hosting large-scale military manoeuvres in the Russian regions neighbouring NATO member states. Basic changes in its foreign and security policies did not take place, as both foreign and security policies of the Russian state are mostly aimed at, first and foremost, maintaining the stability and security of the ruling regime.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

At the moment of Russian military aggression against Ukraine, Russian domestic and foreign policies had the entire set of strategic documents (in Russian regulatory practice they are called the documents of strategic planning): Military Doctrine (Kremlin 2010), The Russian Federation National Security Strategy to 2020 (Russian newspaper 2009), Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2013) as well as Russian Federation Marine Doctrine to 2020 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2001) and the Russian Strategy on Development of the Arctic Zone and the Provision of National Security to 2020 (Russian Government 2013) etc.

During the period of its most recent history Russian basic strategic documents, including both the Military Doctrine and the National Security Strategy, were rewritten several times. Other documents of a strategic nature were also reviewed or amended by special decrees following the influence of foreign policy factors. For example, the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation was adopted and reviewed in 1993, 2000, 2010 and 2014. Redefining the doctrine reflected domestic regime and political changes as well as the liberal and democratic erosion taking place in the Russian Federation. The Military Doctrine of 1993 (following the Soviet Military Doctrine of 1987) stated that Russia did not have probable adversaries and declared an obligation to use its armed forces only for self-defence. Nuclear weapons were not seen as an instrument of military operations, but more as an element of military and political balance; NATO, in its turn, was not only far from being mentioned in the text of the document, but it was also not present as an underlying danger or threat. In the conditions of the “soft” military doctrine of 1993 President Boris Yeltsin attempted to build “post-Soviet consensus of the near abroad” and signed the Budapest Memorandum and the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation with Ukraine. In the following editions of Russia’s Military Doctrine, a revision of the threat discourse took place as foreign threats and dangers were more specifically defined as well as the threats to the military security of the Russian Federation, therefore the threats of a strategic nature were being shaped (see Ivashov 2016; Sergeev 2017).

The military intervention in Ukraine in spring 2014 as well as the illegal annexation of Crimea and occupation of the separate regions of Donetsk and Luhansks were executed when the Military Doctrine of 2010 was in force (adopted on 5 February 2010) in which the main foreign military danger is defined as: “the desire to endow the force potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with global functions carried out in violation...
of the norms of international law and to move the military infrastructure of NATO member countries closer to the borders of the Russian Federation, including by expanding the bloc” (Kremlin 2010). The capture and occupation of part of Ukraine’s territory followed by the extremely negative reaction of the global community as well as the impossibility to shape international public opinion able to legitimize the aggression on the territory of Ukraine led to the Russian Federation adopting a new military doctrine (Russian Newspaper 2014). The new military doctrine more specifically defined the “NATO military threat”, which, according to the Doctrine, is becoming more tangible: “The main external military risks are: build-up of the power potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and vesting NATO with global functions carried out in violation of the rules of international law, bringing the military infrastructure of NATO member countries near the borders of the Russian Federation, including by further expansion of the alliance” (Russian Newspaper 2014) (see also Vandysheva 2014; Korotchenko 2014; Karaganov 2016).

Apart from clarifying the strategic nature of the NATO threat (RIA Novosti 2014) the new doctrine included a longer list of domestic and foreign threats, with, first and foremost, a foreign threat being the following: “establishment of regimes, whose policies threaten the interests of the Russian Federation in the states contiguous with the Russian Federation, including by overthrowing legitimate state administration bodies” (Russian newspaper 2014), while a military threat was defined as: “intensification of activities of the armed forces of individual states (groups of states) involving partial or full mobilization and shifting the governance and military command and control bodies of these states to functioning as in wartime conditions” (Russian newspaper 2014). Moreover, it is important to pay attention to the fact that the mechanism of application of nuclear weapons was not changed in the new doctrine.

Revisiting (adopting) a new national security strategy was not an exception either. For instance, instead of active at the moment of Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine “Russia’s National Security Strategy to 2020” (Russian Newspaper 2009) “National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation” was adopted (on December, 31, 2015). It is quite obvious that the “Strategy” was transformed into a more aggressive version. For example, in Strategy (2009) in the chapter “II. Russia and the Modern World: current conditions and trends of development” the Russian Federation points to its predictable behaviour as an international player, with the text containing an appeal to the primacy of international law: “In the long term, the Russian Federation will seek to construct international relations based on the
principles of international law, and on the institution of reliable and equal security of nation-states. For the defence of its national interests, Russia, while remaining within the boundaries of international law, will implement a rational and pragmatic foreign policy, one which excludes expensive confrontation, including a new arms race” (Russian Newspaper 2009). In “Strategy 2015” the same chapter “II. Russia and the Modern World”, given the context of the 2014 military aggression against Ukraine, states that: “Russia has demonstrated the ability to safeguard sovereignty, independence, integrity of state and territory and to protect the rights of compatriots abroad. There has been an increase in the Russian Federation’s role in resolving the most important international problems, settling military conflicts, and ensuring strategic stability and the supremacy of international law in interstate relations”. Substituting previously declared obligations to remain within the framework of international law in the old national security concept for its transformation from “declaration to practice”, “ensuring the supremacy of international law in interstate relations” in unilateral order that took place after a dramatic unilateral violation of the Budapest Memorandum, violation of territorial sovereignty and illegal annexation of the part of Ukraine’s territory speak for themselves (Steshin 2016).

In the “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013) among other points it was pointed out that Russia will: “build up relations with Ukraine as a priority partner within the CIS, contribute to its participation in extended integration processes” (48, d), while in the “Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” Article 56 stated that: “56. The Russian Federation is interested in developing political, economic, cultural and spiritual ties with Ukraine in all areas on the basis of mutual respect and commitment to building partnership relations with due regard for Russia’s national interests. Russia undertakes to make every effort to promote political and diplomatic settlement of the internal conflict in Ukraine in cooperation with all the interested states and international agencies” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016). Therefore, the change of Ukraine’s strategic status is taking place, from a partner in the zone of a pro-Russian integration project (CIS) to an object for Russian efforts falling short of strategic partnership but, however, located in the zone of Russian interests and control.

2. Changes in security discourses

The perception of Russian military aggression within the Russian power
discourse of the Russian Federation is quite consistent and univocal, and is also based on legitimization of “Putin’s policy on Ukraine” by the Russian political establishment and legal decisions of the legislative, judicial and executive branches of power. Taking into account not only the special status of Vladimir Putin defining the foreign policy course of the Russian state but also the monopolistic nature of his personal power in the Russian political system, it is possible to state with confidence that this is his personal public and rhetorical activities that shape the content of the “security discourse”. For instance, his personal political statements (addresses etc.) in modern Russia are the turning points forming its discourse and political agenda. For example, “Munich speech” (2007), “Crimean speech” (2014), “Valdai speech” (2017) by Vladimir Putin defined both the course of development for the state as well as the discourse system (the discourse of threats, the discourse of dangers, security discourse etc.) where the former was taking place.

In a special address by the President of Russia Vladimir Putin to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation (18 March 2014), the so-called “Crimean speech”, Putin declared the annexation of Crimea as an imposed necessity: “Let me note too that we have already heard declarations from Kyiv about Ukraine soon joining NATO. What would this have meant for Crimea and Sevastopol in the future? It would have meant that NATO’s navy would be right there in this city of Russia’s military glory, and this would create not an illusory but a perfectly real threat to the whole of southern Russia. These are things that could have become reality were it not for the choice the Crimean people made, and I want to say thank you to them for this”. Within the security discourse defined by Vladimir Putin, the alleged NATO threat is so significant that it demands considerable violations of international law in the name of the security of the Russian state. Putin also sees a domestic threat for the stability of his regime that lies in the foreign influence (“foreign threat” discourse): “Some Western politicians are already threatening us with not just sanctions but also the prospect of increasingly serious problems on the domestic front. I would like to know what it is they have in mind exactly: action by a fifth column, this disparate bunch of ‘national traitors’, or are they hoping to put us in a worsening social and economic situation so as to provoke public discontent? ”

In the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly (Kremlin 2014b) Vladimir Putin mentioned Ukraine seventeen times, each time pointing out that the tragedy of the Ukrainian people is the result of an inadequate perception of the role of Russian interests (and its readiness to defend the “red lines” of national interests and security which he had outlined before, for
instance, in his “Munich speech”). When evaluating the sanctions against Russia due to its annexation of Crimea, Putin explains them as an imminent threat and refers to the traditional idea of the “hostile West” and “containment doctrine”: “The policy of containment was not invented yesterday. It has been carried out against our country for many years, always, for decades, if not centuries. In short, whenever someone thinks that Russia has become too strong or independent, these tools are quickly put into use”; “However, talking to Russia from a position of force is an exercise in futility, even when it was faced with domestic hardships, as in the 1990s and early 2000s. We remember well how and who, almost openly, supported separatism back then and even outright terrorism in Russia, referred to murderers, whose hands were stained with blood, none other than rebels and organised high-level receptions for them” (Kremlin 2014b).

The main threat, according to Putin, is lack of attention to Russia’s role and position in the world and regional politics, while he himself defines Western nations and the USA as the main international destabilizers: “Since 2002, after the US unilaterally pulled out of the ABM Treaty, which was absolutely a cornerstone of international security, a strategic balance of forces and stability, the US has been working relentlessly to create a global missile defence system, including in Europe. This poses a threat not only to Russia, but to the world as a whole – precisely due to the possible disruption of this strategic balance of forces”. However, Putin’s main message for foreign and domestic consumers of such discourse in this case is expressed in the following: “No one will ever attain military superiority over Russia. We have a modern and combat ready army. As they now put it, a polite, but formidable army. We have the strength, will and courage to protect our freedom. We will protect the diversity of the world. We will tell the truth to people abroad, so that everyone can see the real and not distorted and false image of Russia” (Kremlin 2014b).

In the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly (Kremlin 2015) despite even more tensions due to the influence of the “Ukrainian issue” in Russia’s foreign policy, Ukraine was not mentioned at all. However, it was the threat of international terrorism that was defined as the main threat factor at both the international and local security level. It is exactly these words that Putin begins his address with: “I would like to begin my Address with words of gratitude to the Russian servicemen who are fighting international terrorism”. The Russian military campaign in Syria is seen by Putin as the most adequate answer to the growing threat of international terrorism. If in the 2014 Address terrorism was mentioned only within the context of the recent
domestic threat, which had already been neutralized, in 2015, according to Putin, this threat is growing and in order to overcome it: “We must stop our debates and forget our differences to build a common anti-terrorist front that will act in line with international law and under the UN aegis”. In fact, Putin, instead of international discussion on the issue around “national sovereignty integrity” offers a new format of international consensus – the global fight against international terrorism: “Every civilized country must contribute to the fight against terrorism, reaffirming their solidarity, not in word but in deed”. In this address, taking into account tensions between Russia and Turkey (Turkish authorities, the state of Turkey) had escalated by then, Turkey is referred to as a terrorist accomplice, therefore, Turkey is being defined in this rhetoric as a “threat-state” not only to Russia, but also to the entire system of global security: “We know, for instance, who are stuffing pockets in Turkey and letting terrorists prosper from the sale of oil they stole in Syria...We remember that the militants who operated in the North Caucasus in the 1990s and 2000s found refuge and received moral and material assistance in Turkey...We have many good and reliable friends in Turkey. Allow me to emphasize that they should know that we do not equate them with the certain part of the current ruling establishment that is directly responsible for the deaths of our servicemen in Syria. We will never forget their collusion with terrorists. We have always deemed betrayal the worst and most shameful thing to do, and that will never change. I would like them to remember this – those in Turkey who shot our pilots in the back, those hypocrites who tried to justify their actions and cover up for terrorists”. To President Putin the necessity to form a global anti-terrorist front is the most important task in order to 1) ensure security of the political course, 2) transform the security discourse, and 3) stabilize the general political situation in the Russian Federation: “We have mobilized our Armed Forces, security services and law enforcement agencies to repel the terrorist threat. Every one must be aware of their responsibility, including the authorities, political parties, civil society organisations and the media”.

In the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly (Kremlin 2016b) Ukraine was not mentioned at all either, neither as a factor of danger, nor as a focus for possible efforts to ensure security; however, there is also a considerably lower level of rhetoric related to the threat of international terrorism (leaving behind the issue of international terrorism and its actual dangers was caused by instrumental difficulties of Russia’s military campaign in Syria and its inability to build “post-Crimean international consensus” offered earlier). Instead, Putin offers a potential instrument for guaranteeing international security which is increased cooperation between Russia and the United States
in addressing pressing issues of international policy: “Cooperation between Russia and the United States in addressing global and regional issues will benefit the whole world. We have a shared responsibility to ensure international security and stability, to strengthen non-proliferation regimes. I would like to emphasize that attempts to break the strategic parity are extremely dangerous and can lead to a global catastrophe. We must not forget about it even for a second. I certainly count on joining efforts with the United States in the fight against real rather than fictional threats, international terrorism being one of them. That is the task our servicemen are fulfilling in Syria. Terrorists have suffered significant losses. The Russian Army and Navy have shown convincingly that they are capable of operating effectively away from their permanent deployment sites”. Yet the efforts made by Putin to “reload the security discourse” from “anti-American” to “partnership discourse” were fuelled by Donald Trump winning the US presidential elections, followed by the expectations of upgrading bilateral relations while searching for a new consensus (with further recognition of Crimea as Russia’s territory and lifting personal and sectoral sanctions).

Another essential element of the Address (2016) was the call for public consolidation in the face of foreign and domestic threats: “When people feel they are doing the right thing, they act in close solidarity, and advance with confidence along the chosen path. In recent years, we have had a hard time, but these trials have made us even stronger, truly stronger, helped us better and more clearly define those areas in which our efforts must be even more persistent and vigorous”. (Kremlin 2016b) This call “for rallyning” should be interpreted as the rallying of people to the elite, which makes it impossible to have “colour revolutions” in Russia, something Putin is aware of permanently.

President Putin monopolized the political agenda in the Russian Federation which led to the “security discourse” being far from a product of public or party discussions (the discussion between power and opposition on the issues of foreign and security policy are non-existent). For instance, even the ruling party “United Russia” in their electoral campaign (2016) prior to the State Duma elections (the seventh convocation) demonstrated impersonalized exploitation of the security discourse: “We have efficient, mobile, well equipped Armed Forces. They are the guarantee of our security. We launched a military reform just in time. And the move when even in difficult times we defended military spending from cuts was strategically correct”, “We believe it is necessary to maintain high-level combat readiness and flexibility of the Armed Forces, reinforce the system of strategic deterrence and carry on
further modernization of non-nuclear weapons”, “We will support the active and balanced position of the Russian Federation on the settlement of the Northern Korea nuclear issue, the promotion of initiatives to launch an inclusive system of regional security in this region including both the USA and their allies as well as China and Russia. This being said, it is essential for Russia to maintain a neutral position”. (United Russia 2018). That means that the ruling party is reproducing the general security doctrine and the so-called “Putin’s policy”. The parliamentary parties with lower relevance are being even more careful when interpreting the issue of security in their programme documents.

It is quite often that Vladimir Putin (and his political and institutional circles) defines the sources and levels of national security threats via public “discussion platforms” that represent the infrastructure of forming a power discourse. For instance, on 19 October 2017 at the “Valdai Club” meeting Putin responded to the question regarding the strategic threats of NATO’s growing military presence and frequent military manoeuvres near Russian borders with de facto affirmations that he does not see NATO as a strategic threat: “We analyze this, we look carefully. Every step is known and clear to us...This does not concern us. Let them train like this. Everything is under control.” Which could serve as a somewhat positive signal of Putin’s certain readiness to some foreign policy détente, perhaps in the context of deploying a peace-keeping mission in Donbas. For this “domestic consumer” of national security discourse should be duly prepared through reducing in the Russian public consciousness the vitality of the threat about “NATO/West forceful approximation” to the zone of Russian interests.

Yet on more conservative platforms such as the influential “Izborsk Club” (its chairman A. Prokhanov) joining both radical communists and national conservatives-Eurasians, who, despite the retranslation of the general threat and security discourse defined by Vladimir Putin, permanently see threats and dangers posed by the US destructive role on the international arena: “..US ruling elite is not going to refrain from its former policy concerning Russia – the policy that can be called Cold War-2”, as well as “a much bigger danger lies within the domestic threat given the conditions of the coming elections” (Izborsk Club 2017). Within the security discourse of national conservative platforms such as the “Izborsk Club” domestic threats are brought on by the following – the USA, West, NATO, liberals, anti-Stalinists, and “national traitors”.
3. Transformation of security policies

The Russian Federation documents of strategic nature (Military Doctrine, National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation, Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation and other documents of strategic planning) are traditionally disbalanced by voluntary manual management by the supreme authority. Therefore, the security policy is mostly implemented within the context of personal policy – the so-called “Putin’s policy”.

The annexation of Crimea and pro-Russian marionette regimes in separate areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions brought significant consequences, namely: 1) halting strategic partnership with Ukraine, 2) post-Soviet states reconsidering their strategy of relations with Russia (erosion of post-Soviet consensus) and 3) the USA, Canada, EU and other countries introducing a considerable number of personal and sectoral sanctions. As a result of reinterpreting a new international context, in which Russia is about to operate in the medium term perspective, at the normative and institutional level, the following strategic documents were adopted, reviewed or clarified: Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (Russian newspaper 2014), National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation (Presidential Decree of the Russian Federation 2015), Russian Federation Food Security Doctrine (2015), Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation (2016), Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation (Russian Newspaper 2016), the Russian Federation Economic Security Strategy until 2030 (The Russian Federation Economic Security Strategy until 2030 2017). The main “novelty” of revision and clarification of strategic documents is giving an opportunity for Russia’s supreme power to conduct a more radical security policy.

An important element of transforming Russian security policy is introducing and implementing an “anti-sanction regime” (both personal and economic) against 1) politicians, public figures and state authorities whose governments introduced sanctions against Russia and 2) economic activities of separate enterprises located in those states. An anti-sanction regime plays the role of punishment for countries that traditionally export to the Russian Federation, as well as serving as an instrument for consolidation and rallying of its population in the situation of foreign policy isolation. Adopting a “State Programme on Import Substitution to 2020” (2015) became an essential element of Russia’s security policy in the new conditions within the context of “anti-sanctions” (Kremlin 2016a).
Crimea’s annexation and Russian intervention in 2014-2015 took place against the backdrop of the completed second phase of military reform, the main result of which, according to experts, was increased combat readiness and deployability of the Armed Forces (military reform for 2008-2020 was planned as military and institutional revision of the Russian army after the Georgia-Russia war of 2008 and an instrument of increasing its combat readiness). As a result of reform in 2016 more than 50% of the forces were to be supplied with modern weapons, while by 2020 army and navy rearmament was to reach 80%. According to the Global Firepower World Military Strength Ratings, Russia ranks second, with the USA taking first place and China third. Currently Russia’s military manpower makes up 798,500 men, with its military budget making up $44.6 bn (Global Fire Power 2017).

Creating a new internal federal security service, the National Guard of the Russian Federation, became quite an important element for institutional transformation of the security sector (Kremlin 2016c). The National Guard of the Russian Federation reports directly to Vladimir Putin, while being led by General Viktor Zolotov (personally loyal to Vladimir Putin), therefore, a special federal agency loyal to the President of the Russian Federation is in fact being launched, securing the loyalty of Russian society and regional elites.

Dramatic militarization of the Southern Military District bordering Ukraine became an extremely negative element of the new security policy after the annexation of Crimea. In particular, in the Southern Military District Russia formed four new divisions, nine brigades, twenty-two regiments including two missile brigades equipped with “Iskander-M” complexes (RIA Novosti 2016). At the same time in 2016 the 150th Idritsa-Berlin Motor Rifle division with its headquarters located in Novocherkassk was launched (Polonskiy 2016). Moreover, in 2015-2017 there were multiple statements regarding the revival of the earlier existing 42nd Guards Evpatoriyskaya Krasnoznamennaya Motor Rifle division on the basis of the 17th, 18th and 19th motor rifle brigades.

Given the current situation of Russia’s isolation from military and political cooperation with NATO member states, military drills and manoeuvres gained a special meaning (there were more than 200 military exercises in the Southern Military District in 2013-2016), with their main target being to demonstrate considerable combat readiness of the Russian Army to the West. For example, Caucasus-2016 strategic command and staff drills took place on the territory
of the Southern Military District on 5-11 September 2016, with a total number of 12,500 military personnel involved, and Zapad-2017, joint strategic drills of the Armed Forced of Russia and Belarus that took place on 14-20 September, 2017, with 12,700 military personnel.

Conclusions

Russian military aggression against Ukraine in 2014-2015 led to the loss of trust regarding the capabilities of the highest Russian authorities to fulfil international obligations. Having found themselves in a situation of insufficient foreign support due to the illegal annexation of Crimea and launch of puppet regimes in separate areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Russian authorities revised strategic documents and implement actions aiming to: 1) legitimize “territorial acquisitions”, 2) provide for a new strategic agenda, 3) neutralize the domestic threats for the Russian political regime, 4) destabilize the domestic political situation in Ukraine, 5) destroy the “pro-Ukrainian” coalition or pro-Ukrainian consensus, foreign policy support for Ukraine against Russia.

Regarding the revision of strategic documents and evolving security discourse, a special place is reserved there for a new global threat – international terrorism, as well as a necessity to search for an international “post-Crimean consensus”. According to this thinking, constructing a new adversary should “reload” relations between Russia and the West (NATO, USA, EU) and form a new consensus, where Russia’s contribution towards the fight against global terrorism will perform the same role as USSR’s contribution to the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition.

Ukraine remains an important factor for Russia’s security discourse and policy. Russia’s military build-up within the immediate territorial proximity to Ukraine, occupation of Crimea and support of the puppet regimes in separate areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions allow the prediction of the security deficit in relations between Ukraine and Russia in the medium-term perspective and escalated tensions at the Ukrainian-Russian borders.

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SECURITY ENVIRONMENT CHANGED: IMPLICATIONS FOR UKRAINE

Hanna SHELEST

Résumé

The year 2014 became a watershed for changes in the security discourse in Ukraine, which resulted both in the adoption of new strategic documents and practical steps for enhancing national security and defence. The article presents the evolution of strategic documents in Ukraine since 2010, underlines the main differences between the National Security Strategies adopted in 2012 and in 2015, as well as analyses the newly adopted Military Doctrine of Ukraine, Cyber Security Strategy, Doctrine of the Information Security of Ukraine, and Strategic Defence Bulletin.

The study demonstrates that, despite some level of opposition towards the future NATO integration of Ukraine and existing discourse about the possible neutrality of the country as a way out of the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict, nevertheless adoption of NATO standards and close cooperation with the Alliance are among the top political and military priorities of the state. Other spheres that received the most attention of Ukrainian experts and politicians were the modernization of the security forces, first of all military, information and cyber security, and protection of critical infrastructure. The attitude towards Russia and nuclear status of Ukraine are those disputable issues, approached both as reasons and as consequences of the current crisis.

For the first time in Ukraine, the main tasks set out in the new National Security Strategy clearly correlated with the priorities of the security sector reforms. Moreover, active cooperation with NATO and individual member states was aimed on transformation of the Ukrainian Army according to NATO standards. Tactical and operational changes were accompanied with the establishment of the Military Cabinet within the NSDC and Main Situational Centre of Ukraine, Special Operation Forces and new formats of the Annual National Plan.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

The change of the security paradigm in Ukraine due to the illegal Russian annexation of Crimea and military actions in Donbas led to the transformation of the political and public perception of the national security strategy’s role for the state. For a long time, Ukrainian strategic documents had not represented actual policy. If in 2010, President Yanukovych took the decision to announce a so-called non-bloc status (Ukrainian analogue to neutrality, aimed just to satisfy Russia by not joining NATO), so the decision was adopted to change the Law on Basics of Internal and External Policy of Ukraine – de facto, at that time, the main document framing the foreign policy of Ukraine. However, the Military Doctrine of Ukraine, where NATO membership was still stated as a priority, stayed without change until 2012. The National Security Strategy of 2012 had even less impact on real politics.

2014 stood out through more operational documents adopted by the National Security and Defence Council, or even lower level decisions of the Ministries, which acted to address the immediate threats to national security due to the illegal annexation of Crimea and start of the armed actions in Donbas. It was already 2015-2016, when the main strategic documents were elaborated and presented to the public. Currently the following documents define the national security sphere in Ukraine: National Security Strategy (adopted May 2015); Military Doctrine (adopted September 2015), Cyber Security Strategy (adopted March 2016), Doctrine of the Information Security of Ukraine (adopted February 2017); Strategic Defence Bulletin (adopted June 2016).

There is no direct hierarchy among the legislation defining national security and military spheres in Ukraine. However, de facto, the National Security Strategy is perceived as a main directive, which should outline priorities, threats, and reforms necessary to reach the goals of both hard and soft security guarantees in Ukraine. However, as the situation with the “non-bloc status” described above showed, political decisions have been prevailing over strategic ones, when the National Security Strategy was seen as something general, necessary accessories of the modern state, rather than a reference point for decision-makers.

Despite the fact that the National Security Strategy 2012 had the title “Ukraine in the world that is changing”, its actual substance far from reflected the real challenges the country had been facing. The new Strategy adopted in May 2015 was made to identify and to focus on the finally
acknowledged threats that from being potential became real. The National Security Strategy 2012 mostly referred to global changes, challenges and geopolitical transformations, while predominantly concentrating on the threats to the internal security of the state.

In 2015, the main threat was clearly defined, and the necessity to create a new system of guaranteeing national security of Ukraine was explained by the Russian aggression “that would have a long-term character” (Administration of the President 2015, Art.1). Moreover, for the first time, the Goals of the National Security Strategy were set: minimization of threats to the state sovereignty and the creation of conditions for the restoration of Ukraine’s territorial integrity within the internationally recognized state borders of Ukraine, guaranteeing the peaceful future of Ukraine as a sovereign and independent, democratic, social and legal state; endorsement of the human rights and freedoms of the citizen, ensuring a new quality of economic, social and humanitarian development, confirming Ukraine’s integration into the European Union and creating conditions for joining NATO (Administration of the President. 2015, Art.2).

At the same time, in the 2012 Strategy, among the strategic goals and priority tasks to guarantee national security of Ukraine (Parliament of Ukraine. 2012, Section 4) in both internal and external spheres, there was not a single mention about military or security reform. It appears only in Section 5 dedicated to the system of guaranteeing national security, where the described activities did not correlate with the tasks set in the previous section. De facto, attention was paid to the legal and organizational changes, social guarantees of the military, civilian protection, democratic civilian control, criminal justice reform, and state programmes to fight terrorism, etc. An eye-catching feature is that, while stating the necessity to improve functional capabilities of the security sector, the primary focus is on law enforcement and intelligence, rather than military (Parliament of Ukraine. 2012, Art.5.2.3.)

The biggest changes between the 2012 and 2015 Strategies are undoubtedly in the definitions of the security environment and threats to the national interests and security of Ukraine. In 2012, three main trends were named that potentially threaten the national security sphere of Ukraine from outside (Parliament of Ukraine. 2012, Art. 3.1.). First of all, there are factors that challenge the global international stability and have an impact on Ukraine, such as increased competition between the world centres of power, crisis of the international security system and diffusion of the system of international
treaties, the appearance of self-proclaimed quasi-states in the territories of other states, competition for natural resources, intensification of some states’ militarization, spread of terrorism, piracy and trafficking, and global environmental challenges. Secondly, there is the deterioration in the regional security environment, including provocations of the conflicting situations and the use of the forces beyond their national borders, escalation of conflicting situations and militarization in the Black Sea – Caspian region and internal instability of states, incompleteness of the state borders delimitation, demarcation, and possible territorial claims. And the third dimension was named as direct challenges to the national security of Ukraine: the unresolved Transnistrian conflict, an unsettled state border issue with the Russian Federation in the Sea of Azov and the Strait of Kerch, lack of demarcation of the state border with the Russian Federation, Moldova and Belarus; existence of the troubled question of the temporary deployment of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea; and last but not least, imperfect migration policy.

However, as was shown in practice, what was stated in the Strategy and how the government of President Yanukovych acted were far from being the same. One of the biggest contradictions lay in terms of the resolution of the deployment of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, which had been prolonged until 2042, instead of resolving the existing legal and organizational issues, they made a foreign military base in the territory of Ukraine de facto uncontrolled and dangerous.

In 2015, for the first time since Ukrainian independence, the new National Security Strategy pulled back to describe general threats, global problems and common risks that can be mirrored by any other regional country. Nine main spheres emphasized in the new Strategy, analysing threats to the national security of Ukraine, are focused on Ukraine and its external and internal challenges (Administration of the President. 2015, Art. 3) and include: Russian aggressive actions, which are undertaken to exhaust the Ukrainian economy and to undermine social and political stability, aiming to destroy the Ukrainian state and to conquer its territory; ineffectiveness of the national security and defence system; corruption and ineffective system of governance; economic crisis exhausting state financial resources, decrease in the level of life; threats to energy security; threats to information security; threats to cyber security; threats to the security of critical infrastructure; environmental threats.

