

Security through Unity

Europe's Challenges after Ukraine Crisis

Paul Ertl (Ed.)

Schriftenreihe der
Landesverteidigungsakademie



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Europe's Challenges after Ukraine Crisis

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Introduction

Paul Ertl

The 2023 Civil-Military Relations Conference “Security through Unity: Europe's Challenges after Ukraine Crisis” – a cooperation project between the National Defense Academy and the Order of St. George

The international Civil-Military Relations Conference 2023, titled “Security through Unity: Europe's Challenges after Ukraine Crisis”, took place as a cooperation event with the Order of St. George, a European Order of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine at the National Defense Academy in Vienna from September 13-15, bringing together experts and experts from the military and civilian sectors. The conference provided an important platform for the exchange of ideas and solutions to ensure Europe's security in the aftermath of the Ukraine crisis.

With over 70 participants from Kazakhstan to the United States, from Germany to Egypt, and from various sectors of civil and military organizations, the main purpose of the three-day conference was to discuss the challenges facing Europe and to find ways to achieve unity and security.

Important representatives from politics, the military and civil society gave inspiring lectures and presented their research results. The keynote speakers were Polish Professor and Major General Boguslav Pacek, who has been working in Ukraine since 2014 to transition to NATO standards, and Janez Jansa, former Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Slovenia. Dr. Stefan Zapotocky, former director of the Vienna Stock Exchange and former director of the Russian Sperda Bank, provided insights into his experiences in the economic field.

The conference was a platform for knowledge sharing and provided an opportunity to share best practices and successful approaches from different

countries and to present why other approaches have failed. Among other things, the practice of cooperation between European countries and NATO partners, the role of women in military and civil structures, strategic communication in times of disinformation, and the need for effective planning and response to hybrid threats were presented.

In addition, a workshop (“World-Café” format) was held to address various pressing issues, such as the underlying causes of the conflict, the needs and goals that drive the parties to the conflict, and how cultural, social and economic diversity can be rebuilt and respected.

The conference concluded with a summary of the joint work, which highlighted the urgent need for close cooperation and coordination between civilian and military organizations. The presentations and key notes are thus made available to a broader audience in a timely manner via this publication. This is to actively address the challenges Europe faces in today's geopolitical situation.

The joint organization of the 2023 Civil-Military Relations Conference by the National Defense Academy and the Order of St. George is an important step towards a secure and united future for Europe. The participants agreed that only through close cooperation and an integrated approach to security issues can the challenges be overcome.

P.E.

Vienna, November 2024

Part A

Opening and Welcome Addresses

Opening Address of the Commandant

LTG Erich Csitkovits

Baron Vinzenz von Stimpfl-Abele, Procurator of the Order of St. George,
General Pacek,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to the Conference on Civil-Military Relations. It is my honour to open this event and to draw your attention to a question of vital importance to our society.

Civil-military relations, or CMR, stands for close and effective cooperation between civilian and military actors. It brings together the knowledge, skills, and resources of both sectors to address complex challenges, whether in the context of a humanitarian crisis, post-conflict reconstruction, or the promotion of peace and security in our country but also out in the world.

In today's world, in which we face a multitude of global problems, the importance of civil-military cooperation is becoming increasingly clear. After all, we cannot tackle any problem alone – be it climate change, terrorism or the refugee crisis. It requires the combined efforts of all relevant actors to find sustainable solutions. This all the more applies to the theme of this year's conference: *Security through Unity: Europe's Challenges after the Ukraine Crisis*. Here, these civil-military efforts simply have to pay off. This is the challenge we must face as an institution and as a society. Here we must stand up with all our strength for a liveable and fairer future, share our knowledge and find new ways of living together.

Our cooperation with the Order of St. George is exactly such an opportunity for networking and mutual exchange of knowledge. Hofrat Dr. Paul Ertl, as a dedicated worker for the cause anchored in both institutions – the NDA and the Order of St. George – has also been instrumental in helping us take

advantage of these opportunities. He has organised the CMR's and similar events for many years.

The National Defence Academy, as the highest teaching and research institution of the Austrian Armed Forces (AAF), serves as the 'brain trust' of the AAF, providing invaluable support to both the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence.

With approximately 240 dedicated employees, the Academy is a hub of knowledge and expertise. It caters to around 2,000 students, including many internationals, offering a diverse and enriching learning environment. Each year, the Academy conducts more than 350 courses, hosts up to 700 superior national and international events, and delivers hundreds of individual lectures, coachings, and councils.

The Academy's primary tasks revolve around research and training. It offers basic training for senior officers through the General Staff Course, the Higher Quartermaster and Legal Advisor Course, and the Course for Higher Military Services. Additionally, it provides comprehensive training for staff officers, both career and ready reserve, and focuses on developing leaders who are well-versed in security, defence, and military policy. Additionally, the National Defence Academy has also been tasked by the Austrian federal government to conduct the Strategic Leadership Course for top-level representatives from industry, society, the Armed Forces, and the Austrian governmental institutions.

The Academy is also a centre for teaching, research, and lectures in the fields of military strategy, operations, and tactics. It emphasises the importance of security policy, considering aspects of humanities and social sciences, and offers language training for the forces.

In conclusion, the Austrian National Defence Academy stands as a pillar of excellence, dedicated to advancing the knowledge and capabilities of the Austrian Armed Forces. It is through the tireless efforts of its staff and students that the Academy continues to uphold its mission of fostering a secure and well-prepared military force as well as a sound and well-shaped collaboration between the civil society and the military here in Austria.

This conference provides a unique platform for the exchange of experiences, best practices and ideas in this field of civil-military relations. It is an opportunity to learn from the successes (as well as failures) of others, identify obstacles, and forge new partnerships.

We have assembled a wide range of high-profile experts and practitioners from different areas of the civil-military sector. Together, in the days ahead, we will shed light on the challenges we face, come up with innovative solutions, and derive concrete recommendations for action.

I invite you all to participate actively in the discussions, ask questions and share ideas. Take advantage of the opportunity to gain knowledge and build networks. Because together, we have the power to bring about change and create a better future for all of us.

Let us use this conference to strengthen civil-military cooperation, build partnerships, and fulfil our responsibilities as citizens. Let us work together to make our society more resilient, secure, and sustainable.

I would like to wish you all an exceptionally successful conference. May our commitment and exchange lead to significant progress in civil-military cooperation.

Thank you.

Opening Address of the Procurator of the Order of St. George

Vinzenz Stimpfl-Abele

Esteemed General,
dear ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me that the National Defense Academy and the Order of St. George are working together substantially today for the first time. Because as an order that is explicitly committed to national defense in its constitution and that is proud to be a defense policy partner of the Austrian Armed Forces, such a coming together is particularly important in times like these. Because of course it makes sense to connect as many socio-politically relevant players as possible who are prepared to show their colours in this context. At this point I would like to thank the Head of Organizing Committee, Hofrat Paul Ertl, for the initiative and organisation of the conference! Especially for the fact that we deal with the topic that the Grand Master of the Order of St. George, Karl von Habsburg has set for our community for this year: SECURITY THROUGH UNITY. A topic that is dramatically relevant at a time when Europe is facing a brutal war of aggression on our doorstep that violates international law - and, by the way, cannot be justified by ANY constructed historical or political explanation.

By the way, I have just spoken to Karl von Habsburg this morning on the telephone and he asked me to convey his whose warm greetings to you all. A request that I am happy to comply with.

Now please allow me to briefly introduce you to the Order of St. George - A European Order of the House of Habsburg-Lothringen: Orders of knights like our Order of St. George originally sought to combine the noblest of knighthood with the best of the ecclesiastical orders. To put it simply, they have always been focused on two areas of responsibility: charitable activities

and protection. Concerning the charitable element, the fight against the so called eightfold misery, that is

- Illness and hunger
- Abandonment and homelessness
- Unbelief and guilt
- Indifference and unkindness

not much has changed - we still encounter the old evils – may be in a different guise. But who or what are we protecting today? The answer is simple, but not clear at first glance: we protect and defend values. So what does that mean in 2023? In an increasingly decaying, hedonistic society? In a world in which the crisis of institutions and parties is becoming more and more evident? In a Europe that, as said, is confronted with a relentless war that is questioning and challenging all Christian European values?

In this context, the main question for us is what identity the Order of St. George should have. Because it depends on how we interpret and weight the values that our Dames and Knights have sworn to defend. And this aspect of identity is also crucial for Europe, because it is about the values for which European citizens should stand up and even fight. One way to define identity has always been through differentiation and demarcation. Although criticised by some, I consider this to be a completely legitimate and effective approach. Because only those who can be distinguished can also be recognized! And because this path is also the shortest I want to just very briefly address the question of what we are or what we are not: The Order of St. George is not a ecclesiastical Order, we are the Order of the House of Habsburg. So we know who we serve, namely those values and traditions that are inextricably linked to the Archducal House. It's not about folklore, but about substance. Gabriela von Habsburg-Lothringen, the sister of our Grand Master, once answered the question of what the name Habsburg would oblige her to: “It is not the name, but the values that oblige our family.” And the Dames and Knights of the Order of St. George are just as committed to these values!

We see ourselves as a EUROPEAN order. This means we strive for a strong, proud Europe. A Europe that is as aware of its shared history and the lessons

to be learned from it as it is of its shared values. Our aim is certainly not to let the identities of countries and regions dissolve into an indefinable, bureaucratically imposed amalgam. Nor can blind nationalism be the solution. What we need is a new type of positive PATRIOTISM that simultaneously means commitment to one's own individual roots AND pride in the common Europe. This is not a contradiction, but the only way to make the peculiarities and differences of our continent the central strength of Europe on the fundament of the unifying values mentioned.

This conference has the subtitle: “Europe's Challenges after Ukraine Crisis”. I think the biggest challenge in this context is to create awareness among Europeans that this is actually a European fight, because in Ukraine European values are literally being defended on the front line. The problem in this context is that in recent years and decades the European Union has reduced the word “UNION OF VALUES” almost exclusively to economic values. The monetary union, for example, is of great importance and of great benefit for our economy and every single citizen, there is no question about it. But we need much more to develop solid roots und self-confidence. And, if you'll forgive me for using clear words that are probably not entirely politically correct, we focus on this so-called “political correctness” and deal with peripheral topics such as gender issues, feminist foreign policy etc. - but have never systematically and sustainably shaped European identity. With the result that we de facto, to this day hardly have any noticeable and, above all, weighty and relevant common foreign policy. In short, far too little effort has been and is being invested in elements that create identity. In the last years we repeatedly experienced how quickly the often quoted and praised European spirit can fail because of national interests. And the war in Ukraine shows us dramatically that paralysing war fatigue can spread even in the “hinterland” where the war is not raging and does not require huge sacrifices, does not claim any REAL victims.

So, SECURITY THROUGH UNITY, what does that actually mean? What should we agree on? For us as an order, this is clear: it is about unity in relation to our roots, to what defines us – it is about unity concerning our values.

If we get this consciousness of values into the minds and hearts of Europeans, then we don't need to worry about civil-military relations, nor about Europe's defense will at all levels, but especially not about our Europe.

Slowly coming to an end of my brief remarks, which of course could only touch on the topic, allow me to quote the impressive SPEECH ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE that Karl von Habsburg gave in January of this year – he said: “***We will only create security for Europe through unity.*** *I have as well concerns regarding a too centralised Europe as regarding a nostalgic glorification of nationalism, which allows not even the big European countries to make a real foreign and security policy.*”

I wish the conference a constructive discourse with results that we can build on and hope that it will become the basis for intensive and close further defense policy cooperation with the Order of St. George.

With this in mind, I end with the motto of the Order of St. George, which couldn't be more appropriate here and now:

VIRIBUS UNITIS - WITH UNITED FORCES!

Welcome Address of the Minister of Defence, Austria

Kludia Tanner

Your Excellency,
Dear Mr. Jansa,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to the Civil-Military Conference here at the National Defence Academy in Vienna. This year's conference is co-organised by the Order of St. George and is dedicated to the theme of *Security through Unity*. It is an important event, which will provide the most up-to-date information and insights.

Security is one of the cornerstones of a prosperous and peaceful Europe and research on it should be welcomed.

The war in Ukraine has fundamentally changed our security agenda. The repercussions of Russia's attack can be felt all over the world and in all aspects of daily life. The war has also highlighted the importance of further security and defence cooperation among European states. Because it is only together that we can meet the risks and challenges posed to our continent.

We are experiencing turbulent times. Just look at the increasing transnational and global threats and challenges, such as regional conflicts, terrorist attacks, pandemics, cyberattacks, blackouts and climate change. In fact, we have had to realise that not only are we facing more and bigger threats, the threats are also coming closer. We are confronted with a war in Ukraine, which involves classic military means and has a massive economic impact on our nations.

There is, however, one positive aspect to be considered as well: each of these challenges and threats can be met – it is up to us to do so!

The key lies in multilateral cooperation.

In other words, we need to cooperate with other governments and we also need to support partnerships across the various disciplines and institutions

both nationally and internationally. Accordingly, as security matters affect all of us, the military has to cooperate with civilian partners.

So, in today's fast-changing and complex environment, conferences like the one today have greatly increased in importance. We have all realised that the world is becoming less secure and more challenging. All organisations face unprecedented challenges, from technology to geopolitics, and therefore we need to navigate these changes together. Only together we can find solutions and make decisions which create value for governmental organisations, the military and – above all – our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This conference covers a wide range of topics and military as well as civilian experts will discuss and present strategies to achieve a liveable and sustainable future.

Civil-military conferences are about connecting the participants' ideas, knowledge and concepts. This way, new approaches will be found, possible solutions will emerge, and problems will be solved through cooperation.

I would therefore like to thank the National Defence Academy and the Order of St. George for the organisation of this event and I would like to wish you all an informative and constructive conference with interesting presentations and discussions!

Thank you.

Welcome Address of the Chairman of the EU Military Committee

Robert Brieger

Dear Conference participants,

I would like to thank the National Defence Academy and the Order of St. George for the opportunity to present some of my considerations on Europe's challenges in the context of the war in Ukraine at this year's Civil-Military Relations Conference.

The war in Ukraine is in the nineteenth month and we have to be prepared that this war of attrition will last even longer. There is absolutely no telling how long this war will continue. However, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine represents an existential threat to Ukraine but also a fundamental challenge to European peace and security and the international order in general.

It is also not foreseeable which post-war order will take place. One **scenario** would be that there could be a **ceasefire without a formal peace agreement**. This would consequently lead to the question of how Ukraine's admission to the EU might look like in the future. Furthermore, what would that mean for the reconstruction of a war-shattered state, in what form and intensity should the international community contribute to monitor such a fragile peace scenario.

Another **scenario** could be - this would be the best case - Ukraine regains the **full sovereignty** and the status quo before 2014. What will almost certainly not happen is that Ukraine will formally cede the territories occupied by Russia.

If there is peace, major challenges will emerge, primarily for European Union and whole of Europe. Ukraine will, continue to need the European Union's long-term commitment and support to secure its free and democratic Euro-

pean future and its path there. In addition to the countless civilian reconstruction measures, the military component will also play a significant role in reconstruction.

The European Union is already one of the main contributors to Ukraine's immediate and long-term security and resilience. In order to end this war, also to make the Ukrainian Armed Forces operational, and to maintain them in the post-war phase, a sustained multiannual provision of military training through the European Union Military Assistance Mission is being carried out. Now, the total number of Ukrainian military personnel having completed their training or currently under training has reached 25.000. Within October 2023, 30.000 are to be trained.

In 2023, the level of support under the European Peace Facility will exceed four billion euros, with a gradual shift from destocking to procurement and joint procurement of new equipment, and reimbursement of more sophisticated and costly weapon systems. Since the start of the Russian invasion, the European Union and its member states have provided more than 77 billion euros in support to Ukraine and its people. Of this alone around 20 billion euros in military support. All of these measures taken so far within the framework of military assistance for Ukraine point the way for a time after the war. In this sense, efforts to enhance the cooperation between the European and Ukrainian defence industry sector should be expanded. This would be important to ensure alignment of standards and interoperability in the future, but also to benefit from Ukraine's expertise and innovation, namely even beyond the war period.