One of the main differences between the 2012 and 2015 Strategies is the concentration of the latter on hard security more than on soft security.
The new Security Strategy’s references to reform of the security sector are detailed and particular, with great concentration on military structures and cooperation. It is not only reaction to the actual threat due to the illegal annexation of Crimea and military actions in the East, but it is clear acknowledgement that the country’s reform of the security sector had been underfinanced, badly structured and lacked reforms during all the years of Ukraine’s independence. Article 3.2 (Administration of the President 2015) clearly states the following threats to national security in the domain of the inefficiency of the system of ensuring national security and defence of Ukraine: the failure of the security and defence sector of Ukraine as a holistic functional association, to be managed from a single centre; institutional weakness, lack of professionalism, structural imbalance of the security and defence sector; lack of resources and ineffective use of resources in the security and defence sector; lack of effective external security guarantees to Ukraine; and activities of illegal armed groups, growth of crime, illegal use of weapons.

As a result, the text (Administration of the President 2015) presents thorough suggestions for creating an effective security sector (Art. 4.2) and increasing the state’s defence capability (Art.4.3.). These suggestions include not only improvement in legislation, but also improvement in the state strategic planning system; improvement in budgetary policy in the sphere of national security and defence; professionalization of the security sector; preparing the state (both military and civil bodies) to withstand armed aggression; reforming the mobilization system and formation of a powerful, numerous, military-trained reserve; elimination of duplication of functions between the Ministry of Defence and the General Staff; modernization and improvement of rocket forces, aviation, and counterintelligence.

Among completely new features are the development of the Special Operations Forces, improvement and development of a control system, protected telecommunications, intelligence, and radioelectronic warfare; special attention is paid to the Navy and its modernization, and ensuring maximum interoperability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the armed forces of NATO member states through the introduction of NATO standards.

Importantly, in 2012 no attention was paid to the development of the Ukrainian navy. Among the problems singled out were unsettled questions over the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea (Art. 3.1.3.) and militarization of the Black Sea-Caspian region (Art. 4.2.5.). However, the impression is that the Black Sea was seen just as a sphere of the foreign policy, with Ukraine being
a littoral state not a marine power, thus the absence of significant attention
to the development of the Navy. On the other hand, in 2015 the aim was set
“to form adequate to the threats the naval capabilities of Ukraine, to defend
the state’s sea coast, to develop necessary infrastructure for the deployment
of the Navy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, as well as its deployment in
Crimea after the return of the temporarily occupied territory under the control
of Ukraine (Administration of the President 2015, Art 4.3).

The ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the methods used made the
government and experts elaborate other strategic documents reflecting
the challenges, which shifted from soft security to hard security priorities.
Both information and cyber security turned to be a domain and a weapon
of contemporary warfare. Information security appeared for the first time as
a top priority of national security, resulting in the adoption of the Doctrine
of the Information Security of Ukraine in February 2017 (Administration of
the President 2017b). After long disputes, it was separated from the Cyber
Security Strategy, which also was adopted in Ukraine for the first time. While
originally drafted as one document, the final decision was made to separate
the two spheres, and concentrate in more detail on each of them.

Starting from 2016 and the adoption of the Cyber Security Strategy, it
became clear that the state no longer refers to cyber security as a sphere of
business responsibility, something purely connected with IT development.
Firstly, the cyber security sphere has been named as a part of the national
security of Ukraine (NSDC 2016). What is noteworthy is that the Russian
Federation’s actions against Ukraine were named as one of the main reasons
for the elaboration of this strategy. Moreover, it was stated that ‘cyberspace
is gradually turning into a separate area, along with the traditional “Earth”,
“Air”, “Sea” and “Space”, a sphere of combat operations, in which relevant
units of the armed forces of the leading countries of the world are increasingly
active’ (Art.2). In addition, creation of special units within Army structures
for active cyber protection and cyber security was proposed, in addition to
the Security Services and Intelligence Units, all of which should be
interoperable with respective units of NATO member states (NSDC 2016).

Among the flaws of the Ukrainian Information Security Doctrine is that,
despite its timely and innovative approach, it has an extremely narrow
goal. The goals are limited only to one - to clarify the principles of the state
information policy and its implementation, primarily in counteracting the
devastating informational influence of the Russian Federation, considering
conditions of its unleashed hybrid war (Administration of the President
2017b). Not underestimating this threat as being a trigger for the development of the Information Security sphere in Ukraine in a new security domain, nevertheless, framing it only with reference to Russian actions decreases the level of its implementation, makes it not a long-term vision, and allows the ignoring of other possible channels of interference. At the same time, in addition to the soft security, social and political spheres covered among the national security threats in the information sphere, the Doctrine also mentions: implementation of special information operations aimed at undermining defence capabilities, demoralization of the personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations, provoking extremist manifestations, feeding panic moods, exacerbation and destabilization of the socio-political and socio-economic situation, interethnic and inter-confessional conflicts in Ukraine (Administration of the President 2017b, Art. 4).

NATO integration received significant attention in the strategic documents of Ukraine. It is separately mentioned in the National Security Strategy as one of the main directions of governmental policy on national security, where detailed description is given to the main directions of the special partnership between Ukraine and the North Atlantic Alliance, including the “long-term goal of joining the common European security system, the basis of which is NATO” (Administration of the President 2015). At the same time, in other strategic documents, especially in the Military Doctrine, most statements refer to the issues of the reform of the Armed Forces, bringing them in line with NATO standards, and the enhancement of military and political cooperation with its member states.

2. Changes in security discourses

In the political and expert discourse, three spheres received the most attention: modernization of the security forces, first of all the Army; future NATO membership and information security. While cyber security and the protection of critical infrastructure were named among the priorities as well, however, they were left predominantly for discussion in expert circles, accepted by all political parties as important and apolitical components of national security. Two other topics: the attitude towards Russia and the nuclear status of Ukraine, in some way, underlie those disputable issues and are treated both as reasons and as consequences of the current crisis.

In spite of the general agreement with the new National Security Strategy, some criticism appeared among both politicians and experts. One of the issues
of argument was the absence of long-term strategic visions in the Strategy; some experts even called it Tactics not a Strategy (Соломонюк 2015). What some experts saw as a strength - detailed and clear identification of necessary actions and reforms, others perceived as a reactional approach towards security threats. However, if we go to the goals of the National Security Strategy where the minimization of the threats to state sovereignty and restoration of the territorial integrity are set as the ultimate goals, and reflect on them against the backdrop of the tools necessary to reach these goals and a condition of the Ukrainian security sector in 2014, then such priorities are perfectly framed within the long-term timeline, including how the future security sector of Ukraine should look. Serhiy Pashynsky, Head of the Parliamentary Committee on national security, while describing the new National Security Strategy, stated that most important was acknowledgement of the fact of Russian aggression, while Ukraine wanted peace, and a modern, well-equipped Army should be a guarantor of that peace (Chanel 5 2015).

Russia was never before named as a security threat to Ukraine. As early as 2008-2009, a few experts forecast a possible a Russian invasion stemming from the results of the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. However, most of them, as well as politicians, talked about potential Russian political and economic pressure, and destabilization of Crimea but not military intervention. The reason for disregarding this threat was the belief that compared to Georgia Ukraine had so-called security guarantees from the Budapest Memorandum (1994). Between 2015 and 2017, Ukraine referred less and less to this document, as a reality demonstrated that when the document is violated by one of its signatories, others are reluctant to fulfil their obligations. Moreover, American diplomats insisted that Ukraine received assurances rather than guarantees of its territorial integrity, so the US, the UK and in some way China and France were not obliged to protect Ukraine from open aggression. The de facto absence of the security guarantees, in three years resulted in a situation where fewer and fewer politicians referred to the Budapest Memorandum, but insisted on the necessity of quick modernization of the Army, for Ukraine to protect itself by itself.

Serious discourse was undergoing as a necessity for Ukraine to restore its nuclear power capabilities. 2014 was a peak year, as many politicians from different political spectra assumed that had Ukraine still had a nuclear arsenal, Russia would have never attacked it. Several draft laws were submitted to reinstate the nuclear status of Ukraine. The first was the Draft
Law on denouncement of the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (1968) initiated jointly by Members of Parliament from the parties “Udar” and “Batkivshchyna” on March 20, 2014, and the second was the Draft Decree on Announcement by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on restoration of the nuclear status of Ukraine — introduced by the party “Svoboda” on July 23, 2014. Both draft legislations were recalled in November 2014. According to Polina Synovets (2016, 134), director of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Centre in Ukraine, the theoretical possibility to adopt such legislation existed. Of all political parties represented in Parliament in 2014, three (Oleh Liashko’s Radical party, “Svoboda”, and “Right Sector” – jointly around 15% of seats) officially supported restoration of Ukraine’s nuclear status. In addition, such moderate parties as “Udar” and “Batkivshchyna” also supported the idea of Ukraine denouncing the NPT. At the same time, the President and the Government of Ukraine officially supported the country’s membership in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, and this to some extent stabilized the situation. Despite the low intensity of the “nuclear” discourse within the last year, this topic appears from time to time in political and media discussions, with a nostalgia and false perception that a nuclear potential would allow Ukraine to restore its sovereignty and prevent Russia from further aggression.

Since 2014, cooperation of Ukraine and NATO has become one of the key foreign policy issues for political parties and the governments’ agenda. The 2014 Coalition Agreement acknowledges «cancellation of the non-bloc status of Ukraine, restoration of its political course to integration into the Euro-Atlantic security space, and acquiring membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization» (Parliament of Ukraine 2014, Art.1) among the first priorities for guaranteeing national security and defence. The questions of cooperation with NATO and Ukraine’s future membership in the Alliance became one of a few separately defined foreign policy priorities in the Annual Address of the President of Ukraine in 2015. It has also become a leading idea of military reform and foreign policy strategy.

At the same time, there are alterations in how different political forces perceive this issue. In fact, the division goes along the line of for/against joining NATO, as well as about the desirable speed and procedure of Euro-Atlantic integration (whether a referendum should be held or not, and whether Ukraine should file an application for membership right away) (Shelest 2016, 92).

“Non-bloc status” became an invention of President Yanukovych’s team,
as a response to Russian demands. The wording “non-bloc” sounded bizarre from the point of view of international law, but reflected the Soviet / Russian perception of NATO as a purely “military bloc”, so this status envisaged not general abstention from joining military organizations, but refuting the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine.

Due to its clear pro-Russian background, after 2014, this term could not be used anymore. Therefore, the discourse turned to integration with NATO as the only way to secure Ukraine in the future versus the suggestion to choose neutrality in order not to further provoke Russia. Neutrality is widely supported by the representatives of the Opposition Bloc Party (former Party of Regions) (Вилкул 2017), while NATO integration is a main goal of the Presidential party “Solidarnost” and other right and centric parties. NATO integration supporters argued that neutrality will not only leave Ukraine alone against future aggressions, but would also cost much more to the national budget, as Ukraine would not be able to share responsibilities, and referred to the Switzerland example. What is important to mention is that ideas of neutrality are heard not only from Ukrainian politicians (Pinchuk 2017), but also from its international partners. Moreover, Ukrainian non-bloc status did not prevent the illegal Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014.

The second issue around the NATO topic is about whether the decision should be taken by Parliament or whether a referendum needs to be organized. For many years, both NATO officials and Ukrainian anti-NATO forces insisted that Ukrainian public opinion was against further NATO integration, so with a dramatic change in the number of supporters (up to 69% in June 2017) (Ukrainian Crisis Media Center 2017), President Poroshenko started to express the opinion that a referendum should take place after Ukraine fulfils all reform obligations (Reuters 2017). However, as the level of knowledge about NATO is low, and the numbers of supporters can be manipulated by strong propaganda before the referendum, many experts insist that such strategic decisions should be taken by the government and parliament, not by referendum.

3. Transformation of security policies

It is worth mentioning that for the first time in Ukrainian history, the main tasks set in the National Security Strategy (2015) clearly correlated with the priorities of military reform and organization. Among others, several of them deserve special attention. Reaching NATO standards, as well as full
interoperability with the Alliance has been a basic line for all Strategic and Operational Documents of Ukraine since 2014.

The tactical changes happened on several levels including the operation of the National Security and Defence Council, whose role has been upgraded compared to previous years. In January 2015, for the first time, a Main Situational Centre of Ukraine was established by the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council and Confirmation of the Presidential Decree (NSDC 2015a). Its main tasks are to provide information and analytical support to the activities of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine, coordination and control over activities of the executive authorities, law enforcement bodies and military formations in the field of national security and defence in peacetime, during special periods, including in conditions of martial law, in a state of emergency and in the event of crises threatening the national security of Ukraine.

By another decision, a Military Cabinet within the NSDC, headed by the President of Ukraine, was created in February 2015 (NSDC 2015b). The Cabinet consists of the Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defence, Head of the Security Service, Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, Head of the State Border Guard Service, Commander of the National Guard, Head of the Presidential Administration, as well as approved by the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Such arrangements allowed coordinating top-level decisions quickly, combining responsible ministries (who usually meet at the Cabinet of Ministers meetings) with those institutions directly supervised by the President. The main topics for the Cabinet discussions are proposals concerning the use of forces, strategic development, preparation and application of the forces for strategic actions, operations, combat actions; organization of the interaction of forces between themselves and with executive bodies and local self-government bodies during the fulfilment of the tasks assigned to them in a special period; determination of the needs for ensuring state defence, use of reserves, as well as the needs for military assistance to Ukraine from foreign states and international organizations, etc.

In March 2016, the Concept of the Security and Defence Sector Development was elaborated and signed by the President and followed by the decision to adopt the State Program of the Development of Armed Forces of Ukraine until 2020 in March 2017 which, however, received a secret status (NSDC 2017a). The same situation is with the Decision of the
National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine dated January 27, 2017 “On the main indicators of the state defence order for 2017 and 2018, 2019” (NSDC 2017b). However, from the Presidential statements it is clear that for the year 2017 an amount of nine billion hryvnas (approximately EUR 300 million) was allocated in the state budget for military procurements (Administration of the President 2017a), in some cases it should envisage ‘military equipment in the amount that ensures the so-called “wholesale rearmament” of certain military units’. According to the President, a big discussion about state defence order has been around the choice of items to be purchased. “We have a choice: either one “Oplot” or ten modernized and fully repaired T-64s or T-80s. Moreover, construction of the “Oplot” takes at least 18 months, while modernization of the T-80 takes 2.5 months (Administration of the President 2017a).

In fact, decisions were taken not only to increase the state budget for procurement and modernization, but to facilitate development of the Ukrainian military industry, which in the last years was underfinanced or sabotaged. The Government of Ukraine approved the State Program for the Reform and Development of the Defence Industrial Complex of Ukraine 2021 in May 2017; however, it also received a secret status. Little information was available, which confirmed the three-year planning circle in military procurements, integration of science and industry, changes in monitoring and prices policies, as well as adaptation to NATO standards. The programme is based on the realization of the Strategic Defence Bulletin and National Action Plan for NATO membership of Ukraine. One of the main goals in this sphere is not only modernization of Ukrainian military-industry enterprises, but also substitution of the past close cooperation with Russia in military industry, so to start full circle production in Ukraine or attract additional investments. As for now, aviation and tank production are those spheres which have localized their production in Ukraine by 80% (Зеленюк 2017).

Approval of a number of internal documents, such as the Decree of the President of Ukraine on new annual national programs development procedure with NATO and the Strategic Defence Bulletin contributed to both Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations and the internal reform process.

Firstly, Special Operation Forces were established in January 2016 (according to Art. 4.3.) being under the direct command of the Minister of Defence. Their main tasks are military information-psychological operations, protecting the lives of citizens and objects of state property outside of Ukraine,
participation in combating illicit trafficking in weapons and drugs, fighting terrorism and piracy, and organization and support of resistance movements’ actions (Special Operations Forces 2017).

Secondly, most of the military reform sections have a reference to NATO standards and interoperability of forces with NATO member states. For the next years, all documents connected with security sector reform, from the Military Doctrine to the operational documentation had same reference. It was also supported by the work of the military advisers sent by partners from NATO to assist with different aspects of military reform in Ukraine. Even more, the section on the necessity to improve and develop telecommunication, radioelectronics and control systems reflected in the NATO Trust Funds approved for Ukraine. Signing of the Trust Fund Agreement on the establishment of five NATO trust funds for the total amount of EUR 5.4 million, in particular NATO-Ukraine Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4) Trust Fund (EUR 2 million), NATO-Ukraine Logistics and Standardization Trust Fund (EUR 1 million), NATO-Ukraine Medical Rehabilitation Trust Fund (EUR 845,000), NATO-Ukraine Cyber Defence Trust Fund (EUR 815,000), as well as the NATO-Ukraine Military Career Management Trust Fund (EUR 410,000) (NATO 2015) became an important cooperation framework outside of the political dialogue.

Despite the high priority given to adaptation and integration with NATO, for the first two years after the start of the conflict, it had been a slow process often characterized by the absence of joint work by the different branches of power. For example, the conflict, which unfolded between the members of the Parliament of Ukraine — members of the Permanent delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine became public in 2015, when MPs accused the Ministry of Defence in stalling adoption of decisions related to the start of the Trust funds. Delays with approval of separate provisions of the Trust Fund Agreement related to specific issues of taxation and customs clearance for technical assistance, also confirmed that non-core ministries lacked understanding of the peculiarities of the Ukraine-NATO cooperation (Shelest 2016, 92).

However, in 2016, the situation improved significantly, primarily due to the introduction of the post of the Vice-Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, establishment of the commission on coordination of Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic Integration and an announcement about establishing the coordinating mechanism of the implementation of the NATO Trust Funds, which operates within the Government office for
European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Activities of Ukrainian institutions concerning cooperation with NATO have accelerated at all levels — presidential, parliamentary, military, and governmental. Regular top-level visits of Ukrainian officials to Brussels, as well of the NATO Secretary General to Ukraine, joint military exercises, signing roadmaps and action plans, elaborating new manuals and procedures for the Ukrainian army, activities of NATO advisors in Ukraine — all this formed the agenda of cooperation. In addition, the Defence-Technical Co-operation Roadmap (December 2015) and the Strategic Communications Partnership Road Map (September 2015) widened the spheres of practical cooperation. Such activities are not limited to the issues of defence cooperation, but include emergency response, risks assessments and sharing experience. Therefore, after three years of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, NATO-Ukraine cooperation is becoming a two-way road, where Ukraine is not only a recipient of the assistance.

Conclusions

After three years of war, a clear understanding of the security priorities, threats and necessity of reforms has come in Ukraine. Both at the strategic and operational levels changes can be seen, although accompanied by a challenge to simultaneously reform the security and defence sector and to fight, protecting territorial integrity of the state. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has not only stressed the urgent necessity to reform the Army, but also crystalized vision according to which standards and with what ultimate goal to do it. NATO membership perspective is no longer a declarative statement of the authorities, without a real aim to reach it. It has become a cornerstone of all reforms and cooperation planning in Ukraine.

Even more importantly, a new strategic vision has embraced not only the military sphere, but also brought cyber and information spheres to the limelight, where cyber space has become equal to land, sea and air in terms of war terrain. The de facto state of war in which Ukraine operates, has stipulated creation of the new mechanisms and forces (e.g. Special Operations Forces) to be able to adequately react to current threats. Aiming to reform the military according to NATO standards by 2020, Ukraine is still far from the goal. Certain disproportions and misbalance of attention towards different reforms and military branches are visible. However, the experience gained in Eastern Ukraine and close cooperation with partner countries are facilitating transformation of the Ukrainian national security sphere.
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Section 2

SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014
Résumé

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine made leaders of the European Union reconsider its relations with Russia, and the key requirement is respect for international law that envisages the restoration of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to think of the strengthening of its own security policy. In June 2014, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, stated: “I am convinced that we need to work on a stronger Europe when it comes to security and defence matters.” (European Union 2012, art. 42). Later, he added that “if Europe does not take care of its own security, nobody else will do it.”

Since 2014, the EU has been working on adjusting its regulatory framework in the field of security and defence aimed at developing defence capabilities, enhancing security coordination among the EU member states and developing resilience to withstand hybrid threats, which the EU has linked to Russia and such terrorist organizations as ISIL.

The EU adopted an entirely new strategic document - the EU Global Strategy, which reflected new approaches to European security, developed and started implementing a series of operational and working documents. Practical steps were taken, new security and defence institutions, working bodies and units were established. In order to carry out reviewed security and defence tasks, the EU revised budget spending for these goals and created a separate European Defence Fund. And this work continues today, including activities within the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which is considered a breakthrough solution to strengthen security cooperation in the EU.

While taking security and defence efforts, the EU is steadily moving to a “security union” that will not replace NATO, but will significantly strengthen joint actions to detect and neutralize threats, especially hybrid ones. This will allow the EU to use fully its security and defence capabilities, and complement NATO’s military capabilities.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

At the beginning of 2014, before the beginning of Russia’s open aggression against Ukraine, the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU (CFSP) was framed by the Treaty on European Union (edited by the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009) and the EU Global Strategy.

According to the recent changes, a number of the EU executive bodies - the European External Action Service, the Political and Security Committee; the Military Committee; the EU Military Staff, were created, and all types of foreign policies were reorganized into a unitary system of principles, values and goals. The term “external action” was introduced that covered all external directions: economic, political and security.

The key position of the Treaty on European Union is the position on mutual defence, which obliges the EU member states to provide assistance and support “if a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory”. (European Union 2012, art. 42). This article is similar to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, but it is important that the European document is more widely formulated than the NATO document, as it previews collective actions not only in the case of a military attack, but also in the case of a terrorist attack, natural or man-made disasters.

The established Political and Security Committee, subordinate to the EU Council, monitors the development of international events in the sphere of the CFSP and helps to identify and monitor directions of this policy. It is assisted by the Politico-Military Group, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management and the Military Committee. Coordination of defence activities is carried out by the European Defence Agency. It performs the following functions: development of defence capabilities; assistance in scientific research and development of new technologies for defence; promotion of cooperation in the field of weapons; creation of a competitive European defence equipment market and strengthening of the European defence, technological and institutional base.

Within the framework of the CFSP, the European Union implements the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the main task of which is to carry out missions outside the EU, in particular peacekeeping, conflict prevention and international security operations. It was envisaged to expand participation of the EU in foreign operations (missions) and improve cooperation with the UN, NATO and the African Union. Civil-military
cooperation will remain the basis for the development of European security processes. It is planned to develop new initiatives within the framework of updating the CSDP concept and to find compromises between member states and the EU institutions in this area.

As a key political document, the European Union Security Strategy “Safe Europe in a Better World” was adopted on December 12, 2003. (European Union 2003a) The main threats were terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, threats to statehood and organized crime. However, among the threats not mentioned were regional conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Russia is listed among the international partners of the EU, along with the United States, the UN and NATO, in particular, to stabilize the situation in the Balkans and the Middle East. (European Union 2003b)

Further, certain changes occurred in the security environment, in particular, the Russian gas war against Ukraine in 2006 and the Russian Federation’s war against Georgia in August 2008, which forced the EU to make some changes to the Security Strategy. As a result, the report to the European Council on the implementation of the Strategy of December 11, 2008 evaluated the implementation of this strategy and highlighted such additional threats as cybercrime, global climate change and energy security, which were classified as key issues in relations with the Russian Federation. There was also mentioned Georgia and Moldova concerning unresolved conflicts. (European Commission 2008) However, Russia was not determined responsible for incitement of the conflicts, and no rigid steps against the perpetrator of security and stability were proposed.

For almost 10 years, the EU Security Strategy remained the only unchanged document that set out the principles of the EU security policy in a comprehensive manner. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, a number of the EU member states insisted again on reviewing the Strategy. Agreement could not be reached for a long time, and therefore, in May 2013, a report on the need of revision of the Strategy was presented on the initiative of Sweden, Poland, Italy and Spain. Changes in the security situation in Europe, caused by Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, made it possible to really move this process apace. In June 2015, the European Council presented assessments of the security environment of the EU and started the preparation of a completely new strategy, which was approved on June 28, 2016, and entitled the EU Global Strategy for Common Foreign and Security Policy “Shared Vision, Common Action:
Stronger Europe” (EUGS). It became a new integrated vision of the EU foreign and security policy.

Unlike the Security Strategy, the EU Global Strategy, alongside with the EU’s own security, pays more attention to security in the neighbourhood. For example, the EU Global Strategy clearly states: “To the east, the European security order has been violated.” (EEAS 2016) Of course, this means the aggression of Russia against Ukraine, although it is not clearly indicated there. In the Global Strategy, the EU took into account the current regional situation, sources of new security challenges and threats, permanent and situational allies, and the development of the situation in Eastern Europe. The EU Global Strategy identified five key priorities: 1) EU security; 2) neighbourhood; 3) an integrated approach to conflicts; 4) cooperative regional orders; 5) global governance.

In the Global Strategy, the range of threats has been defined more extensively than had been done earlier in the EU. They are: terrorism, illegal migration, economic volatility, energy threats and hybrid threats. It is important to note that Russia’s violation of international law and destabilization of Ukraine created a new challenge to the core of the European security order. At the same time, the EU-Russia interdependence is highlighted, which prompts the EU to involve it in discussing misunderstandings and cooperation where interests coincide, above all, at the regional level.

In order to counter current threats, the Global Strategy envisages enhancing internal capabilities in the EU, which should lead to European collective security. Along with this, the EU emphasizes the need to deepen cooperation with NATO. Particular importance is attached to the security to the south and east from the European Union, that is, in the immediate surroundings. At the same time, attention is focused on the need to strengthen the resilience of countries and societies, as well as the involvement of these countries into the CSDP. It is foreseen that the EU will respond to conflicts and crises at all stages of their development by preventing, resolving, maintaining stability and avoiding new conflicts.

The EU Global Strategy has become not only a conceptual document in the foreign and security field, but also a basis for the development of other sectoral and operational documents aimed at a specific area of counteracting existing and potential threats.
2. Changes in security discourses

In order to implement the EU Global Strategy as the strategic document, a number of other documents have been developed, including the EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan, the Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats and the Joint Report to the European Parliament and the Council on its implementation (EU Council 2017a), the EU operational protocol for countering hybrid threats ‘EU Playbook’, the European Parliament Briefing “Combating hybrid threats: EU-NATO Cooperation”, the EU cybersecurity strategy, Joint Staff Working Document “Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 Focusing on key priorities and tangible results” and other documents.

The EU Global Strategy Implementation Plan on Security and Defence was approved on November 14, 2016, at the joint meeting of the Foreign Ministers and Defence Ministers of the EU member states, and later on - at the European Council meeting in December 2016. (EU Council 2016) The implementation process itself was shaped in the so-called “defence package” of the European Security and Defence (2016 EU Security and Defence Package). (EEAS 2017a) In addition to the Implementation Plan, it includes a list of financial resources identified in the European Defence Action Plan (European Commission 2016a) and a set of proposals for the implementation of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration. The package provided for the creation of a European Defence Fund aimed at supporting member countries and the European defence industry in the development of joint effective defensive capabilities. The relevant decision in this regard was approved by the European Commission in June 2017. (European Commission 2017a) The Fund is managed and filled by the European Union and its member countries in order to coordinate and strengthen national contributions to defence research and to improve the interaction between national armed forces. The Fund has two areas: research, which is financed with €90 million until the end of 2019; development, which is financed with €500 million per year after 2020.

Although Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has elevated security issues to a higher level in the European Union, there are some kind of “red lines” in the EU that deter Brussels from creating an independent, powerful defence and security component of the EU. Despite the initiative of the European Parliament to consider the initiative of a European Defence Union (EDU), as it is set out in the relevant resolution of November 22, 2016, and the launch by the European Commission of a relevant discussion in June 2017 (European
Commission 2017b), there is some scepticism among the EU member states about the creation of a “duplicate” of NATO in the European space. In any case, in each of the three scenarios proposed by the European Commission for the further development of EU security and defence – “Security and Defence Cooperation”, “Shared Security and Defence”, and “Common Defence and Security” (European Commission 2017c), an integral component is enhanced cooperation with NATO.

The goals of cooperation between the EU and NATO coincide, and this is based not only on the fact that 22 countries are both members of the EU and NATO, but also on the desire to mutually fill the current gaps in the security capabilities of each other. For the European Union, the Alliance remains a pillar in Europe in terms of confronting military threats, since no EU member state has sufficient military capabilities. As President of the European Council Donald Tusk declared in June 2017, “such cooperation will allow the EU to move towards deepening defence integration.” Declared in the Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats of April 2016 (European Commission 2016b) the enhanced EU-NATO cooperation was further enshrined in the Joint Declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the NATO Secretary General in July 2016. In this document, the first task is to “boost the ability to counter hybrid threats.”

In the Joint Framework, the European Union correctly identified the hybrid threats as a “mixture of coercive and subversive activity, conventional and unconventional methods (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological), which can be used in a coordinated manner by state or non-state actors to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of formally declared warfare.” But the question about these “state or non-state actors” remains open. The Joint Framework document states that the main challenges to peace and stability lie in the eastern and southern neighbourhood, but the main source of threats is called the southern direction - the Sahel and the Horn of Africa. (EEAS 2017b)

More precise definitions are made by the European Parliament, which in its resolution in June 2015 clearly named Russia as an aggressor that launched a hybrid war against Ukraine and conducted an aggressive information war against the EU. In March 2017, the Parliament adopted the Briefing “Combating hybrid threats: EU-NATO Cooperation.” It clearly states that “the concept of hybrid threat has been revived in relation to Russia’s actions in Ukraine and the ISIL/Da’esh campaigns going far
Consequently, in the EU, Russia, along with ISIL, has already begun to be identified as the cause of hybrid threats. At the same time, the EU still has a desire to continue a dialogue with Russia. This, in particular, was confirmed by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini during her visit to Moscow in April 2017. “We always believe in the European Union that dialogue – constructive, open dialogue, frank dialogue – is the way. And this is true also for a relevant – not only neighbour – but a global player as the Russian Federation is,” she said. Although the EU has repeatedly felt Russia’s reluctance to conduct an “open and honest dialogue”, it continues to insist on it so as not to annoy Russia.

In July 2016, the European Commission introduced the EU Operational Protocol for countering hybrid threats “EU Playbook”. This document defines the modality of coordination, the processes for obtaining and analyzing data and informing the persons responsible for security, training and cooperation with partner organizations, in particular with NATO.

In addition, in November 2016, the European Commission presented the European Defence Action Plan, which was approved by the European Council in December 2016. That document identified several specific initiatives aimed at strengthening the EU’s ability to respond to hybrid threats, including the European Defence Fund, the promotion of investment in defence, and the strengthening of a single defence market.

Today, the EU positions cybersecurity as one of the key areas for countering hybrid threats, although the conceptual document - the EU Cybersecurity Strategy, was developed in 2013, before the emergence of hybrid threats in European terminology. Taking into account the new realities, which arose in the background of Russian offensive behaviour in cyberspace, on September 13, 2017, the European Commission approved a cybersecurity package based on tools and new initiatives to further strengthen cyber resistance in the EU. (European Commission 2017d) In October 2017, the European Council approved a common approach to EU cybersecurity, based on the mentioned strategy and the NIS directive. It envisioned the creation of a powerful cybersecurity agency in the EU, introduction of a common cybersecurity certification scheme for the EU and the rapid implementation of the NIS directive. Such a set of activities, according to the conclusions of EU leaders, should lead to the creation of a single digital market.
The European Commission released its **Energy Security Strategy** in May 2014. The Strategy aims to ensure a stable and abundant supply of energy for European citizens and the economy. EU energy dependency is particularly high for crude oil (90%) and natural gas (69%). Many countries are also heavily reliant on a single supplier, including some that rely entirely on Russia for their natural gas. This dependence leaves them vulnerable to supply disruptions, whether caused by political or commercial disputes, or infrastructure failure. The Strategy proposes actions in five key areas: increasing energy efficiency; increasing energy production in the EU; completing the internal energy market; speaking with one voice in external energy policy; strengthening emergency and solidarity mechanisms and protecting critical infrastructure.

On December 11, 2017, the EU Council approved the Permanent Structured Cooperation (**PESCO**). (European Council 2017) The intention to participate in this format was announced by the 25 EU Member States. (EU Council 2017b) One of the goals of this format was to determine timely responses to changes in the security situation around the EU. PESCO provides for closer cooperation between the EU member states in the field of security and defence, developing common defence capabilities, investing in joint projects and enhancing the operational readiness and capabilities of national armed forces. Priority projects were identified in the areas of military medicine, logistics, troop transport, training, energy provision, emergency response, mine action, in particular at sea, maritime surveillance and protection, information and cybersecurity, command and control and crisis response.

The European Defence Fund and PESCO, along with the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (**CARD**), constitute a comprehensive EU Defence Package. CARD is a process of monitoring the defence plans of the EU member states, aimed at coordinating joint security and defence projects. The review is prepared by the European Defence Agency in co-operation with the European External Action Service. The first full review is expected in 2019.

As one of the sources of hybrid threats for the EU is the East, the views on improving the security situation to the East from the EU borders were set out in the Joint Staff Working Document “**Eastern Partnership - 20 Deliverables for 2020 Focusing on key priorities and tangible results**” in the section “Security”. (European Commission 2017e) This document was approved in December 2016 and revised and amended in June 2017. Given the security situation in Eastern Europe, the document was improved,
and the goals and objectives became more specific. If the first version of the section was entitled “Resilience and civilian security” and the content was more aimed at ensuring human security with an emphasis on the internal dimension, then the final version the section was called “Security”, and it already had wider national and regional security objectives. For example, there were such goals as “solving cybercrime problems”, “estimating cyber-threats”, “enhanced protection of critical infrastructure” and “comprehensive national and regional disaster risk management policies”.

With regard to “countering hybrid threats” in the Eastern Partnership region, the European Union focuses on protecting critical infrastructure and cybersecurity. The EU proposes partner countries to adopt cybersecurity strategies and set up computer emergency response teams (CERT). Meanwhile, in countering hybrid threats, there are no other areas which are identified in the EU Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats; they are information, economic and financial spheres. However, in this revised version, the EU did not identify Russia as a source of threats.

Possessing limited military capabilities, the EU focuses on non-military security aspects in the Eastern Partnership region - mainly on cyber defence, society resilience, emergencies, critical infrastructure protection, chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear risks, countering organized crime and illegal arms trafficking. Purely in the military sphere, the EU defined achievements of operational cooperation, participation of partner countries in missions, operations and the EU Battlegroups and their involvement into military training programmes.

3. Transformation of security policies

Since 2014, militarization of approaches to security policy and formation of a set of measures to identify and counter hybrid threats have been taking place in the EU. Thus, the creation of the EU Military Planning Conduct and Capability Facility was a step in the practical implementation of the EU Global Strategy. Although the Facility is not a classic full-fledged military headquarters, it is responsible for EU military operations. At the initial stage, under its control, there are three EU operations: EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia, EUTM République Centrale Africaine (RCA) and EUTM Mali. The maritime operations “Sophia” in the Mediterranean and “Atalanta” are still outside its powers, but may be in the future.
At the institutional level, the EU has taken a very serious approach to the detection and counteraction to hybrid threats. In 2016, it proposed establishing the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell at the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (EU INTCEN) of the European External Action Service. This new structure, which gained full operational capability in May 2017, has responsibilities to collect, analyze and provide open and closed information on hybrid threats. This Cell brings hybrid threats to a single European denominator and provides information about them, including in the form of the “Hybrid Bulletin”, to the EU institutions and the member states. At the same time, it was proposed to set up a Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats that was launched in April 2017 in Finland, which focuses on research on threats of such types and mechanisms to counteract them. (Finish Government 2017)

If to analyze the key areas for countering hybrid threats identified by the EU, in the purely military sphere, the EU limited enhancing intelligence for the timely detection of hybrid threats and reducing the cycles of developing national military capabilities to neutralize hybrid threats and protect critical infrastructure. However, Russian aggression has given rise to a serious discussion of the possibilities of creating a European Army. Even President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, in an interview with the German edition of Salzburg.com in May 2017, acknowledged: “A European army is not a project for the near future. It is, however, a project that would give additional weight to the European foreign and security policy.”

Nevertheless, the information sphere, or strategic communications in a broader sense, is recognized as a top priority in countering hybrid threats in the EU. The key task is to raise awareness of the public about hybrid threats that should increase its resilience in this dimension. To counteract Russian propaganda, the EU created the East Stratcom Task Force, which launched a website to counteract disinformation.

In terms of protection of critical infrastructure, the European Union still defines indicators of infrastructure vulnerability within the framework of the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP), and works to identify the required security capabilities due to the European Defence Agency’s efforts.

In the energy sector, to counteract hybrid threats, the need to diversify sources and routes of energy supply to the EU is identified; first of all, they are the development of the Southern Gas Corridor to transport Caspian gas
and the construction of liquefied gas hubs, mainly in Northern Europe.

While having the developed and interconnected cyber-network, the European Union has already taken a number of measures to counter cyber-threats: creation of a network of 28 (according to the number of member states) Computer Security Incident Response Teams (CSIRT) and the EU Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-EU). Separately, the European Commission created the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) for countering cyber-threats at the EU level and the NIS Platform for the cooperation of EU bodies with public and private players in cyberspace.

In the financial sector, the EU pays the utmost attention to the resilience of banking and financial infrastructure and counteraction to the financing of terrorism and money laundering. So far, only separate cases of obstructing the financing of hybrid aggression has been fixed in the EU. For example, Estonia closed the bank account of MIA “Russia Today” in 2015.

An important place is devoted to EU cooperation with other international organizations and third countries. First of all, in practical terms, this has resulted in close cooperation at the working level between similar institutions of the EU and NATO, for example: the joint European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats; the EU Hybrid Fusion Cell and the NATO Hybrid Analysis Branch; CERT-EU and the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability (NCIRC). The EU and NATO intend to step up cooperation in security planning and interoperability with regard to standardization and joint training.

The EU believes that functional institutions to counter hybrid threats in third countries are a guarantee of protection for the EU itself. Therefore, using the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the European Commission is taking measures to strengthen the stability of partner countries, including Ukraine. However, with regard to EU partner countries, the focus is mainly on cyber defence, increased society resilience, emergencies, neutralization of chemical, biological, radio-biological and nuclear risks, the fight against organized crime and illegal arms trafficking. But the EU task to launch a pilot risk assessment of hybrid threats is implemented in Moldova, and not in Ukraine, which counteracts directly such threats from the East.

Russia’s direct aggression against Ukraine, which became a flagrant violation
of international law and European values, has still forced the European Union to resort to restrictive measures (sanctions) against the Russian Federation. The EU sanctions are divided into five categories: diplomatic measures; individual restrictive measures; restriction of economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol; economic sanctions; restriction of economic cooperation. Diplomatic measures include the abolition of EU-Russia summits and regular bilateral summits, suspension of negotiations on visa issues and new agreements with the Russian Federation, reduction of the G8 to the G7, suspension by the EU of support to talks over Russia’s joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the International Energy Agency. 150 people and 38 entities are the subject of individual restrictive measures. The EU banned the maintenance of any relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, including investments and tourism. Economic sanctions against Russia are sector-specific and relate to capital markets, sensitive technologies, arms and dual-use goods. The European Investment Bank and the EBRD suspended the financing of new operations with Russia.

Conclusions

Despite attempts of the EU to address hybrid threats, this security area is still seen as a set of tactical measures to counteract individual risks of mainly terrorist and cyber-information dimensions. Although the European Union notes the emergence of hybrid threats because of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, it does not identify the only source of such hybrid threats, which already, in practice, threaten security in Europe - the Russian Federation. The reason for this is the lack of unity within the EU. Each time the continuation of sanctions against Russia goes problematic. Many EU member states are interested in continuing economic cooperation with Russia, even if it harms other member states. A vivid testimony to this is the dispute on construction of the second line of the North Stream.

However, Russia’s destructive policy towards the EU is forcing the European Union to increasingly identify Russia as a source of threats to European security, and every new European security document makes this trend ever clearer. The Association Agreement and the Eastern Partnership initiative are aimed at integrating Ukraine into the EU, including the security sector, while measures are taken against Russia to force it to adhere to international law. At the same time, the EU is not closing a dialogue window for Russia, which is perceived in Russia as a desire of Brussels to resume cooperation,
and not as a channel of influence and stabilization of the situation in Europe.

References


SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014

NATO

Juraj KRUPA

Résumé

The conflict in Ukraine and the illegitimate annexation of Crimea by Russia took NATO and its Allies off guard. It showed that NATO was not really prepared for confrontation with a peer actor like Russia. Actually, many of its European Allies saw Russia as a partner insisting on their long-term foreign policy goals towards Russia and advocating partnership and business which should create ties between the West and Russia with the aim of bringing Moscow closer to the West and making any confrontation less possible. This miscalculation also transferred to NATO strategies and policies.

NATO Russia relations are still, after all the changes to the security environment based upon the NATO-Russia founding act, a 20-year-old document that just does not reflect the current situation. The Alliance realized that not only are no substantial forces based on the Eastern flank but that it didn’t even have any standing defence plans to defend the Eastern flank. While being focused on crisis and overseas operations suddenly collective defence emerged again as the most important task of the Alliance. As in the Cold War the issue was to avoid possible military (not to mention nuclear) confrontation with Russia.

The first steps undertaken by NATO were just to assure its Allies on the Eastern flank. It took NATO another two years of difficult negotiations to bolster its defence on the Eastern flank by deploying troops as part of the enhanced forward presence that is considered as a tripwire in case of hybrid or conventional attack by Russia.

The adaptation of the Alliance is on the right track but many challenges still remain. Regarding strategic documents the adaptation of the Strategic Concept to provide the Alliance with important policy guideline remains the major challenge.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

The fall of the Iron Curtain and political changes in Eastern Europe had their impact on NATO and its role as a security guarantee in the transatlantic area. Collective defence became less important while crisis management and cooperative security started to play a central role for the Alliance in a reaction to regional conflicts. Crisis management and cooperative security played a more important role with the focus on operations abroad, stabilization efforts and building up the security and defence capabilities of partners and this was coupled with downsizing the necessary heavy force for the defence of Europe together with downsizing the US military presence in Europe to 2 permanently deployed brigades. The effort was also to normalize relations with Russia by establishing the NATO - Russia Council as a platform for direct talks.

Russia’s illegitimate and illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its illegal intervention in Ukraine took the world by surprise and led to fundamental changes in the security environment in Europe. Since the Cold War, once again Russia and the West are confronted. One might say that the aggressive behaviour by Russia was unexpected even though this was experienced already during the Russian-Georgian war in 2008. At the time the West decided to look away and continued with day-to-day business with Russia as it has been considered that it was better to keep Russia as a partner rather than a foe.

NATO had a relatively quick response to the occupation of Crimea but there was certain reluctance among some European Allies to take more decisive action. First of all, Russia was considered as a partner and business between the Russian Federation and Western Europe was flourishing. Also, Ukraine was neither part of NATO nor the EU and Germany, France, Italy and some other European Allies were cautious about pushing hard on Russia and putting it economically on knees, which would have led to a rise in tensions. The employment of new methods of warfare in Ukraine and beyond described also in the Gerasimov Doctrine and known as “new generation warfare”¹, “non-linear warfare” or the frequent term “hybrid warfare” which includes information operations, cyber warfare, and covert action combined with low-intensity military operations, led to the understanding of Russia’s

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¹ One of the descriptions of ‘new generation’ (or ‘permanent’) warfare is the one that is “to be dominated by information and psychological warfare, in order to achieve superiority in troops and weapons control, morally and psychologically depressing the enemy’s armed forces personnel and civilian population” and its objective is to “reduce the necessity for deploying hard military power to the minimum necessary”. (Bērzinš 2014, 5)
willingness and intentions in pursuing its interests. It took some time to realize that NATO had to start the process of adaptation to face the new realities on the ground.

The first changes of NATO strategy regarding assertive Russian behaviour and towards the adaptation of the Alliance to the new security situation started with the approval of measures and initiatives at the NATO summit in Wales in 2014. The Wales summit was the departure point for enhancing the Alliance’s collective defence capabilities starting with the Readiness Action Plan consisting of Assurance Measures and the start of designing the Adaptation Measures. Defence spending became again a priority agenda. The Allies realized that the cuts in defence spending in the last decade had led to the loss of capabilities, downsizing the necessary heavy force of Europe and withdrawal of US troops necessary to face new challenges from the East and also the South, and embraced the need to refocus again on collective defence. The highlight of the summit was the introduction of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of about 5000 troops to be deployed to the area of operation at short notice as a so-called spearhead force to defend Allied territory. It was considered as a limited response to the new threats on the Eastern flank of the Alliance taking into account that out of more than 2,000,000 NATO standing troops of all Allies in Europe only 5000 troops were to be ready to be deployed in the worst case scenario. Already during the negotiations about the VJTF, issues with its deployment to the Baltics emerged, such as the Russian A2/AD deployed in the area. This system would endanger or prevent their deployment. Vague pledges to increase defence spending up to 2% until 2024 were made but no major increase followed in the short period after the summit. Another summit and hard negotiations were needed for the Defence Investment Pledge where almost all the Allies would confirm an increase in defence spending until 2024 (NATO 2017a).

NATO and its Allies soon came to terms that more had to be done to meet the challenges they are facing. During the Warsaw summit NATO agreed on many important documents and initiatives which influenced the Adaptation Measures. NATO used better the opportunity to take tough decisions and provide better security to its members. The focus was on traditional territorial defence and approval of the necessary Adaptation Measures, among which the most important are the implementation of the Readiness Action plan, the Deterrence and Defence package, NATO Strategy countering Hybrid Warfare, Cyber Defence Pledge and acknowledgment of the cyber domain as the 5th military domain, the new Political Guidance 2015. This sum of
documents laid the ground for the much needed start of the transformation of NATO Forces with creating the possibility of military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance, increasing the size of the NATO Response Force (NRF) from 13,000 to 30,000 and also led to the establishment of the NATO Force Integration units as small commands under the NATO Forces structure with the aim of incorporating NATO contingency plans into the national planning of Allies and facilitate reinforcements of Allied Forces. According to NATO secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, “the NATO response force is now three times bigger, with a brigade-sized spearhead force at its core, able to move within days” (DW 2016).

The changes of threats and dynamics of modern warfare require that NATO adapts also its decision-making process. It is very hard to make decisions quickly with 29 members in comparison to a peer actor who has the advantage of fast decision-making by one actor/politician. Therefore NATO made important changes to its crisis management decision-making process, making it faster to react to threats. The issue with NATO’s decision-making process is that it has significantly changed since the Cold War and too many decisions which were in the hands of the commanders in the past are under political control. During the Cold War era the military part of the house used to have more independence in cases of imminent crisis to deploy forces. These competencies were taken from the military and led to full political control of any decision to move or deploy NATO Forces. The idea was to prevent any possible escalation. All steps taken in the changed decision-making process will have to be adapted more in the future to regain the automatization of the decision-making process, leaving more autonomy to the military.

After adapting most strategies and documents there is one striking example of the most important document which has not been touched and that is the Strategic Concept. The Strategic Concept dates back to 1999 while the last update took place in 2010 and represents the operational view of the Washington Treaty. The document is among codified decisions and practices and is also seen as a tool of public diplomacy. It is considered as a balanced document of collective defence and global engagement. Discussions are ongoing in the background about the need to adjust the document to reflect the changed security environment in and around Europe. The Allies who insist on keeping the text for longer actually are limiting NATO’s possible global engagement (for example full engagement of NATO in Iraq was blocked by Germany and France) with the arguments that NATO must retain its three core tasks with the orientation on 360°. The same Allies were pushing the break when it came to a more responsive role of NATO to the Russian
activities in and around Ukraine trying to play a moderate and reasonable international player. But the need to adjust the Strategic Document remained and will have to be done in future. The question is just how long it will take to make the first step and how many compromises it will take to get a strong language.

2. Changes in security discourses

Russian actions against Ukraine served as a wake-up call for NATO and its Allies. NATO started to engage more with collective defence, its Allies started to spend more on defence and prepare for the worst-case scenario. According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg: “We have launched a wholesale reform and reinforcement to our collective defence deterrence - the biggest since the end of the Cold War” (DW 2016).

As mentioned, discourse within NATO on many pressing security issues may differ. Russia’s behaviour in Ukraine was a game changer for the US which considered Europe as stable. Once again it had to redesign its security policy towards Russia. Poland and the Baltic states specifically started to push for the permanent presence of the US and also of NATO troops in the region as the only guarantee to their sovereignty and independence. While the US decided to send one brigade to Poland on a rotational basis, discussions in NATO about deploying troops to the Baltic states and Poland were more complicated. Especially Germany and France considered stationing of NATO troops to the east as a provocative act and no decisions were achieved during the Wales summit. Only the so-called Assurance Measures were agreed, which were based on more exercises, sending troops on a rotational basis, beefing up the early warning system and enhancing the naval presence in the Baltic.

It took a further two years of negotiations among the Allies and in 2016 during the NATO summit in Warsaw an “enhanced forward presence” which provides the deployment of forces to the Baltic states on a continuous rotational basis based on four multinational battalions and a “tailored forward presence” to the Black Sea were agreed on. The enhanced forward presence is a small force spread along the hundreds of kilometre-long border with Russia to pose no threat to its security and it is obvious that in the case of worst scenario it cannot defend the Baltic states. Its function is a tripwire effect similar to West Berlin during the Cold War.
Adjusting relations with Russia was a very sensitive issue that NATO had to focus on before starting with political transformation. Even though the reaction to the conflict in Ukraine was relatively fast with suspension of all civilian and military cooperation, however the issue how to talk to Russia remained. Differences among the Allies especially in the East and West about how to deal with Russia took some months of negotiations.

NATO left intact channels for political dialogue under the NATO – Russia Council as well as for military communication. The Alliance intends to use a dual track approach towards Russia – one which complements credible deterrence with periodical, focused and meaningful dialogue. In Warsaw the Alliance confirmed a willingness to pursue dialogue with Moscow and explore the possibilities to revive confidence-building measures.

German Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen admitted that Kremlin actions can be “completely unpredictable and aggressive,” but, according to her, there is also a Russia that cooperates on the crisis in Iran and Libya (DW 2016). The rhetoric is about keeping channels with Russia open and leaving space for both sides to continue negotiations, avoiding misunderstanding, and making Russia understand that it is not pushed into the corner. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stresses that the Alliance would continue dialogue with the Kremlin since “Russia is our biggest neighbour and integral part of European security” (DW 2016).

Russia understands that it cannot deal with a well-armed, prepared and decisive Alliance and therefore it is using all means to divide the Allies through unconventional/hybrid activities (warfare). The same approach is used by Russia against the EU, which pursued economic sanctions despite growing influence of nationalistic and populist parties who are in favour of normalizing relations with Russia and abandoning the policy of sanctions. The EU is keeping with the sanctions while sporadic voices of EU members are critical towards the EU sanctions policy, calling for it to be lifted. Despite the expressed divergent opinions of especially the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Italy and Greece, the EU remains unanimous on this policy so far. The reasons why these countries are advocating for Russia are manifold. Economic reforms were successful but had also its losers in society. Development is fast and parts of society still feel left behind and do not identify with its foreign and security policy orientation. Together with the ongoing disinformation campaign, a lack of political leadership which prefers to follow the mood of the population rather than making difficult decisions is making space for populism and nationalism. This is certified by
decreasing support and trust in the EU and NATO (GLOBSEC 2017).

A danger of a growing division among the Allies remains. Especially the policy of Turkey and its complicated relations with the EU, Germany and other European countries while sticking to rapprochement with Russia might be a divisive factor. This could trigger another complicated debate about the future of enhanced forward presence, as well as some painful changes to the NATO command structure (Larabee et al. 2017, 3-15).

Poland is a key player in the region who sees itself as the leader in security and defence areas within the V4 (Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) and focuses also on building strategic partnerships with Romania, and Scandinavia while also considering the Weimar triangle as a key format. Even the Baltic countries are more or less secretly relying on the help of Poland in the worst case scenario. The rest of the V4 countries are improving their defence capabilities but are still sending mixed signals with their rhetoric towards Russia.

Romania was also struck by the annexation of Crimea which changed the security situation in the Black Sea and is trying to improve its security and deterrence but is limited by the Montreux convention from 1936. Against the backdrop of Turkey blocking more NATO presence in the Black Sea, Romania is trying to balance with more US presence and establish strategic partnerships, such as the one with Poland.

Sweden and Finland are also taking serious measures to counter Russian activities in the region. Before the Russian assertive behaviour and war against Ukraine the political leadership and the population were clear about their neutral status. The mood has changed and the support for NATO membership is rising among the population. Both countries are now building closer ties with NATO, enjoying a special partnership participating more in exercises and strategic discussion with the Alliance (Ondrejcsák 2016, 14-24).

Another direction of discourse within NATO is evolving around defence spending. It is not new and did not emerge with President Trump calling for the Allies to spend more on defence in an “impolite” way. During the Cold War era the NATO guideline on spending was set up to 3% of GDP but also at that time not all Allies fulfilled the margin. The 2% was set already in the 1990s as a precondition to keep NATO and Allied defence most modern and advanced (Techau 2015, 10). But most of the defence spending and protection was left on the shoulders of the US. Critics of the attitude
of European Allies to defence by the US administration were present long before the Trump administration. Former U.S. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates in 2011 mentioned the changing generational perception in the US: “Future U.S. political leaders—those for whom the Cold War was not the formative experience that it was for me—may not consider the return on America’s investment in NATO worth the cost” (Valášek 2017).

The Allies have already started spending more on their defence to balance the unfair burden shared between the US and European Allies. Especially the Allies on the eastern flank are expected to reach the 2% in 2017 (Latvia, Lithuania, Romania). The Allies agreed on a plan at the NATO summit in Brussels in 2017 which will entitle NATO to follow the performance of each Ally. However there is certain resistance among some NATO countries (Germany, Italy, France, Netherlands) which consider keeping constant spending on the 2% level as ineffective.

### 3. Transformation of security policies

After the Cold War NATO focused mainly on crisis management operations while its deterrence posture remained unchanged, outdated and unfit for the purpose. After enlargement no proper measures were taken, contingency plans to defend the eastern Allies were missing and there was no change to the Command and Force structure.

The decision to strengthen the Alliance’s deterrence and defence posture was triggered by two developments. The first was Russia’s military doctrine, the scale and pace of its military modernisation (Bryce-Rogers 2013, 17), and above all, its aggressive rhetoric (Gurzu and Herszenhorn 2017), aggressive actions against neighbours with air and sea provocations especially in the Baltics, big military snap exercises on the NATO border, and increased military activity and provocations close to NATO’s borders (Paulauskas 2016). The second reason has been also the deteriorating security situation in the South with failing states, terrorism, migration as transnational threats to the security of the Allies. To tackle both conventional and unconventional threats effectively new strategies and policies will have to be developed. Focus should be put more on cooperative security but some Allies simply do not want to see NATO becoming more involved in the area of Middle East and North Africa.

There are two types of opinions about NATO’s ability to adapt to new threats.
as can be seen in many studies especially published in the last years after the start of the conflict in and around Ukraine. Critics keep saying that NATO is too slow to adapt to new challenges and threats while many believe that NATO is capable to adapt to the ever-changing security environment. Actually during the existence of the Alliance NATO had to change and adapt to the new environment constantly. When looking back at the end of the Cold War and the period of the 1990s NATO adapted relatively quickly with the focus on crisis management and cooperative security.

Nowadays with more member countries with low spending on defence it is a difficult task. The challenges NATO is facing are far more complex, going beyond purely military solutions. NATO started with a wider transformation on both political and military to make the Alliance a more effective instrument to carry out its tasks.

**Political adaptation**

Most of the measures taken in response to renewed tensions with Russia have focused on defence on the borders of NATO. The Alliance understood that NATO will not be secure while the neighbourhood is in turmoil. NATO has several partnership policies which are focused on defence and security building as well as on resilience building. But each partner is different so the cooperation had to be tailored. The aim was to provide an umbrella the partnership programmes and initiatives to achieve a more coherent approach and unified policy called Projecting Stability. NATO’s effort with projecting stability is to have a better coordinated approach to provide faster support and training to partners in need with all necessary tools at one place (NATO 2016a). The aim is to support resilience of the most endangered partners in the NATO neighbourhood and is tailored to each partner in understanding the differences between them.

Ukraine was provided with the so-called Comprehensive Assistance Package. Ukraine is a long-standing partner of NATO, contributing to several operations and missions of the Alliance even during times it had to defend itself. It must be understood that the package provided to Ukraine with the aim of building resilience is not a replacement for an open door policy. NATO is providing a set of measures which are focused on security sector reform with the aim of enhancing its resilience and improving its interoperability with NATO in the areas of Command, Control, Communications and Computers (C4), Logistics standardization, defence and civil emergency planning. To make Ukraine more self-reliant in defence
technical cooperation with NATO is focused on strengthening the Ukrainian defence industry which has big potential also for the future cooperation with NATO countries, especially those still using Russian equipment.

Besides all the enhancements of partnerships one of the most important is a closer cooperation among NATO and the EU. As often mentioned, neither of these organizations is capable of dealing with the new challenges alone. Until 2014 both organisations had some marginal cooperation. Both organisations are facing comprising military and civilian threats stemming mainly from hybrid threats. Closer cooperation is a logical step because most NATO members are also members of the EU. In the case that a country should become part of a hybrid campaign it is expected that also the organisation of which the country is a member will become part of that hybrid campaign (NATO 2014). One of the main benefits achieved at the NATO Warsaw summit in 2016 was the deepening of the cooperation between NATO and the EU in specific areas implementing operationalising parallel procedures in the areas of situational awareness, cyber security, crisis prevention and strategic communication and also signing of the joint declaration by the NATO Secretary General, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission.