A military expertise that will definitely come into play in the post-war period is the major task of demining activity, on the one hand to continue to train and support the Ukrainian Armed Forces in this domain and on the other hand, to provide civilian needs - in the sense of humanitarian aid - where support is concerned. The demining assistance, which can also be seen as a comprehensive reconstruction measure, would be a key condition for Ukraine's economic, security, recovery and reconstruction phase.

Of course, based on a clear need analysis from the Ukrainian side, assistance could be provided in other areas such as hybrid threats, cyber security, etc.

Now, we do not even know which international organization (such as United Nations, European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) could assume any responsibility in the post-war order and which other actors are exerting their influence.

In the course of the ever-growing discussion regarding Ukraine's accession to the European Union, I expect that Ukraine will not join the Union until the war is over and a peace solution is agreed. However, should Ukraine join the European Union, the Union would definitely be under much greater pressure as a security policy actor than it has been up to now.

In summary, I would like to state that we in Europe would have to prepare ourselves for a long-lasting war and that in all likelihood there will be no sustainable peace solution in the end. The West will for a long time, provide Ukraine with all its resources, both civil and military, in a complementary and comprehensive manner. This can be reflected in the areas of humanitarian aid, security sector reform up to military administration.

It is in our interest that we continue to support Ukraine to ensure sustainable security in Europe. I wish you an interesting conference and a lively discussion. I would be interested to know which solutions you will come up with at the end.

Thank you for your attention!

Part B

Key Note Speeches

Military Key Note Speech

The Situation and Role of the Civilian Population During Wars of the XXI Century – Experiences from the War in Ukraine

Bogusław PACEK

Abstract

The article attempts to present the situation and new role of civilian population during 21st century conflicts, including the challenges faced by the international community in the area of violating the humanitarian rights. Using the example of the conflict in Ukraine, the author highlights the changes that are taking place in this area making it a central issue in the theory and practice of the art of conflict. He presents Russia's strategy for conducting a new type of conflict in the form of hybrid warfare. It also points out the complexity of today's forms of influence on the adversary, as well as the associated transformations of the international security environment. It formulates the hypothesis that it is absolutely necessary to adapt the security system to the new challenges in a manner aimed at effectively countering the new threats.

Key Words: *civilians, war in Ukraine, international law, Gerasimov doctrine, lessons from armed conflict*

Introduction

The 21st century has brought a new era of armed conflicts that affect the lives and livelihoods of the civilian population to a greater extent than before. One example of such a war is the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Speakers at the opening meeting of the 49th session of the Council on 28 February included Michele Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human

Rights, and Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General, who were unsparing in their criticism of the Russian Federation for its attack on sovereign and peaceful Ukraine. Bachelet reiterated her call for an end to aggression and urgent action by the international community, which she made shortly after the start of hostilities against Ukraine on 24 February. At that time, she had already sounded the alarm that this military attack was opening a new and dangerous phase in world history and risked the loss of countless lives. The High Commissioner also provided a thorough and comprehensive analysis of the dramatic human rights situation in Ukraine as a result of Russian aggression.¹ However, despite the condemnation of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law by the Russian Federation, the situation of the civilian population in Ukraine remains difficult.

Under the provisions of international humanitarian law, civilians are subject to special protection during wartime. This follows from the provision of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, signed on 12 August 1949. Civilians, under international law, are treated as non-combatants. Consequently, it is prohibited to kill or injure such persons. International law obliges warring parties not to attack persons who are not directly participating in hostilities, to respect their physical and moral autonomy. The participation of civilians in combat is also prohibited.²

The principle of distinction of this law indicates that directing armed attacks is only possible against military targets and military persons. Attacks against civilian targets and facilities are prohibited. Whereby persons with a military status, non-civilians, include soldiers of the armed forces of the parties to the conflict, but also members of the police, volunteer units that are part of the armed forces, participants in organized resistance, participants in a common movement (spontaneously grabbing weapons in the face of an imminent threat). Other civilians do not have the right to take part in armed action.

¹ <https://web.swps.pl/strefa-prawa/artykuly/24338-rada-praw-czlowieka-onz-i-wojna-w-ukrainie?dt=1696628696923>

² K.Mačák, The Role of International Human Rights Law in the Interpretation of the Fourth Geneva Convention (July 11, 2022). Israel Yearbook on Human Rights, Vol. 52, 2022.

In contrast, civilian targets, i.e. those that cannot be attacked, are those that are intended for civilian use (churches, dwellings, schools, etc.). Here it should be noted that civilian targets cease to be protected from attack when they are used directly in hostilities; e.g. when munitions or other means of warfare are stored in a school.

International law prohibits acts or threats of violence whose main purpose is to intimidate civilians. The principle of humanity contained in Article 3 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, concerning the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, prohibits attacks on life and physical integrity, hostage-taking and executions. The warring parties must provide proper care for the sick and wounded.³

So much follows from international law. And what is the reality?

Hybrid wars – concept of Walery Gerasimow from 2013

Throughout the years, from the very beginning after the adoption of the existing instruments of the International Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict, there have been problems with compliance during each successive minor and major war, especially often these violations involved attacking civilians and inflicting suffering on them. The 21st century has brought no significant change in this regard.

International law has not kept pace with the realities of life. Contemporary armed conflicts have introduced changes, particularly regarding the role of civilians in war. Of particular relevance are the involvement of civilians in armed conflict. At the beginning of the 21st century, the term hybrid wars emerged and became vastly popular. Research on these wars has been conducted mainly by American experts including: Frank Hoffman, Nathan Freier, John J. Mc Cuen, Robert G. Walkner and others. But they were not the only ones. Among the most prominent figures who have made hybrid wars very popular is the Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation, General

³ M.Bothe, K.J.Partsch, W.A. Solf, W. A., New rules for victims of armed conflicts: commentary on the two 1977 protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, Dortmund, 1982, passim.

Valery Gerasimov, who in January 2013, during a lecture at the Academy of Military Sciences in Moscow, presented a future scenario of wars. He emphasized that not only military, but also political, economic and humanitarian actions would play an important role in them. General Gerasimov's speech and the hybrid warfare assumptions presented have contributed to the creation of many definitions of hybrid warfare.⁴ One of these, which appears to be the most complementary, indicates that hybrid warfare is a military conflict conducted with the participation of states, international organisations, national and social groups, carried out using all available means of warfare (from the very traditional to the most modern) with the participation of soldiers and civilians, started after a declaration of war or without a declaration of war, carried out with the application of measures prescribed by law or in violation of the law, with significant participation of non-military means, with large-scale use of economic and economic, political, information and propaganda activities, with different and changing objects of attack (states, societies, organisations, nations) and aimed at defeating the opposing party or forcing the desired action (behaviour) on it.⁵

According to the concept of hybrid warfare significant importance was given to information and psychological activities towards civilians living in the conflict area and those not involved in the conflict.

The main assumptions of the future conflict given by Gerasimov are primarily:

1. no boundaries between war and peace,
2. the use of uniformed soldiers and civilians or civilian-dressed, unmarked soldiers equally in warfare.

Hybrid conflicts, as Gerasimov referred to them, although he did not call them such, are the simultaneous use of different forces, modern weaponry

⁴ B.Pacek, P.Pacek, Russia's devastating impact on critical infrastructure during the hybrid war in Ukraine, *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka* 2023, nr 2, s. 12-13.

⁵ P.Pacek, *Informacja i psychologia na wojnie nowej generacji*, Warszawa 2022, s. 23-26.

and traditional conventional means of warfare through guerrilla warfare, diversion, sabotage, acts of terrorism through to actions in cyberspace, the use of psychology, sociology and economic pressure.

Gerasimov also defined the new goals of the war, which no longer necessarily meant occupying the enemy's territory and defeating it, but the most important thing would be to weaken it, to bring it to a situation where it would do the will of the attacker.

In Gerasimov's idea, which is contrary to the International Humanitarian Law of Armed Conflict, Russia's new war doctrine is defined. Just two years after its announcement, in February 2014, was put into practice on Ukrainian soil.

The on-site research I carried out in Ukraine, mainly through interviews with participants in the 2014-2016 conflict and document analysis, yielded the results presented below.⁶

The annexation of Crimea was accomplished through an operation involving so-called 'green men', i.e. Russian special subdivisions involving soldiers dressed in civilian clothes and civilians performing tasks on a par with soldiers. The green men were an out-of-uniform formation, dressed in green, without signs of military ranks or any emblems. The operation was well prepared months before the annexation of Crimea.

The Russian security services conducted operational activities among the civilian population of Crimea. They recruited them as agents. Those who were resistant were intimidated, others were bribed.

Before the annexation of Crimea began, through agents of influence placed in the elite of the government in Kiev and among the local authorities in Crimea, decisions were made to deprive Ukrainian units in Crimea of their ammunition supplies, the number of Crimean troops was reduced, and conscripts from remote areas were recruited there from among the Ukrainian population hostile to their state.

⁶ B.Pacek, *Wojna hybrydowa na Ukrainie*, Warszawa 2018, s. 33-43.

In talks conducted by Russian special services, Ukrainian officers and NCOs from Crimea were promised double salaries if they were loyal to Russia. Propaganda activities were intensified among the local population setting them against the authorities in Kiev.

When the annexation of Crimea began, 6 Russian helicopters appeared in the sky and quietly landed at Belbek airport and the takeover of Ukrainian institutions began, without shooting or fighting.

After the takeover of Crimea, the Russians allowed the troops to leave and go deep into Ukraine. 70 per cent of Ukrainian soldiers went over to the Russian side, along with a Ukrainian admiral. Ukrainian Defence Minister Lebedev also left for Russia.

Those who were still supporters of Ukraine were allowed to leave Crimea into Ukraine. However, only a small percentage of the civilian population left Crimea. Some families split. The wife left with one child near Kiev and the husband with the other stayed in Crimea. There were many such divides. Also, a significant proportion of Ukrainian soldiers went over to the Russian side.

Crimea was then won by the Russians, for before they entered it, they had previously skilfully influenced hearts and minds through propaganda, blackmail, bribery and promises.

The civilian population of Crimea played a large role during the annexation and the Russians succeeded not through combat operations but by influencing the psyche of mainly the children and wives of officers and non-commissioned officers, leading them to behave as Russia expected. Also, the work of the special services vis-à-vis government representatives, decision-makers has had the desired effect.

The annexation of Crimea, in early April 2014, was followed by an escalation of pro-Russian sentiment in the eastern part of Ukraine, in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Mass demonstrations aimed to achieve a similar situation to that in Crimea. The demonstrators demanded self-determination and the establishment of republics in Donetsk and Luhansk. Local people occupied

Ukrainian official buildings. There were attacks with weapons by pro-Russian Ukrainian citizens on facilities defended by Ukrainian services. This is how Russia-backed separatist forces emerged, but in reality they were rebellious Ukrainian citizens.

The separatists were partly Ukrainian soldiers with Russian commanders and trainers and partly civilians. Their operation was a combination of guerrilla warfare, irregular actions with the use of modern technology and contemporary fighting methods. The actions used by the separatists included acts of terror, intimidation, coercion of their desired behavior and the use of civilians, women and children, as 'human shields' when fighting Ukrainian troops.

Ukrainian soldiers were not mentally prepared for these actions. They often did not know how to react when civilians appeared in their path as "human shields" in front of the advancing Russian tanks, preventing them from using their weapons and conducting operations against the separatists. As in Crimea, the failure to adapt Ukrainian law to the unusual situation of a peaceful conflict was a significant obstacle.

The Ukrainian military as well as the state as a whole was completely unprepared for the intense Russian information and propaganda activities. Particularly acute was the information campaign by Russia and the separatists, which was aimed at preventing mobilization, inciting the population to disobey the authorities and failing to fulfil their military obligations to the state. Ukraine's extremely limited capabilities in providing information to soldiers, adequate media communication with the local population in the Lugansk and Donetsk regions, the lack of proper psychological support and effective combating of the negative informational impact of both the separatists and the Russians were for a long time the weakness of the Ukrainian authorities' action.⁷

⁷ P.Pacek, Influence of informational and psychological activities on the attitudes of soldiers and civilians during the hybrid conflict in Ukraine, in: Security Challenges of Europe, Brussels, Toruń, 2021, s. 50-55

The war in Donbass was not just about shooting guns. It was a war aimed at hearts and souls. Russia was pursuing objectives concerning Ukraine, but also concerning Western countries.

The ongoing information operation targeting Ukrainians, Russians and the Western community consisted of:

1. the dissemination of false information in the press, radio and television in Ukraine, Russia and elsewhere in the world regarding the course of the
2. armed conflict,
3. setting up accounts and administering pro-Russian groups on social networks,
4. using agents to disseminate anti-Ukrainian information,
5. engaging paid experts from among Ukrainians to present false information about Ukraine,
6. using Russian diplomatic missions to spread propaganda abroad.

The conclusions of the research indicate that the lack of adequate action by Ukraine in terms of information and propaganda warfare by the separatists and Russia caused more negative consequences than military action. Russia was well prepared for the hybrid war in Ukraine. It is no coincidence that it focused its main effort on perfectly organized actions of inciting local residents, playing on the mood of the population. Russia's regular military forces only occupied or blockaded key facilities in Crimea and other areas of Ukraine. Other actions were carried out with or by local forces and with the support of the local population. Also, the rapid destabilization of the situation in the Donbass was only possible with the participation of the local population.

Priority was given to non-military rather than typically military actions in Crimea and the Donbass. This shows that the hybrid nature of these actions can be an alternative to classic armed conflicts. The key role in these actions is played by civilians, who on the one hand are used for large-scale combat,

while on the other hand it is on them that the informational and psychological impact is directed to produce a good effect for the attacking state.

Russia's 2019 war doctrine

The same Russian Chief of General Staff I have already mentioned, General Valery Gerasimov, at the same military academy in Moscow, six years later, in 2019, announced a new concept of wars - Russia's new war doctrine. In it, he reiterated everything from hybrid warfare for hearts and souls, psychological impact on the military and civilians, and civilian participation in war, but pointed to new priorities. He included: the use of modern technology including space technology in combat and the priority destruction of critical infrastructure.⁸

It is the destruction of energy infrastructure, communication lines, attacks on internet networks and other sensitive sites that is supposed to force the aggressor's will on the attacked state.

The war since February 2022 exactly implements Gerasimov's concept of both 2013 and 2019, and is filled with dead, wounded among both soldiers and civilians. However, unlike the wars of the 20th century, in this war civilians participate to a greater extent as combatants on a par with soldiers. On the Russian side, this included the Wagner Group, civilian mercenaries who were more effective than the Russian army in the fighting in Bachmut.

A large part of the population sided with the Ukrainians, who not only supported their army, but also fought themselves by taking spontaneous action. Already in 2014, after the annexation of Crimea, when the war in Donbas began, Ukraine benefited from 20 spontaneously formed battalions made up of civilians who were not subordinated to the Ukrainian army, but who fought alongside it at the front. These civilians from the volunteer battalions had weapons, ammunition, grenades, launchers, Where did they get this?

⁸ B.Pacek, P.Pacek, Russia's devastating impact on critical infrastructure during the hybrid war in Ukraine, *Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka* 2023, nr 2, s. 14-16.

They didn't get it from the army, they took it themselves from the warehouses of Ukraine. The war in Ukraine shows that the distinction between combatants and civilians is blurring.

The issue of civilian participation in war is becoming increasingly complex and shows that a review of international law is necessary. For how do we treat a civilian who has illegally taken part in the fighting and has been detained by the opposing side? A prisoner of war, according to the law, he cannot be, and we will not call him a criminal either. Are all the civilians who operate computers to strike at the enemy in cyberspace, if they are not acting as part of the military, war criminals? In my opinion - no. Today, a participant in war can even be a disabled civilian sitting at home controlling drones, or even entire operations. So change is needed. Is Elon Musk, who disabled his Starlink system preventing Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian ships in the Black Sea, a participant in the war? How to qualify US and other Western countries' military assistance to Ukraine? Reconnaissance, intelligence activities, or directing HIMARS launcher fire that can be carried out by civilians from the territory of another country?