Military Adaptation

The most important precondition for strengthening Alliances Deterrence and Defence was the reverse of declining defence spending. The defence investment pledge (DIP) agreed in Wales in 2014 was the start of increased defence spending with the aim of achieving the NATO guideline of 2% on defence, of which a minimum 20% should be spend on modernisation and research & development.

The unbalanced defence capabilities and capacities are especially visible on the European side and the US was already for many years demanding the generation of more power within the European Allies. Currently, the US provides 70% of all burden sharing in the Alliance, and European Allies should provide at least 50% of the burden except for specific capabilities (NATO 2016b).

The Readiness Action Plan (RAP) was a cornerstone of the ongoing transformation and remains the pivot for the most important decisions agreed since 2014 regarding military adaptation of the Alliance. Besides the very important impact on the readiness, size and flexibility of the NATO Response
Force (NRF), together with the creation of the spearhead force (VJTF) and changes to the NATO Force structure: Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland fully operational and creation of NATO Force Integration Units on the territory of Allies in the eastern part of the Alliance to assist in training of Alliance forces and in the reception of reinforcements when needed, it also has impact on infrastructure projects on the Eastern flank of the Alliance to prepare for the hosting of troops as well as improving the rapid movement of forces.

The RAP also delivered a new and more ambitious exercise programme. There is a series of ongoing exercises within the Alliance together with NATO partners. But the last bigger exercise, Trident Juncture, took place in 2015 and the next one is planned for 2018. It is a good step forward because NATO besides downsizing its numbers, resources and heavy armour was for a long time also downsizing military exercises, considered among other things, also as expensive. In comparison to the Russian exercises NATO exercises are smaller and take more time for preparation. The Trident Juncture exercise had around 20,000 participants being defensive in its nature, compared to the Zapad exercises of the Russian army which have every time, according to intelligence estimates, tens of thousands of participants training offensive operations against the Alliance on the NATO border.

To enhance the readiness and responsiveness of the Alliance NATO increased the size of the NATO response force (NRF) of 30,000 troops and created a multinational brigade-size Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) of 5,000 troops. The VJTF often called “spearhead force” is ready to be deployed within a few days to respond to challenges at the periphery of NATO’s territory. This force consists of a land component with appropriate air, marine, and special operations forces available. Once fully operational, the VJTF will be supplemented by two additional brigades, as a rapid-reinforcement capability, in the case of a major crisis. If activated, the force will be available to move immediately, following the first warnings and indicators of potential threats, before a crisis begins, to act as a potential deterrent to further escalation (NATO n.d.).

There were certain issues which the NATO planners had to overcome to make the deployment of the NRF effective. Most of the NATO Allies in the east miss enough enablers and logistics and have a lower level of interoperability. Besides the necessary increase in defence spending making these allied forces more modern it is important to have regular
exercises to reach an appropriate level of interoperability. Another issue is the infrastructure and host nation support which is necessary to provide for the NRF being in place. To facilitate the deployment and sustainment of the NRF small command and control nodes have been established called **NATO Force Integration Units** (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia). Their main goal is to identify logistical networks, transportation nodes and supporting infrastructure in order to ensure that NATO high-readiness forces (VJTF) can deploy to an assigned region as quickly as possible, within two and up to seven days (NATO n.d.). But once in place it cannot be considered as deal done. In the case that the deterrence of the VJTF or NRF fails NATO should be able to send Follow-on Forces.

The approval of the Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltics and Poland together with the Tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea are the most significant decisions taken by the Alliance since the end of the Cold War. Since April 2017 four battalion-sized battlegroups on a rotational basis (every 6 months) are fully operational led by framework nations for each battalion (the UK in Estonia, Canada in Latvia, Germany in Lithuania and the US in Poland). These battlegroups provide preventive measures in various scenarios that might arise in the region, such as hybrid threats and are also a trigger as an immediate NATO response to potential aggression. The multinationality of the battlegroups boosts its deterrence effect. In the case of a Russian invasion the casualties would be from many NATO member countries which would cause a unified response of the Alliance.

Achieving permanent presence on a rotational basis in the Baltics was a lengthy drafting process which, after the approval of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), was another milestone in enhancing NATO deterrence and defence. The RAP is based on the plan to deploy the VJTF after the decision of the North Atlantic Council in case of Russian military action and relying on the assumption that Russia would refrain from any action against such deployment and would not use its A2/AD capabilities (Gady 2017). Even if the VJTF reached its desired destination it would need time to be combat ready and fully interoperable with local defence forces.

Another major obstacle was also the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, which is a political agreement rather than a legally binding one. It limits permanent stationing of substantial NATO combat forces in the East. But after 20 years it seems that the first not to feel bound by the agreement was Russia with its big snap exercises on the border with the Alliance, while...
some NATO Allies are still fully committed to adhering to the Founding Act.

With the changes in the security environment NATO has also started a functional assessment of its current command structure (NCS) to make it more robust and ready to react to simultaneous challenges across the full spectrum. In November 2017 Ministers agreed to upgrade the Command Structure to establish two new headquarters for the Atlantic, as well as logistics to move troops in Europe in a better way. The first is to be stationed in Norfolk and the second most probably in Germany (Stoltenberg 2017). Already in 2016 the regional Hub for the South, based at NATO’s Joint Force Command in Naples was created to help to collect information on countries in crisis and challenges stemming from the South (NATO 2017b).

The NCS has changed little since the end of the Cold War. Some changes were made which had impact on downsizing personnel and the closure of some headquarters (the last in 2011). Each process of reorganizing the NCS is very difficult and highly political with substantial lobbying behind the scenes - each headquarters is of utmost importance to every host country from a political and socio-economic view. But geographically there is no move to create a new headquarters in the East while logic says the opposite.

Another area where NATO has already started to do more is the fight against terrorism to tackle the challenges stemming from the south. This has been another demand by the Trump administration which is having impact on the future adaptation of the Alliance. The Alliance decided to join the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL by providing support to the coalition with situational awareness (AWACS) and enhancing the assistance to Iraqi forces through Defence and Related Security Capacity Building in Iraq (DCBI). (Valášek 2017)

**Conclusions**

Russia has demonstrated in Georgia and in Ukraine that it is willing to use military power to achieve its political goals. NATO as an organization of 29 based on consensus took some time to take the appropriate measures to provide more credible security to its most vulnerable members. In 2014, instead of deterring Russia, it decided to provide reassurance measures to its members, starting initiatives such as the RAP to boost the NRF concept while being at the same time more reluctant to provide significant support to the Allies in the east. It took some time until the next summit in Warsaw in 2016 for
NATO to take more measures to boost its deterrence and defence by sending troops to the Baltics and Poland on a rotational basis.

The key element of NATO’s adaptation will remain in assuring its eastern Allies and enhancing their security for them to be able to resist Russian efforts to influence their governments and populations through hybrid or new generation warfare (including massive disinformation campaigns).

The US has continued support to the eastern flank with its deployments, closer cooperation with the EU on sanctions and policies towards Russia. It is of utmost importance to sustain the Transatlantic bond, especially in the light of a certain loss of credibility after remarks during the presidential campaign in the US about the obsolescence of NATO and also certain diplomatic setbacks in recent months.

References


Résumé

The largest changes in US strategic documents and thinking were in both form and substance. Since 2014, Russia has become a security challenge to the US and larger Euro-Atlantic milieu. In the security documents, the US governments declared Russia responsible for actions in their neighborhood and at the international stage there are continuing calls for imposing economic sanctions unless Russia reverses from military and involvement.

The main security discourse in the United States is focused on two things – Russia’s military capabilities, including nuclear weapons and its influence on domestic issues of European countries and the United States. Security and intelligence agencies consider them to be threat to national security. However, this conclusion is rarely concurrent with the White House official statements.

Both the Obama and Trump governments took a pragmatic approach with caution. Both NSS of 2015 and 2017 clearly call upon Russia and blame it for the conflict in Ukraine. But both the Democratic and Republican governments also leave room for cooperation when it comes to broader international security challenges. US foreign policy continues to declare aid to Ukraine but perceives the situation in global terms and there are few expectations for changing this strategy.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

The overarching document of American strategic tradition is the US Constitution. In the Preamble, the US government assured its people to provide for common defence; the Constitution describes the President as Commander-in-Chief, and allows Congress to declare wars. Given the rise of proxy wars during the Cold War, US presidents saw the urge to be in charge of providing US allies with substantial military support. The United States does not have a history with coloured books such as other countries, but uses abstract concepts such as doctrines instead. The difference, however, is only in name. The role of doctrines in US strategic history varies from one administration to another. National Security Strategy Archives contains sixteen National Security Strategies. The first one is from the Ronald Reagan administration, dated 1987. (White House, 1987) The document usually includes interests, goals, objectives, commitments, short-term, and long-term use of political, military, and economical means, including other capabilities to fulfil the goals. Further in history, other documents were added to the strategic discourse, but the President of the United States remained the most important actor.

After the Russian intervention in Georgia (2008) and before that in Ukraine (2014), the 2010 NSS was mostly focused on “nation-building at home” and providing a moral example for other nations to follow. Among the priorities were fighting Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. It was also focused on the strategic importance of weapons of mass destruction. Both issues represented clear continuation from the Bush administration leaving the office a year before drafting. Russia was mentioned in general terms, although not as a threat. “Russia emerged in the international arena as a strong voice,” the NSS stated. (White House, 2010, 8) The NSS 2010 sought to engage countries such as Russia and China. The US wanted to cooperate with Russia on non-proliferation, trade, investment, and fighting violent extremism, and the US promised to “support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Russia’s neighbours.” (White House, 2010, 44)

In the 2014 National Intelligence Strategy, Russia was described as “likely to continue to reassert power and influence in ways that undermine U.S. interests.” (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2014, 4) The authors did not seem to recognize Russia’s interests in reasserting its power in bordering countries. Indeed, they rightly predicted Russia’s effort to either undermine US interest by developing propaganda and disinformation machines in countries allied to the United States. The second part of
undermining was to be focused on the American political system. Despite warnings about Russia, the strategy left room for cooperation where the issues connect. It further mentions that Russia should be willing to cooperate with the US on “important high priority security issues, when interests converge.” (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, 2014, 4)

There were several changes regarding Russia and Ukraine in security documents published after 2014. However, these are somewhat minor given the scale of the geopolitical changes Russia had caused, and the threat perception remained mostly the same. Based on the NSS 2015 and other documents from the Obama administration, the US considered terrorism the most important threat against the homeland and its people. Russia was being mentioned as a mere regional threat, mostly to Ukraine and Europe. President Barack Obama called Russia “a regional power” during a Q&A at the 2014 Nuclear Summit, omitting the long-lasting consequences of Russia’s actions. (Washington Post, 2014) However, the NSS 2015 was postponed because of Russia’s actions in Ukraine. By the standard in Washington, the more recent NSS is less ambitious, and shorter in length than the previous one. Based on the geographical location of the conflict, it is understandable that of all the threats the US is facing today, Russia is not on the top of the list. “Aggression by Russia” is mentioned in the preamble of the NSS 2015, preceded by cybersecurity, and followed by climate change, and infectious diseases. The strategic priorities include attacks on the US homeland, infrastructure, and threats against US citizens and its allies. Russia’s aggression is later mentioned with a potential rise of Chinese power as the most important challenges: “From the Middle East to Ukraine to Southeast Asia to the Americas, citizens are more empowered in seeking greater freedoms and accountable institutions.” (White House, 2015, 19) The strategy included Russia among the threats to the United States: “Many of the threats to our security in recent years arose from efforts by authoritarian states to oppose democratic forces—from the crisis caused by Russian aggression in Ukraine to the rise of ISIL within the Syrian civil war.” (White House, 2015, 19)

In the section “Strengthen Our Enduring Alliance with Europe,” more space was devoted to Russia and Ukraine. The strategy stated that, based on Russian actions, “the international rules and norms against territorial aggression cannot be taken for granted.” (White House, 2015, 25) The US responded, the NSS read, by helping Ukraine and its people in their struggle towards democracy. The strategy further acknowledged instability in the East-Central European region after the Russian intervention. The US sought to impose costs on Russia, including sanction mechanisms and countering
Russia’s disinformation campaign which also influenced the 2016 US presidential campaign. The US also planned to deter Russia by zeroing-in at its strategic assets and helping allies in the region to be more resistant in case of its future conventional and unconventional interventions. At the same time, the US promised to keep the “door open” for maintaining collaboration with Russia on issues where interests overlap. However, the Obama administration found little in common with the Russians, thus the cooperation post-2014 deteriorated.

In 2015, the US issued the National Military Strategy. The document devoted one paragraph to Russia by praising Russia for its contribution to counterterrorism operations. However, the document pointed out that Russians apparently did not appreciate the independent sovereignty of its neighbours. It reminded that Russia contributed to escalation of the conflict. “Russia’s military actions are undermining regional security directly and through proxy forces,” the Strategy reads. (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015, 1) Two pages later, the same as the National Intelligence Strategy, the Military one included provisions about being “ready to engage Russia in areas of common interest.”(Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015, 3) Similar language was used in the 2015 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDDR), which listed topics where the US can work with Russia. These included Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, transparency, strategic stability, arms reduction, and strategic nuclear forces. (US Department of State, 2015) However, it talks about building broader coalitions to “counter Russian aggression against Ukraine.” (US Department of State, 2015, 8) The aggression was mentioned in two other places in the document, additional to a part of sanctions imposed on Russia, which is a significant break from the first QDDR of 2010 where Russia was mentioned mostly as a partner in technology development projects. (US State Department 2010, 67)

The Trump administration passed the National Security Strategy in December 2017. The Strategy links Russia and China, calling them a “challenge to American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity.” (White House, 2017b) According to the Strategy, Russia is “using information tools in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of democracies” (White House, 2017b) and intervenes in the domestic political affairs. However, President Trump has yet to acknowledge Russia’s influence during the 2016 presidential election. Following on the previous strategies, the NSS 2017 described the intentions of Russia as “not fixed” and declared the United States “stands ready” to cooperate with Russia. (White House, 2017b)
In conclusion, we may argue that the strategic documents issued post-2014 contain changes, mostly regarding Russia’s role in US foreign policy. While documents issued before 2014 counted on Russia in cooperating on security issues, the documents following the intervention in Ukraine avoided approaching Russia as a partner. However, the drafters left the door open to be ready to engage Russia to deal on threats when appropriate or necessary. The US took a pragmatic approach, but with caution. It made sure to call upon the Russian Federation for its actions, but the stakeholders realized fully the complexity of global security and the importance of Russia’s place in it. However, Russia remained among the many foreign and security challenges of the United States. The change in the White House neither reversed nor intensified this course.

2. Changes in security discourses

The 2016 presidential election resulted in changing the party in the White House and the majority in Congress. In the US political system, the president is the party leader. Barack Obama’s position towards Russia often faced criticism for being naïve and soft. (Walt, 2017) Vladimir Putin had invaded Georgia before Obama came into office and the Reset policy Obama administration proposed in 2009 seemed like an omission of Putin’s foreign interventions. With the situation in Ukraine, the administration had an opportunity to shift the narrative and challenge the criticism.

Thus, Obama probably felt that he could repair his declining reputation on Russia by calling on Russia for its actions while supporting Ukraine. After the Russian intervention broke out in the media, Obama called the Russian actions in Ukraine a violation of international law. On March 6, 2014 Obama announced signing an Executive Order authorizing sanctions on Russian individuals and entities responsible for the situation. He further declared that the sanctions would continue if Russia did not change its behaviour. The Executive Order was signed upon consultations with the State Department. (White House, 2014d) He further announced support to the Ukrainian government in Kyiv. Obama mentioned that the referendum for Crimean independence had violated the Ukrainian constitution and called for international monitors. (White House, 2014e) At the same time, he urged to establish a communication channel between representatives of Russia and Ukraine to de-escalate the conflict. (White House, 2014a) On March 1, President Obama and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called Vladimir Putin to inform each other about the situation in Ukraine. Hagel spoke to his
Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu. (US Department of Defense, 2014)

The first steps Obama took were aimed mostly at de-escalation of the conflict. He clearly called out Russia for violating international law by disrupting Ukraine’s sovereignty. Obama urged countries to establish a communication channel, which suggested that the US administration saw both Ukraine and Russia as actors equally responsible for the conflict and its development.

To get himself up to date, Obama’s White House reached out to Ukrainian representatives. The president met Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk on March 12, 2014 in the White House. During their brief talk, he acknowledged the demands for change from the Ukrainian people displayed during the Maidan Revolution. Obama also recognized the historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine. (White House, 2014b) This step again suggested that Obama derogates Russia’s claims over Ukrainian territory. On March 20, 2014, Obama updated the US standing on Ukraine. He called the referendum in Crimea “illegal” and mentioned dangerous escalation of the conflict. He announced new sanctions furthering the list of individuals with the list of sectors. Obama, however, reminded that the diplomatic talks between Russia and the United States were continuing while mentioning that the actions that Russia took were deliberate. (White House, 2014c) In almost all public statements, Obama called upon Congress to develop a package of laws to aid Ukraine to continue with economic and other reforms.

While preserving open talks with Ukraine, the US administration sought to provide assurance to its allies. In March 2014, Vice President Joe Biden was dispatched to Poland and the Baltic states to inform them of US commitment to NATO and the common defence pledge. Biden announced plans to conduct more exercises in the Baltic states. “We are exploring a number of additional steps to increase the pace and scope of our military cooperation including rotating U.S. forces to the Baltic region to conduct ground and naval exercises and training missions,” he stated after meeting Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves. (Rampton, 2014) During the press conference with the Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, Biden called the Russian actions a “land grab.” (Rampton, 2014) In April, President Obama, standing next to Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko, announced sending non-lethal aid to Ukraine and called on G7 leaders to support Ukraine in its effort to restore order in the country. At the end of his speech, he reminded that “Ukraine can be a thriving, vital democracy that has strong relationships with Europe and has strong relationships with Russia.” (White House, 2014f)
The US State Department was not as vocal as the White House when the crisis erupted. It most probably perceived Russia as an important party to larger issues such as Syria’s chemical weapons. “I hope the same motivations that drove Russia to being a partner in this effort will still exist,” Kerry replied to a question whether the situation in Crimea will have an impact on the cooperation with Russia on the matter. (US Department of State, 2014c) In June, Kerry and Sergey Lavrov met in Paris. During a short press exchange they both expressed their desire to seek the stability and security of Ukraine without any further details. It was around that time when the negotiations about the nuclear programme in Iran were ongoing. The talks that involved all permanent member states of the UN and Germany eventually led to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, effective from January 2016. Therefore, these meetings were focusing on other issues, besides Ukraine.

The US Congress reacted promptly to the new situation. Unlike domestic issues, the foreign policy ones find more bipartisan cooperation in the legislature and are often immune to partisan politics. In April, Republican leader in the Senate Mitch McConnell called for providing Ukraine with arms. He further urged European leaders to “take Ukraine in.” He also mentioned the missile defence system which the Obama administration dismissed at the beginning of its tenure, which McConnel saw as “a sort of a gesture to the Russians.” He, however, opposed sending US troops to Ukraine to solve the situation. (McConnell, 2014) In November 2015, the Congress passed a law offering 50 million USD work of lethal aid to Ukraine (RFE/RL, 2015) despite an earlier veto from the House, while some, including the White House argued that beefing up Ukraine’s defence could lead to escalation of the conflict. (Darden, 2015) The argument for helping Ukraine was built on the premise that it would make the fight costlier for the Russians. Despite strong pressure from the Congress, the Obama administration was more reluctant to provide Ukraine with sufficient military material because it feared further escalation of the conflict. (Steinheuer, 2015)

The 2016 brought a few occasions to debate US foreign policy towards Russia that would go beyond headlines and campaign sound bites. The Republican party, including conservative media, blamed the outgoing Obama administration for not having a substantial position towards Russia which eventually led to worsening the state of the US – Russian relation. The Democratic party or liberal media, on the other hand, blamed presidential candidate Donald Trump for praising Vladimir Putin and not providing enough policy recommendations on Russia. The Democratic platform for the 2016 elections passed in July before the election included one
paragraph-size subchapter on Russia between North Korea and Cybersecurity and Online Privacy. The platform accepted that “Russia is engaging in destabilizing actions along its borders, violating Ukraine’s sovereignty and attempting to recreate spheres of influence that undermine American interests.” (Democratic National Convention, 2016) The Republican platform included more details on Russia. First, the platform blamed the previous party for “currying favor with Russia,” and “allowing Russia to build up its nuclear arsenal.” (Republican National Platform, 2016, 41) The document promised that the sanctions imposed on Russia will not be lifted unless Russia helps to restore Ukraine’s sovereignty. (Republican National Platform, 2016, 42)

It is fair to admit that from the beginning of the crisis, strategic security discourse in the United States has not taken a steep turn. Russia was considered a security challenge in the public statements from the national security establishment. However, the outgoing Obama administration preferred diplomacy and direct talks between actors involved in the conflict while the Republican party called for direct action, including military aid to Ukraine. Donald Trump took a different approach towards Russia and president Putin. During the presidential campaign he praised him several times and called him a good leader. (NBC, 2016) Nevertheless, the US official position of non-recognition of Crimea as a part of Russia has not been put up to a debate by the president in a serious way.

3. Transformation of security policies

Discourse in the United States about Ukraine and Russia was influenced by the 2016 presidential election. The Obama administration, often described as reluctant towards broader security issues in the world, did not take rapid steps towards Russia or Ukraine. Nevertheless, following the Russian intervention, the immediate security debate began on how to protect American allies in Europe and keep NATO intact. The 2015 proposal from Obama’s White House came about alongside issuing of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review. The defence budget proposal was USD 495.6 billion. Russia was not mentioned in the statement. As it was released on March 4, 2014 it is well-assumed that the Russian intervention was not reflected in the final proposal. The 2016 QDR proposal, issued on February 2, 2015, had provisions tied to Russia. It reaffirmed the 2014 QDR and included a quote about “Russia’s aggressive actions in Europe.” (US Department of Defense, 2015a)
The 2017 proposal of the outgoing administration contained more details on Russia. The US allocated resources to countering “Russia’s aggressive policies” by modifying conventional military equipment such as defence systems, cruise missiles, and nuclear arsenal. (US Department of Defense, 2016a) In its own words the budget proposal “quadrupled” the 2015 request for the European Reassurance Initiative, which added up to USD 3.5 billion. The allocated resources were to be aimed at reassuring NATO allies by conducting exercise and deploying a brigade-size force on a rotational basis to East-Central Europe for exercise. (US Department of Defense, 2016a)

The 2018 budget proposal from May 2017 asked Congress for USD 639.1 billion for defence investments. The document included statements on Russia’s attempts to marginalize US influence in Syria and Iran. In the section focused on Russia the document required countering Russia in Europe by deterring Russia and assuring allies as the Overview read, “the forward presence of Army Soldiers,” among them routine rotation of an armoured brigade combat team, “underpin the nation’s ability to assure NATO Allies and non-NATO partners, deter adversaries, and posture to act in a timely manner if deterrence fails.” (US Department of Defense, 2017a)

There has not been a significant military procurement programme that we could tie to the Russian invasion. Out of the 208 billion dollars invested in modernization in FY2018, most was allocated for Aircraft and Related Systems, and Mission Support Activities. (US Department of Defense, 2017b) The US defence budget request for 2018 rose from the 2017 budget by 4.6 per cent. (Stone, 2017) Nevertheless, this rise only barely reacted to the Russian intervention in Ukraine while it included a rise in the further explained European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) chapter by 1.4 billion dollars. Apart from military, the cyber threat from Russia is on the radar. “Russian actors are stealthy in their cyber tradecraft and their intentions are sometimes difficult to discern,” reads the 2015 Cyber Strategy. (US Department of Defense, 2015b, 9) Thus, the efforts America has taken have been mostly focused on investing in cyber defence capabilities and resilience programmes. Eventually, the budget for the Department of Defense rose by 9 per cent.

From the military perspective, in 2017 the US conducted five national exercises in Europe. Additional to that, the US conducted one exercise in Ukraine. The exercises focused on Article 4 of the Washington treaty, which allows parties to “consult together whenever the territorial integrity, political independence or security” of any of them is threatened (NATO, 1949).
United States did change its position regarding the level of US troops in Europe. Barack Obama proposed the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) as an assurance means with five focuses: increased presence, training and exercise, improving infrastructure, enhanced pre-positioning, and building partnership capacity. (US Department of Defense, 2017c) The US deployed troops in Eastern Europe under the Atlantic Resolve mission. Also, the emphasis on NATO and Article 5 had been made clear before the Obama administration departed from the White House. The foreign policy establishment was expecting to carry on this policy. However, the unexpected win in the presidential election of Donald Trump disturbed their lines of thinking. Eventually, Donald Trump publicly confirmed the US pledge to affirm Article 5 during a Q&A session at the occasion of meeting with Romanian president Klaus Iohannis. (White House, 2017a) Yet, the true meaning of the pledge can be measured only after an actual attack on one of the NATO countries.

In June 2017, the US deployed a special envoy to Ukraine, senior diplomat Kurt Volker. This was perceived as an important step in solving the crisis still ongoing in eastern Ukraine. Furthermore, Congress passed an amendment to a bill imposing more sanctions on Russian companies and individuals while demanding Ukrainian energy efficiency and called for a special budgetary chapter of USD 250,000 to counter Russian disinformation campaigns in Eastern Europe. (Congress, 2017) The law was passed with an overwhelming majority in both chambers of Congress and was signed by president Trump, although reluctantly and without media presence. The US Treasury Department currently lists four Executive Orders in total from the White House aimed at companies and individuals connected with the Ukrainian intervention. Furthermore, the Trump administration announced that it would consider sending lethal arms to Ukraine to raise the cost of Russian intervention. (Callahan, 2017) This strategy was supported by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford. His main arguments to do so were to increase Ukraine’s capability to protect its sovereignty and to counter Russia’s military presence. (RFE/RL, 2017) During the meeting between Donald Trump and Petro Poroshenko, the Ukrainian president replied shortly to a question on military aid from the US by saying that the Ukrainian government is “very much satisfied” with cooperation with the US. (White House, 2017) Kurt Volker stated that there is “an eighty per cent chance” there will be fighting between Russia and Ukraine at the end of 2018. (Glasser, 2017) The NSS 2017 described Ukraine as one of the examples of Russia’s willingness to violate states’ sovereignty.
It is problematic to describe one foreign policy position towards Russia in the current administration. There is one position of the foreign policy and security establishment which differentiate on many levels with the positions taken by the President. Donald Trump continues to centralize power over foreign policy decisions on Russia without significant steps. The United States security structure is currently under unprecedented reconstruction. The longer the division remains in the bureaucracy, the longer it will take for the policies to be implemented.

Conclusions

At the end of 2017, US foreign policy seems pre-occupied with security challenges ranging from the Middle East conflict to the emerging nuclear capabilities of North Korea. Ukraine, as it seems, is not on the list of foreign policy priorities. The Trump administration entered the White House with a promise of solving crises by negotiating better deals and involving all partners. The reality on the ground seems more complicated. US envoy Kurt Volker admitted that Russia must be included in the talks and in resolving the conflict. This position has not changed since the beginning of the conflict. Trump’s predecessor Obama encouraged both sides to engage in dialogue. The Russian conflict in Ukraine is in a stalemate. Russia faults Ukraine for domestic problems such as corruption while it maintains a strong military presence in the Eastern part of Ukraine. As the Trump administration struggles with historically low approval ratings, it seems it is less keen on international interventions beyond diplomatic efforts and lethal and non-lethal aid. The US has been focused on providing robust protection of its allies and supporting its partners with limitations. The Russian intervention in Ukraine has not changed this stance.

References


Résumé

Russian aggression against Ukraine was one of the major drivers of the UK security reassessment in 2015, which aimed to put an end to the period of defence spending cuts and openly acknowledged the resurgence of state-based threats. Moreover, the 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review introduced a whole range of steps to counter this aggression, with special attention to the potential of NATO and other multilateral fora. While public debate before the adoption of the 2015 National Security Strategy largely concentrated on the need to overcome the serious shortcomings of the 2010 strategic documents, only half a year later Brexit posed entirely new challenges to the future of the British security environment and choices, inviting a rethink of the strategy once again. In the realm of practical politics Russia-related security policies followed the documents quite closely and the UK’s was one of the most consistent responses within NATO.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

For decades British strategy was defined by reliance on American strategic guidance. It combined a “special partnership” type alliance with the US and (at a later stage) strong economic bonds with the European Communities, toying with the idea of being a meeting point between the EU and the US. Consequently, British security thinking was more concentrated on managing and adjusting its military capacities than on properly considering the country’s place in the world. Nearly a dozen post-war defence reviews, accompanied by the yearly Statements on Defence estimates, reflected the UK’s slow adaptation to the post-imperial world, the gradual erosion of its influence and engagement worldwide, further concentration on the defence of its own territory, progressive defence spending cuts, and ever-increasing reliance on NATO allies (see Walker and Mills 2015).