Particularly wide participation of civilians was shown by the war in Ukraine, which was started by Russian aggression in February 2022. Civilians of all ages are taking part en masse in the war on the Ukrainian side; this is regarded by observers as a heroic, patriotic basis. As in other wars, war crimes are rife. Photographs of murdered, tortured soldiers and civilians from Bucha were seen by the whole world. Ukraine is assisted by volunteers from various countries. Most of them are civilians with experience from previous military service. How should this be treated on the legal front?

I still want to show how effective the psychological and informational activities applied to the civilian population are. At the end of 2021, my team conducted surveys in Eastern Ukraine among civilians - Ukrainian citizens living mainly in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. The survey covered 1002 people, of whom 762 were women and 240 men, 480 aged 18 to 45, 451 aged 46 to 60, 61 over 60. 512 live in large cities in the area of armed conflict, 367 in small towns. 64% of the respondents claim to have personally seen the facts of the destruction of civilians' homes and property during the war, 14% have

heard about such cases from others, 18% know about it only from the media. When asked who was the perpetrator of the destruction of civilians' property, as many as 59% pointed to Ukrainian soldiers, only 14% pointed to pro-Russian separatists, 15% did not know who did it, and about 9% pointed to both sides.

When asked whether the destruction of property had a negative impact on the civilian population, as many as 95% said it had a very high impact.

To another important question about the intimidation of civilians, 27% of respondents answered that they had encountered it themselves, more than 15% that they had heard about it from others who had seen it, 48% had seen nothing and heard nothing. About 20% of respondents thought it was done by both Ukrainian soldiers and separatists, 7% thought it was done by both sides, about 50% thought that intimidation had a very strong impact on the behaviour of the civilian population. More than 45% did not answer this question.

The survey also showed that some 27% of respondents had encountered cases of physical abuse against civilians. 19% had heard about it from others, more than 10% knew about it only from the media, 43% had not seen or heard about such cases. As perpetrators of abuse, 27% identified Ukrainian soldiers, 20% separatists, 8% both.

84% of respondents had personally encountered the dissemination of false information directed at the civilian population, 13.5% had seen and heard nothing. Only about 1.2% of respondents had encountered cases of agents recruited among the civilian population. More than 6% heard about it from other people who encountered it, 3.6% knew about it from the media, 88.7% saw nothing and heard nothing about it. The perpetrators of these actions were both Ukrainian soldiers and pro-Russian separatists.

94.4% of respondents encountered the use of clerics to influence participants in the conflict. According to the respondents, this was mainly organized by separatists.

More than 26% of those surveyed had witnessed incidents where people were killed as a result of actions during the conflict, 46% had heard about it from other people who had seen it, 91% thought it had a major impact on civilians.

27% witnessed incidents where they were injured, 95% of the correspondents felt that this had a major impact on the civilian population. More than 50% of respondents confirmed in the survey that they had supported separatists during the conflict and 28% had heard that others had done so. 44% took action against Ukrainian soldiers and 60% refused to help them.

The majority of respondents perceived Ukrainians as the perpetrators of negative events affecting the civilian population. The results show what effect the information-psychological activities of Russia and pro-Russian separatists, which were implemented during the eight years of conflict, had. It is no coincidence that any emerging Ukrainian broadcasting device or transmitting Ukrainian TV or radio programmes was immediately destroyed by the separatists.

In addition, respondents were asked questions that were intended to lead to a determination of whether the parties to the armed conflict were complying with the Geneva Conventions. This research was complemented by an analysis of the results of surveys conducted in Ukraine.

It was agreed that during the war in Ukraine, international law is systematically violated, war crimes are committed every month. Russian forces have committed an act of aggression by invading Ukraine and have committed extrajudicial killings of civilians and indiscriminate attacks on civilians. There was sexual violence, which was also used as a tool of warfare. Destruction of critical infrastructure, including hospitals, power stations, water supply systems are also crimes mainly targeting civilians.

The Convention on Prisoners of War is not respected. During the conflict, detainees, whether they were soldiers or civilians did not have the status of prisoners of war; no prisoner of war camps were organized at all. The separatists were locking up detained Ukrainian soldiers in the basement of their homes, in primitive conditions, without any standards under humanitarian law. They were detained, beaten, tortured, forcibly handing over information.

Cases of castration of Ukrainian soldiers were quite common, a significant number of whom later committed suicide. Officers were treated most brutally and were also tortured the most. The principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War were not respected. The local population of Donbass was forced to serve in the separatist forces. The population positively disposed towards Ukraine was forced to resettle, to leave, first Crimea, then Donbass. In order to intimidate the civilian population, the separatists themselves shelled their own areas and population at night to indicate that Ukrainian soldiers were doing this and to cause civilians to want to retaliate against Ukrainian soldiers. The idea was to create hatred of Ukraine in the population. They also destroyed, on an ongoing basis, all equipment that allowed the population to receive Ukrainian radio and television broadcasts. For several years of the war in the Donbass, everyone received only Russian TV and radio. The civilian population was forced to take up arms. Families whose children served in the Ukrainian army were also mistreated.

Violations of the Geneva Conventions are categorized as war crimes. In the case of the conflict in Ukraine, this violation was clear. Torture, the use of collective responsibility, hostage-taking, separation of families, psychological abuse were used on a large scale against civilians.⁹

The international community, including key organizations such as the UN, recognizes the changing role of civilians in wars through their increasing participation, which is not provided for by international law, and they also recognize the blatant disregard of that law. The world's reactions to violations of the law are important. The arrest warrant against Russian President V. Putin for abducting Ukrainian children to Russia was well received in most countries. However, these responses still need to be refined. States in responding to war conflicts are guided mainly by their interests and less by their values, hence the many challenges in this area.

⁹ <https://war.ukraine.ua/russia-war-crimes/>

Summary

The war in Ukraine confirms conclusions about the involvement of civilians in modern wars that have previously emerged from other armed conflicts of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Nothing has changed since the Second World War in terms of attacking civilians by warring parties. Although not the main focus of warfare, large numbers of civilian deaths and injuries have been avoided.

What is new, on the other hand, is the appearance of civilians on an equal footing with soldiers in ongoing operations against the other side. In particular, the use of modern technology, the increased role of cyber warfare, psychological and informational impact has resulted in civilians fighting on an equal footing with soldiers.

It must be assessed that the international law of armed conflict, which has not been reformed for many years, also needs to be analysed and many changes introduced due to the new conditions in which modern wars are being fought.

There are also many indications that future conflicts using the experience of current conflicts will have a greater impact on civilian societies in an attempt to put pressure on their governments, the decision-makers who should do the will of the aggressor.

Wars of attrition rather than quick defeat of the opponent will be waged with a high level of civilian participation and will aim to attack, neutralise what determines the survival of the state: critical infrastructure, energy, basic sources that ensure survival.

The participation of civilians requires further research and the adoption of measures, not only legislative, but also organisational and protective measures that would guarantee more widely than before the defence and protection of civilian life and health during war.

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Political Keynote Speech **(Short summary of the speech & Q&A by Paul Ertl)**

Janez Jansa, Slovenia

With former Prime Minister Jansa, the NDA was able to gain a profound expert on the political agenda who has also proven himself in practice as Minister of Defense of Slovenia and as Prime Minister on several occasions. After his speech, which lasted about an hour, there was a lively discussion. Here are my own key findings on his extraordinary enlightening and interesting lecture and the following Q&A session.

Reflecting on his initial years as his first tenure as Prime Minister, serving both as a member and the rotating President of the European Council pre-Lisbon Treaty, he recalled what was deemed the “golden years” of the European Union following its significant enlargement. Progress was notable not only in Western Europe but also in Central and in Eastern Europe. It was a time filled with optimism, where it seemed an era of prosperity lay ahead. Russia was considered a partner, not a threat, and the challenges the Nations faced – like developing Africa and managing immigration pressures – appeared surmountable, especially with the European Union leading the global economy and the Euro growing stronger against all odds.

But the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February last year has significantly disrupted European lives and exposed weaknesses in Western oversight and defense strategies. Reflecting on more optimistic times, Europe now faces the reality of renewed military threats.

Five Key Findings (highlighted and interpreted by P.E.):

1. Underestimation of Russian Threat:

The West, particularly the EU and NATO, failed to recognize the true nature of the threat, neglecting defense spending and relying on economic engagement to manage what is perceived as the enemy.

2. Strategic Miscalculations:

The decision to delay Membership Action Plans (MAPs) for Ukraine and Georgia at the 2008 Bucharest Summit was consequential, leading to increased aggression (cf. Georgia and Crimea).

3. Inadequate Western Response:

Despite numerous warnings and sanctions, the West's response to the aggression has been insufficient, allowing the perceived enemy to capitalize on Western indecisiveness and maintain its geopolitical ambitions.

4. Military Spending Reevaluation:

The invasion of Ukraine has prompted a reevaluation of military spending in the West, highlighting the Russian military capabilities and the need for greater support for Ukraine's defense.

5. Broader Geopolitical Challenges:

Beyond Ukraine, Europe faces significant security challenges, including the rise of China and instability in Africa and South America. Addressing these issues requires a concerted, strategic effort from Western allies.

These findings as well as the additional topics raised by Mr. Jansa and discussed in the plenary session illustrate the complexities and challenges Europe faces in maintaining stability and security in the face of renewed threats and geopolitical shifts. Such shifts are pivotal for rectifying past injustices,

suggesting that without accountability, historical wrongs are doomed to recur. Reparations and a gradual reconciliation process are essential steps towards healing. We find ourselves at a juncture reminiscent of the post-Berlin Wall era and the dissolution of the Soviet Union - a moment ripe with potential that the West failed to fully capitalize on.

Mr. Jansa ended his exceptional enlightening and intriguing speech with an extremely vital invocation: *“As we confront similar circumstances today, we are presented with another chance to shape the future. It is imperative that we seize this opportunity to forge a path towards lasting peace and stability.”*

Economical Keynote Speech

Aspects of threads and chances concerning the stability of economical and financial markets in Europe and abroad

Stefan Zapotocky

I want to highlight in this short summary the possible development of actual and future major impacts of our actual situation. The Covid disaster, the Russian war in Ukraine, energy costs, and high interest rates are some of major negative experiences in the actual situation. I will present several topics only as incomplete examples to describe my findings and possible outlook concerning the problems we are facing actually in our economical and financial environment especially here in Europe.

1. Raw materials

The war in Ukraine has already changed the world of raw material markets, mines and producers internationally worldwide top champion by value is Russia followed by the USA. The costs of the war will lead to a huge export from Russia to China, India and the Arabian Countries.

EU Europe will face in the coming years a dramatic bottleneck of raw material imports for our industry, which cannot be substituted by other means, and markets – a strong price increase will be seen.

So very likely, the winners in this game are China, East Asia, Arabian nations and India and -yes- the USA! Definitely not Europe!

The losers are Europe and Russia! Why Russia? – Because China starts already to buy and invest in Russian mines and production companies in the far eastern part of Russia.

They will control and own more and more important mining production entities several critical minerals are globally already under Chinese control.

2. Energy supply

The Gas and Oil crisis based on the import stop from Russia has to be watched carefully concerning the strategy of the other OPEC countries. The price increase generates enormous windfall profits for those countries as the only alternative to Russia. Recently the Ambassador of EU – Dr. Selmayr – said, that Austria pays „blood money“ to Russia buying especially gas for its own demand.

What is true?

Imports from Russia to Austria raised from 2021 to 2022 from € 4.6 bn to € 8.2 bn. Main reason was the enormous increase of the price level – now in the first half of 2023, the imports are down to € 2 bn but not zero! All in all Europe is the biggest importer of Russian liquid gas beside China

From January to July 2023 eight million cubic meter LNG went to China, Spain more than seven million, Belgium more than seven million and France more than 5 million cubic meter. Of course, the harbours in Spain, France and Belgium are also distributors to other countries – but it shows the ongoing need for Russian LNG in Europe in a dramatic way.

Here a quick solution to reduce this dependency is not realistic, even that China is the biggest trading partner for Russia stabilizing the income of the Russian Oil and Gas industry and funding the further efforts of Russia in their war in Ukraine. And USA is a true winner of this situation.

When I was responsible as CEO of the Vienna stock exchange between 2000-2007, we established the Austrian electric power and gas exchange. The European trading business for electric power is now especially based at the „Leipzig Strombörse“.

During the political relatively stable times since 2000, the EU electricity providers agreed on an international pricing model to regulate as fair as possible the different cost for the several energy systems based on gas, water, wind, solar or coal and other fuels.

This so named „merit order system“ has brought now major disadvantages especially also for Austria with its possibility to use for the domestic energy production over 80% of natural resources like waterpower, wind and solar.

Unfortunately I can not see for the near future a strong reduction of energy prices for private households and the industry. In my opinion the regional EPU's and the Austrian Power grid will not give up this high price policy – as already announced to invest into the future needs of production and a stronger grid.

Even that most of our regional EPUs and the Verbund AG are owned majoritywise by the state or the countries I doubt that politicians and the government can regulate the price.

One hope is that more and more private households can additionally produce their energy demand also by solar power but this has no major influence on the complete and very complex market situation – so that for the coming years the situation with higher energy costs will not change. Especially because of the „green deal“ to get CO2 neutral until 2040.

3. Inflation and Interest rates

Very important components to measure the stability of the economic situation are inflation and interest rates.

The Corona crisis with a strong impact on the budgets of nearly every country and government worldwide came along with the change of the zero interest policy of Central banks. After a decade of very low interests – with huge advantages to stabilize the enormous deficits especially of southern EU countries – interest rates raised sharply and rapidly.

The ECB in Europe and the FED in the USA reacted very strongly to the sharp increase in inflation, caused by oil and gas price shock in 2022 and the ongoing increase of price levels concerning food and labour costs.

The energy inflation rate in Europe comparing March 2021 and March 2022 with 44.3 % was never seen before in the countries of the European Union.

The supply shock in daily goods with a bottleneck in severe demand-supply mismatches set a strong impulse to nowadays inflation rates. Additionally rising wages contribute strongly to this situation.

So (Pic 3 Inflation chart) inflation in the European countries reaches more than 8 percent – slowly coming down now to an average of 6 percent.

It seems that the inflation rate in the EU will come down under 3% average after 2024. In Austria this might take longer – also in 2024 an inflation rate between 4-5% could be possible.

The most important instrument of ECB and the European national banks is to increase the interest level of Central bank money. Within only one year the interest level of ECB raised from zero to more than 4%.

I do not expect that this strong increase of the basic ECB interest level with very negative consequences for the economic development of the EU countries and especially the welfare and real income of private households will come down rapidly. It will take in my opinion at least two years to reduce the actual interest level.

According to a recent ECB study, the goal to reach again a stable 2% level is also depending on tightening the monetary policy also by the mean to reduce the pace of net assets purchases.

So – as we all know ECB has strongly revised the APP (Asset Purchase Program) - hoping that the monetary instruments together with the fiscal instruments should help to meet the mid- and long range inflation targets.

4. Real estate and housing

Another very important indicator for the economical development is the real estate industry, building, construction, and private housing. Beside the strong increase of the price level of consumer goods, costs for energy and reduced real household income the price level for buying or renting private homes are strongly important.

The recent experts survey of the IFO Institute (July 2023) shows an enormous value increase of property values and rents. In the 10 years between 2012 and 2022 nominal houseprices increased by an average of 5.4% worldwide.

For the coming years in Western- and Northern Europe, a yearly increase of 6.5 up to 9.9 is expected. In Southern- and eastern Europe even higher with 14.9-18.4%. The forecast is based on growing demand, higher inflation and higher interest rates.

On the other hand, the actual situation of large property development and investment companies and funds show a different picture:

Very large companies like VONOVIA in Germany or CPI (Czech Property Investors) lost billions in their evaluations on the stock markets in the recent years. Vonovia unfortunately faces a decreased of its valuation from 38 billion € in 2022 to 17 billion € actually

The plan of Vonovia to sell some 60.000 private apartments to reduce their debt exposure cannot be realised under the recent market conditions. In addition, the activities of building- and construction companies in this segment have strongly decreased in the actual situation.

Germany expects a lack of 700000 private apartments until 2025. The IFO institut forecast shows also a decrease of more than 30% in building permits for new private houses.