The post-Cold War period did not immediately bring strategic reassessment, until mistakes and misperceptions encountered in the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns questioned the limits of following the US lead and demanded defining what British strategic interests and choices really are. Combined with the repercussions of the economic crisis, which imposed austerity and further reduction in funds available to defence, the discourse of the need to “return to strategy” gained a place in British public debate. What strategy should the UK pursue in a new world? How should it respond to the new threats? What are the limits of the special partnership with the US? Should it weigh in the world beyond its limits? Even how should the strategy be defined and implemented and by whom?

The initial 2008 and 2009 Labour Government’s takes on creating National Security Strategy were short-lived and criticised for their descriptive and non-strategic approach: “It offers a free lunch where the UK can simultaneously be Europeanist and Atlanticist, pro-sovereignty and pro-human rights; an upholder of ‘rules’ yet the spreader of values”, complained one observer (Porter 2010, p. 6). Thus the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR), prepared by the coalition Conservative-Liberal Democratic Government, were expected to become a breaking point of a new era of British strategic thinking. The government aimed to resolve at least three puzzles: to institutionalize strategic thinking capacity, to mend serious budget imbalances via cuts in defence expenditure, and to respond to the changing nature of warfare and new threats of the post-Cold War period. The results proved to be mixed at best.
On the positive side, the institutional arrangement for creating strategy was established. From now on, the government engaged to publish the NSS and SDSR every five years, thus linking them to the parliamentary mandate, as well as to produce yearly reports on progress in their implementation. The “Whole of Government” approach to security was officially adopted: in addition to issues of defence and armed forces, the NSS and SDSR considered counter-terrorism, diplomacy, international aid, homeland defence, border security, cyber security etc. Both documents were prepared across the government, diminishing the role of the MoD. To enhance leadership and coordination, the National Security Council from the representatives of ministries was established to oversee the development and implementation of the NSS and the post of National Security Adviser was created. This structure was largely retained with some improvements for the 2015 NSS-SDSR. Another innovation that persisted was the risk-based approach, which the National Security Risk Assessment ranged the risks (and not threats) to British security in three tiers. The four first-tier risks in 2010 included international terrorism, hostile attacks upon UK cyber space, a major accident or natural hazard, and an international military crisis between states.

On the level of substance however, the results were much less impressive. Relying on the overarching idea that economic security was even more important than military security, and reflecting heavily on the Iraq-Afghanistan experiences, the 2010 NSS and SDSR had assumed that many conventional capacities for state-on-state conflict were outdated and could be scrapped. It supposed that the less numerous and more efficient military would now focus on infrequent stabilisation operations in fragile states overseas, mostly fighting lightly-armed insurgents and terrorists. The NSS and SDSR thus introduced drastic cuts to the military budget (8% fall in real terms to the defence budget up to 2014/15, according to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review). With retiring Harrier aircraft and delaying the building of new aircraft carriers, the UK was losing carrier strike capability until 2020. With retiring HMS Ark Royal and Type 22 frigates, the surface fleet was reduced to only 19 frigates and destroyers. Cancellation of the Nimrod MRA4 maritime patrol aircraft programme wiped out maritime patrol capacity, making Britain dependent on its allies. The British Army was to go through a reduction in the armed forces by 17,000 personnel and a major restructure (Future Force 2020), thus becoming the smallest in decades. Because of the drastic cuts, US representatives expressed concern over “disengagement” of the UK and inside the country a question arose of whether the army could fulfil its duty at all (Brooke-Holland 2015,
Evolving threats have quickly proven that the 2010 documents were at best interim. The huge concentration on Afghanistan became non-relevant within a few years as Russian aggression in Ukraine together with instability in the Middle East and North Africa (Libya, Syria, and ISIS) have created a new security environment, while unprecedented cuts exposed further vulnerabilities. Most tellingly, the capability gap related to scrapping Maritime Patrol Aircraft proved critical since a Russian submarine first appeared off Scotland’s shores and Britain was forced to ask its NATO partners for help (The Telegraph 2014).

Thus, an important consensus in favour of the new strategy emerged across parliament (i.e. a series of reports from the Joint Committee on National Security Strategy and the Defence Committee), government (i.e. lectures by the Chief of Defence Staff and Minister of Defence, MoD Global Strategic Trends document (MoD 2014), as well as security experts. In a nutshell, they all demanded development of a new and viable security strategy with a fundamental review to the threats, which would preview both rebuilding conventional capacities and developing capabilities to respond to asymmetric or hybrid warfare, as well as an unwavering commitment of 2% of GDP to defence. The US and other allies exerted additional pressure against any further cuts before the 2015 NSS and SDSR were published.

A whole lot of necessary strategic changes were demanded precisely in connection to Russian aggression against Ukraine: Russia was absent from the 2010 NSS altogether. This included developing analytical capacity to understand Russian motivation and strategy, enhancing the UK’s activity in NATO, reassessing defence priorities to be capable of addressing a threat from an advanced military nation (maritime surveillance, CBRN warfare, ballistic missile defence) and ambiguous warfare, including cyber capabilities and special forces capabilities. (see Defence Committee 2014 and Defence Committee 2015, p. 14-17).

After this wave of harsh critique, the November 2015 NSS-SDSR, combined into a single document, took on the task of introducing visible changes as to previous policies on the one side and not exceeding budgetary capacities on the other. It kept the 2010 rhetoric of linking economy and security but shifted attention more to defining Britain’s place in the world, although still doing it
in quite a generic way.

“Our vision is for a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and influence”, declared the NSS-SDSR, defining three “National Security Objectives” – “protect our people, project our global influence and promote our prosperity”. The risk assessment had not significantly evolved compared to 2010: Tier 1 risks remained terrorism, international military conflict, cyber and major natural hazards, but two other risks were added (public health risks and instability overseas). Nevertheless, the 2015 document also set out four main challenges for British security: (1) the increasing threat posed by terrorism, extremism and instability, (2) the resurgence of state-based threats and intensifying wider state competition, (3) the impact of technology, especially cyber threats, and wider technological developments, and (4) the erosion of the rules-based international order. Russia’s aggressive policy could theoretically be classified under any of these challenges; still the most evident would be challenges 2 and 4, resurgence of state-based threats and erosion of rules-based order.

As the 2010 NSS and SDSR barely featured Russia at all – the country was not present either as a meaningful threat or as a valuable partner– the changes in this part of strategy were imminent and evident. Throughout the document they are palpable on two levels: that concerning immediate response to the Russian challenge and the other, more indirect and influenced by other challenges, concerning general strategic choices.

Direct response to Russia’s actions: leading from behind.

The 2015 NSS-SDSR does directly acknowledge the disturbing evolution of Russia’s behaviour in several dimensions:

3.19 ...Russia has become more aggressive, authoritarian and nationalist, increasingly defining itself in opposition to the West. The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and continuing support to separatists in eastern Ukraine through the use of deniable, hybrid tactics and media manipulation have shown Russia’s willingness to undermine wider international standards of cooperation in order to secure its perceived interests.

The NSS-SDSR underlines that Russia poses “no immediate direct military threat to the UK mainland”, but admits that “with increasing frequency, our
responses are tested by aircraft, including Russian aircraft, near our airspace, and maritime activity near our territorial waters” (4.14), and due to its military build-up, including nuclear, and unpredictable behaviour “we cannot rule out the possibility that it may feel tempted to act aggressively against NATO Allies” (3.20). Finally, the NSS-SDSR admits that “Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilising activities in Ukraine directly challenge European security and the rules-based international order” (5.45).

Having thus assessed the Russian threat on three levels, the Strategy does not propose a direct response on a bilateral level, underlining the UK’s commitment to act through alliances and international organisations. Thus, via the UK’s work in NATO, the EU, the UN, and the OSCE, the aim is: to ensure that Russia is held to account for its actions, complies with the commitments it entered into at the Minsk Summit, withdraws from Crimea, and meets its international obligations in respect of the rule of law, human rights and democracy (5.45).

Detailing the response via the framework of NATO, the NSS-SDSR pledged that “The 2014 Wales Summit, under UK leadership, delivered an effective and united response to Russian behaviour” (3.20), citing the UK’s involvement into the defence investment pledge, Readiness Action Plan, Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, NATO Air Policing Mission in the Baltics, Maritime Patrol Aircraft, UK participation in NATO exercises, as well as training and military expertise sharing with its partners.

Response in the EU framework equally highlights the UK’s commitment to the multilateral instruments. This relates to imposing EU sanctions “at UK urging” (3.21) as well as UK support and initiative for the EU Assistance Mission, and a pledge to “work with the EU to shape the single energy market, helping to reduce the EU’s energy dependence on Russia” (4.142).

In 5.47 the NSS-SDSR declares its support for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis in Ukraine and pledges to “continue to work to uphold Ukraine’s sovereignty, assist its people and build resilience”, admits providing humanitarian aid, advice and assistance on fighting corruption, defence reform and training Ukrainian Armed Forces. Simultaneously, there is certain ambiguity as the desire to cooperate with Russia is manifested twice in the document (3.22 and 5.46). Acknowledging Russia’s role as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, it states the will to engage with Russia on a range of global security issues, such as ISIL and referring to “successful cooperation that we shared in negotiations on Iran’s
nuclear programme”.

*General strategy evolution: getting conventional back*

The second level of change in security approaches was informed not only by Russian actions, but also by the general changes in the security environment, driven by the acknowledgement that the conflict between states is no longer unimaginable or outdated. According to the PM’s Foreword, “we cannot choose between conventional defences against state-based threats and the need to counter threats that do not recognise national borders. Today we face both and we must respond to both” (2015 NSS-SDSR p. 5). Thus, he listed the priorities as “deter state-based threats, tackle terrorism, remain a world leader in cyber security and ensure we have the capability to respond rapidly to crises as they emerge” (2015 NSS-SDSR p. 6).

The first step was to regain credibility via announcing an end to the cuts. Thus, the government has committed to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence every year. Already the Summer Budget 2015 announced that the defence budget would rise by 0.5% each year from 2016 to 2021. To resolve the financing issues, more emphasis was placed on promoting prosperity through international trade (especially with emerging powers such as India and China, as well as boosting defence and security exports). Also, ambitious savings were expected from the MoD (mostly relating to personnel and efficiency, not equipment).

As to deterrence, the most significant decision was that the NSS-SDSR has explicitly committed to retain a nuclear deterrence capacity “as long as the security situation demands” and to launch a costly Successor programme: construction of four new Trident missile-carrying submarines. On another level, the UK committed to lead “a renewed focus on deterrence” in NATO, in order that “our potential adversaries are in no doubt about the range of responses they should expect to any aggressive action on their part” (4.12).

For this deterrence to become credible, a whole range of new acquisitions and regaining capacities has been announced: establishing two additional Typhoon squadrons and an additional squadron of F35 Lightning combat aircraft to operate from new aircraft carriers, buying nine new Maritime Patrol Aircraft, creating two new Strike Brigades, and in the longer term committing to increase the size of the frigate fleet.
The much-criticized Future Force 2020 army structure was to be remodeled as the Joint Force 2025, with an increased expeditionary force of around 50,000, up from the 30,000 previewed in 2010 and with closer integration of reserves with regular forces. Again, the explicit obligation not to make further cuts to the army was crucial.

Defence engagement became one of the core tasks for the MoD as building stability overseas in fragile states was deemed a priority for British security. This involved focus on institutional and capacity building, increased training for international partners, as well as committing to doubling the number of military personnel contributed to UN peacekeeping operations (5.12-5.14).

Cyber security was rather on continuity than change track, since the first Cyber Security Strategy (CSS) and the National Cyber Security Programme were established already in 2011. The new CSS, acknowledging the growth of scope and variety of cyber threats and challenges, was adopted in 2016.

2. Changes in security discourses

The 2015 NSS-SDSR went through several rounds of discussion in parliament and government, both before and after its presentation, but it largely failed to initiate a meaningful public debate. Lunn and Scarnell argue that “the apparent semi-eclipse of the 2015 UK NSS” happened because of the feeling that the strategy was more refreshed than transformed (Lunn and Scarnell 2015), which corresponded to Prime Minister Cameron’s vision. As a significant portion of army commanders, experts and allies were visibly relieved that the most drastic cuts were finally over, the 2015 NSS-SDSR was greeted somewhat positively. Nevertheless, the Joint Committee on the National Security Strategy lamented the generic way to describe a range of threats and risks, lack of clear vision on how three national security objectives would be combined, doubted if Joint Force 2025 would be able to meet the national security challenges, or even if the MoD could succeed in making the efficiency savings of £9.2 billion expected of it over the next five years (JCNSS 2015).

Still these debates have been quickly outshone by the advent of the Brexit referendum in mid-2016. For political reasons mostly, as the negotiations of PM Cameron with the EU were underway at the time, there were no provisions in the 2015 NSS-SDSR as to strategic challenges to Great Britain in the case of Brexit. Thus, half a year after the adoption of the Strategy, Britain
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had to contemplate a modified security environment with new tasks and new threats, for which no recipes had been previewed. Not only did the question of the future of the UK’s alliances and its post-Brexit positioning in the world emerge, but even questions of the unity of the UK—with Scotland launching the idea of another independence referendum—or the future of the Northern Ireland peace process with the emergence of the Irish border problem came to the fore. Questions about the financial capacities for security and defence after the UK quits the EU or the nature of future UK-EU security cooperation became imminent.

The idea of developing an ambitious post-Brexit security partnership between the EU and the UK gained its place in PM May’s speeches, still the task of rethinking the strategy was reported towards 2020. Meanwhile, the government publicly defended the position that the 2015 NSS was perfectly compatible with the Brexit process: in a first yearly review the Government has reassured that the only commitment that would suffer because of Brexit—is the pledge to champion the free trade agreement between the EU and India (Cabinet Office 2016 p. 7). In her Lancaster House speech, Prime Minister May painted the future of Britain as a globally engaged nation (Lancaster House Speech 2017), which perfectly corresponded to the three national objectives of the 2015 NSS.

In parallel to the general Brexit debate, public rhetoric towards Russia became harder in 2017. Edward Lucas even announced that “the outlines of a new Russia policy are taking shape in Britain”, which is ‘tough, cautious and pragmatic”, and centred on containment and protecting allies (Lucas 2017). In November 2017 Premier May gave two speeches – one at the Lord Mayor’s Banquet in London, another at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels. In both she spoke against Russia’s threatening of the world order, mentioned Russia’s attempts to undermine western institutions, its involvement in the conflict with Ukraine, violations of national airspace of several countries, meddling in elections and mounting a campaign of cyber-espionage and disruption.

I have a very simple message for Russia. We know what you are doing. And you will not succeed. Because you underestimate the resilience of our democracies, the enduring attraction of free and open societies, and the commitment of western nations to the alliances that bind us (PM speech to the Lord Mayor’s Banquet 2017).
This hawkish line of discourse, underlining the Russian threat, was supported by other ministers. In the last months of 2017 – first months of 2018 Michael Fallon, former Defence Secretary, underlined that Russia spent twice as much on defence as did the UK. Actual Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson maintained that Russia was looking to damage the British economy and infrastructure, potentially causing “thousands and thousands and thousands of deaths”. Chief of the General Staff Nick Carter described Russia as the biggest state-based threat to the UK since the Cold War, warning that Britain would struggle to match Russia’s military capabilities on the battlefield. The head of the Royal Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach warned that Russia is an increasing threat. News about Russian ships and planes appearing close to UK territorial waters and airspace, increase in the activities of Russian submarines near undersea data cables became numerous in the media at the end of the year. On December 3, the intelligence service MI6 reclassified Russia as a “tier one” threat, after years of regarding it as a security issue of secondary importance.

Partly the reason for this heightened attention to the threat from Russia was the National Security Capability Review, commissioned in July 2017 and due in January 2018: at the end of the day, its defence part (Modernising Defence Programme) was reported until July 2018. The review process rendered obvious that the defence commitments under the 2015 strategy have been too ambitious and either more money was needed (which the Treasury resisted), or further cuts were inevitable. Thus, the need to increase defence spending in general, often citing the threat from Russia, was regularly underlined. Michael Fallon, for example believed that the growing threats from Russia and cyber-attacks demanded an increase in the defence budget to 2.5% of GDP. The Chief of General Staff Carter defended retaining a forward base in Germany although the UK is gradually withdrawing troops to be able to return quickly if necessary.

Another line of discussion considered the current projects of economizing in relation to the Russian threat: two amphibious landing ships (HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion) were reported as considered for the chop, together with 28 Wildcat helicopters. The counterargument thus went that these ships and naval helicopters were vital components of the conventional deterrent of Britain via NATO in the Baltic. Also, the British government is believed to be contemplating combining elite units of paratroopers and the Royal Marines, thus reducing the number of military personnel by 14,000. Assessing the proposed changes as to the Russian threat, Mark Galeotti was very sceptical about an independent nuclear deterrent, vast equipment procurement or
concentrating on an aircraft carrier. Instead he underlined the importance of special and intervention forces in deterring Russia as well as keeping a lighter navy such as submarines or frigates. (Galeotti 2017)

Parliament has also been an important contributor to the Russia debate. The opposition decided to investigate potential Russian involvement in the Brexit referendum and June 2017 parliamentary elections via the bots in social media. Ben Bradshaw, a Labour MP, has called for a judge-led inquiry and MPs on the House of Commons media committee wanted to hear from representatives of Twitter and Facebook about ads purchased by Russian accounts. Damian Collins, chair of the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, has requested details including how much money was spent on ads, how many times they were viewed, and which Facebook users were targeted. Labour’s shadow digital minister Liam Byrne proposed that laws should be changed to safeguard future elections (banning political advertising on social media, recognising Facebook and similar platforms as publishers, and giving the Electoral Commission more possibilities to investigate foreign money in election campaigning). The Intelligence and Security Committee warned that Russia’s threat to the UK remains “significant”, citing evidence from British agency GCHQ on the Kremlin’s influencing campaigns to manipulate public opinion in Europe. Also, the heightened interest in Russian topics was manifested in several reports on relations with Russia, prepared by the Committees of the House of Commons. Most interesting of them were the Defence Committee’s “Russia: Implications for UK defence and security, First Report of Session 2016–17” and the Foreign Affairs Committee’s “The United Kingdom’s relations with Russia, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17”.

As to the opposition, Labour under Jeremy Corbyn has been somewhat cautious and dialogue-prone regarding Russia. Jeremy Corbyn himself demanded more evidence to the allegations that Russia is trying to undermine Western democracy, supported a dialogue to ratchet down tensions with Russia and has opposed the deployment of British troops to Estonia, referring to the threat of unnecessary escalation with Russia. Also, Corbyn was disappointed with comparatively little attention to human security in the current strategy and – traditionally – opposed the decision to keep the nuclear deterrent and develop the Successor programme. (Even prior to the 2015 election, the nuclear deterrent was a contentious point: the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru also wanted to get rid of it and the Greens were contemplating for a small defence).
3. Transformation of security policies

The practical British reaction to Russian aggression quite literally corresponded to the priorities and principles outlined in the 2015 NSS-SDSR. Britain was one of the leading countries to formulate the NATO response to Russian incursions at the 2014 and 2016 NATO summits (summarized in Brooke-Holland 2016). The 2014 Newport Summit enlarged the Response Force from 13,000 to 40,000 troops, improved its decision making, created a new Very High Readiness Joint Force (VTJF), introduced continuous presence of NATO forces on a rotational basis and pre-positioning equipment in eastern Europe, established headquarters in Baltic and eastern European states, and decided to conduct more joint exercises. The 2016 Warsaw Summit introduced an ‘enhanced forward presence’ of four multinational battalions in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland on a rotational basis from 2017 onwards.

The UK played a prominent role in most of these policy decisions. It became one of seven framework nations leading the VTJF, contributed a battlegroup of up to 1,000 personnel each year, led the VJTF in 2017 and pledged a battlegroup for the Polish-led VJTF in 2020. It also supported establishment of NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania (2015), Slovakia (2016) and Hungary (2017) to ensure that the very high-readiness forces can deploy into an assigned region as fast as possible and contributed manpower.

As to the pivotal decision on ‘enhanced forward presence’, since May 2017 the UK has led battalion to Estonia, and deploys a company to support the US-led battalion in Poland. It deployed Typhoon aircraft to the Baltic Air Policing mission in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and to the NATO Southern Air Policing mission based in Romania in 2017. It contributed Sentry aircraft for NATO air surveillance missions to Romania and Poland.

The UK has significantly increased the number of personnel deployed on NATO exercises from fewer than 700 in 2011 to over 9,000 in 2016. It also contributed to the Standing NATO Maritime Group in 2016 for the first time since 2010 with a frigate and a destroyer patrolling the Baltic Sea. In 2016 three Royal Navy minesweepers were deployed to Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group.

The UK, alongside other nations, launched the Transatlantic Capability Enhancement and Training (TACET) initiative in February 2016, providing
training and expertise to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The UK has a lead nation status for the initiative, alongside Germany and the US. Finally, the UK leads a NATO C4 (Command, Control, Communications and Computers) Trust Fund for Ukraine and will contribute over €400,000 to this initiative. In January 2018 it was announced that a radar station on a Shetland island will soon be relaunched in order to track Russian war planes, as already it did during the 1960s and 70s, to better protect both the UK’s airspace and that of its allies.

Generally, the UK follows the idea of stepping its presence in countries that border Russia, increasing the number of NATO military exercises with Ukraine, Poland and Estonia, as well as financial commitments to support reforms and security in Central and Eastern Europe.

Conclusions

The short overview of the evolution in British security thinking explicitly shows that the changes to the security situation are quicker than the ability of the government to inscribe them into a viable mid-term strategy. In both the 2010 and 2015 cases, non-anticipated developments demonstrated the limited scope of the strategy: the 2010 NSS was overinfluenced by the Iraq and Afghanistan experiences and did not preview the emergence of new threats in Middle East and Eastern Europe. The 2015 NSS-SDSR fully ignored any possible influence of the perspective of Brexit on the British strategic situation, which granted it again with the temporary status. Nevertheless, the 2015 NSS-SDSR introduced quite a comprehensive assessment of Russian aggression and its implications for the UK and world security on a scale from a resurgence of state-based threats to undermining the rules-based order. The UK’s has been one of the most consistent positions of all the European states and it has indeed led the NATO response, particularly reassuring NATO members from Eastern Europe. The UK also made necessary conclusions for its own defence, trying to regain some capacities, restructuring the army, and adhering to the nuclear deterrence disregarding great costs and lack of unanimous public support. Still the lack of will to go beyond multilateral forums combined with limited possibilities to influence decisions inside the alliances have limited the UK’s leverage to resolve the conflict as only Germany and France are implicated in direct negotiations. The UK’s departure from the EU will weaken this dimension even further.
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Towards the next Defence and Security Review: Part Two—NATO House

SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014

CHINA

Filip ŠEBOK

Résumé

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has not changed Beijing’s overall positive view of the international environment but has highlighted its concerns about threats to its domestic stability from “colour revolutions” as well as its own security conundrum in East Asia.

This has been demonstrated in the official pronouncements of Beijing on the conflict, as well as in media and academic commentary, where, whilst carefully sticking to the neutral position, China has in effect largely sympathized with Russia, seeing analogies with its own strategic position in East Asia and alleged Western efforts to undermine the regime via ideological destabilization.

The indirect effect of the conflict for China has been Russia’s turn towards Beijing, which has brought deliverables in the form of renewed arms and gas deals. Furthermore, the Russian actions in Ukraine showed the efficacy of grey zone tactics that China has itself been employing in its territorial disputes with neighbours. However, the Crimea analogy is not a useful analytical tool as it neglects the different situation China faces in its disputes.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

An authoritarian, one party state, China has been notorious for intransparency of the functioning of its state apparatus, including its security and defence policy. There is no clear hierarchy of documents setting out the country’s security policy and also the relationship between the different documents is not clearly established. The White Paper on Defence is the only public document outlining China’s security policy and it should be mainly viewed as a tool of Beijing’s strategic communication towards the international audience. China released its first White Paper on Defense in 1998 and has published the document on a biennial basis ever since (McReynolds 2015). The 2015 White Paper was the first to be fully dedicated to outlining Chinese military strategy while skimming over other issues.

The overall direction of the Chinese security policy is guided by the Military Strategic Guidelines, which are, however, not published as a publicly available document. The Guidelines come directly from the leadership and are proclaimed by the Central Military Commission (CMC), the central national defence decision-making body chaired by the General Secretary of the Communist Party (Singh 2016, 16). The change in Guidelines is often made public only after the fact – the most recent Defence White paper from 2015 announces that China’s security policy is now guided by the new Guidelines with focus on “winning informationized local wars” and “maritime military struggle” (Fravel 2015, 2), pointing to the salience of maritime disputes in the evolving Chinese security policy.

The 2015 White Paper reiterates the main pillars of the country’s security policy and pledges that “China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development, pursue an independent foreign policy of peace and a national defence policy that is defensive in nature, oppose hegemonism and power politics in all forms, and will never seek hegemony or expansion” (SCIO 2015). The White Paper acknowledges that the strategic goals of China on the international stage are growing, which necessitates a more robust and active security policy. China is therefore willing to shoulder more international obligations and provide public goods (SCIO 2015). Yet, as the interests grow, so do the threats to them. The PLA and especially the Navy is thus tasked with “effectively secur[ing] China’s overseas interest”, moving from the strict “offshore waters defence” to the combination of “offshore waters defence” and “open seas protection”, stressing the growing importance of the maritime domain.
The White Paper directs a whole section to the “strategic guideline of active defence”. While the concept is nothing new and has been the mainstay of the Chinese security policy since the Mao era, it gains new meaning under the recent developments. Active defence is based on the dictum that “We will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will surely counterattack if attacked” and the “adherence to the unity of strategic defence and operational and tactical offence”. In practical terms, it is questionable what diplomatic or political activities of other countries may be perceived by China as offensive, even if short of a military attack on China. These may include actions viewed as threatening Chinese sovereignty, territorial integrity or regime stability.

In line with the previous editions, the White Paper (SCIO 2015) assesses China’s external environment as “generally favourable”, claiming that the period of “strategic opportunities for its development” continues. China does not expect an outbreak of a global conflict, but local wars are possible. In this respect, the document notes that China faces “increasing external impediments” and pinpoints the issues of territorial integrity and national reunification as the most salient threats. In the South China Sea dispute, China blames opposing claimants for “taking provocative actions and reinforcing their military presence on China’s reefs and islands that they have illegally occupied”, and criticizes outside forces (meant to be primarily the US and Japan) for their interference. China also views foreign forces as responsible for alleged attempts to “instigate a colour revolution” in the country. While domestic stability is the recurring theme in the consecutive White Papers, this is the first time that the threat of colour revolutions is directly mentioned, which is probably a reaction to the 2014 Hong Kong Umbrella Movement but also shows potential repercussions of the Ukrainian developments for the Chinese threat perception.

The document does not touch upon specific conflicts, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict, and only offers more detailed assessment of the security environment and policies of other actors in China’s immediate neighbourhood. While this may be partly the result of the limited nature of the White Paper itself, the fact that China still views the external security environment as positive shows that the Ukrainian conflict has not changed its overall outlook on global security even if it may have highlighted

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3 Political movement led by Hong Kong pro-democracy activists that erupted in September 2014 after Beijing unveiled its plan for election reforms in the Special Administrative Region. It was seen as the biggest challenge to central rule since Hong Kong’s “return” to China in 1997.
concerns about domestic stability.

2. Changes in security discourses

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has presented a particularly complicated challenge but also opportunity for the Chinese foreign policy. China has had extensive economic engagement with Ukraine, including the import of crucial arms technology to China, agriculture and Ukraine’s potential role in the emerging Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). At the highpoint of the Maidan protests in December 2013, the Ukrainian president Yanukovych was visiting China looking for economic opportunities. China had thus important interests in place that were threatened by the political instability and Russian military involvement. Moreover, the Russian annexation of Crimea and support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine challenged the principles of territorial integrity and noninterference that China has long cherished as the basic principles of international relations and created dangerous precedents for its own separatist issues. At the same time, the development in Ukraine was seen by China as another case of “color revolutions” instigated by the West, the like of which China wanted to prevent within its borders. Last but not least, Russia has long been a strategic partner of China, allied in its opposition to the Western global norms and US “hegemonism”.

In the end, due to strategic convergence between Beijing and Moscow, China opted for de facto political support of Russia without abandoning the formal policy of neutrality. Beijing shielded Russia from Western pressure, abstaining in UN votes condemning its actions and denouncing international sanctions, while also preventing Russia’s isolation in international institutions. For this, China was met with Russian strategic concessions within their bilateral relationship. At the same time, China has managed to not antagonize Ukraine, creating space for Beijing’s stepping in after the breakdown of Ukraine’s relationship with Russia.