Beside inflation – causing the recent decrease of real household income of the population in most of the EU countries and abroad – the increase of interest rates reduced the opportunity to buy private property since about one year in our region heavily.

At the end of the zero interest period last year – Financial market Authorities and National Banks introduced new regulations to reduce the partly over-heated financing of properties by banks.

This regulation (called KIM in Austria „Kreditinstitute- Immobilienfinanzierungsmaßnahmen) together with the sharp increase of the interests has since mid of 2022 and quite dramatic in this year reduced the ability of private and institutionell clients to finance property housing projects.

I think it is now time to reduce these restrictions for customers and banks. They are in my opinion in this extend no more helpful – this additionally to the ESG regulations (environmental, social and governance criteria) with a strong impact on development of real estate costs.

Therefore – one of the biggest challenges for stability is to support by all means that especially young people, young households in Europe can finance their private homes as property investment at fair affordable conditions! In my opinion, we are facing a big danger that the actual loan financing criterias and sharply increased pricelevel for private homes are going to reduce the level of welfare and available income of young middleclass families in our region for the coming years. I myself prefer the creation of more property concerning the private homes especially for the young generation compared to rental models.

On the other side the sharp and – in this dimension unexpected interest rate hike – hits the financing needs of nearby every industrial sector in Europe heavily especially real estate investments.

Several companies with project plans calculated and financed short time ago can no more fund these projects with suddenly 3 to 4 times higher interests on bank loans.

This is now an excellent chance for strong and liquid equity investors to buy finished and non finished projects on a much deeper price level – cash is also now king !

5. The banking sector

After the big financial crisis between 2008 and 2011 which started with the so named „subprime crisis“ in the US and the collapse of Lehmann Brothers – ECB and national authorities in Europe elaborate several strict regulations to increase the equity and core capital ratios of European banks with additional conditions for the risk management of loans and debt issues of clients. Moreover, the European banks have really worked hard in the last decade to improve their asset and income quality, cost structure and capital basis.

ECB and the national financial markets authorities and National Banks execute a yearly assessment of the capital and assets quality of European banks – especially the systemically important banks – around 57 large and 42 medium sized banks in Euro area under ECB control.

A recent stress test of the ECB – published and of July 2023 – shows that the European bank could withstand a severe economic downturn so that the CET-1 core capital ratio could be reduced by more than 4 % to 10.4% after three years of strong economic stress.

Therefore, the banks should stay resilient amidst adverse economical conditions because of an improved asset quality and increased profitability.

In Austria we see a total equity capital ratio of around 19.5% of assets under risk and Common Equity Tier 1 Ratio (german: *hartes Kernkapital*) of above 16 %. A quite positive situation.

The war of Russia in Ukraina had so far no strongly negative influence to business volume and earnings of the banking sector in the EU and the banking industry is much better prepared to such a crisis compared to the worldwide financial crisis 15 years ago.

Nevertheless, due to the other market conditions described before the banks will still act with a relatively strict risk management – so retail and corporate client financing by banking credits and loans will not become easier in the near future.

We stay with low volumes and high interests. No doubt, that high interests and a high interest margin are on the first glance an advantage for the banking sector – but I already described the high danger for the banking sector in the near future especially in the sector of large real estate investment projects which fall into default. This can bring the recent relatively low non-performing loans volume and ratio in danger

6. What do I expect for the near future?

Very important is confidence that the countries in Europe can settle most of the actual problems and that in the coming two years hopefully a least a ceasefire treaty between Russia and Ukraina can be found.

The coming 18 months are especially crucial for further financing industrial projects and real estate development under the pressure of very high interest rates.

The authorities in the ECB, national banks and Financial Market Supervisors are forced to find ways to avoid big further cases of insolvency in the coming months due to the high interest situation. This is also a big challenge for commercial banks to finance price and interest increases.

In Austria and the EU countries, we are facing a recession – very likely no GDP growth within 2024 and beginning 2025.

Therefore, a lot depends on sinking interest for credits and loans hopefully starting in 2025 and on a further stable development of the Euro and a stable budget policy of the European countries.

In this situation, the idea from some political parties to reduce the weekly average working time to 32 hours without salary reduction is completely unreal and dangerous and cannot be financed. But if we want to keep our living standard in future we need best educated and highly motivated young people proud to work.

To concentrate most of the visible efforts of the EU only on the sonamed GREEN DEAL is definitely not the solution for a prosperous economy – electric cars alone will not solve the problem.

To produce the energy we need to transform everything to CO2 neutral creates both investment opportunities and big threats on the cost side.

Also a much broader approach for technical innovation and high performing industry developed in Europe is the real challenge to compete.

Finally – After 80 years of peace, Austria is also forced to find new and sufficient ways for our military security as active part of the European Union.

Thank you for your attention and the invitation to speak here in this important conference.

Part C

Expert Contributions

War, Women, Civilians, and Soldiers

Tricia Glazebrook

Women, civilians, and soldiers are not entirely separated. Soldiers can be female, while women who are not soldiers and may or may not be mothers can be intentionally harmed in war; civilians can be female, male, or non-gender-binary. Women in war as warriors and then women in forced migration caused by war are first discussed. Since 'refugee' is a negative word, 'forced migration' is used in this research; and FM is used for 'forced migration.' Secondly, drones, civilians and soldiers are discussed during President Obama's time in the 'war on terror' in the United States of America (U.S.) against al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban regime.

The purpose of this work is not to argue in support of opinions but to provide information to be thought about by the reader. None of the work is complete. It provides examples, ideas, and discussion.

Women in War

Women in war is, on one hand, historically the story of women warriors, though war is still much more a man's business. On the other hand, war often forces women and their children into migration.

The life of a woman soldier

Women fight in war more than is typically expected. For example, in World War 1, women served as combat troops in Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia. The Russian Ministry of War actually created 4 battalions of strictly female infantry in 1917 known as the Russian 'Women's Battalion of Death' (Stoff 2006). This was proposed and lead by Maria Bochkareva. Earlier on, she had been rejected as a soldier by the military but had asked for, and got, approval from the Tsar, Nicholas II (Goodridge 2018), and so she worked in the front line with the 5th Corps, 28 Regiment of the Second Army. She

was initially poorly treated by her colleagues, but her courage in battle made her better respected (Stoff 2006). Pennington (2003) reports that she was eventually decorated for having saved 50 wounded soldiers, and was herself wounded in the arms and legs until another injury left her paralyzed for 4 months; once recovered, as a senior non-commissioned officer delivering supplies, she lost interest and was eventually discharged in early 1917.

Soon after, the February Revolution successfully made the Tsar abdicate, and Bochkareva proposed to one of the Revolution leaders that a female combat unit would improve the men by shaming them into more effort support (Atwood 2014). She agreed to lead it, and despite army regulations, a female battalion was granted special dispensation (Pennington 2003). Many women volunteered, and after training were sent to the western front with Bochkareva as Lieutenant. She was wounded and sent away to recover, and in the meantime, the growing hostility of the men led the women's unit to collapse. She then was detained by the Bolsheviks who decided to execute her. She was able, however, to get a passport and go to the United States, where she dictated her memoirs in New York to a Russian journalist who published her book (Bochkareva and Levine 1919) after she had moved on to the United Kingdom where the War Office financed her to return to Russia (Noonan and Nechemias 2001). She was again taken by the Bolsheviks and this time executed as 'an enemy of the working class' on May 16th in 1920 (Goodridge 2018). She was 30 years old.

Women in forced migration (FM)

At the end of 2023 across the planet, 117.3 million people were displaced from their home (a rise of 8.8 million from the year before) with almost 3 of every 4 people living in a country with high or extreme exposure to climate-related hazards and 1 of every 2 still exposed to conflict; of these people, 43.4 million left their country (UNHCR n/d). According to Women for Women International, in 2023, 1 in 5 women was subjected to violence; women and girls were on average more than half of the people in FM, and women and children are most of the people in FM, especially from Syria; South Sudanese

and Sudanese were each forced back into their country; and many women in FM have skills and could contribute \$1.4 trillion to the annual global Gross Domestic Product (Women for Women International 2024). Often, however, they are held in camps that provide no opportunity or take advantage of their skills for little return to the women (Glazebrook 2021).

In comparison with 2023's 43.4 million people in FM out of their country, 10.4 million people were internationally displaced in 2009 (UNHCR 2019), though others reported in 2009 that as many as 50 million people were in FM outside their country and 80% were women and children (Roberts 2009). It seems that data is incorrect as current reports state that the number has constantly been growing. It is certainly still the case that in some countries, especially in the global South, data on numbers of birth, life, and death is not always reliable.

Regardless, it is clear that war damages and destroys lives, that those lives were generated by women, and that women and children are at risk in many ways in FM. For example, the UN Security Council reported in 2008 that a war tactic is sexual violence of women and girls (UNSC 2008). Major General Cammaert, a Dutch officer, said 'it is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict' (Roberts 2009). That is, rape of women in war is used as a weapon to put the enemy in the bloodline, damage or destroy her worthiness and relationships, and undermine cultural practices, as if to take advantage of a woman as a resource.

On the contrary, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) recognized women's capacity to participate in society and discussed the vulnerability of women and girls as part of their work toward gender equality and female empowerment that included ending human trafficking and sexual abuse (GCR 2018). Much of their work on gender, however, was not retained. For example, Sanjula Weerasinghe submitted an assessment to the UN High Commissioner that returned to the long-standing, traditional 'nexus dynamics' knowledge gap. In the 205-page document, she used 'women' 8 times, 'girls' only once in a footnote, and 'female' 3 times when writing the phrase 'female-headed households' (Weerasinghe 2018). Given the number of

women and girls in FM, failure to draw attention to the need of safety for women and girls is a returning to gender blindness that makes their situation more difficult and dangerous. Camp toilets, for example, are typically grouped together, and women and girls who must walk a distance to a toilet during the night can be at risk of rape and violence.

Abuse of women and girls in FM during war is a violation of their rights. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR 1948) says that ‘everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person,’ and should not be degraded, forced into slavery, or tortured, and should have privacy, dignity, and ‘free development of personality.’ Yet support against women’s abuse comes and goes, and the UDHR is breached in war, when violence against females is normalized and women experience more abuse and violence, with less accountability.

Abuse can dehumanize women and girls when they are abused and then simply ‘thrown away,’ as if she has served her use. It is not uncommon for young women to be sold in camps. For example, in the Za’atari camp in Jordan, opened in 2012, young women are sold by ‘marriage-brokers’ and fathers; men from areas nearby come for ‘pleasure marriages,’ take her away, and abandon her after a few days, so she has to find her way back alone (Long 2013). In short, women in FM are caught in a specific version of what has commonly been called ‘rape culture’ (Griffin 1971; MacKinnon 1999) .

Drones, Civilians, and Soldiers in the ‘war on terror’

The U.S. 2001 to 2021 war against al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban regime, known as the ‘war on terror,’ indicates changes in war when the relationship between civilians and soldiers is blurred. Further complication is that al-Qaeda was not a country but a militant organization, led by Sunni jihadists, that planned to create an Islamist revolution to unite Muslims. It was thus complicated for the U.S. to be justifying its ‘war on terror’ that was not actually a war between countries; the U.S. was presumably following interna-

tional humanitarian law, but al-Qaeda was not so bound to their rules. Moreover, soldiers in al-Qaeda were not easily separated from civilians as their soldiers did not always wear uniforms.

The Geneva Conventions, that establish minimum protections for people caught and affected by armed conflict, and the United Nations, that work toward peace, dignity and equality for all, disallow killing civilians. The doctrine of double effect in Just War Theory, however, does not argue against 'collateral damage' as a factor in war. The number of killed soldiers reported, however, is not agreed between the U.S. government and organizations against war. The most successful and efficient tool when the war is a distance away is the drone that is relatively small and not easy to see until close, and needs no soldier to travel or die.

Drones are relatively new weapons. The 'war on terror' was the beginning of its use in war and thus it was unclear whether international human rights or laws of armed combat apply to drones. As a new weapon, the Geneva Conventions had not rule on it yet, while also soldiers and civilians were not always distinguishable in the 'war on terror,' and the enemy is not under the control of its country. Its use is a significant change of war. For example, it challenged the idea of 'lawful combatants ... against lawful targets' (Vogel 2011) by showing it to be impossible in a war that is different on both sides, i.e., one with equipment and resources, and one with its own plans, rules, and resources. The difference is significant between a war of two states both connected to rules of war, and a war of one state connected to rules with another that answers to no state and its own rules, and works from more than one state. Thus the U.S. was responsible to the distinction between soldiers and civilians, while al-Qaeda and the Taliban were not. These differences actually threatened the differences between 'civilian' and 'military'; for example, the CIA was said to have acted like civilians in the 'war on terror' (Anderson 2010). Indeed, the drone pilot going home is every day a civilian and a soldier. President Obama used drones as much as he could.

Obama started his Presidency in 2009. He launched so many drones in the 'war on terror' that his time in office is known as 'the drone presidency' (Cole

2016). He used drone strikes in his first term more than 6 times the strikes Bush had used in both his terms (Boyle 2013). His assistant for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism actually said that civilian injuries and deaths from drone strikes were 'exceedingly rare' (Brennan 2012). In 2016, a court-order obliged the administration to make data on drone killing available to the public because of a successful lawsuit supported by the American Civil Liberties Union. The data stated that approximately 2500 terrorists had been killed by 473 strikes between 2009 and 2015, and, since 2008, only 64-116 civilians were killed (Ackerman 2016). Hence civilians were reported to be no more than 5% of the total deaths.

It had already been argued, however, that drone use was responsible for a high number of civilian deaths; i.e., between 750 to 1000 non-combatants were killed by drones, while by 2009, eight years after the beginning of the 'war on terror,' only 20 Taliban or al-Qaeda leaders were killed (O'Connell 2010). In 2011, O'Connell also argued that the U.S. claim that nothing in international law bans drones is a weak statement for supporting its drone attacks. It has also been estimated that from 2004 to 2012, only 2% of drone deaths were killings of high-ranking military officials, and the 98% who had otherwise been killed had not been active in direct hostilities (Bergen 2012). Boyle (2013) collected data from 2004 to 2012 in which the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, a News organization in London UK, estimated that up to at least 1800 and possibly as many as 3200 people died by 346 strikes. He also reported that the New America Foundation said that 85% of those killed in strikes were military, i.e., 15% were civilian, while the Bureau of Investigative Journalism suggested that 18-26% were civilian. This difference shows that the numbers are not precise, but also that the 'collateral damage' is non-trivial.

The numbers from the government are much smaller for deaths of civilians as opposed to the soldiers. Obama reports that less than 5% of deaths are civilian; that is, 64-116 civilians and 2500 were killed. The disagreement is clearly a problem of understanding who is a civilian and who a soldier. When enemies are not the country's soldiers, do not answer to nation-states, and

have no uniforms, distinguishing a small group of soldiers from non-combatants is extremely difficult. Nonetheless, it is clear that drones are efficient tools in war, and that the global North has much better access to such sources.

Drones were also, however, relatively new and the Geneva Conventions had not created policy and law about drones. It was thus debated how international human rights and laws of armed combat might applied to drones. The ‘doctrine of double effect’ made it the case sometimes that soldiers and civilians could not always be distinguished, and that the enemy that was hard to see as civilian or soldier, and was not was responsible anyway to the state. Moreover, drone strikes could no longer be conducted by ‘lawful combatants ... against lawful targets’ (Vogel 2011), as only one side was ‘lawful.’ The U.S., fighting a war not with another country, for which neither armed combat or international law was required, and thus could not be justified, given the number of the enemy killed but clearly distinguishable as a soldier and not a civilian. Discussion actually threatened the distinction of soldier and civilian by saying that the CIA acted like civilians during the ‘war on terror’ (Anderson 2010).

Drones also change war in that drone pilots do not travel to war but work on-line and are daily both soldier and civilian. Though it sounds more pleasant than traditional war, it can put a soldier into two situations: having to kill a person they have watched over a period of time; and, having to live their life in two worlds every day they work, i.e., the world of the people they live with, and the world of war.