A particularly useful tool to understand the position that China has taken and the underlying thinking is to analyse the discourse in China on the conflict, both official and unofficial. Below follows the overview of official statements of China on the issue and a subsequent discussion of the unofficial discourse about the conflict formed by the media and academics.

In official proclamations throughout the conflict, China has repeatedly
expressed its support for the principles of non-interference and territorial integrity, which are the longstanding pillars of Chinese security policy. China has also maintained that apolitical solution is the only way of solving the situation in Ukraine. However, Beijing has never publicly condemned Russia for its actions in Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea and relativized the situation. Beijing claimed that “there are reasons for why the situation in Ukraine is what it is today” (MFA 2014a) and that “[China has] also taken the historical and contemporary factors of the Ukraine issue into consideration” (China Daily 2014). China repeatedly called for a political solution “addressing the legitimate concerns of the parties and achieving a balance of interests among all parties” (Liu 2014).

Despite the ramifications of the Crimea referendum for its own separatist issues and the stated respect for the principle of territorial integrity, China did not condemn the Russian military takeover of Crimea nor did it bring up the question of international law in relation to the referendum. In both the UN SC and UN GA votes on the resolution against the Crimean referendum, China abstained. Asked about Putin’s decision to authorize armed forces to “protect Russians and Russian soldiers” in Ukraine in March 2014, the MFA spokesperson avoided direct response but said that China “condemns the recent extreme and violent acts” in Ukraine, thus indirectly pointing at the Maidan revolution and the removal of president Yanukovych (MFA 2014a). Furthermore, China has also been critical of Western sanctions against Russia claiming that they “can in no way help achieve political resolution” and “may give rise to new and more complex factors” (MFA 2014b).

Nevertheless, China also had to consider its position towards Ukraine in the light of the development of future ties and sizeable economic and geostrategic interests. Moreover, direct support for Russia would not bring any positive results from China, as opposed to its carefully crafted approach, and could create unnecessary friction with the West. Last but not least, China had to adopt a pragmatic stance based on the new situation on the ground. For this reason, Beijing did not directly condemn the overthrow of Yanukovych or declare the interim government as illegitimate, which would be in line with Russia’s position. Instead, the MFA stated that China “respects the independent choice made by the Ukrainian people in keeping with Ukraine’s national conditions and stands ready to foster strategic partnership with the Ukrainian side on an equal footing for win-win progress” (MFA 2014c).

While in general, the official sources have been largely restrained, unofficial discourse sheds much more light on the Chinese reading of the conflict,
its causes, the role of the West and Russia and implications for China. The Xinhua (official state press agency) commentary from December 2013, when the demonstrations against the Yanukovych government were ongoing, criticized the Western powers for “manipulat[ing] the opinions of the Ukrainian people” and warned that the West “must keep its hands off the domestic affairs of a sovereign nation” (Xinhua 2014a). Another Xinhua commentary from March 2014, following the Russian deployment of troops in Ukraine, bashed the West that “under the cliché pretence of supporting democracy interfered in Ukrainian domestic affairs by engaging in biased mediation” (Xinhua 2014b). However, the author opined that Western leaders “underestimated Russia’s will to protect its core interests in Ukraine” and that Russia “proved [its] credibility and shrewdness in planning and executing effective counter moves” (Xinhua 2014b). Several commentaries also touched upon the negative effects of the democratic system to Ukraine’s stability and the tragedy of becoming a testing ground for colour revolutions instigated by foreign countries (People’s Daily 2014). An article in PLA Daily (2014) viewed the ongoing upheaval in Ukraine as an exemplary case of Western interventionism, with “the will of the people” and “democracy” serving as mere instruments of creating conflicts and divisions while pursuing own interests.

The contributions from Chinese foreign policy experts and academics provide a more nuanced view on the issue, while largely conforming to the themes introduced in the media commentary. Chinese observers mainly see the Ukrainian issue as a realistic power struggle for strategic interests and influence between competing blocks of the West and Russia. There is a remarkable consensus among most of the Chinese analysts who see the West (and especially the US) as having led a containment policy against the resurgence of Russian power after the collapse of the Soviet Union, never abandoning “Cold War thinking”, disrespecting Russian strategic interests and enlarging its sphere of influence via the eastern expansion of NATO and the EU (Ding 2014, Ren 2014, Feng 2014, Wang 2014, Liu 2015). Jin Canrong and Wang Hao (2014) claim that the West’s “arrogant strategic calculations” in Ukraine have touched upon the “Russian baseline” and pushed it to act. On the other hand, Russian strategic or “core interests” in Ukraine are given close scrutiny by the authors, pointing at the common history, ethnic ties, stationing of the Russian Black Sea Navy and the strategic importance of Ukraine as a European bridgehead for Russia.

The West’s policy towards Russia and China are, according to several authors, two sides of the same coin. Liu Fenghua (2017) sees the US as propping up
the competing claimants and taking advantage of territorial disputes between China and its neighbours in Asia the same way as it uses the Ukrainian issue to distance the EU from Russia. In general, there are a number of similarities between the assessment of the Russian strategic position vis-à-vis the West and China’s own strategic environment in Asia. Stressing of Russian “core interests” is also similar to how China views its territorial disputes. Commentary on the conflict reveals that it is mainly seen through the prism of geopolitical competition, and the active role of Ukraine is neglected, being viewed as merely a Western proxy.

Chinese authors are aware of the negative precedent effect of the Crimean referendum for its own separatist issues, but the issue is not given as much attention as other aspects of the Ukrainian conflict. When discussed, authors often point out the important differences between Crimea and the Chinese position towards Xinjiang, Tibet and Taiwan (Zhu 2014). Creating such a linkage was indeed not in the interest of Beijing which specifically instructed the media that they “may not connect the [Crimea issue] to our issues with Taiwan, Tibet, or Xinjiang” (China Digital Times 2014). Still, several authors point at the referendum as a manifestation of Western double standards, referencing the West’s previous support for Kosovo independence (Ding 2014, Wang 2014).

Apart from the geopolitical factors, the failure of the Ukrainian state to find its independent way of development (in contrast with China), rampant issues of corruption, powerful oligarchs and an unstable democratic system are also explored by Chinese analysts. Several authors see the fundamental root cause of the conflict in Ukraine as a failure of importing Western democracy regardless of the specific conditions of the country, leading to internal divisions and political unrest (Gao 2014, Sun 2014). This line of argumentation is highly relevant for China itself, as Beijing has long sought to portray Western democracy as in decay and unsuitable for China’s conditions. The Arab Spring, Ukrainian upheaval, Brexit and the election of Trump all helped China in its propaganda efforts to delegitimize Western democracy and in presenting its system as superior.

It is notable that the discourse on the Russia-Ukraine conflict is evocative of the Chinese view on the 2008 Russia-Georgia war. The Chinese media discourse on the 2008 war as analyzed by Turner (2011) presented Russia as merely responding to the Western incursion into its traditional area of influence. In both the Ukraine and Georgia cases, China tended to view the conflict not through the lens of a bilateral issue but as a geopolitical clash.
of Russia and the West, thus mirroring its own strategic competition with the US.

3. Transformation of security policies

The following section presents an analysis of the implications of the conflict in Ukraine for Chinese foreign and security policies. Firstly, the conflict has altered the inner dynamics of Russia-Chinese relations, where Russia, faced with Western indignation and sanction regime would now be a much more enthusiastic partner, even willing to assume the position of a junior partner in the partnership. Secondly, while damaging to its short-term interests, the conflict has created an opportunity for China to take advantage of the breakdown of the Ukraine-Russia relationship and develop its own ties with Ukraine. Thirdly, the Russia-Ukraine conflict brought ramifications for the development of the Chinese military and may have affected the Chinese risk calculus in its own analogous “Crimea-like” scenarios over Taiwan or territorial issues.

The single biggest impact of the conflict in Ukraine on China has been the strategic realignment of Russia towards China, manifested in various arenas. Firstly, Russia, under economic and political pressure from the West, has made concessions towards China on issues that have troubled the relationship in the past – including energy and the sale of military equipment. In May 2014, just a month after the annexation of Crimea, Putin and Xi oversaw the signing of the 400 billion dollar gas deal after more than a decade of intense negotiations, mainly revolving around price. Starting from the mid-2000s, Russia had not sold any advanced arms to China due to the longstanding issue of Chinese reverse-engineering of technology. However, soon after the eruption of the conflict in Ukraine, deals for the sale of the Russian advanced surface-to-air missile system S400 and Su-35 fighters were reached.

Secondly, Russia and China have achieved a deal on the cooperation between BRI and Russia’s own Eurasian Union (EUE) which has, at least for now, acted to mitigate the competition of the two powers for influence in the post-Soviet space. In May 2015, Xi and Putin signed a joint declaration cooperation in coordinating the development of the EEU and the Silk Road Economic Belt (Gabuev 2016). According to Gabuev (2016) the two sides reached a consensus on the kind of division of labour in Central Asia, where China will drive the economic development while Russia will remain the main security guarantor.
Even if potential for future tensions between Russia and China is not to be neglected, the conflict in Ukraine has clearly manifested that the two powers share their opposition against “Western interventionism” and concern for their “core interests” that they view as red lines that cannot be crossed and oppose “foreign destabilization”. It is notable that the two countries have, in recent years, charted the same course on stifling civil society and limiting foreign influence. China followed Russia’s example in restricting foreign NGO activities in China with a 2017 law. Both countries also share their views on the concept of “cyber sovereignty”, pushing against ideological infiltration of cyberspace allegedly waged by the West, including instigating the revolution in Ukraine (Dyon 2015).

Despite China’s support for Russia during the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the door to China’s cooperation with Ukraine has not been closed. On the contrary, China has used the breakdown of Ukraine’s relations with Russia to its advantage and decided to step in. Although the plans to lease agricultural land equivalent to 5 percent of Ukraine’s territory have come to a halt with the Ukrainian conflict, the volume of trade in agriculture between the two countries rose by 56% in the year after the annexation of Crimea (Ukrainian Prism 2015). While the plan for the construction of a deep water port in Crimea went unfulfilled with Russia’s annexation of the peninsula, China has become involved in transforming the Ukraine port of Yuzhny to become a part of the BRI. As the Russia-Ukraine conflict resulted in Kyiv’s ban on arms sales to Russia, the symbiotic relationship between the two countries’ arms industries has come to an abrupt halt. Ukraine has had to offset the loss of Russian exports, which also creates opportunity for China. Beijing has significantly depended on the arms trade triangle with both Russia and Ukraine since the 1990s, including high performance jet engines, gas turbines and naval diesel engines which China has so far been unable to produce on its own (Kirchberger 2016, 264). However, as Ukraine gets closer to the West, it may be expected that its arms exports to China will face obstacles. This could be evidenced by the court action against the Chinese acquisition of a controlling stake of the Ukrainian aircraft engine company Motor Sich in September 2017 (SCMP 2017).

The successful Russian military action in Ukraine may have also affirmed the direction of China’s military reform efforts (as argued by Sautin (2016)) and proved the efficacy of the grey zone tactics employed by Russia. The Ukraine conflict has been the first time the Russian military has been utilized in a large-scale engagement since the war with Georgia in 2008, which uncovered shortcomings in Russia’s war capabilities and spurred military
reforms. As China itself has not fought a war since the conflict with Vietnam in 1979, it has been closely following the experiences of other militaries, mainly Russia and the US and using them as valuable lessons.

Since 2015, the PLA has been undergoing the most significant organizational reforms since the 1950s. Apart from personal cuts of 300 thousand personnel, the reforms have so far made crucial changes to the structure of the PLA, scrapping the outdated Soviet model. The previous seven Military Regions were replaced by five Theatre Commands, each with their own Army, Air Force and (in three of the Theatre Commands) Navy components (Chase and Engstrom 2016). The integrated structure means parting ways with the ground forces-dominated model of the past. At the same time, the restructuring will further centralize power under the CMC.

The reforms should streamline the control of the CMC over the PLA, while, at the same time, giving the Theatre Commands more leeway on the operational level, directing them at specific conflict scenarios where they will have forces from different services at their disposal, without the need of supervision by the general headquarters of the respective services in Beijing. Thus a combat command system running from the CMC through the Theatre Commands to troops and a military administration system running from the CMC through the service HQs to the troops will be established (Xinhua 2016).

The rationale for the reforms is twofold. The first is political. Reform of the PLA should create a streamlined command structure that is directly subservient to the control of the CCP and the General Secretary himself. The second goal is to create an even more professional and modern force with increased war-fighting capability, especially in the area of joint warfare, which has also been a goal of Russia’s modernization. Increasing the joint warfare capabilities and weakening the army at the expense of the navy and air force will make the PLA a more flexible and powerful war-fighting force focused on the most probable scenarios of local conflicts erupting in the Taiwan Strait or over the contested Chinese territorial claims.

Coming to the relevance of Crimea’s annexation for Chinese own behaviour in its territorial disputes, there are notable parallels between the tactics employed by Russia against Ukraine and those pursued by China. Similar to Russian “little green men”, China has been using “little blue men” of fishermen, maritime militia and coastguards to further its claims over the disputed maritime areas (Gady 2015). Beijing took advantage of this tool
in a successful occupation of Scarborough Shoal in 2012, blockade of Filipino marines stationed on Second Thomas Shoal in 2014 and during the deployment of an oil rig in waters claimed by Vietnam as its EEZ in 2014. In the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands dispute with Japan, China has similarly used ship patrols to challenge the Japanese administration. Since 2013, China has been reclaiming land on its occupied maritime features in the South China Sea under the pretense of improving conditions for the stationed personnel while effectively militarizing the features.

Chinese “salami tactics” have made an open conflict unnecessary for the achievement of its goals- Beijing has managed to consolidate its control and increase power projection in the South China Sea without a single bullet having been fired. Beijing’s power grab took place in the background of divided US attention towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the war against the Islamic state that have crippled its “Asian rebalance” policy. The US, the self-professed protector of the freedom of world oceans, has been left largely powerless in the face of Chinese actions, keeping to “Freedom of navigations” operations of uncertain strategic value.

Despite these similarities, it is not useful to view the Chinese actions in its neighbourhood through the lens of Crimea scenarios. China already claims all the disputed areas as its own territory, which was not the case of Crimea which was universally accepted as part of Ukraine before the annexation. The uncompromising Chinese stance on territorial issues and the utmost importance they play, not only in Chinese foreign but also in domestic policy, has been a longstanding phenomenon that is driven by independent factors. Secondly, none of the disputed territorial features in the South China or East China Seas are inhabited with significant native populations, precluding an analogy with the alleged Russian protection of ethnic Russians in Crimea. Finally, there is little indication that Chinese use of grey zone tactics is directly related to Russia’s action in Ukraine as the phenomenon predates the conflict and is a result of the long-term development of the Chinese doctrine, even if China undoubtedly took advantage of the limited US strategic attention towards the region.

Deserving of a special note is Taiwan, which presents the closest analogy to the Russia-Crimea situation. Despite the very low support for reunification with the Mainland, there are strong pro-unification elements that China could decide to “protect” against the Taiwan independence forces in the case of a political upheaval on the island (Cole 2014).
Nevertheless, the Taiwan issue is, in many aspects, *sui generis*. Most of the international community respects the principle of One China, which means that Taiwan is recognized as a part of China, although political claims to what government rightfully represents China may differ. For Beijing, the Taiwanese issue is a domestic issue and solely to be decided upon itself without interference by outside parties. In relation to Taiwan, the Crimea issue actually poses more of a dangerous precedent than opportunity from the perspective of Beijing, as referendum initiatives for independence have already been proposed by Taiwanese politicians in the past. However, the development of the Chinese position on Taiwan and any decision for a military solution will be primarily affected by the changes of the Taiwanese political landscape and the evolving views of the Chinese political elite. Due to the utmost importance of national reunification for Beijing, if Taiwan were to declare independence, China would most likely act militarily regardless of the US determination to prevent the occupation of the island. Failure to act could mean a fatal hit to the legitimacy of the regime. At the same time, China is very unlikely to take military action against Taiwan save for in the case of an outright declaration of independence for the fear of the heavy damage to its international environment and stability of the economy which is the basis for the legitimacy of the regime.

**Conclusions**

The Ukrainian conflict has not significantly changed the overall Chinese view of the global security environment. With a carefully crafted approach, China has managed to maintain relations with both Ukraine and Russia, strengthening its geopolitical position and demonstrating its growing clout in international affairs. In the aftermath of the conflict in Ukraine, China has acted to both bolster domestic stability against perceived foreign threats and increase its preparedness for a possible local conflict through military reforms. In its maritime disputes, China has been pursuing grey zone tactics similar to Russian actions in Ukraine, but these have not been directly related. Moreover, the differences of the Chinese situation in its maritime disputes make the Crimea analogy mistaken.

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SECURITY STRATEGIES AND POLICIES AFTER 2014

POLAND

Agnieszka LEGUCKA

Résumé

Warsaw did not accept the violation of international law and Russian aggression in Ukrainian territory. It interprets Russian policy as a threat to Central Europe and European security. Poland is strengthening its military capabilities and is looking for international support on issues concerning Central European security, especially from NATO. After 2014 Poland adopted two strategic documents which testify the evolution of the perception of Russia from it being a challenge to it being a threat to Poland. In terms of security discourse, in Poland there is consensus about special relations with the United States and NATO in security issues, more complex political discourse has been connected to relations with the European Union. Polish security policy can be characterized as somewhat “Americanized” at the expense of its European dimension. The main directions for Polish security is to strengthen the eastern flank of NATO and its own military potential. Striving to deter Russia and defend itself, Poland works on strengthening its cohesion and cementing solidarity within NATO.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

The most important document in the field of Poland’s security and defence policy is the National Security Strategy (SBN). It is approved by the President, prepared by the Council of Ministers and coordinated by the Minister of National Defence (Wojciechowski 2015, 55-70). Previous strategy documents of this type were adopted in connection with historic breakthroughs, i.e. NATO accession, terrorist attacks on the WTC, and preparation for integration with the European Union. It is worth pointing out that for several years Polish strategic documents have addressed the issue of security in a comprehensive manner, analyzing both its military and non-military aspect (Kuźniar 2006, 142-179). The first SBN was adopted in 2000, just after Polish membership in NATO (1999), and it viewed the Polish situation in a moderately optimistic way, especially it was said that global confrontation is not a threat for Poland, hence the decreases in military spending. The second SBN, signed in 2003 was the Polish answer to the terrorist attack on the WTC two year before. That is why Poland and its alliance started preparations for operations abroad, for example in the Middle East. The third SBN in 2007 looked at Polish security from the sectoral point of view (military, energy, social).

Otherwise, in the case of the National Security Strategy of 5 November 2014, the annexation of Crimea and Russia’s confrontational policy in Ukraine were kept in consideration in the background of ongoing consultations on this important document. The National Security Strategy was the result of the four-year work of the Strategic National Security Review, which resulted in the first White Paper of National Security of the Republic of Poland in 2013.

The SBN occupies a special place in the hierarchy of national defence planning documents, because it is a continuum of deliberations on broadly understood national security as well as acting as a basic reference point for documents detailing or developing its provisions, including state security and defence (Kupiecki 2015, 13). According to some politicians and commentators, the White Paper and the SBN have insufficiently analyzed the threats posed by the evolution of the neighbourhood of the Republic of Poland (Rak 2014). Some commentators of the National Security Strategy complained that it was adopted “too late” (Jagnieża 2015). On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that “long-term strategies, forward-looking, always take place at a certain time and place, which strongly influences document records” (Kupiecki 2015, 12).
Following the parliamentary elections in Poland in November 2015, the new defence ministry launched a Strategic Defence Review in July 2016. As a result of its work, a part of the report entitled “The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland” was announced by the Minister of National Defence in May 2017 (Koncepcja 2017). It was not a document signed by the president and there was an opinion that it was only a “defence ministry voice” on the reform of command in the armed forces (Świerczyński 2017). The president did not have a voice on this issue because of disputes between him and the Minister of Defence about reform of the Polish army and the model of the 2032 Polish Armed Forces.

An analysis of the main documents concerning Poland’s security strategy shows that the rhetoric towards Russia and the perception of the Russian Federation as a threat to the stability of the Central and Eastern European region have intensified over the last three years. The White Paper of 2013, which became a basis for the later SBN, contained key conclusions and recommendations on Poland’s security policy and the improvement of the national security system. Its aim is “to contribute to the deepening of knowledge and public awareness about the security of Poland and the Poles” (White Paper 2013, 9), while the 2014 Strategy was a governmental document signed by the Head of State, a directive for state authorities dealing with the security of Poland and an introduction to state defence enforcement work.

The difference between the two documents is therefore between the “idea” and the “guidelines”. Concerning Russia in the White Paper, it was stated that “Poland’s security is heavily dependent on the development of relations between Russia and the West. Today it is difficult to determine their clear perspective. Will Russia keep its course of building power, without regard for others, especially neighbours, and even at their expense? Or will there be a change in this course for the collaborative building of common security? For today, it seems more likely to be a continuation scenario unfavourable for Poland” (White Paper 2013, 126).

The *Strategy* underlines clearly that “as a neighbour of the Russian Federation, Poland is of the view that both bilateral relations and NATO-Russia and EU-Russia relations should develop on the basis of full respect for international law, including the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states as well as the freedom to choose their own development path and political and military alliances” (Strategy 2014, 10). This has confirmed the need to increase Poland’s own defence capabilities and strengthen NATO’s
eastern flank in this part of Europe, especially as the situation is not about
to calm down and in the coming years, the destabilization of the eastern
neighbourhood of Poland is anticipated.

It is not quite right to agree with one of the critical comments on the National
Security Strategy that “it does not define the risks of Russia and does not
formulate ways of achieving long-term foreign and security policy goals”
(Rak 2014). A careful reader is able to analyze these threats, highlighted
several times in the document as not only dangerous for Poland but also for
the region. In addition, various records indicate how to implement these
objectives of foreign and security policy connected precisely to the “Russian
threat”. Cognizant of the events in Ukraine in 2013 and 2014, the National
Security Strategy does not remain indifferent and stresses that “in the
neighbourhood of Poland there is a risk of regional and local conflicts that
may involve it indirectly and directly” (point 36).

In this context, the naming of these phenomena as a threat pushes Polish
security policy in the direction of strengthening its own defence capabilities,
as well as maximizing pressure on other NATO members to return the
Alliance to its traditional defensive functions. The impact of Russia on
neighbouring countries, especially Ukraine, is interpreted in a very negative
way, and the intensification of confrontational Russian policy has, according
to the authors, a destabilizing effect on the state of security in the region.
For Poland, the conclusion is that European security will be conditioned by
four main factors: NATO, the European Union, the strategic presence of the
USA on the European continent and relations with Russia.

In general terms, the threat is to be understood as a subjective state of
consciousness of the subject and an objectively occurring factor having
a negative impact on the given subject (Korycki 1994, 18). The strategy
deliberately diagnoses the threat of new cybercrime (points 31, 47, 57),
international terrorism and organized crime (points 30, 31, 55), and the
potential for destabilization in Europe (point 35). After this threat directory,
the document singles out challenges, safety issues and negative phenomena.
It is emphasized that “Europe will remain a continent of diverse dangers in
the military sphere” (point 35), and “Threats to Poland may, in unfavourable
circumstances, take on a non-military and military nature. The latter may
take the form of crisis and war risks, that is, armed conflicts on different
scales - from military action below the threshold of classical war to less likely
large-scale conflicts” (point 36).
Furthermore, in a document prepared by National Defence Minister Antoni Macierewicz in May 2017, the threat from Russia is foremost. In his introduction to the document, the minister criticizes the previous strategy papers, arguing that they underestimated the environment of international security. “The strategic analysis of the current position of Poland on the international scene yielded a clear conclusion: the scale of threats resulting from Russian aggressive policy had not been adequately assessed in the past” (Koncepcja 2017, 6). The aggressive policy of Russia is a major challenge and threat to the authors of this document. “We assume that by 2032 Russia will maintain its aggressive stance in its foreign and security policies. Taking into account the asymmetry of military capabilities between Russia and NATO’s eastern flank members, such a situation creates a direct threat for Poland and the region (...) Russia’s actions are often camouflaged and conducted below the threshold of an armed conflict. It is not unrealistic that Russia could incite a regional conflict and dragging into it one or several NATO countries. Russia is also likely to provoke proxy wars in various parts of the world in order to exert pressure on Western countries” (Koncepcja 2017, 6).

The second challenge is the unstable neighbourhood on the Eastern Flank. A potential source of instability for the region is the situation in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Southern Caucasus. The third challenge is the unstable neighbourhood in the South. “Although the situation in Eastern Europe is the main security concern for Poland, we also recognize serious challenges connected with a deep, multi-faceted crisis at the southern border of NATO. The dynamic situation in the Middle East and Northern Africa makes any attempt to predict future developments in these regions highly problematic” (Koncepcja 2017, 21-22). Such negative phenomena as illegal migration, terrorism, and extremism are covered in the concept. Special attention is paid to terrorist threats, convincing that “a potential terrorist attack on the territory of Poland, a member state of NATO and the EU which is associated with Christianity, can be used by Daesh not only to broaden the scope of “the fight against the infidel”, but to intimidate the members of the anti-Daesh coalition” (Koncepcja 2017, 27). According to the document, we can conclude that striving to deter Russia and defend itself, Poland is expected to work on strengthening its cohesion and cementing solidarity within NATO. Strengthening NATO’s eastern flank and continuously engaging the USA into the European affairs is the core of Polish security policy.
2. Changes in security discourses

The main directions of the political discourse in Poland in the security sphere were based on three principles: to keep Americans in Europe, to make NATO a stronger alliance, and to keep Russia out as a main challenge for European security. Since the transformation of the security environment after the collapse of the Soviet Union the Polish political scene has been consistent in the most important issues of security policy. Over the last years the main elements of Polish security policy have remained unchanged. The most vital pillars of Poland’s security remain NATO, and in particular the alliance with the United States; strengthening the defence capabilities of the Polish state; and defending against Russia’s great power aspirations.

In the Defence Concept, one reads that “NATO remains the world’s most powerful military alliance, and Poland will make every effort to ensure that it remains a guarantor of peace and prosperity in Europe. The North Atlantic Alliance, as well as the European Union, has contributed towards producing unparalleled stability of the continent. An important element of this architecture will be the continuation of the military and political engagement of the United States” (Koncepcja 2017, 42).

Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has confirmed the legitimacy of Poland’s position in the Western security structures of NATO and the European Union. Since 2014, Polish-Russian relations have been characterized by a classic security dilemma, in which the continuation of Russia’s policy in Ukraine has created the need to increase the defence capabilities of the Polish state. An element in halting Russia was the NATO summit in Newport in September 2014 and in Warsaw in July 2016, and above all the strengthening of the Alliance’s eastern flank. The debate within the organization pointed to the need for dialogue with Russia, about which politicians in Poland were sceptical.

Putting the accents in foreign policy and security was taken over by the Law and Justice (PIS) party in November 2015. PIS, led by Jarosław Kaczyński, brother of the president Lech Kaczyński who died in Smolensk catastrophe, emphasized the need to strengthen Poland’s security against the threat from Russia. The main difference in views between the ruling party and the earlier ruling Civic Platform is the attitude towards the European Union as a pillar of that security. Although previous governments have also preferred NATO to the European Union in matters of stabilizing Europe, the PIS government has increasingly stressed the need to safeguard national interests within the EU.
As a consequence, it did not attach much importance to European integration in the area of the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU. The PIS’ distance to the European project was due to the general European trends caused by the migration crisis of 2015, Brexit, and the rise of populism in European societies.

Nevertheless, the attitude towards the EU was an important element of public debate in Poland between the ruling party and the opposition. Taking into account the positive attitude of Poles to the European Union, the ruling party does not explicitly advocate leaving the integration structure. 78% of Poles are for staying in the EU (IBIRS). The definition of Russia as a threat also corresponds to the social mood. According to a 2017 opinion poll, 65% of Poles consider Russia’s power as a threat. Poland differs in this respect from other countries in the world where this indicator is smaller - in the USA 47%, in France 45%, in Hungary - 28%, Turkey - 54%, United Kingdom - 43% (Poushter and Manevich 2017).

The objectives of Polish diplomacy were presented in the Sejm on 29 January 2016 by Witold Waszczykowski in the Information of the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2016 (Priorities 2016). It is in the interest of Poland and Europe to have pragmatic and substantive relations with the Russian Federation, according to the minister, while he stressed that Russia is addressing its neighbours from the position of power. Another objective pointed out by the minister was the creation of a solid and consistent EU and NATO policy towards Russia. Poland did not oppose dialogue with Russia, but thought that one of the themes should be the Crimean issue and the war in the east of Ukraine. Due to the increase in military capabilities and exercises near the Polish border (Strategic File, PISM), a key issue for the region’s security was the organization of the NATO summit in Warsaw on 7-8 July 2016, which strengthened the eastern flank of the alliance.