Conclusion

Women can be worked in bad ways, and can be soldiers
though often not for long;
Men can, or not, be soldiers, often in war,
but not always for life.

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Europe – no Peace in Sight: Power and Violence as Foundations of Humanity¹

Paul Ertl

The actions of the Russian Federation surprised and shocked many people in Europe. The use of armed force, characterized by brutality and a lack of clear direction, appears savage and cruel. This is especially true for these Central Europeans who grew up in the system of political idealism of the last decades. The invasion's consequences shifted priorities and life within the European Union. While in the past the EU prioritized economic prosperity, it now prioritizes securing essential resources like energy, gas reserves, and grain using a weapons-based approach. Power, violence, and force continued to shape the discourse of the states in a much broader area from then onwards.

Various perspectives and theories exist to elucidate Russia's aggressive war, whether through political, social, or legal frameworks. There are four main interpretations of Russia's actions in the Ukraine conflict: offensive, defensive, situational, and domestic political.² Two of these descriptions are neo-realist models of explanation. One is focused on defense while the other is focused on attack. Their approach involves the following steps:

¹ This text follows a version of a peer-reviewed article that I published in “Conatus. Journal for Philosophy” at the end of last year. I have shortened the theoretical derivation but also added a current example for practical implementation at the end. For the extended original version, see: Paul Ertl, “Progressus as an Explanatory Model: An Anthropological Principle Illustrated by the Russia-Ukraine War”, in: Jovan Babic, *War Ethics, Conatus - Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 8(2), 175–194. <https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.35250>.

² Cf. Heinemann-Grüder, “Außenpolitische Denkschulen und der Ukraine Konflikt”, in *Lehren aus dem Ukraine Konflikt: Krisen vorbeugen, Gewalt verhindern*, eds. Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, Claudia Crawford, and Tim B. Peters, 11-30 (Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich Verlag, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv25wxccp>.

Offensive neorealism asserts that anarchy, great power politics, distrust, and strategic interests are defining features of all global relations. Being a dominant force therefore requires focusing on oneself and working towards achieving power and safety. International legal norms do not guide objectives in this matter. If we accept this understanding, then the actions of Russia can be seen as the result of a growing rivalry stemming from resistance to a unipolar system and competition between the EU and Russia in the post-Soviet region. It also implies that Russia is territorial and uncooperative. It has pulled back from the Euro-Atlantic region to reassess its diminished importance following the collapse of the Soviet Union and to establish dominance over the post-Soviet area.

In defensive neorealism, Russia responds solely to the prior expansion of the West, such as NATO and EU expansions. Making things even more complex, Russian security concerns are not acknowledged internationally and the EU is unwilling to align its association policy with Russia. Putin is so simply copying the Western behavior of not following international law when removing disliked leaders.

Next, a contextual understanding of the Russian agenda is also present. This theory asserts that there is not enough proof of a preconceived master strategy for the annexation of Crimea and the Donbass secession in 2014. Evidence of a related choice has been apparent starting in September 2013. Signs point to the annexation of Crimea and the try to replicate this situation in eastern Ukraine as a strategic move by Putin, based on his belief that he had the upper hand in existing planning games. After using the same ratio and calculation, he subsequently invaded Ukraine with a similar background but with a higher amount of official state actors, including regular forces. The West had renounced red lines from the Georgian War in 2008 and did nothing to respond to Russian military protectorate over Georgian territories.

Putin could count on this Western avoidance of conflict. This probably encouraged Putin to push out the limits of military action in the case of Ukraine – a policy which assumed that the West feared the abyss more than he did.³

The next explanation is of socio-cultural origin. One of the most important reasons for Moscow's considerable military, political, and rhetorical aggressiveness in the Ukrainian war, however, is not so much Kiev's and the West's disregard for Russian national interests. Rather, a sustainably reforming, economically well-developing Ukraine joining the EU would be a considerable threat to the power of the Kremlin. After all, given the cultural closeness between Ukrainians and Russians, this would become a legitimacy problem for Russian elites. A successful Ukraine could become a counter-model to Russia's current autocratic, patrimonial system. This has already happened before, especially for the Russian educated middle classes. This would trigger a similar democracy movement in Russia as it did in Ukraine. This is clearly a domestic political interpretation. In fact, neither Ukrainian domestic politics nor European geopolitics per se played a decisive role in the emergence and escalation of the “Ukraine conflict”. Rather, the aggressive way the Kremlin reacted to the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity illustrates the close connection between Russian domestic and foreign policy. In its media justification and diplomatic apologetics, the Kremlin constantly refers to domestic Ukrainian and Western geopolitical threats to Russian interests. It is not uncommon to hear talk of a threat to Russian nationality, identity, and sovereignty, such as the danger of fascism in Kiev, territorial expansion by Western organizations (EU, NATO), repression of ethnic Russians in Ukraine, and so on.

³ Russia's then Chief of Defence Staff Gerasimov developed this concept, flexibly shifting the line between war and peace, between internal and external, and between lawbreaking and legalistic conduct. This was formerly laid down in the so-called “Gerasimov-Doctrine” in 2014. Cf. Murphy Martin, “Understanding Russia's Concept for Total War in Europe,” *The Heritage Foundation*, September 12, 2016, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/understanding-russias-concept-total-war-europe#>. Also: Molly McKew, “The Gerasimov Doctrine - It's Russia's new chaos theory of political warfare. And it's probably being used on you,” *POLITICO Magazine*, September-October 2017, also: <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538/>. Also: Cf. Heinemann-Grüder, a.a.O., 19-20.

And finally, a personal explanation rooted in ideology and history. The ex-German ambassador to Russia, Rüdiger von Fritsch, believes that Vladimir Putin's reasons for the Russian war against Ukraine are closely tied to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia and the rest of Europe have had very different perceptions of the last 30 years. The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in Germany's reunification, but it was a disaster for Russia. He stated that the Russian Empire has been brought down by its own mistakes, although they do not acknowledge it. Russia has failed to achieve what China has accomplished: developing a modern national economy, while its own economy has been diminished. Thus, Putin is a “prisoner of the regime's own shortcomings.”⁴ He sees the war in Ukraine as his final option, which he thinks can still be effective. Nevertheless, von Fritsch commented that this was a grave error in judgment on Putin's behalf. His view of the situation in Ukraine, his own forces, the Ukrainian forces, and the Western willingness to resist is skewed. This error could also result in “the war continuing for an extended period”, according to von Fritsch. And he concluded: “Because this war that he started is going so badly for him, he is now also fighting in Ukraine for his own political survival at home. (...) And that's why he can't lose this war.”⁵

Despite all the predictions of disaster, Putin seems to view himself as a flawless humanitarian, according to his speeches. He declared at the German Bundestag back in 2001:

“I am touched that I can talk about the German-Russian relations, [...] about the problems of international security – especially here in Berlin, in a city with such a complicated destiny. [...] But even in the worst times – not even in the difficult years of Hitler's tyranny – it was not possible to extinguish in this city the spirit of freedom and humanism for which Lessing and Wilhelm von Humboldt laid the cornerstone. [...]

⁴ Cf. Rüdiger von Fritsch, “Ukraine-Krieg für Putin. ‘letztes Mittel’” *ZDF Heute*, June 20, 2022, <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/putin-ziele-motivation-ukraine-krieg-russland-100.html>.

⁵ Ibid.

Culture has never known borders. Culture has always been our common good and has united the peoples.”⁶

Putin's motivation is evident in this ideological-historical legacy for the purpose of uniting Russians and Ukrainians, to bring them together as a stronger and more successful nation. He highlights in his article the historical connection between Russians and Ukrainians, emphasizing that Russia and Ukraine belong to the same historical and spiritual zone, and mentions that Ukrainian leaders held top positions in the USSR, as noted by Putin including Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev. He also emphasized the shared literary and cultural history, asserting that contemporary Ukraine was shaped by the Soviet period, and suggesting that Russia was at a loss due to the separation.⁷ That summarizes the historical-ideological reasoning behind Russian behavior.

Inherent in every society (1): violence, power, and force (aka “*Gewalt*”)

After touching on these five explanatory models briefly, it is feasible to emphasize certain shared characteristics and trends that connect them. All of them share a commonality in that there exists a connection between the two states. The bond between countries and states is established on terms of living together that need to be socialized, implemented, and 'discussed' in the most inclusive way. It is a symbol of civilization; tasks that need to be completed collaboratively in a hostile setting using the resources and abilities at hand. In order to thrive in nature and withstand its challenges, a person must possess some strength, skill, courage, and assertiveness, regardless of whether they are used for positive or negative purposes. This becomes more

⁶ Vladimir Putin, “Speech of Vladimir Putin at the German Bundestag,” transcript of the speech, *Deutscher Bundestag*, 25 September 2001, https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/geschichte/gastredner/putin/putin_wort-244966.

⁷ Cf. Vladimir Putin, “Article by Vladimir Putin ‘on the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians’”, *President of Russia*, July 12, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66191>.

important when the focus is not just on survival, but on achieving higher standards and goals. The same is true for both societies and states, it is clear: Every society will grow and change, if it hopes to survive in competition with its surroundings or other societies.

This (technical, cultural, political, social, etc.) revolution takes place at the heart of the conflict between the individual and their surroundings. Thus, both the individual and society adhere to identical regulations. In this context, the information and thoughts offered in this article are relevant for both the individual and the community.

Examining the five explanations more closely, we can observe that in each one, a certain level of effort is required to obtain what you believe you want or need. Therefore, the importance of force is related to existence. In any of these models, assertiveness requires power to achieve your goals. Without power, there is no profit. Ultimately, all of these models require the use of violence, through either execution or the credible threat of it. Violence is a central feature, both in the models mentioned and in society as a whole, even if it is not regularly acted upon. All three categories are undoubtedly present in each relationship and can be observed in varying degrees depending on the circumstances. In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, both sides unfortunately resort (or have to resort) to violence as the primary means to achieve their goals or perceived needs.

The interaction of force, power, and violence in global affairs can be challenging, and while these terms are related, there are significant distinctions among them. This makes it difficult to scrutinize these efforts and connections. I suggest bypassing the issue to enable a more comprehensive investigation of the broader topic and recommend studying a German noun for further research. It is a term that encompasses all three definitions and has the potential to enhance comprehension and provide more profound insight on an advanced level. The term in question is *Gewalt*.

Initially, it is important to note a linguistic oddity of the German language that is crucial to my thoughts: In English, there is a differentiation between force and power, as well as between violence and power. In German, *Macht*

equates to power in English, *Kraft* means force, and *Gewalt* (often used negatively) most closely relates to violence but can also encompass all the other terms. In English, there is also a differentiation between violence and force that in German blurs in different situations.

In *Gewalt* the old-germanic *walten* is etymologically inherent. Therefore, *Walten* represents a task, an act. This foundational principle exists in every *Gewalt*. It also serves as the foundation for the German idea of *Staatsgewalt* (government power), *Gerichtsgewalt* (judicial power), and other concepts. Moreover, there are much more effects that are associated with its use as an adjective.⁸ These few examples already show that in the German language, the word *Gewalt* can have negative, positive, and neutral connotations. All these subtexts, these meanings have societal impact and are bound to the discourse between human beings, groups or states.

Armed conflict, or situations resembling war, represent the most extreme and violent form of discourse in societal settings. There, a goal must be accomplished at all times, similar to Clausewitz's well-known statement: "War [...] is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will."⁹ Additionally, he places the desire to initiate a war at the start of his thoughts. There are two reasons that drive men to conflict: natural aggression and intentional aggression. A bit further in the piece, he mentions that it is not feasible to imagine the intense hatred akin to pure instinct without also including the notion of a hostile purpose. According to him, the driving force behind war is the desire to satisfy individual or collective needs, whether they are basic needs such as water and food, or secondary needs like political power and economic growth. War, in this regard, involves the use of extreme violence and force.

⁸ E.g., there is in German the term "gewaltige Medizin" standing for "powerful medicine" in English, or "gewaltiger Effekt" meaning "huge effect", or "gewaltiges Schauspiel" which is a "tremendous spectacle", to name a view.

⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard, and Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75.

Interpretation of Gewalt

It is essential to perceive and assess Gewalt itself as a “technical” phenomenon.¹⁰ It comes from fundamental human formations and, once more, creates different formations through its application. The way Gewalt is understood is always based on how it affects society (or the individual within society) and is determined by society. Two interpretations¹¹ are known to us: The first one sees Gewalt in a negative light. It begins with lack of acceptance, progresses to methods of intimidation and penalties, and culminates in the annihilation of living organisms. In the positive context of Gewalt, it symbolizes the opposite meaning of negativity; beginning at the lowest level and moving upwards - from tolerance, permission, supporting others, all the way to sacrificing one's own life shown in figure 1.¹²

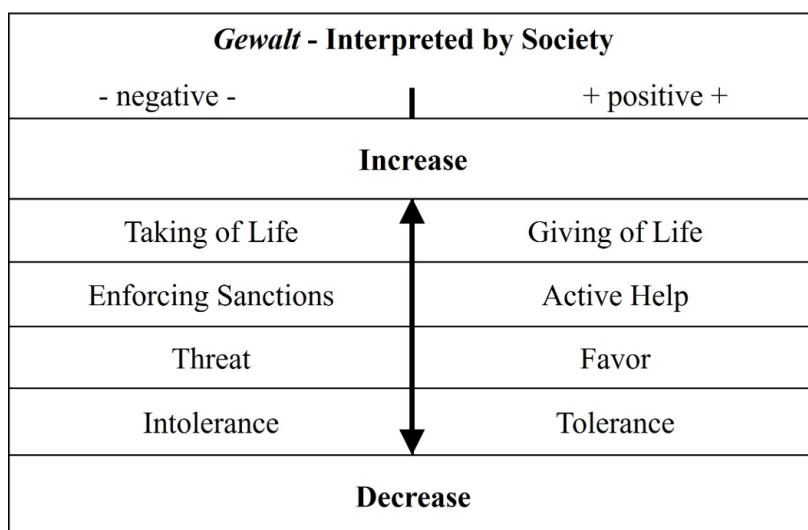


Fig. 1: Interpretation of Gewalt

¹⁰ Cf. Paul Ertl, “Gewalt-Herrschaft-Totalität. Eine strukturanalytische Studie zur Globalisierung der Gewalt in der Postmoderne” (PhD, Alpe-Adria-University Klagenfurt, 2010), 24-29, <https://netlibrary.aau.at/obvuklhs/download/pdf>.

¹¹ Ibid. Here and in the following especially also: Paul Ertl, (2023). *Progressus as an Explanatory Model*.

¹² Paul Ertl, *Progressus as an Explanatory Model*, 2023, 168.

The bright aspect of violence is tolerance. As mentioned earlier, I suggest a four-step-escalation. Initially, the focus is on tolerance. It symbolizes quietly acknowledging and respecting each other's dreams and desires, or at least giving consent. The second level, known as Goutation or favor, is linked causally to agreeing with the goals of the other. It is therefore the clearly favorable approach to it. The third level of positively perceived Gewalt involves providing practical support to help achieve a desired goal, showing complicity in actions or outcomes desired by another. It involves actively promoting and providing assistance to reach the objective. For the first time, a practical intervention is being implemented in a process. Ultimately, the fourth dimension is the selfless gift of life, which is given willingly to others as a “present”. Consider, for instance, a mother's affection towards her child.¹³

Similar to the constructive and beneficial aspects of Gewalt, there exist four detrimental and negative dimensions as well. Also in this case, the varying levels of its functioning are evident, showing growth in both intensity and quality. Firstly, intolerance is defined as a personal rejection of the other person's dreams and ambitions. The next stage involves actively attempting to sabotage the desires and will of the other. Still, there is currently no genuine proactive involvement. Next in line is the implementation of force, whether it is savage (as shown by Benjamin and Clausewitz) or redirected, withheld within the societal framework. An instance of third-level Gewalt, practical violence exists within society as internalized and adopted violence. Nation states, for example, utilize it in the justice system, the law finding processes and so forth. This marks the start of the active phase, involving intervention in the current or assumed process, deemed essential in line with the previously mentioned positive third level. Finally, similar to giving a positive gift, the act of taking another's life is happening in this situation. This might oc-

¹³ Cf. Paul Ertl, *Gewalt – Herrschaft – Totalität*, 2010, 71f., 82. See also, and mainly for the following thoughts: Paul Ertl, *Progressus as an Explanatory Model*, 2023.

cur, such as in the fight for survival, the extermination of the enemy in ideological warfare, or, in the most severe case of loss of life, as described by Giorgio Agamben, in the concentration camp.¹⁴

Inherent in every society (2): Progressus

The categorization of Gewalt as positive or negative (or even neutral, but this is another focus) is easily comprehensible and can be seen in society as well. The categorization of positive and negative into four levels is simply a technical distinction used in the analysis of Gewalt. Various levels can happen at the same time, alongside each other, and in conjunction within a group or society. Nevertheless, the various degrees of positive and negative Gewalt can be found in every social system, typically in practice, but at the very least in theory. The greater the complexity of the system, the more complex the involvement of the individual in various levels of social violence.