In order to minimize the Russian authorities’ opposition towards NATO arrangements, the Allies started talks with Russia. The first NATO-Russia meeting after the annexation of the Crimea took place in April 2016. Poland was sceptical about the dialogue with the Russian Federation, but agreed to have cyclical meetings with it. Foreign Minister Waszczykowski emphasized that “Dialogue should make sense. It should not only be concerned and be limited to a certain rhetoric, to a ritual, to the very fact of meeting, but should lead to something concrete” (Waszczykowski 2016). During the NATO Summit Minister of Defence Antoni Macierewicz called Russia the
greatest threat to European security.

Partnership with the United States was confirmed during the US President’s visit to Warsaw on 5 July 2017 (Wiśniewski, 2017). The manifestation of the Americanization of Polish security policy at the expense of its European dimension was, among others, the retreat in March 2017 from the decision to be a framework state in the Eurocorps. This was explained by the need for greater involvement in NATO’s eastern flotilla. Deputy Minister of National Defence Tomasz Szatkowski explained the decision of the Ministry of Defence: “We have assumed that this is a structure that performs tasks both within the NATO framework - in a full fanfare, also in collective defence and within the EU Common Security and Defence Policy” (MON, 2017).

Poland has begun to engage in regional initiatives that strengthen the voices of the Visegrád Group countries in the European Union. The European Union Operations and Strategic Command headquarters in Krakow was established in November 2015 in accordance with national commitments. Its task was to perform half-yearly duty (from 1 January to 30 June 2016) based on soldiers of the Visegrád Group of the European Union (GB UE V4), formed by Poles, Hungarians, Slovaks and Czechs while Poland would play the role of the “framework state”. On the other hand, the command team in Krakow was composed of more than 230 soldiers, of whom nearly 150 were Poles, followed by Hungarians (31 soldiers), Czechs (30 soldiers) and Slovaks (25 soldiers) (Visegrád Group 2016).

In Polish discourse this military regional cooperation was seen as a support in other more important issues (migration policy). Polish think-tanks were pointing out that there are many differences between V-4 countries in their perception of Russia and Eastern Partnership. However, while Ukraine, Georgia, and Belarus are among EaP priority countries for Poland, “Hungary calls for equal attention to Armenia and, especially, to Azerbaijan” (Jóźwiak, 2017). Hungary’s contacts with Russia are viewed suspiciously by Poland. For that reason, Poland supports closer military cooperation between Lithuania and Ukraine for example in the common brigade (LITPULUKRBRIG), which achieved full operational capabilities in January 2017.

3. Transformation of security policies

Responding to the challenges spreading from the east, Poland is focused on
strengthening its own defence capabilities. At the same time, it fulfils allied obligations resulting from membership of NATO and the EU. After the PIS government took over, a programme of modernization of the Polish army began. Certain discrepancies have arisen between Minister of Defence Antoni Macierewicz and President Andrzej Duda on the command system of the armed forces – Model of Polish Army 2032 (Świerczyński, 2017). The president had doubts whether the command of individual types of forces - directly under the head of the General Staff - would provide the “combined” merit of the current commanding general and operational command. He would like to see in this structure the “Combined Force Commander”.

Within the concept of the Ministry of National Defence “the command and control system of the Polish Armed Forces will be improved not by a thorough reorganization of the existent structure. It will restore divisions as true tactical combat units, and not merely administrative entities” (Koncepcja 2017, 45). The priority is to simplify the whole system, and make the separation of responsibilities amongst commands clear, as well as to strengthen the hierarchy and establish a clear designation of the highest ranked commander (Koncepcja 2017, 46). The new system will facilitate the transformation during escalation from peace to war. Senior civilian and military leadership will participate in an intensified programme of exercises and staff training – they will also regularly participate in war games organised by a special cell within the Ministry of National Defence. Conclusions from such activities will have an influence on the operational plans and the development of the Polish Armed Forces. After the reform, the role of the “first soldier” will be played by the Chief of the General Staff of Armed Forces and the subordinated new commands of the individual services of the armed forces: Land Forces, Air Force, Navy, Special Operations Forces, and Territorial Defence Forces. The Chief of the General Staff will be also responsible for commanding the armed forces in the country and abroad, as well as the planning of their strategic employment.

The reform of the system was designed to be coherent with the proposed model of the 2032 Polish Armed Forces. In contrast to President Duda, Minister of Defence Macierewicz would like to strengthen the General Staff. In his view, it should be supported by two deputies, responsible for the planning of defence operations and for the support of the armed forces respectively. Due to the importance of logistics, the Support Inspectorate of the Armed Forces will be elevated to the strategic-operational level (Koncepcja 2017, 46-47). At the time of writing the final effect of the reform
is not yet finished.

Experience from the annexation of the Crimea ("green men") has been used to create a new formation of the Military Territorial Defence. According to Macierewicz’s proposals, this is to be a separate, fifth type of armed forces (alongside land, air, special forces and navy). Their task is to support local communities during armed conflict, but also during natural disasters or catastrophes. WOT are counted to 53,000 soldiers whose service will last from 1 to 6 years (with the possibility of extension). By the end of 2019, 68 battalions will be formed, which will be composed of 17 brigades of subordinate units of the Territorial Defence Forces (Territorial Defence, 2017, 2016 Act). The first territorial defence brigades based in Bialystok, Lublin and Rzeszow, due to the assessment of potential military threats, will be located on the eastern wall of Poland.

The Commander of the Territorial Defence Forces is the Commander of the Armed Forces and, like the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces (DG RSZ) and the Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of Armed Forces, is subject to the Minister for National Defence. The total estimated expenditures from the National Defence budget for the establishment, equipment and functioning of the WOT are as follows in 2016 - PLN 394.4 million (about 98 million euros); in 2017 - PLN 1,096.9 million (about 274 million euros). Considering the suggestions of the Ministry of Defence that procurements for the Polish Armed Forces should be based on supporting domestic industry, it should be anticipated that the WOT equipment will be based on domestic producers (Territorial Defence, Ministry of Defence, 2017).

The concept also envisages an increase in army size and military spending. By 2032 it is planned to double the number of professional soldiers in the Polish armed forces to 200,000 (including about 50,000 territorial defence forces). This will be a gradual process but consistently implemented (Szatkowki, 2017). To help achieve this goal, the process of modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces will be accompanied by achieving one of the highest levels of defence spending in NATO, which by 2030 should reach 2.5% of the Polish GDP as a minimal objective. “Thanks to an expenditure rationalizing process, Poland will increase the defensive capabilities of our country and of the whole region” (Koncepcja, p. 45).

Poland is one of a small group of states (USA, Greece, Great Britain and Estonia) which fulfil NATO’s commitment to devote 2% of their GDP to defence. From 2018 3 more countries plan to raise defence spending
(Lithuania, Latvia and Romania) up to 2% but Poland has a more ambitious plan. The draft amendment to the Act on Modernization and Financing of Armed Forces envisages an increase in defence spending. According to its content, the state’s expenditures on defence will be allocated at the level of not less than 2% of GDP in 2018, 2.1% of GDP in 2019, 2.2% of GDP in 2020-2023, 2.3% of GDP in 2024-2025, 2.4% of GDP in 2026-2029, and 2.5% of GDP in 2030 and subsequent years (Act 2017). Adoption of the draft amendment of the Act in the proposed version will increase the planned budget for defence in the years 2018-2019 by a total of about PLN 5-7 billion (about 1.25-1.75 billion euros) in relation to the current law (Dmitruk 2017). Significant resources will be invested in order to increase the range of operational fire, which is a key to achieving effective deterrence. In the Concept, the Ministry of Defence is planning to put additional attention on the development of tube and rocket artillery, which when employed in combination with the new attack helicopters, will enable the delivery of more effective firepower. A crucial element of the Polish deterrence force will be played by the Air Force equipped with long-range precision weapons and 5th generation combat aircraft and developing a new generation main battle tank (Koncepcja 2017, 47).

An important step in defending Polish territorial integrity is building an anti-missile system, the so-called Polish Shield. Some elements of the “Wisła” programme have been under development for several years. During the US President’s visit to Poland in July 2017 the memorandum on the supply of Patriot anti-aircraft and anti-missile systems was signed. The United States has agreed to sell Patriot batteries in exactly the same configuration as the US Army, with the IBCS system and the gallium nitride radar (Palowski and Sabak 2017). In November 2017 the US Department agreed to sell to the Polish Army Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) Battle Command System (IBCS) enabled Patriot Configuration-3+ with Modernized Sensors and Components for an estimated cost of $10.5 billion. The proposed sale will increase the defensive capabilities of the Polish Military to guard against hostile aggression and shield NATO allies who often train and operate within Poland’s borders. Poland will have no difficulty absorbing this system into its armed forces (News Release, DSCA 2017).

At the same time, the Polish MoD did not yet finish the other contract on multi-task helicopters. Previous management of the Ministry of Defence indicated the offer of Airbus Helicopters, which includes 50 Caracal multi-taskers. Polish Defence Minister Macierewicz said in October 2016 that the
Ministry is considering the purchase of Black Hawk and AW149 helicopters from Lockheed Martin and Leonardo, respectively. Lockheed Martin’s subsidiary PZL Mielec makes the Black Hawk, while Leonardo’s PZL Swidnik offshoot produces the AW149 (Adamowski, 2016). That was another signal that the Polish Army would be modernized in cooperation with the Americans, who are prioritized the Polish security policy.

Conclusions

The goal of the National Security Concept adopted in 2014, which was complemented by the document of the MoD proposed in May 2017, was to enhance the security of Poland after annexation of Crimea. Russian policy started to be seen not only as a challenge but as a threat for the security of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw maintains the position that Russia must first remove its militaries from Crimea and Donbas, sign a bilateral agreement with Ukraine and restore the status quo before 2014. The main directions for Polish security were to strengthen the eastern flank of NATO and its own military potential. Effective implementation of the decisions made at the two NATO summits in Newport and Warsaw were fundamental for this process. Polish activity within the Alliance is crucial and there is political consensus on it between political parties. There are differences between the ruling party (PiS) and the opposition about Polish relations with the EU, which includes military cooperation. There are some disputes of competences between the president and the MoD over the model of the Polish army.

Modernization of the Polish army is falling along the lines of this strategy, which means increasing its military expenditure (to 2.5% in 2030) and doubling its numbers. Land Forces are given more attention and a new type of military force is created (Territorial Defence Forces). The updated Technical Modernization Plan gives priorities to Polish industry and close cooperation with the US. In that regard the most important task is to accomplish the Polish Shield anti-missile system.

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Résumé

The general approach to security in Romania went through a process of significant evolution in the last century although the events of 2008 in Georgia and 2014 have accelerated the process of such evolution. Strengthening Trans-Atlantic bonds, perceiving the security situation in the wider Black Sea region as a challenge to Romania’s national security and the attempts to adjust to the new realities with the available security tools are the main factors shaping Romanian strategic thinking. The perception of Russia in this regard is sober and balanced. It has gradually changed from defining Russian policy in a sensitive manner for the Romania region of the Black Sea as “a destabilizing factor” in 2010 to defining Russian behaviour in the region as “violation of international agreements” in 2015.

There is a national and interparty consensus regarding these definitions. The trending discourses include commitment to support the neighbourhood for the sake of stability in Romania itself. Romanian governments in their discourse are shifting into defensive paradigm and their position on both security and defence priorities and assessment of threats to Romania is quite sustainable whereas the necessity to counteract Russia’s efforts on changing the security balance in the direct neighbourhood of Romania remains in the top position of the security agenda.

Romanian military procurement and security policies correspond with the strategic documents adopted in recent years and political statements made by the Romanian leadership. Bucharest’s policies including military spending are aimed at the improvement of situation, setting closer ties with its allies, in particular with the US, and ensuring the security and implementation of Romanian interests in the region.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

The evolution of Romanian strategic thinking and approaches to ensuring security and defence is hardly possible without at least a brief mention of its historical background. The feeling of insecurity has been always implicitly present in strategic thinking in Romania and has been rooted in its historical past. Since the nineteenth century Romanian political elites were under the influence of the concept of a “Latin island in the middle of the Slavic sea” (Angelescu 2011, 126). That concept was resulting in a lack of cooperation and ties with neighbouring countries, emphasizing the differences with the neighbouring nations, etc. At the end of the twentieth century the feeling of insecurity reinvented itself through both active engagement in broader alliances and a commitment to strategic partnerships and collective defence concepts. Such an approach by Romania was deeply connected with its Westernization and resulted in the creation of a commission in February 1993 with the mandate to elaborate Romania’s European Integration Strategy (Angelescu 2011, 127), which became a significant step towards European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Romania completed by full-fledged membership of Romania in both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (in 2004) and the European Union (in 2007). Aside from NATO and EU membership Romania was also investing into strengthening transatlantic ties and cooperating with the U.S. Such an approach of having privileged relations with one of the great powers in the region has been often applied by Bucharest throughout its history since gaining independence in 1878 (Soare 2008, 56). The most explicit example in this regard was the Agreement between Romania and the United States of America on the deployment of the United States ballistic missile defence system in Romania signed in 2011 (US Department of State. 2011) accompanied by the “Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century between the United States of America and Romania”.

Simultaneously, Romania played significant attention to its closest neighbour in the East – the Republic of Moldova, with which Romania has historical and cultural ties and to the region of the Black Sea which was usually perceived by Romanian authorities as a “backyard” and where Bucharest was trying to become a mediator between the EU and NATO on the one hand and neighbouring countries on the other. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the Russian-Georgian war in 2008 was perceived by Romanian authorities as a serious threat to Romanian interests in the region and even caused Romania’s diplomatic offensive. Soon after the “August war” on August 20-21 that time President of Romania Traian Basescu undertook a “blitz-tour” to Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey. During the trip
Basescu met with the leadership of these states and was accompanied by a clear message to Russia that Romania did not accept territorial revisions of Georgia and emphasized that the Helsinki Final Act should serve as a foundation stone for the peaceful resolution of the conflict between Russia and Georgia.

A further deterioration in relations between the West and Russia caused by illegal annexation of Crimea and Russia-led proxy war in Donbas, Ukraine, also found its reflection in Romanian strategic documents. In the 2010 National Defence Strategy (Centrul de coordonare a protectiei infrastructurilor critice 2010) Russian policy in the Black Sea was mentioned within the context of the Russian-Georgian war as a destabilizing factor. The main security challenges were still perceived as those coming from military conflicts outside the European continent, terrorism and weapons proliferation. The approach reflected in the National Defence Strategy 2015-2019 (President of Romania 2015) is relatively different. Russia is mentioned in the document four times. Firstly, Romanian Strategy clearly defines that the region is marked by deterioration in relations between NATO and Russia and such deterioration has direct impact on Romanian citizens’ security. In this regard the document on the one hand reflects Romania’s clear identification of itself as a NATO member country that shares the concerns of its allies. Secondly, the document mentions that Russian behaviour in the region on the one hand violates the international agreements which were also signed by Russia at the end of the twentieth century and on the other hand that it makes the issue of collective defence under the NATO umbrella relevant again. In this regard Romania demonstrates sustainability of its policy, since the Helsinki Act was also referred to by the previous President of Romania Basescu during his abovementioned tour. Simultaneously, reference to collective security reflects Romania’s commitment to NATO. On the top of all that Romania traditionally emphasizes the importance of the Black Sea region in its foreign policy and defence strategy. Thirdly, the Strategy highlights that Russia by its attempts to consolidate its status as a power at the regional level undermines the European path of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Therefore it is fair to say that the document reflects the combination of approaches that Romania for years has found as the most relevant approach in the field of security – emphasizing the relevance of alliances and expectations to benefit from deep strategic relations with the global powers.

In its assessment of national security threats the Strategy goes beyond the traditional perception of military threats. Although the document does not show a major doctrinal change in Romania’s approach to security, it seeks
to define a broader concept of national defence that might be perceived as the attempt to respond to the challenges of hybrid warfare. Another argument in favour of such hypothesis is the fact of highlighting energy threats, cyber threats, and hostile informational actions in the Strategy and putting the task to develop the capacities to respond to asymmetric and hybrid threats.

Among the main responses that the Strategy suggests is strengthening of strategic credibility. This is a new trend in Romanian strategic thinking – an attempt to convert the “Latin island in the middle of the Slavic sea” into the “Island of stability” within an unstable and vulnerable environment. By these means Romania seeks to find more support from global powers and is simultaneously looking for the opportunities to capitalize this support into promotion of its regional agenda.

It is noteworthy that for the sake of strengthening strategic credibility Romania is ready for an increase in defence spending. For example, the strategy foresees an increase in the respective spending up to 2% of GDP which will both increase defence capabilities and satisfy the demands of the American administration to NATO countries numerous voiced by President Trump. That is quite logical bearing in mind that according to the strategy Romania seeks to deepen the Strategic Partnership with the U.S.

Generalizing, the current Strategy both combines the historical tradition of Romanian strategic thinking and counts on close relations with the global powers in the region. The trend of Westernization has however brought new details. Firstly, it causes Romanian commitment to the Western block represented by NATO. Secondly, it hints that the Romania’s allies are located towards the west, not towards the east, meaning that the US and the EU are considered as the strategic allies whereas positioning towards Russia is gradually converting from neutral (with the exception of cases where Russia interferes into Romania’s direct neighbourhood e.g. the Republic of Moldova) to defensive and supportive to Eastern neighbours e.g. the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, which are in a situation of conflict with Russia. Thirdly, the Black Sea emerges as Romania’s “backyard” and Bucharest at the level of strategic documents tries to express its willingness to engage both the US and NATO into defending and stabilizing this backyard, while Russia is perceived as the cause of turbulence.
2. Changes in security discourses

The ideas reflected in Romanian security related documents and the ideas behind them are often voiced by Romanian high-ranking officials and politicians notwithstanding their political affiliation. Interestingly the internal competition between the political parties in Romania can be high but it undermines neither national nor interparty consensus on foreign policy priorities. The trending discourses include commitment to support the neighbourhood for the sake of stability in Romania itself, to promote and capitalize Romania’s role as a security contributor and reliable partner to both the United States and NATO (commitment to EU strategies is also present but less vivid) whereas relations with Russia are shaped by two components – firstly, solidarity with European and transatlantic partners and secondly, the assessment of Russian-caused risks in the Romanian backyard.

For example, during the first visit abroad of the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis (to Moldova, which is not a surprise bearing in mind the ties between the two countries) in 2015 the main elements on the agenda were regional security, the situation in Ukraine and Russian troops stationed in the secessionist region of Transnistria. President Iohannis raised concerns regarding the security situation and ensured Romania’s commitment to keep Moldova on its European path. (Schwartz 2015)

Later on in 2016, in his address given during the “Between Reassurance and Reengagement? The Future of NATO” panel discussion, at the 52nd Munich Security Conference, Iohannis emphasized the need to consolidate NATO as a guarantor of Euro-Atlantic security and to focus on collective defence, with major investments in the political and strategic realms. Another strong message from Iohannis was the necessity to keep in place the strong transatlantic link, complemented by an increased European contribution, in line with the Wales Defence Pledge. In accordance with the Romanian strategic vision of the situation in the region Iohannis also stressed the Black Sea’s strategic importance. Besides, he emphasized: “Romania, as a predictable and trustworthy partner inside NATO, remains a pillar of democracy and stability in this region” (President of Romania 2016). In other words Iohannis both reflected Romania’s vision regarding the situation in its “backyard” and attempted to promote the country as an island of stability in an unstable region ready to assist its allies in bringing security and stability to the region.

Although Iohannis often emphasized the dominance of American support in Romania’s security calculations he doesn’t exclude participation in EU led
initiatives. In July 2017 in his press statement he underlined that EU strategy on the security and defence dimension is a very important topic for Romania. (Agerpres 2017) However it is the United States who, for Romania are a guarantor of its security, a sound ally and a reliable partner, tied by a strong friendship, shared values, principles and interests, and a strong commitment to the unity and strength of the Euro-Atlantic family. (Embassy of Romania to the United States of America 2017)

It is worth mentioning that in terms of the assessment of the Russian threat the President of Romania was not that vocal. This is quite understandable since Russia always nervously reacted to the establishment of close ties between Bucharest and Washington and putting additional stress on that by unfriendly rhetoric would hardly be reasonable.

But the lack of declarations by President Iohannis on the direct threats caused by the Russian Federation is compensated by the somewhat explicit statements of the Prime Ministers. While Iohannis is still trying to be neutral the leaders of the Romanian governments are shifting into defensive paradigm and their position on both security and defence priorities and assessment of threats to Romania is quite sustainable. Victor Ponta, the Prime Minister of Romania in 2012-2015, was quite explicit in his assessments. In his interview with CNN in 2014 Ponta said: “We have lived for centuries next to a big aggressive neighbour like the Soviet Union and just as Russia is now, employing more or less the same methods as in the past... and we need to show Ukraine and Georgia that this is the way, that together we can be strong against the new Soviet Union” and emphasized “We must be independent; we cannot let Russia impose the borders”. (Antena3. 2014).

Later on, Ponta’s successor Dacian Ciolos, Prime Minister of Romania from 2015 to 2017 also suggested active NATO presence in the Black Sea region (Kozmei 2016) and clearly stated that although Romania seeks better relations with the Russian Federation it will support sanctions against Russia unless the Minsk agreements are fulfilled. (Weymouth 2016) And indeed Romania has been a consistent supporter of European sanctions towards Russia despite the lack of European solidarity on this issue. Besides, the government of Ciolos also promoted the idea of Romania as a significant security contributor towards regional security. When opening the American missile shield platform in Deveselu Ciolos emphasized that Romanians had become “security providers, not only security consumers”. (Agerpres. 2016)

Another Romanian head of government, Sorin Grindeanu, Prime Minister of
Romania in 2017, while presenting the highlights of the governmental security priorities, emphasized that “an important pillar in the construction of defence priorities is found in the Government Programme 2017-2020, which identifies as basic defence directions: participation in the collective allied defence within NATO and the EU, participation in missions and operations under the aegis of international organizations, national defence capacity building or strengthening strategic partnerships, especially with the United States.” (Government of Romania 2017) Grindeanu’s Cabinet also turned defence into a priority area of the state budget for 2017. The defence budget provides, according to the undertaken commitment, the allocation of 2 percent of GDP, and according to the Programme for Government, maintaining this level of allocation is envisaged for 2018-2020. (Government of Romania 2017)

Romanian Prime Minister Mihai Tudose also clearly proved the sustainability of Romania’s strategic course. In July 2017 he stressed “that Romania will remain a US ally and friend, and the Romanian Government will act to intensify bilateral cooperation in all areas of the strategic partnership between Romania and the US”. (Agerpres 2017) The defence and security dimensions, according to Tudose, are a priority in the bilateral relationship and are highlighted by Romania as a NATO member. “Romania’s devotion to regional stability is proved and strengthened again by committed defence investment, the earmarking of two percent of its GDP in defence spending. Moreover, the multitude of operations in which Romania is taking part proves our commitment to our strategic partner in ensuring regional and global security”, he stressed. (Nineoclock 2017)

Regarding relations with the Russian Federation Tudose’s government went even further in comparison to its predecessors. In July 2017 Romania prohibited the transit of the Russian airplane with the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin who was heading to the Republic of Moldova. The government of Romania explained that since Rogozin is under European sanctions Romania had a right to prohibit his air transit and although formally that is a correct explanation, the true motivation was also an expression of support for both Moldova (where Rogozin was later that month declared persona non grata) and to Ukraine since it was Russian intervention into Ukraine that caused Rogozin to be under the European sanctions. (Gerasymchuk 2017) Definitely such a step consequently led to the further deterioration of Romanian-Russian relations although already back in May 2016, Romania was “officially” placed on Russia’s targeting list (along with Poland) by Russian President Vladimir Putin, when the US built and manned ballistic missile defence site became operational in the country. (Wetzel 2017)
Summarizing, the analyses of the political discourse in Romania together with the analyses of the strategic documents proves that Romania, notwithstanding the political affiliation of its leadership, is expressing commitment to the Western block and NATO, counts on its strategic partnership with the United States and contributes to this relationship by prompt fulfilment of American demands on an increase in military spending, shifts to proactive defensive rhetoric and policies towards Russia and tries to counteract Russia’s efforts in changing the security balance in Romania’s direct neighbourhood.

3. Transformation of security policies

Romanian military procurement and security policies correspond with the strategic documents adopted in recent years and political statements made by the Romanian leadership. Firstly, the declarations on the increase in military spending alongside the documents that stipulate such an increase have already been in place. Romania’s military expenditures in 2017 reached the margin of 2% of GDP and have been constantly growing since the illegal annexation of Crimea and Russian intervention in Donbas (see the graphs below, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources) (Trading Economics 2016).

Graphs:

Romania’s defence budget is also higher than that of several countries in Western Europe whose economies are more powerful, including Denmark, Finland, Portugal, and Austria. (Romania-insider 2016)
Apart from the increase in military spending Romania has also persuaded its NATO allies to increase the Alliance’s presence in the Black Sea. According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in February 2017 NATO has taken the decision to complement its strengthened regional posture in the air and on land – based on a multinational framework brigade in Romania. Eight allies have committed to provide brigade staff and five allies have committed land and air forces for training and air policing. It was also decided to take two additional maritime measures: an increased NATO naval presence in the Black Sea for enhanced training, exercises and situational awareness, and a maritime coordination function for NATO’s Standing Naval Forces when operating with other Allied forces in the Black Sea region.

Besides, US security and aerospace company Lockheed Martin said in May 2017 that it had signed a contract with the Romanian Air Force to deliver a training system for F-16 Falcon Fighters in 2019. Under this contract, Lockheed Martin will deliver the Scios Train suite of simulators in 2019, also providing contractor logistics support services. The technology can be networked together to enable multiple pilots to train together on advanced scenarios. (Lockheed Martin. 2017) In 2016, Romania received nine F-16 fighter jets from Portugal as part of a programme that aims to replace the country’s Soviet-era Russian-made MiGs with combat aircraft that comply with NATO standards. Also last year, Lockheed Martin provided Romania with two new radars under an existing contract. (Kershaw 2017)

Moreover, in July 2017 the State Department announced that it had approved a possible USD 3.9 billion sale to Romania for Patriot air and missile defence systems. The Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress of the foreign military sale for seven Raytheon-made Patriot systems, including 28 launching stations, 56 guidance enhanced missiles and 168 Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) missiles. (Mitchell 2017)

In addition, the United States intends to supply High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) to Romania for a total of USD 1.25 billion, the US Department of Defense announced in August 2017. Romania will use the HIMARS MLRS to modernize its Armed Forces, strengthen its national defence, and contain “regional threats”, the US Defense Department indicated. It also clarified that the implementation of the agreement will require sending approximately 10 technical experts from both the US government and private American contractors to Romania for about one year to assist in the deployment of the acquired military equipment and training of personnel. (UA Wire 2017)
Romania is also an active participant in military drills, which is perceived by Bucharest as its region of strategic interest. Only in 2017 it participated in NATO’s international military exercise Sea Shield 2017 (besides Romania, Bulgaria, Canada, Spain, Turkey and the US deployed warships. According to the press release of the Romanian Naval Forces, 2800 military personnel took part in the exercise. Romania will provide, besides warships, two mobile missile launchers, a special-operation detachment, two MiG 21 Lancer airplanes and a medical evacuation helicopter) (Bosphorus Naval News 2017); Saber Guardian 17 drills (approximately 25,000 service members from 22 allied and partner nations will take part, and the exercise highlights participant deterrence capabilities, specifically the ability to mass forces at any given time anywhere in Europe) (Kershner 2017); Spring Storm 17 exercises (there were 450 Marines and 750 Romanian troops participating in the exercises to simulate defence of the Black Sea coastline and urban areas) (Midia 2017); Sea Breeze 2017 drills (More than 30 ships will participate in the four-day free-play phase, operating and training together in the Black Sea) (U.S. Department of Defense 2017) etc.

The above-mentioned activities prove that not only the rhetoric of Romanian politicians and Romanian strategic documents reflect a sober vision of the situation in the Black Sea region caused by Russia but also Bucharest’s policies including military spending are aimed at an improvement of the situation, setting closer ties with its allies, in particular with the US, and ensuring the security and implementation of Romanian interests in the region.

Conclusions

The current Romanian approach towards shaping security strategy combines the historical tradition of Romanian strategic thinking and counts on close relations with the global powers in the region. The trend towards westernization has brought new details: it causes Romanian commitment to NATO and causes the perception of the US and the EU as being its strategic allies whereas its positioning towards Russia is gradually converting from neutral (with the exception of cases where Russia interferes into Romania’s direct neighbourhood e.g. the Republic of Moldova) to defensive and supportive to the Eastern neighbours, e.g. the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, who are in a situation of conflict with Russia.