The presence, display and application of violence is inherently present in every person and community. For society to progress and be sustained, something needs to be both fundamentally existing, as well as adaptable and capable of evolving. Obviously, human societies are present and they tend to last for a long time. It is inherently a skill possessed by humans. This fundamental ability for Gewalt is essential for enabling different types of human relationships (political, social, economic, etc.) to exist. Therefore, if one wants to use this (physical and/or virtual) force in the manner described above without facing immediate destruction, specific conditions must be met. Progressus is the term I use to describe these conditions and how they are utilized in human society.

The conclusion that can be drawn is that a society is more likely to engage in violence when it focuses on Progressus goals, whether positive or negative, and effectively applies these goals against other societies. Additionally, the higher the perceived significance of rational goals compared to those of

¹⁴ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo sacer. Die Souveränität und das nackte Leben* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2002), 177-179.

other societies, the more likely violence will be used and accepted within that society. Therefore, four determinants or variables influence the direction and intensity of Progressus, as depicted in figure 2.¹⁵

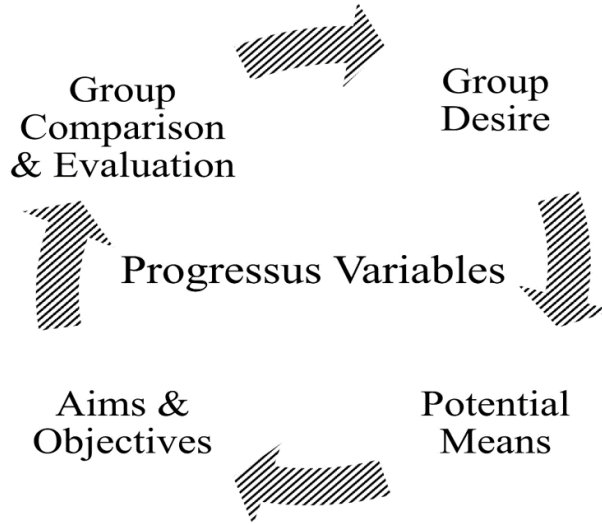


Fig. 2: Progressus Variables

The stronger the violence of a society or group, the more Progressus-bound goals they pursue within a system, compared to other societies or groups with similar progressive goals. In other words, there is a distinctive link between the different shifts and transformations deemed essential and the level of violence implemented. A revolution does not stem from a minor imbalance. In order for this to happen, a society must have a significant level of perceived unfairness and a viewpoint that justifies the use of a particular type of force.

Additionally, the nature of Gewalt will differ from one situation to another based on the society's access to violent methods. The load placed on a high-

¹⁵ Paul Ertl, *Progressus as an Explanatory Model*, 2023, 189.

tech society, nuclear state, or constitutional state are different from those on an agrarian society, medieval feudal state, or eventual future virtual state. Here, the way Gewalt is used and the potential uses of Gewalt also evolve. This is also the second variable of Progressus.

The society's goals and objectives represent the third variable. The more significant these societal objectives seem, the more intense and aggressive the interaction between one group and another becomes. This holds particularly true when compared to the objectives of the opposite society.

The stronger the perceived superiority of one's own resources compared to others, the more intense the level of violence. This also applies to one's personal assets or those kept by others to an especially great extent. In the hierarchy of Violence, the greater the significance of resources included or withheld by opposing groups in relation to other groups, the higher Progressus and the “performance” of Gewalt become.

Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix

Therefore, the continuous interaction of the four Progressus variables results in effects on both individuals and society, compelling them (to some extent) to resort into Gewalt. The aspirations of a group determine the objectives, while the potential for power and violence illustrates the eventual outcomes of achieving those goals. Throughout this procedure and following it, the group is compared and the goals achieved during the event are evaluated. We can observe every day that Progressus and Gewalt have a relationship with each other. Progressus employs Gewalt, and Gewalt (symbolically) evolves Progressus. Thus, a matrix called the *Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix* is formed between these two essential aspects of human nature.

The Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix interacts and intervenes in social reality to enforce individual, social, political, economic, and/or cultural goals, which we see in various societal situations – if not in all social encounters.

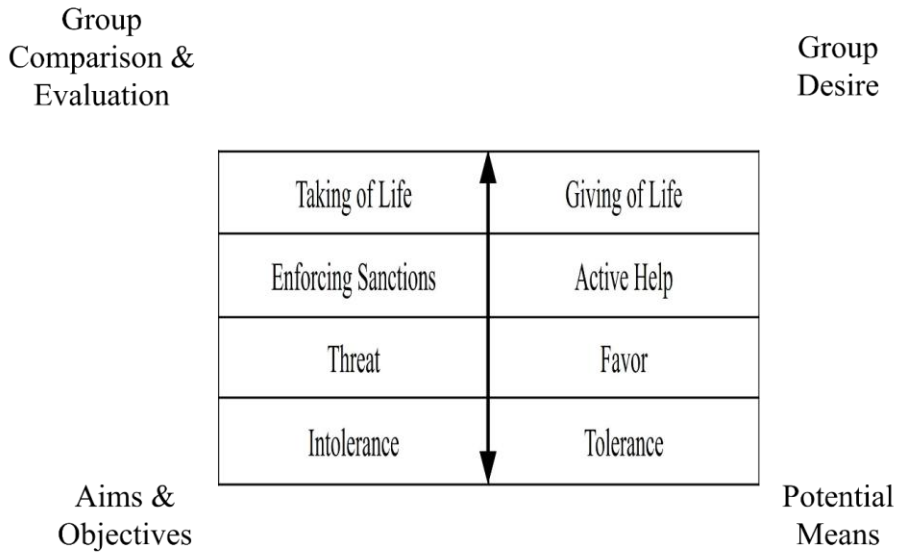


Fig. 3: Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix

In conclusion, it appears evident yet significant to mention that the favorable trends shown have the potential to result in contrasting outcomes using the same methods. The tools have been identified. The impact of their use varies depending on the user and their intentions, ideally aiming to benefit the world.

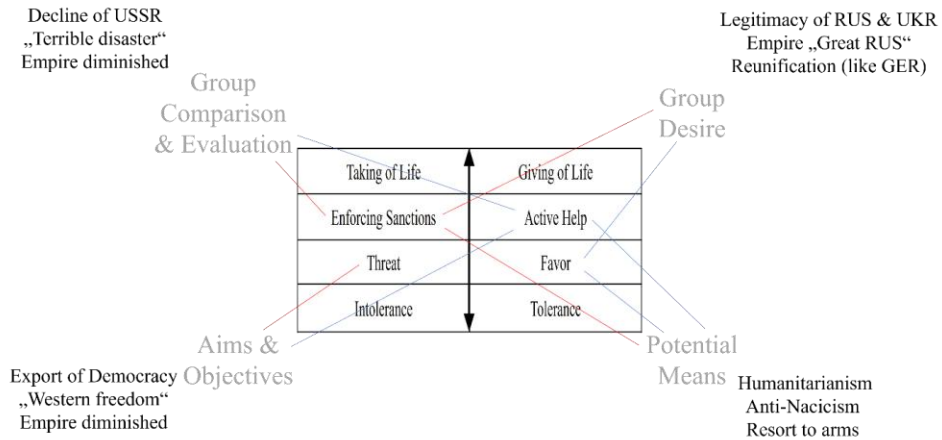


Fig. 4: Example – Potential use of Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix

This begs the question of whether the factors desire, means, goal, and comparison can be altered separately, but unfortunately, this is currently not feasible. Is it possible for a group or individual to achieve more Progressus-goals without utilizing more resources simultaneously? Is it possible to achieve goals that Gewalt should lead to without giving them higher priority? Is it possible to elevate one goal without requiring additional resources for the others? I believe that the answer is affirmative: it is indeed achievable in the near future and investigable as well as applicable for praxis with the Gewalt-Progressus-Matrix (e.g. see Fig. 4). For instance, consider the suicide bombers who, due to an excessive focus on socially enforced Progressus objectives, internalize them so deeply that they genuinely believe they can attain the goal through extreme violence. Nevertheless, this only depicts a potential for achieving goals that has been turned into a short historical event that can only be made “semi-permanent” without the involvement of other forces like the media, propaganda, and similar entities. Ultimately, the objectives and methods need to align to achieve Progressus and a clearly defined, relatively positive state of society, its comparability, and the aspiration within it. In addition, this shows one important societal mechanism: Every society re-

lies on Progressus, which is force, violence, and power, making Gewalt essential and indispensable. It just depends on how we interpret and make use of it.

Keyword: EU Army

Requirements for a great power

Andreas Stupka

1. Introduction

With a fairly regularity, approximately at intervals of two to three decades, two phenomena appear again and again. They then briefly arouse a great deal of interest, but immediately disappear again when they have been judged to be an impossibility. Nevertheless, they remain in the collective memory, to be brought out again at some point. These are, on the one hand, the Loch Ness Monster and, on the other, the European Army. The difference between the two, however, is that the former seems to be a fantasy designed to fill the pages of the tabloid press. The European Army, on the contrary, seems to be a utopia, because all attempts in this direction have either failed so far or got stuck in an unsatisfactory stage.

A first major attempt to create such a European Army was the so-called Pleven Plan at the beginning of the 1950s; however, it failed to gain the approval of the French National Assembly. The Cold War brought the Western Europeans closer together under the leadership of the United States within the framework of NATO, so that the question of an independent European Army did not arise during this period. It was only after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the consolidation of the EU also as a security and defense community from the 1992 Maastricht Treaty onwards that the creation of a joint European armed force within the framework of the European Union once again came into focus. Since peace in Europe seemed to be secured, politics turned to non-European tasks and decided to establish a common armed force for this purpose. According to the decisions (Helsinki Headline Goal), about 60,000 soldiers were to be provided within the framework of 15 brigades, which were to reach an operational area within a range of 4,000 kilometers within 60 days and have a holding capacity of one year. These goals

were never achieved; a modest remnant of this aspiration are the two EU battlegroups, each formed for six months, with a total strength of about 3,000 soldiers. The Lisbon Treaty of 2007 adopted the EU's Common Security and Defense Policy, and Article 42 also calls for mutual assistance obligations and the objective of a common European defense. This implies the de facto establishment of joint armed forces as a long-term goal. However, such structures already exist within the framework of NATO, which, after its withdrawal from Afghanistan and strengthened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, is returning to its original defense intentions. For this reason, the creation of a separate EU army is widely regarded as an unnecessary and utopian idea. However, this short article will provide information on why it still makes sense to consider building up an EU army of its own. In addition, the basic requirements for the functioning of such a force will be presented.

2. Advantages of an EU army

The origins of the European Union are rooted in the devastating effects of the two world wars of the 20th century, with which Europe had weakened itself and had to cede its global supremacy to other powers. The realization that Europe could only maintain its position as a global player and as a prosperous region within the world community if peace prevailed on the continent caused the individual states to grow together into an economic community. The military alliance of NATO and the associated support of the United States were used as security policy backing. This logic resulted from the defense of the Western community of values against the expansion of the communist system under the leadership of the Soviet Union, which was sought jointly with the USA. The European Union should therefore be seen as a peace initiative on an economic basis. After the implosion of the Soviet empire, the European Union continued this policy, integrating former adversaries and the European neutrals into its system. The close economic ties within the European states were thus supposed to have a war-preventing effect insofar as a possible belligerent would immediately have to expect immense economic disadvantages for his own polity. After the end of the Cold

War, an attack on Europe from the outside was judged to be very unlikely and therefore this system of integrative security had a useful functionality. Consequently, the European Union presented itself as a major economic power.

The security situation changed massively for Europe with the year 2014, where, on the one hand, the armed conflicts in Ukraine began and Russia broke away and annexed Crimea from the state federation of Ukraine. On the other hand, the Islamic State caliphate consolidated and threatened the "West" with war. The European Union was now confronted with a dilemma, since in the previous 25 years it had concentrated exclusively on military operations outside Europe and had largely reduced its own national defense capabilities. However, the Europeans only really became aware of this dilemma in 2022 with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Although the NATO military alliance still exists, it functions solely based on extensive contributions from the United States. The European states have only very limited military capabilities in many areas, which is why the ability to defend Europe independently without the help of the USA seems highly questionable. So what happens if the U.S. - for whatever reason - is no longer willing or able to make its contribution to support a defense of Europe? Then it would probably make sense to have built up an independent common European defense, as Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty also provides for.

Another aspect that speaks for the establishment of independent European structures is the position of the European Union as a major economic power, which, however, is highly dependent on global resources and their unhindered supply. Thus, as soon as trade routes are interrupted and access to urgently needed resources is denied, a great power needs an appropriate means of enforcing its interests by force if necessary. The absence of such means of power could put the existence of a great power and its prosperous development under massive pressure or even endanger its existence at all.

As a first conclusion, therefore, we can state that it makes sense for the European Union to have independent European military structures at its disposal. In order to generate such an advantage, however, it is not possible to

start only when it is recognized that the existing structures do not work; rather, this buildup must take place in parallel, so that the assistance of the U.S. as the main actor is no longer needed for a defense of Europe and Europe is also put in a position to assert its interests independently worldwide.

3. Sword and Shield:

The defense of the EU should be based on the principle of "sword and shield". This means, on the one hand, having joint forces available on a manageable scale for an immediate response, so that either interests can be effectively enforced immediately, or troops can be quickly deployed to counter the enemy as part of the defense of the Union's territory - in other words, a "sharp sword". On the other hand, in order to defend against threats to the EU or one of its members, a concept is to be created that makes it possible to act effectively, but at the same time cost-effectively and in a regionally concentrated manner, i.e., to form a "strong shield". These two elements also form a visible sign to deter a potential adversary.

In line with the principle of subsidiarity, the defense of the respective territory is to remain the responsibility of the nation states. For the expected threats, nation-state defense is more advantageous because it can be built up, adapted to the specific needs of the respective territory. Due to the manageable structures, the respective national defense is more flexible and can also be designed more efficiently with regard to the motivation to defend one's homeland. The U.S. National Guard could serve as an example of this; national defense would therefore have to be structured like a militia in many areas.

EU-Europe, however, needs a joint first-response force to deal with threats or to defend against a selective attack against EU territory, which cannot be ruled out, in order to be able to react quickly and to enable further mobilization (especially of militia forces) in the European countries or to cover their deployment. This EU force would serve as an immediately deployable presence force, thereby cost-effectively replacing the need to keep large national

standing armies on standby. In line with the Helsinki Headline Goal, this EU force would have to be corps-sized, divided into three to four rapidly deployable divisions and corresponding support troops.

The EU also needs the rapidly deployable forces already mentioned in order to be able to be effective externally (e.g. missions to enforce EU interests in other parts of the world) in a targeted manner. The EU army cannot therefore be limited to land forces, but requires forces from all domains (land, air, sea, space, cyberspace and cognitive dimension).

Conceptualizing these forces as an EU force does not require a military alliance outside of the existing EU treaties. To monitor or defend all European airspace, a joint EU air force would be considered expedient and cost-effective. Maintenance, servicing and the like of a common type of aircraft in the interceptor sector would relieve the financial burden on the small states in particular, since they could be consolidated at a few air force bases. The nation states could then concentrate entirely on the Army Air Forces. A similar approach could be considered for the formation of an EU fleet (e.g., to fight piracy overseas); however, coastal defense should remain in national hands.

Analogous to the national political and military steering and command mechanisms, a separate instrument is therefore also needed within the framework of the European Union, which must be equivalent to a ministry of defense and a general staff. This would mean that the individual member states would determine the deployment of this EU army at the political level, but would not be able to intervene directly into the military structures. Direct access to individual units or individuals would at least make it more difficult to build up and deploy an EU army.

4. Build-up Criteria

The establishment of such an EU army must be supported jointly by all member states, both in terms of funding and willingness to provide the basic

conditions (barracks, training areas, etc.) within the respective states. In addition, the following parameters appear to be indispensable for the successful installation of an EU force:

§1 Personnel

The personnel of this EU army must be recruited from all EU states, preferably broken down according to the proportion of inhabitants. Only in this way can it be guaranteed that this force will be supported by all member states in the same way.

§2 EU passport

The personnel serving in this army will shed their national identity for the duration of their service and become EU citizens, bound exclusively by the instructions of the EU bodies. The nation states thus have no access to the personnel.

§3 Service and Salary Law

For the administration of an EU army, a separate military administration is to be established at EU level. The personnel are thus subject to uniform administrative and pay regulations. Financing by the nation states must be provided through the EU Ministry of Defense.

§4 Criminal law

Uniform disciplinary and military criminal law with its own jurisdiction is to be established to prevent cases of unequal treatment.

§5 Military language

A uniform military language shall be established for this army. Without such a measure, a military unit remains highly unmanageable. Whether this is to be the English language hitherto universally used, or whether another or an artificial language is to be created, would have to be judged.

§6 Equipment and Procurement

Equipment and furnishing of this army have to be carried out uniformly on the level of the EU. The units are therefore to be configured independently of the nation states in this respect as well.

§7 Appearance

The EU army must appear as an EU force, with its own uniforms, insignia and its own military culture, which essentially represents a confluence of European military cultures. This will also send a clear signal to the outside world of the appearance of a great power.

5. Summary:

It is undoubtedly necessary for a great power to have appropriate means at its disposal to enforce its interests. Therefore, it also needs a powerful military component that, on the one hand, can be effective as a first responder within the framework of national defense in order to allow the troops to be mobilized to grow up. On the other hand, this present rapid reaction force should also be able to deal with crises that restrict its freedom of action as a global player. In order to demonstrate its status as a great power and global actor and to be able to continue to assert it, the European Union therefore needs suitable independent military structures that largely rule out dependence on the United States.

After considering all the necessary measures, the establishment of an independent EU army does indeed appear to be a utopian dream. The individual member states are likely to be too divided to allow such a project to succeed. Nonetheless, unity and joint action on foreign and security policy issues are needed. Otherwise, there is a great danger that the European Union will perish as a construct of a great power. So, there are no alternatives and the supposed utopia must take shape.

That utopias can come true is shown to us by the example of the Star Trek films from the 1960s. At that time, Captain Kirk and his officers made wireless phone calls, using small flip-open devices. This type of communication device was considered an actual utopia at the time, but then became a reality at the latest since the turn of the millennium. Today, cell phones have become an integral part of everyday life. So why should it not be possible to set up an EU army, which is currently regarded as utopian? It has already been conceived, it just needs to be dared to become a material reality.

Europe in Geopolitical Competition between China, Russia, and the USA

Gunther Hauser

Introduction

The European Union (EU) is confronted with a multitude of crises and therefore is surrounded by a ring of fire – an arc of crises reaching from eastern Europe to the Mediterranean and Middle East regions. As the 2022 Strategic Compass of the EU states:

‘We are confronted with a dangerous mix of armed aggression, illegal annexation, fragile states, revisionist powers and authoritarian regimes. This environment is a breeding ground for multiple threats to European security from terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime to hybrid conflicts and cyberattacks, instrumentalisation of irregular migration, arms proliferation and the progressive weakening of the arms control architecture.’ (Council of the European Union 2022: 8)

Since 2014, Ukraine has been at war with Russia after Russia annexed Crimea and heavy war fighting erupted in Eastern Ukraine. On February 24, 2022, the Russia government launched its so-called ‘special-military operation’ in Ukraine, its strategic goal is to destroy Ukraine as a state; furthermore, Russia demands from Ukraine to abandon NATO integration and to give up its own cultural policy. (Stavrou 2023: 39) On October 7, 2023, Hamas attacked Israel and massacred some 1,200 people. Roughly 240 people were taken hostage. Therefore, Israel launched its war to topple Hamas which in turn aims to destroy Israel. By early 2024, 23,084 people had lost their lives in Gaza while the injury toll had risen to 58,926 injured – according to the Hamas-run health authority. (The Times of Israel 2024: 1) At the same time, the Houthi rebels supported by Iran in Yemen endangered free shipping in

the Red Sea since the end of 2023 and thus the functioning of international supply chains; under the leadership of the USA, an international military coalition was launched on December 19, 2023 to protect shipping (Operation Prosperity Guardian with the following nine states: Bahrain, Canada, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Seychelles, Spain and the United Kingdom. This operation maintains joint patrols and intelligence support. (Tagesschau 2023: 1)

Additionally, never ending tensions in the Balkans and in the Caucasus (ethnic rivalries are as dangerous as ever) keep EU neighbourhood quite unstable. Furthermore, it is also getting uncomfortable inside the EU: more and more migrants are coming to Europe illegally via the Mediterranean. The economy is weakening. Terrorists strike again and again. Due to the war in Gaza, societies in Europe become more and more unstable, an increasing number of Jewish people feel unsafe and endangered in European cities. It is a multitude of crises that reinforce each other. A phenomenon that British economic historian Adam Tooze calls *poly-crisis*. (Steinvorth: 1)

As early as 2017, German diplomat Wolfgang Ischinger wrote that Israel and Iran were already on the edge of a precipice. (Ischinger 2020: 19) During the war between Israel and Iran proxy Hamas that followed in autumn 2023, no distinction was made between civilians and Hamas fighters either. In Ukraine, Russia deliberately destroyed civilian facilities like churches, restaurants, kindergartens and residential houses with heavy military weapons and missiles, thus, the Russian government is responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians. Both the leaders of Ukraine and Israel are fighting for the sovereignty of their countries, which is not recognized by Russia in the case of Ukraine and by Iran and its proxies Hamas and Hezbollah in the case of Israel. Both Russia and Iran intend to wipe out the sovereignties of internationally recognised states.

Especially the war in Ukraine reflects divergence in Beijing's and Washington's thinking: according to the U.S. Biden administration, Russia's actions are a challenge to the rules-based international order. To the mind of the ruling Chinese Communist Party, the war in Ukraine shows that the 'world

is entering a period of disorder'. (Leonard 2023: 117) In this so-called 'multipolar world order' which now emerges and whose provisional final shape is not yet foreseeable, the EU and Europe itself are, however, in danger of being sandwiched as pawns between the U.S., Russia and the rising great power China.

Furthermore, claims to be upholding a rules-based order has been lacking credibility for western powers. Thus, French President Emmanuel Macron said at the Munich Security Conference in February 2023: 'I am struck by how we have lost the trust of the global south.' (Miliband 2023: 36) Many countries in Africa and in Asia are convinced that the *West* has applied its own norms selectively and revised them frequently to suit its own interests. Thus, from 2021 to 2023, military juntas took control in poverty-stricken nations like Mali, Burkina Faso, Gabon and Niger seen as West's allies in hostile regions. There the Russian flag has become commonplace: 'The Russian flag has become a symbol of resistance in West Africa, affiliated with anti-West and anti-French attitudes', said Kyle Walter, the head of research at *Logically*, a technology company. 'Hopes for economic opportunities and social progress under partnerships with France and the west have dwindled.' (Peltier 2023: 4) This article aims at analysing Europe's current geopolitical situation and highlights the limits of the EU's influence on global affairs.

The goals of the European Union

Through NATO enlargement, the EU was able to expand into Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, the European Union (EU) announced its intention to export its principles of human rights, fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law to the edges of the continent, to 'hinder the outbreak of new conflicts and to spread that stability and security that develops from democracy and prosperity.' (Ferrero-Waldner 2004: 14) On the central and eastern side of the Europe, the enlargement and partnership projects became attractions for many civil society movements: 'Yes, the model is clumsy and bureaucratic, but the attraction is about how societies can be given space to develop and modernise and how state institutions should function and be

made accountable.’ (Dempsey 2015: 22) Therefore, the Eastern Partnership, initiated by Poland and Sweden in 2009, aimed at political association and economic integration of the following countries: Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. But large parts of Moldova and Georgia remain entangled into political and territorial disputes with Russia: In Georgia for example, the greatest challenge remains to be the disintegration of the country – Abkhazia and South Ossetia declared independence after Russian invasion into Georgia in August 2008. Ukraine since 2014 had been first entangled in a war with Russian proxies in Donetsk and Luhansk that on February 24, 2022, had turned into an open military war with Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin’s goal, to his mind, is to avoid Ukraine to become a ‘nationalist anti-Russia’ and ‘a deployment zone of the *West* against Russia’. (Hauser 2023: 14) However, this Russian full-scale war in Ukraine ‘means a blatant breach of the entire European security order and a threat to the stability of the European continent’. (Fasslabend 2023: 1) Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir Putin seemed to have underestimated the Ukrainian resistance, the unity of NATO and the EU and he perhaps has ‘overestimated his own army’. (Gurieva 2023: 26)

Belarus, for example, formed a *Union State* together with Russia in 1999, although it exists mainly on paper. In December 2018, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev suggested that Russia could take over the Belarus customs, central bank and courts stressing that ‘Russia is ready to go further in building a Union State.’ Furthermore, Russia became Belarus’s largest single market. (The Economist 2019: 22) On December 14, 2018, Belorussian President Aljaksandr Lukashenko told Russian journalists: ‘If someone wants to break [Belarus] into regions and force us to become a subject of Russia, that will never happen.’ (ibid) But since 2020 when President Lukashenko brutally suppressed a popular uprising before the upcoming elections, Belarus has been increasing dependence on Russia. However, Belarus refused to recognise Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 and retained good relations to Ukraine till 2022 when Russia began to use Belarus as a military operational base against Ukraine.

Russia is seen by all these European Eastern Partnership countries primarily as a military power which intends those nations to refrain from deepening and strengthening political and economic ties with NATO and the EU. In contrast, the EU defines itself, above all, a civil power as well as a normative power in regards to the enlargement processes in East and Southeast Europe. In the case of the EU, the export of human rights, the strengthening of international law and the implementation of the goals of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) through diplomatic and economic means belong to the concept of civil power. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, however, announced the ‘birth of a geopolitical union’ during her State of the Union speech on September 13, 2023. On Ukraine's side, the EU took a no-holds-barred position and showed its support for the first time by providing coordinated military assistance to the government in Kiyv through the European Peace Facility (EPF). Von der Leyen stated on September 13, 2023, that the “future of Ukraine [...], the Western Balkans [...] (and) Moldova is in our union.’ (Euronews 2023)

The Eastern Partnership – a comprehensive approach?

At the NATO Bucharest Summit in April 2008, the alliance welcomed ‘Ukraine’s and Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO: ‘We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO.’ (Point 23, NATO Bucharest Summit Declaration, 10 April 2018). A few weeks later when Georgia tried to re-integrate its breakaway region South Ossetia, Russia supported this region on the way to ‘independence’, Russian military fought against Georgian troops and deployed soldiers to South Ossetia. After a French negotiation process with Russia, the EU began to launch the Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia.

In 2009, the EU aimed to accelerate political association and economic integration with its eastern neighbours. According to Article 217 TFEU, Association Agreements which encompasses a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) were meant to be a protocol to put the desired transformation of mainly Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine into practice. On

June 27, 2014, these three countries signed the Association Agreement with the EU and its economic core, the DCFTA. Moldova was even granted visa-free travel to the EU in April 2014. The EU Association Agreement with Ukraine clearly states that there will be ‘a shared commitment to a close and lasting relationship, based on common values, in particular full respect for democratic principles, rule of law, good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms.’ (European Commission / European Union External Action 2014: 1) The political association and economic integration is focusing towards a wide range of sector cooperation based on ‘economic recovery and growth, governance and sector cooperation in more than 30 areas, such as energy, transport, environment protection, industrial and small and medium enterprise (SMEE) cooperation, social development and protection, equal rights, consumer protection, education, training and youth as well as cultural cooperation.’ (ibid) Furthermore relating to trade and trade related matters, approximation of Ukraine to EU legislation, norms and standards, will be the method in order to receive ‘higher standards of products, better services to citizens, and above all Ukraine’s readiness to compete efficiently in international markets.’ (ibid)

Thus, the Eastern Partnership includes two relevant agreements: the one about association as well as the one detailing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). The first contains the catalogue of EU values such as democracy, rule of law and human rights as well as combating terrorism, the illegal drug trade, corruption, the shadow economy, and illegal migration alongside the creation of sustainable energy security and a market economy. The DCFTA in the future is supposed to ensure comprehensive economic integration of the involved countries with the implementation of immediately demanded economic reforms. The Eastern Partnership does not offer the opportunity of accession to the EU for the six eastern and southeastern European nations. Crisis management and resolution of conflict form a large thematic area in the new agreements.

During the 2010s, the Eastern Partnership had developed ‘into a transformation project of disparate speeds and ambitions.’ (Atilgan and Feyerband

2015: 1) This fact shows itself very clearly in the example of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia which, in their foreign policy orientations, unmistakably drift away from each other. This was clearly seen also at the Eastern Partnership summit on May 21-22, 2015, in Riga. There the EU as well as the six states of the Eastern Partnership intended to strengthen their resolve for ‘narrower, more differentiated relations between the European Union and its six sovereign, independent partners.’ (ibid: 2) At the same time the EU emphasised that the Eastern Partnership does not direct itself against Russia. And open critique of the behavior of Russia in Ukraine was, however, ‘hindered through the diversely motivated intervention of Armenia, Belarus and Azerbaijan.’ (ibid) At the summit in Riga all states rejected the ‘illegal annexation of Crimea and of Sevastopol.’ (ibid) Since the end of 2013, the Eastern Partnership no longer revolved around a comprehensive integration process according to a purely technocratic ‘one size fits all approach” that applied to all partners. Rather, according to statements by the then EU Council President Donald Tusk, it was about ‘differentiated relations’ – diverse approaches that take into account the various assumptions and interests of the six partner countries. Furthermore, Armenia and Belarus became members of the Eurasian Economic Union. Azerbaijan had already declared in 2013 that it does not intend to sign an association agreement with the EU, and prefers individual accords similar to Armenia’s sectoral cooperation with the EU. Not all partnerships aim for a political association and a comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU. However, due to severe geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus – Armenians left Nagorno Karabakh in September 2023 after Azerbaijani troops invaded this region, the close rapprochement of Belarus with Russia since 2020 and Russia's war against Ukraine from 2022 onwards and Georgia's new rapprochement with Russia, the Eastern partnership can be considered a failure.