Such an approach is reflected in the respective discourse: Romania, notwithstanding the political affiliation of its leadership, is expressing
commitment to the West and NATO and is shifting to proactive defensive rhetoric and policies towards Russia and trying to deter Russia’s efforts in changing the security balance in the direct neighbourhood of Romania.

Romanian military procurement and security policies correspond with the strategic documents adopted in recent years and political statements made by the Romanian leadership. Romania’s military expenditures in 2017 reached the margin of 2% of GDP and have been constantly growing since the illegal annexation of Crimea and Russian intervention in Donbas.

Romania’s increased military spending is aimed at reaching its strategic goals in the region which are the improvement of the situation, setting closer ties with its allies, in particular with the US, and ensuring the security and implementation of Romanian interests in the Black Sea area.

References


Résumé

Fundamental strategic documents of the Slovak Republic have reacted to serious changes in the security environment, especially those associated with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Other factors in their focus included instability, terrorism, Islamic State, and economic and political crises. The strategic documents were accepted only in late 2017, even though various security analyses emphasized serious changes in the security environment as early as 2014.

Conflict in Ukraine and Russian aggression influenced the discourse in the presidential elections in 2014 and the parliamentary elections in 2016. As a consequence, the majority of political parties have maintained a pro-European and pro-Atlantic attitude towards the political orientation of the Slovak Republic and they were in favour of adaptation to the new security challenges.

The specific impact of this was the unambiguous stance toward the annexation of Crimea. In the sphere of security and defence, the Slovak Republic has increased its participation in activities on the Eastern flank of NATO. It has also gradually increased its defence spending and continues to modernize its armed force to lessen its dependency on Russian technology.
1. The revision of strategic documents after 2014

Despite the awareness of the important changes in the strategic environment which have taken place since 2014, the Slovak Republic was slower to react with the revision of its key strategic documents compared to the Czech Republic and Poland.⁴ The government of the Slovak Republic and ministries responsible for the preparation of strategic documents started to work on the revision as late as 2016, when the new government was formed after the elections in 2016.⁵ The drafts of these documents were introduced to the public only in September 2017. This is quite surprising, because there have been many analytical writings pointing out the important changes in the strategic environment since 2014.

The Report on the Security of the Slovak Republic for 2015 identified destabilization and conflicts on the eastern, south-eastern and southern borders of the EU and it also pointed out the magnification of terrorism threats and extremism, the increase in the levels of uncontrolled mass migration, raising conventional and hybrid threats. It pointed to a radical change of the security environment in Euro-Atlantic space, particularly in the case of the Ukraine crisis, where an armed conflict has persisted (Government of the Slovak Republic 2015, Chapter 2). The Report on the Security of the Slovak Republic for the year 2016 emphasized the enduring instability on the eastern and southern periphery of the continent (Government of the Slovak Republic 2016, 2). Both reports suggested the need of preparation of new strategic documents of the Slovak Republic.

The real preparation of the documents was rescheduled for the new government, which was formed after the March 2016 parliamentary elections. The manifesto of the new government bound it to prepare an up-to-date Security and Defence Strategy, which has to take in account the strategic adaptation of NATO and the EU. Specific tasks for the preparation of new strategic documents were defined by the document “Background for Actualization of the Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic and Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic”, which was discussed by the government in August 2016. The document emphasized the crisis in Ukraine and its radical impact on the European security environment. It also pointed out the instability of regions south of the EU, with the increasing threats of terrorism and mass

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⁴ Polish Security Strategy was approved in 2014, the Czech one in 2015.
⁵ The task to update the Security and Defence Strategy has been set out in the Manifesto of the Government 2016 - 2020.
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migration. Continuation of pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientation is mentioned as the key background element for the actualization of strategic documents.

The new Security Strategy from 2017 is the third document of that name and function in the history of the Slovak Republic (previous versions were from 2001 and 2005 respectively). In comparison with SS 2005, the security environment gradually deteriorated, which motivated NATO and the EU to adopt new strategic documents. The intensity of new threats has increased - armed conflicts, terrorism, hybrid threats and cyber threats. In the domain of internal security, there has emerged increased support for extremism, intolerance, propaganda and attempts to disrupt the system. As a consequence, more emphasis in the document is placed on the interconnectedness of internal and external security and on a comprehensive approach to security policy. The key element of the document is the continuity of pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientation of the security policy of the Slovak Republic. Membership of Slovakia in NATO and the EU are therefore emphasized throughout the document. The basic philosophy of the document is two-dimensional. The first idea is that the responsibility for its security rests primarily on the Slovak Republic. The second is that the changes in the security environment create the need for resolving security threats and challenges through international cooperation. (Ministry of Defence 2017b).

According to the Strategy, in defining its security interests the Slovak Republic takes into account the deterioration of the security environment and the adaptation of NATO and the EU toward these changes. On the top of the hierarchy of interests it enlists there is ensuring of political independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders and security of its citizens and residents. In relation to the conflict in Ukraine, the Slovak Republic emphasizes the previous interest as being primary. Security interests also include upholding the fundamental principles of international law, prohibition on the use or threat of force and territorial integrity, increased security and stability of Euro-Atlantic space. This is also closely related to the maintenance of a close trans-Atlantic bond, which forms the basis for collective defence. There is an emphasis on increasing the efficiency of the EU and NATO, their strategic partnership and the need to avoid duplication of their functions in defence and security (Ministry of Defence 2017b).

The Strategy highlights the deterioration of security on the eastern flank of NATO and the EU. The violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine is considered one of the most serious violations of international
order, which led to the deterioration of the relationship between the EU/ NATO and Russia. The Strategy points to the fact that the development in the eastern neighborhood of NATO and the EU has radical impact on the security environment of the Slovak Republic and that the instability in Ukraine, connected with the possibility of further escalation, constitute security threats for the Slovak Republic. It claims that it is not possible to exclude the threat of an armed attack against the state, especially after the Ukrainian experience. According to the document, the Slovak Republic will maintain a pro-Atlantic course. The membership of NATO is the highest international guarantee of defence and the best tool for the fulfilment of the security interests of the Slovak Republic. European integration is considered the prerequisite of sustainable development of Slovakia and Europe (Ministry of Defence 2017b).

Preparing the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2017, the focus was on changes in the security environment and previous disregard towards defence needs, which resulted in shortages of resources for defence. When introduced to the government, the accompanying text claimed that “preferential orientation toward using armed forces outside the territory of the Slovak Republic led to a state where development of capabilities for ensuring the defence of the state fell behind”. Indeed, the dynamics within Slovak defence spending has been worrisome: in 2003 - 1.88% of GDP, in 2004 - 1.79%, in 2005 - 1.72%, in 2006 - 1.65%, in 2007 - 1.52%, in 2008 - 1.48%, in 2009 - 1.53%, in 2010 - 1.26%, in 2011 - 1.08%, in 2012 – 2014 - 1.00%. Since 2015 it started to rise to 1.15%, in 2016 – 1.16%, in 2017 – 1.19%, in 2018 – 1.21%, whereas 1.6% is expected in 2020.

In reaction to the increase of risks in the defence sphere, it was suggested to implement strategic adaptation of the national defence based on fulfilment of the primary responsibility of the Slovak Republic for its own defence and the responsibility for carrying out international commitments. According to the latest Defence Strategy from 2017, the primary aim of the defence policy is to maintain sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the state’s borders. In comparison to strategic documents from 2005, there is a shift of focus from operations abroad to territorial defence. Being part of the new paradigm of NATO, this is also the result of a perceived need to mitigate the consequences of the continued neglect of defence in the Slovak Republic in the past. Recent defence policy was based on the assumption that membership of NATO and the EU sufficiently guaranteed Slovak security. Slovakia was not under the threat of armed conflict and the centre of gravity for defence efforts was in line with NATO’s policy, oriented toward the maintenance of peace, security and stability outside the Slovak Republic. According to the
new document, this situation led to an increased perception of security which resulted in decreased attention toward ensuring national defence. The decrease in overall military capabilities of the armed forces was a consequence of this policy. (Ministry of Defence 2017a)\(^6\)

In evaluation of the security environment the Defence Strategy, stemming from the evaluation by the Security Strategy, points to the continued utilization of armed forces in international relations, an increase in the capabilities of modern armed forces, an increase in the military power of non-state actors, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and an increase in hybrid threats, including cyberattacks, damaging propaganda and significant offensive potential east of NATO and the EU (Ministry of Defence 2017a, article 13).

In comparison to the previous Defence Strategy from 2005, the focus is on the strategic adaptation of defence. Strategic adaptation of national defence correlates to strategic adaptation of NATO and the EU to the changing security environment, where NATO is considered a primary instrument of collective defence. Slovakia commits to the development of defence capabilities, participation in common defence planning and the development of rapid response forces. In relation to the EU, the Slovak Republic supports the development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy and participates in the European Union’s Permanent Structured Cooperation - PESCO (the government officially approved PESCO in November 2017). Slovakia will also participate in the development of rapid reaction forces of the EU, projects of sharing and developing military capabilities, including cooperation in the armaments sphere. It will also support common funding (Ministry of Defence 2017a).

2. Changes in security discourses

The governmental coalition (Smer-SD, Slovak National Party (SNS) and Most-Híd) agreed on the necessity to revise strategic documents. During the preparation of the documents, disagreements between the parties occurred, largely as a consequence of the ideological orientation of the parties. The Slovak National Party (conservative, national, centre - right) is considered to be euro-sceptic; however, it does not reject membership of the EU and NATO (Slovak National Party 2017). The Minister of Defence, nominee of

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\(^6\)Free resources were used for “out of area” operations and troops deployed abroad were better armed.
the SNS, confirms the fulfilment of commitments of the Slovak Republic toward NATO. During the preparation of the Security Strategy, the SNS emphasized the need of the state’s defence without much reliance on its allies and collective defence. The Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lukáš Parízek (nominee of the SNS), in his article published during the preparation period, claims that “[t]he new Security Strategy ought not to be a hostage to foreign political and security tendencies, it is about time to consider our own security from the inside, from our national positions. We have relied solely on our allies and collective defence and we neglected Art. 3 of the Washington Treaty. We will only ever be a reliable partner when we are able to ensure our own defence and security with our own means.” (Parízek 2017)

During the preparation of the first draft of the Security Strategy, which was published in May 2017, there occurred a conflict between Smer and Most-Híd, on the one hand, and the SNS on the other side. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miroslav Lajčák (Smer) emphasized that the draft should be more “pro-Atlantic”. The Minister then took responsibility for the development of the document, which the SNS considered to impede its ability to influence the document. The new draft was introduced to the security community at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2017.

The other coalition partner, Most-Híd (a pro-Western “Bridge” party) in the document “Citizen’s vision 2016” in the section “Foreign and Security Policy” emphasized the need for updating strategic documents. It considers NATO to be the fundamental pillar of security, supports the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU and an increase in the defence budget. It also supports EU and NATO enlargement toward the countries of the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Georgia (Most-Híd 2016, 153-163). These stances also shaped new strategic documents. The State Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Róbert Ondrejcsák (Most – Híd nominee) supported the development of new documents, led the preparation of the Defence Strategy and was entrusted to present the draft of the Defence Strategy to the expert community. During the preparation of strategic documents he highlighted NATO’s position on security guarantees and the importance of the transatlantic orientation of Slovakia. In the discussion on Slovakia’s role in strengthening NATO’s eastern wing, he opined that “[w]e must discuss whether we want to be present within the Alliance’s posture. I personally regard solidarity with our allies as the fundamental value of NATO. Our security will be guaranteed more tangibly if we are perceived as a credible and solidary ally.” (Čaplovič 2017)
Opposition parties (except one – Kotleba – Peoples’ Party Our Slovakia) supported the development of new strategic documents. They agree with a gradual increase in the defence budget. The party Ordinary People (OLANO) in their programme in the section “Defence and Security” supports membership of the Slovak Republic in NATO and the EU. It criticizes the failure to fulfil the commitment to spend 2% GDP on defence and it supports the conclusions of the White Paper on Defence for the systematic modernization of the armed forces (OLANO - Ordinary People 2017). The party Freedom and Solidarity (SaS), in the document “Vision of SaS until the year 2024”, supports membership of NATO and the EU. Lubomir Galko (SAS nominee) has proposed a 0.1% increase in the defence budget per year until 2% is reached. The SaS is more sceptical towards developments within the EU. It considers the common market, Schengen system and protection of human rights to be the main advantages of the EU. But it emphasizes that not everything from Brussels is positive for Slovakia, e.g. it points to the risks of uncontrolled migration (Freedom and Solidarity 2017). As seen by its motto “Slovakia - conscious member of the EU and NATO”, it is close to the position of the SNS. Kotleba - People’s Party Our Slovakia is considered to be fascist and extremist, based on its apologetic stance toward Hitler and the Slovak State (a satellite of Nazi Germany). Despite this, it entered parliament in 2016. The party is strongly against membership of NATO and the EU and it launched a petition for leaving both organizations.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence, responsible for the preparation of the Security Strategy and Defence Strategy, have supported public discussion during the development of these documents. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered a grant for the annual event “Slovak Security Forum”, which aims to discuss contemporary questions of Slovak foreign and security policy. In 2017 it was organized by the non-governmental organization “Euro Atlantic Centre” with the participation of more than 150 members of the state administration, diplomats, academics and journalists. The forum, which took place in June 2016, discussed both of the documents.

The Ministry of Defence supports the annual meetings of the security and defence community under the label “Together on Security and Defence”, which is organized by the Slovak Security Policy Institute. The aim of the meetings is to contribute to social consensus in the area of security and defence priorities and at the same time to contribute to the development of the Security and Defence Strategy. In June 2017, at the second annual conference of the Slovak security and defence community, preparation of the Security Strategy was evaluated and at the same time conclusions and recommendations were
offered. Within the recommendations, the areas which should be included in the new document were highlighted: a pledge to Euro-Atlantic space, clear definition of internal and external threats, and internal trends of the development of threats such as disinformation campaigns, extremism, radicalization and cyberattacks (Slovak Security Policy Institute 2017).

3. Transformation of security policies

The transformation of the security policy after 2014 manifested itself through the increased focus on defence and armed forces, as well as strengthening collective defence under NATO. The basic contributions of the Slovak Republic toward NATO’s plan for collective defence are the “Plan for the use of Slovak Armed Forces during war” and “Chiefs of General Staff’s operational plan during war”. The Slovak Republic also contributed to the development of the NATO Force Integration Unit on the territory of the Slovak Republic and it has taken part in the reassurance initiative by sending a unit for training in Latvia. In 2018, as a part of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence, a unit of 152 members will serve in the region. The Slovak Republic also confirmed participation in NATO’s mission in Afghanistan after 2017 and it has supported a more active approach to NATO in the training and transformation of Iraqi armed forces. The Slovak Republic also announced its leading role in the NATO Trust Fund for Ukraine for the elimination and destruction of explosive devices and systems. One of the priorities of the defence policy has been increasing the quality of active reserves, based on the law on conscription from 2016. In the same year, a pilot project for voluntary military training was launched for the first time.

There is a palpable shift of approach towards the development of defence capabilities and modernization of the Armed Forces. The Ministry of Defence prepared the White Paper on defence as early as 2013, with the ambition to emphasize the challenges of the armed forces associated with a constantly decreasing defence budget. However, this version was not discussed at governmental level and a new document was written in 2016. The document identifies the causes and consequences of the setbacks in the transformation process of the armed forces and it emphasizes the risks associated with the deteriorating situation in defence sector. When joining NATO in 2005, the defence budget was 1.7% of GDP, with a promising increase of 2%. However, the budget gradually declined to 1.01% in 2012-2017. Even the previous document from 2013 emphasized the low level of interoperability of the Slovak armed forces. These levels were as low as 50% in 2015. Capabilities of
mechanized troops reach 62% of NATO’s requirements, engineer units - only 39% and the capabilities of the MiG-29 tactical aircraft, performing tasks in NATINADS is at the level of 66%.

According to the White Paper (Ministry of Defence 2016b), modernization will have two phases. The first is scheduled for 2016-2020, and the second for 2021-2030. In the first phase it is expected that the Slovak Republic will achieve “full operational capability of a mechanized brigade, enhanced capabilities of an ISTAR battalion, enhanced combat support and combat service support capacities for a mechanized brigade in line with NATO Capability Targets for Slovakia.” (Ministry of Defence 2016b, Article 186) Priorities in arms acquisition in Land Forces are the following: arming one mechanized battalion with an 8x8 armoured fighting vehicle platform, replacement of Infantry Fighting Vehicles of mechanized units, and arming an ISTAR battalion and motorized battalion with a 4x4 multipurpose tactical vehicle. Arms acquisition priorities in the Air Force include replacing transport aircraft, replacing multipurpose helicopters, and maintaining multipurpose tactical aircraft capability.

The Ministry of Defence also prepared the “Long-term Plan for Development of Defence with Emphasis on Development of the Armed Forces of Slovak Republic to 2030” which was approved by the Government together with the Defence Strategy and Military Strategy. The document calculates the financial costs for the modernization of the armed forces. This calculation is based on two assumptions. The first is that the Slovak Republic will fulfil its pledge to NATO to allocate 2% GDP on defence. The second is that the conditions for joining the EU’s Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) will be met and at least 20% will be spent on modernization (with a prospect of increase up to 40%). The total calculation is EUR 29.9 billion by 2030. According to the Ministry of Finance, the proposal is only partially secured in the budget for 2018-2020. In this context, the debate is on whether additional requirements for the state budget will be possible (Government of the Slovak Republic 2017, recommendations).

According to the plan, armed forces should obtain 81 8x8 armoured combat vehicles (EUR 417 million) and 7 multipurpose helicopters (EUR 194 million) by the end of 2024. By the end of 2029, they should obtain 404 4x4 multipurpose tactical vehicles (EUR 782 million). By the end of 2030, they should obtain 14 multipurpose tactical aircraft (EUR 1,104 billion). The procurement of the 8x8 vehicles will be implemented from 2018 through to 2024. The 4x4 vehicles will come into service between 2019 and 2029. The
complete financial investments should be 33.1 billion for land forces and 2.63 billion for air forces (Government of the Slovak Republic 2017, Appendix). The aim is to integrate as much as possible the capabilities of the domestic defence industry into the modernization of the Armed Forces.

In reality, the Ministry of Defence has so far bought two C-27J Spartan medium transport aircraft to replace the Russian AN 26. In 2017 two UH-60M Black Hawk helicopters were handed to the Slovak Air Force. The Ministry of Defence has purchased 9 helicopters through the United States Government’s Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programme and the total price of everything comes to USD 261 million. The helicopters will replace the Mi-17. The helicopters are without armaments and the possibility for additional arms will be analyzed in the Plan (Ministry of Defence 2017c).

In May 2017, the Security Council and Government of the Slovak Republic approved material for the acquisition of armoured combat vehicles 8x8 and multipurpose tactical vehicles 4x4. The development of vehicles and its acquisition should be conducted in the horizons of 2018-2029 (Ministry of Defence 2017e). This is one of the activities in which the Ministry of Defence will have to be actively engaged as part of the PESCO.

**Conclusions**

After 2014, the factor of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict has begun to become more prominent in Slovak security policy. After a certain “conciliatory attitude” towards the Russian Federation, a more assertive position has entered basic strategic documents. The Slovak Republic reacted to the strategic adaptation of NATO and EU security documents, and after the political debates in 2017 it unambiguously incorporated changes resulting from the Russian aggression in the Crimea into its own strategic documents. These documents feature emphasis on the interconnection of the internal and external dimensions of security and comprehensive approach to security policy. In response to NATO’s requirements, the Slovak Republic is up to gradually increasing its defence spending, modernizing its armed forces to an unprecedented extent. Pro-European and pro-Atlantic orientations remain a key pillar in the foreign, security and defence policies of the Slovak Republic.
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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

Dušan FISCHER is a Marshall Center Alumni Scholar. Besides his engagement with the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, he currently works as an analyst at the NATO Joint Analysis Lessons Learned Centre in Lisbon. Among his research areas are international and European security, NATO, and U.S. foreign and domestic policy. He graduated from American Studies at Heidelberg University and from the Program on Applied Security Studies at George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Previously, he worked at NATO HQ Supreme Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia. He lectures on the topics of American Studies, European and transatlantic security at the Comenius University. He is frequently sought out to provide commentary on the issues of contemporary America, NATO, and European security to Slovak and foreign media.

Sergiy GERASYMCHUK has been engaged in political studies since 2001 and has the experience of working for the Secretariat of the Parliament of Ukraine, scientific research institutions under the President of Ukraine and under the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine. In addition, he has been involved in projects implemented by national and international think tanks. As an expert Sergiy has cooperated with the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt - HSFK (Frankfurt/Main, Germany), International Centre for Defence and Security (Tallinn, Estonia), International Centre for Democratic Transition in Budapest (Hungary), the international research company GfK Ukraine and also conducted research at Uppsala University (Sweden), UMCS Lublin University (Poland) and Giessen University (Germany). Sergiy is also affiliated to the Strategic and Security Studies Group and Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. In 2017 Sergiy was Think Visegrad Fellow at the Slovak Foreign Policy Association Research Center. Sergiy graduated from the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy with an MA in Political Science and is a graduate of the Estonian School of Diplomacy.

Nadiia KOVAL is Head of Centre for the International Studies at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine and Board Member of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. She holds an MA degree in Political Science (“European Studies”) of the National University “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” and a diploma of a non-degree course in political science at the East European Studies of the University of Warsaw. She conducted doctoral research on comparative international reconciliation issues at the National Institute of
Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO, Paris). Nadiia previously worked as an analyst in foreign policy and security issues at the National Institute for Strategic Studies and the Ukrainian Institute for the Future. Her research interests are focused on post-conflict settlement and reconciliation policies, as well as foreign and domestic policies of selected European countries (France, Poland, Turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom).

Juraj KRÚPA has been the director of the Security and Defence programme at the Slovak Security Policy Institute since January 2016. He worked at the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic where he gained experience with defence policy, and crisis management as well as with bilateral and multilateral relations. From 2013 to 2016 he worked at the Permanent Delegation of the Slovak Republic to NATO. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree in International Relations, which he obtained at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica. He graduated from the program on Advanced Terrorism Studies at the George C. Marshall Center for Security Studies in Garmisch-Partenkirchen in Germany, as well as a Program on Security in the Asian-Pacific area at the PLA National Defence University in Beijing. He speaks fluent English, German and French.

Oleksiy KRYSENKO is an Associate Professor of the Political Science Department at the V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University. He became a PhD in Philosophy in 2005. He teaches courses on Political Anthropology, Modern Political Process and Geopolitics, Globalization and the Modern World-System, Theory of the State. His professional interests include Ukrainian-Russian relations, political transformation and political anthropology of the post-Soviet space, regional political regimes and the study of the borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe. From 2003 to 2014 he worked in the Regional Branch of the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Kharkiv where he was engaged in the analysis of the transformation of political regimes in the post-Soviet space. Oleksiy Krysenko has been a member of the board of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” since 2015.

Agnieszka LEGUCKA is PhD habil. in security science, an expert at the Polish Institute of International Relations (PISM) working on post-Soviet security issues and Russian foreign policy. She is interested also in the European Union eastern policy, and EU relations with Ukraine and South Caucasus. She is an author of several publications on international relations and security problems in the post-Soviet space. She completed studies in
international relations at the Centre for East European Studies at the University of Warsaw and postgraduate studies in national security at the National Defence University in Warsaw. She also works as a professor at the Faculty of Business and International Relations in Vistula University.

Hennadiy MAKSAK is the head of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. He is a head of the Civic Council under the MFA of Ukraine and Adviser to the Chief of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs. Hennadiy studied economics (Chernihiv State Institute of Economics and Management), and political sciences (Warsaw University, Centre for East European Studies). In 2006-2015 he was the president of the Polissya Foundation for International and Regional Studies. In 2012-2014 and 2016-2017 he was a member of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum. Since 2017 he has been Co-chair of the SC of the EaP Civil Society Forum (Brussels). His fields of interest include international relations and the foreign policy of Ukraine, security in Eastern Europe, Eastern partnership policy, European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, diplomatic service, and economic diplomacy.

Vitalii MARTYNIUK is Head of the International Programs of the Centre for Global Studies “Strategy XXI”, associated expert at the Ukrainian Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism” and the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research. Born in 1971 in Ukraine. Master of International Relations. Worked as an analyst on issues of foreign policy, international relations and regional security in Ukrainian public and non-governmental organizations, and a first secretary (political issues) in a Ukrainian diplomatic mission. Author of several articles and analytical papers on the problems of NATO transformation, European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine, regional security, energy security and international relations. Research Focus: International political and security relations, EU foreign policy, NATO, Eastern partnership, Balkans, international security.

Elemír NEČEJ graduated from the University of Economy in Bratislava (1974) and from the Military Pedagogic University with the specialization military psychology and education (1994). In 1999 he completed a specialized post-graduate study “European integration and European Union” at the Faculty of Management of Comenius University in Bratislava. As a military professional he worked from 1971 to 1997 in the former 14. tank division, at the Military Air Force School and Military Financial Office. From 1997 to 2002 he worked at the Centre for Strategic Studies and at the defence
planning branch of the MoD of the Slovak Republic. After retiring from military service he worked as a civilian employee at the Institute for Security and Defence Studies of MoD and at the Institute of Strategic Studies of the National Defence Academy at Liptovský Mikuláš (until 2009). Currently he works as a researcher at the Strategic Policy Institute - STRATPOL. The main subject of his research is analysis of security and defence documents of the V4 countries and civil–military relations. As for regional approach he deals with issues related to the armed forces of the Western Balkans and Russian Federation.

Filip ŠEBOK is a research fellow at the Institute of Asian Studies and Strategic Policy Institute- STRATPOL. He is currently a graduate student of International Relations at Renmin University of China, Beijing and at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. He also holds an undergraduate degree in Chinese Cultural Studies from the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno. Previously, he was an intern at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic and worked as an editor for the student journal on security and international relations Security Outlines. In 2015-2016, he studied Chinese language at Renmin University in Beijing.

Hanna SHELEST, PhD, is Editor-in-chief of UA: Ukraine Analytica and Member of the Board at the Foreign Policy Council ‘Ukrainian Prism’. Prior to this, she served for more than 10 years as a Senior Researcher at the Odessa branch of the National Institute for Strategic Studies. In 2014 she was a Visiting Research Fellow at the NATO Defense College in Rome. Her main research interests are conflict resolution, security and cooperation, especially in the Wider Black Sea Region and the Middle East, as well as Ukrainian foreign policy. She is a regular presenter at international conferences and media commentator. She was a Rotary Peace Fellow (2010), Black Sea Young Reformer (2011), John Smith Fellow (2012), and a Marshall Memorial Fellow (2015/2016).

Richard Q. TURCSÁNYI is a director of the Strategic Policy Institute – STRATPOL based in Bratislava, Slovakia. He received his Ph.D. in international relations from Masaryk University, where he also studied economics and political science. In the past, he conducted long-term study and research stays at the University of Toronto, Peking University, National Chengchi University in Taipei and the European Institute for Asian Studies in Brussels. In Slovakia, he has been active in Demagog.SK as Senior Analyst.
and Project Coordinator and as the Deputy Director at the Institute of Asian Studies. Currently he is also an Assistant Professor at Mendel University in Brno and Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations in Prague. Richard has broad experience with lecturing on international relations, security and economic issues of Central Europe and East Asia. In his academic research he focuses mostly on Central Europe’s relations with East Asia and Chinese foreign policy.

Maryna VOROTNYUK, PhD, is an expert working on security developments in the Black Sea region, Ukrainian and Turkish foreign policies, and the Southern Caucasus. She is a researcher at the Center for European Neighborhood Studies of Central European University (Budapest). Dr. Vorotnyuk worked as a visiting lecturer at the Department of Political Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia (2015-2017). She is a Board Member of the Foreign Policy Council “Ukrainian Prism”. From 2006 until 2015 she was affiliated with the leading Ukrainian think tank – the National Institute for Strategic Studies. In 2006-2013 she was also a research fellow of the Center for International Studies of I. I. Mechnikov Odessa National University (2006-2013). Dr. Vorotnyuk has taken part in many programmes, namely the EU Eastern Partnership Civil Society Fellowship (2016), High-Level Experts Programme of the German Foreign Office (2015), National Security Policymaking Institute of the US State Department (2013), Black Sea Young Reformers Fellowship of the Black Sea Trust of the GMF and Robert Bosch Stiftung (2012), Peace Research Course of Oslo University (2007) etc. She is the author of numerous publications in her field.

Samuel ŽILINČÍK is a graduate student in Security and Strategic Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. In his research he focuses on strategic theory and military history. He is the author of several scientific papers examining the character and nature of contemporary warfare, such as Clausewitz and Hybrid War. He also co-authored one monograph dealing with the historical evolution of operational concepts titled Development of Operational Concepts: History and Contemporary Practice. He cooperates on a long-term basis with the University of Defence in Brno and he also regularly takes part in projects led by various think tanks, in which he analyses contemporary conflicts and documents associated with security policy.