In November 2021, Europe also experienced the ‘instrumentalisation of migration’ when EU officials and heads of states from Poland and Lithuania accused Belorussian President Lukashenko of orchestrating the flow of migrants to the Polish and Lithuanian border:

‘Flown into the capital, Minsk, on special visas, they were bused to Belarus’ western border, where they were left in large, unprotected encampments as winter approached and temperatures plunged. Despite EU legislation and UN treaties guaranteeing humanitarian protections for asylum seekers, border guards from Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland pushed those attempting to enter their countries back into Belarus, employing tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets. In orchestrating a televised humanitarian crisis on the EU’s doorstep, Lukashenko produced a major headache for European policymakers.’ (Greenhill 2022: 155)

Ylva Johansson, the EU commissioner for home and justice affairs, suggested that Lukashenko’s strategy was a novel-way of ‘using human beings in an act of aggression’. Gabrielius Landsbergis, the Lithuanian foreign minister, called ‘a hybrid weapon’. (ibid: 156)

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has already repeatedly threatened to ‘flood’ the EU with migrants from the Near and Middle East and farther afield unless the EU provided certain concessions. (ibid: 159) In 2016, this resulted in a deal in which the Turkish government received promises of six billion euros in financial assistance, arrival of EU accession talks, and visa-free travel for Turkish citizens seeking to enter the EU. (ibid)

The case of Ukraine’s approach to the EU

During the 1990s, Russia’s foreign and security policy has been based on the so-called ‘Primakov’s doctrinal ideas’ named after former foreign minister Yevgeniy Primakov. These ideas emphasise that

- Russia should strive toward a multipolar world managed by a concert of major powers that can counterbalance U.S. unilateral power;
- Russia should insist on its primacy in the post-Soviet space and lead integration in that region;
- Russia should oppose NATO expansion to the East. (Rumer 2019: 1)

Since the 1990s, Russia has directly supported and contributed to the emergence of breakaway ethnic regions in Europe: Transnistria; Abkhazia; and South Ossetia. Russia intervenes ‘politically and militarily in all these cases. Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine became a shrinking country. Since Russia began to occupy Ukrainian territories in 2014 and wages a full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022, Russia clearly violates international law and politically binding agreements, also Article 5 of the 1991 Minsk Agreement, signed by the heads of state of Belarus (Stanislaw Shushkevitch), the Russian Federation (Boris Jelzin) and Ukraine (Leonid Kravtshuk) on December 8, 1991 where ‘[t]he high contracting parties recognise and respect one another’s territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing borders within the Commonwealth.’

Furthermore, it remains highly necessary to reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms in Ukraine, which is a challenging, complex, and often perilous undertaking, which calls for patience, stamina, and perseverance. According to Transparency International, Ukraine ‘still ranked the second most corrupt country in Europe after Russia.’ (Stockman 2023: 1)

Before Russian troops invaded Ukraine in February 2022, President Vladimir Putin claimed his six conditions for ‘peace’ as follows:

- No NATO membership of Ukraine;
- No NATO enlargement (in his words: expansion) to Russian borders;
- Withdrawals of U.S. and NATO troops from Eastern Central Europe;

- Withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Western Europe;
- Recognition of Crimea annexation;
- Recognition of the statehood of ‚Donetsk People’s Republic‘ and ‚Luhansk People’s Republic‘ (RT UK, February 21, 2022)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and its ongoing war against Ukraine lead to a *renaissance* of NATO and transatlantic economic relations. As a result, a ‚new Eastern Shield‘ was formed with Ukraine, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together with both Finland and Sweden which became members of NATO in 2023. (Fasslabend 2023: 1) Ukraine became a border state and therefore cannot be defined as a buffer state anymore. (Biscop 2023: 27) Now, European security and defence policy again ‚is shaped within the framework of U.S.-led NATO‘ (Fasslabend 2023: 3) – as long as U.S. President Joseph Biden and the Democrats shape American foreign and security policy. This situation could change if the Republican Party were to win the 2024 presidential elections in Washington, DC; they already have shown minor interests in supporting Ukraine militarily. In the EU, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán of Hungary and Prime Minister Robert Fico of Slovakia which hold political ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin are not going to support Ukraine militarily. In early October 2023, Admiral Rob Bauer, NATO’s most senior military official, said of the West’s ammunition stockpile that ‚the bottom of the barrel is now visible‘, but Ukraine is still in urgent needs of air-defence and artillery munitions. (The Economist 2023b: 27)

The “Chinese challenge“

Beijing, mid-October 2023: Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met Russia's President Vladimir Putin at the Belt and Road Initiative Summit and shook his hand warmly. Prime Minister Orbán then later told Brussels that he was proud to be the only one in the EU actively seeking peace in Ukraine. EU Commissioner Vera Jourova called Orbán's action an act of treason. (Steinvorth: 1)

In its relations with China, the EU and its member states showed themselves to be extremely naive with frivolous sales of parts of their transport infrastructure, such as ports to the People's Republic; Piraeus, for example, gradually became Chinese due to the debt relief policy imposed by the EU on Greece in the wake of the 2007/2008 financial crisis. In the last 20 years, China had acquired massive stakes in ports in the EU – from Greece to Italy, Spain, France, Great Britain, Belgium, and Germany – and in the Middle East and North Africa. (Hauser 2022b) In addition, high-tech companies in Europe – for example, in the fields of artificial intelligence, automotive engineering and aircraft construction – were sold to China. In 2018, a company backed by Chinese investors obtained a 76 percent stake at Zadar port; another Chinese consortium was interested to invest in the port of Rijeka, but in early 2021, Croatia annulled a tender in which that group of companies had made the lowest bid, apparently under pressure from the U.S. and the EU. (Šabić: 3)

In the global economic system dominated by the West, China has become the world's second-largest economic power in the last 30 years on one hand. On the other hand, the political leadership system in the sense of Chinese-style Marxism-Leninism has not only remained unchanged – it has become even more restrictive in sociopolitical terms. Hong Kong lost its autonomy, the principle of ‘one country - two systems’ was abolished in 2019 / 2020 after the central government in Beijing began to suppress the severe student protests. In addition, economic tensions with Australia increased, as did military tensions with India along the Line of Actual Control (LOAC) and political pressure on Taiwan to reunify with the People’s Republic of China (PRC). China massively built up its ownership claims, especially in the South China Sea, while the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) with Australia, Japan, South Korea and India expanded its security coordination: ‘Our collective efforts over the next decade will determine whether the PRC succeeds in transforming the rules and norms that have benefitted the Indo-Pacific and the world’, states the Indo-Pacific Strategy of the U.S. in February 2022 (The White House 2022: 5) In February 2018, then U.S. President Donald Trump approved a U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific region as part of its National Security Strategy and laid out some elements of a China-

focused industrial strategy. (Allen: 37) Consequently, Chinese companies have been prevented from providing equipment for 5G services and the U.S. began to reduce its dependence of Chinese imports and investments. Therefore, China announced its ‘dual circulation’ strategy in response to U.S. embargo and sanctions policies and aimed at sustainably strengthening the domestic market. (Staack 2023: 14) Thus, China began to strengthen its efforts to insulate itself from dependence on the global market. (ibid: 238) U.S. President Joseph R. Biden’s security advisor, Jake Sullivan, said foreign and domestic problems are more interconnected than ever, for instance, in efforts to restrict China’s access to advanced technology. (The Economist 2023a: 21) So China pushed BRICS – consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – to increase economic and security cooperation. BRICS nations decided at their summit in Johannesburg on September 9-10, 2023, to enlarge BRICS by 2024 with Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. BRICS now have eleven member states which account about half of world population and represent 37 percent share on global GDP – more than G7 (30 percent share). India’s and South Africa’s core principles continue to remain outside any alliance in line with the policy of strategic autonomy, particularly India emphasizes the principle of non-interference and rejects alliance relations. (Staack 2023: 28)

However, great economic competition takes place between western (social) market economies and the ‘socialist market economy’ of the People’s Republic of China. Since COVID-19 pandemic, Europe faces concerns about chain disruptions and great power rivalry. The U.S. Biden administration introduced the CHIPS Act in September 2022 that seeks to use subsidies to shift semiconductor production away from China and Taiwan and therefore tries to relocate companies to America. This CHIPS Act could also threaten production in the EU, Japan and South Korea. Thus, leaders in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan respond with their own competing subsidies on semiconductors. (Kamin and Kysar 2023: 93 and 99) South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol called in June 2023 the competition over chips an ‘all-out war’. (Liu and Young 2023: 7) Semiconductors account for 20 percent of South Korean exports. (ibid)

In the Pacific, China and the U.S. are eying each other with increasing hostility and suspicion, and some American analysts believe that both countries could wind up at war over Taiwan. (Rao 2023: 17) China's then foreign minister Qin Gang has warned in April 2023 of 'dangerous' consequences for countries that intervene in Taiwan, saying 'those who play with fire [...] will eventually get burnt – amid heightened tensions over the island nation. (Leahy and Davis 2023: 4) These dangers prompted U.S. President Joseph R. Biden to declare that the world 'is at risk of annihilation for the first time since the Cuban missile crisis' in 1962. (Rao 2023: 17) In a speech from Moscow, Russian President Putin said the 2020s are 'the most dangerous decade' since the end of World War II. (Rao 2023: 17)

The Indo-Pacific does not constitute a region, but a political concept. (Pacheco Pardo and Leveringhaus 2022: II) On September 16, 2021, the EU adopted its Indo-Pacific Strategy (Joint Communication on the EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, 16 September 2021). According to this strategy, five crucial security issues directly affect the EU's own security and prosperity: maritime security; nuclear security and non-proliferation; cyber security; trafficking; and terrorism. The EU offers toolboxes like 'Operation Atalanta', Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), European Peace Facility (EPF), cyber policy, and Coordinated Maritime Presences as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) toolbox components. Four countries in the Indo-Pacific have already concluded Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) with the EU: Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam. FPAs are seen by the EU as an ideal vehicle to boost cooperation between the EU's CSDP missions and partners. South Korea contributed to Operation Atalanta, New Zealand did so in the past. (ibid)

On the part of the U.S., the primary concern remains to be the realization of the concept of a comprehensive securitization and containment of China. Particularly Germany, on the other hand, originally emphasised an inclusive, China-inclusive approach in its 2020 Indo-Pacific Guidelines. (Staack 2023: 11) As a strong economic power, China intends to influence the development of the rules, norms and institutions of the international system and actively shapes the global agenda. (ibid: 12) However, the emergence of the

People's Republic of China as a global player represents a pivotal development in international politics.

Conclusions

A stronger coordination of member states to strengthen and adapt Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) instruments for a variety of purposes around Europe and abroad are at utmost importance: 'A strong EU means having a coherent and united foreign, security and defence policy. Europe lacks these three essential elements that would make EU think and act strategically.' (Dempsey 2015: 23) Furthermore, the realisation of a common asylum system in combination with the implementation of faster asylum procedures will also be crucial for the EU's common action. This also requires viable migration agreements with third countries. Moreover, repatriations of people without the right to stay often fail because the countries of origin are unwilling to cooperate. Most migrants trying to enter the EU illegally use different routes from North Africa and Turkey. (Horváth and Schwab: 1)

The current situation in the Middle East and even relating to the continuation of security and defence policies towards Ukraine already shows larger lacks by realising a coordinated and united common foreign, security and defence policy. In the case of Crimea annexation to Russia, sanctions against Russia between 2014 and 2022 did not make Russia return Crimea back to Ukraine, the government in Russia furthermore became more authoritarian, democratic opposition had been completely silenced, internal political and economic reforms had been stopped. Trade with Russia has been contained. Since 2022, the EU imposed twelve robust packages of sanctions against the Russian state

- to cripple the Kremlin's ability to finance the war;
- to impose clear economic and political costs on Russia's political elite responsible for invasion;
- to diminish its economic base (e.g. complete isolation of the Russian financial sector from the global system)

‘Ukraine has united the world’, declared President Volodymyr Zelenskiy of Ukraine in a speech on the first anniversary of the start of the war with Russia. David Miliband, former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, commented as follows: ‘If only that were true. The war has certainly united the West, but it has left the world divided. And that rift will only widen if Western countries fail to address its root causes.’ (Miliband 2023: 36) Miliband further emphasised: ‘But outside Europe and North America, the defence of Ukraine is not front of mind. Few governments endorse the brazen Russian invasion yet many remain unpersuaded by the West’s insistence that the struggle for freedom and democracy in Ukraine is also theirs.’ (ibid: 36) Furthermore, ‘[a]bout two third of the world population live in countries like Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa that are officially neutral or supportive of Russia’, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit. (ibid: 37) Many of the so-called ‘developing nations’ did not support Western sanctions against Russia and ‘have even helped Putin to circumvent the sanctions.’ (Guriev 2023: 26) Even EU member states like Hungary and Slovakia refuse to support arms exports to Ukraine.

In the case of Israel / Hamas, most of the countries of the world supported the UN General Assembly resolution calling for an end to the suffering of the civilian population after Israel launched thousands of attacks on Gaza City as a reaction on the brutal assassinations of more than 1,400 Israeli citizens in early October 2023. Here, the EU again was divided who to deal with that situation: while on October 26, 2023 Croatia, Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary, together with the U.S and Israel, rejected this resolution, which is not binding under international law, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden and Cyprus abstained. Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain supported together with Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Norway this resolution. (United Nations Organisation 2023: 1)

Furthermore, if EU countries are not ready to coordinate themselves more coherently relating to future integration processes in the Western Balkans and in Eastern Europe, hope and will of the civil societies towards EU membership could decline in those countries. The major challenge for the political and economic European integration process is one big and de facto territorially divided neighbouring country: Ukraine; and a divided EU on that issue. Additionally, Russia is increasingly aligning itself with China albeit as a mere junior partner. Since Russia has been waging war against Ukraine, Russia lost most important sales markets in Europe. By February 2023, Europe's share of Russian oil exports had dropped to approximately 8 percent from above 50 percent in 2021. Of Russia's worldwide oil exports, approximately 53 percent of crude and 54 percent of oil products were exported to Europe. Gazprom contributed around 24 percent to worldwide gas trades in 2021 and sent 83 percent of its pipeline gas exports and 44 percent of its LNG exports to Europe in 2021. (Jordan and Husbands 2023: 1) Russia started to look for other markets, like India, China and Turkey – with success.

China and Russia are also trying to exert greater influence on government systems, politics, universities and the media. Especially Russia is also trying to manipulate democratic opinion-building in Western societies using the most modern methods. (Ischinger 2020: 34) However, a political alliance to combat western political and economic influence began to emerge consisting of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea. North Korea is one of the most heavily militarised countries in the world and as an enemy to the U.S., it is a natural ally for Russia in its standoff with NATO and in its fight against what President Putin portrays as 'Western hegemony'. U.S. President Biden talks of the world being divided into autocracies and democracies (Stockman 2023: 1) and a 'battle between democracy and autocracy' in this context, but this can be refuted: The U.S. continues to selectively back authoritarian governments when it serves U.S. interests. Of the 50 countries that Freedom House counts as 'dictatorships', 35 received military aid from the U.S. administration in 2021. (Spektor 2023: 14)

The EU is still searching for its *strategic autonomy*. The question remains as to whether the EU can ever reached this kind of autonomy. By defence, the EU

heavily still relies on U.S. capabilities, by energy policy the EU has been turning increasingly to the West since 2022. In 2024 – if the Republican Party in the U.S. were to win presidential elections – this situation could cause new transatlantic rifts and shifts. Therefore, the EU again will have to redefine its foreign, security and defence policy to become more *strategically autonomous*; in 2018, former Republican President Donald Trump once called the EU one of the U.S.' biggest foes. (Vazquez 2018) Transatlantic liberalism since then was coming under increasing pressure. For many decades, the principle of an open global economy was seen as a guarantee of prosperity. Now it is increasingly being called into question – particularly by the U.S. through economic protectionism, but also by the system of authoritarian state capitalism in the People's Republic of China.

For the EU, 2024 should be a crucial year to become more resilient and strategically autonomous - in times of increasing political, economic and military rivalries between Russia and the West as well as on a political and economic level between China and the USA. A cessation of military aid to Ukraine could encourage China to exert more military pressure on Taiwan. In 2024, elections are also looming in numerous EU countries and in the USA, which could massively change the current external and defence policies of the USA and the EU towards the USA.

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The European Union's Foreign Policy Facing War in Ukraine – Security Dimension in the Future Role of the Eastern Partnership

Florence Ertel and Julian Plottka

Abstract

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is changing the geopolitical environment in the post-Soviet space and makes a reconsideration of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) necessary, which is the European Union's main instrument to establish closer relations with countries in its Eastern neighbourhood. With the exception of Belarus – whose EaP participation is suspended – the war in Ukraine strengthened the Eastern European states' orientation towards Europe. As Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine move from EaP to EU enlargement policy, the question arises, whether the EaP framework is still suitable to address only two remaining partner countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, all of them share the expectations that the EU should act as a security provider in its neighbourhood. To take the current geopolitical opportunity and become a stronger international actor, the EU has to deepen its relations with its partner countries in the East. So far, the EaP has a strong focus on internal security, while defence policy cooperation is limited and the resilience of societies is also within in the EU a newly evolving policy area. To give the EaP a future, however, such an all-encompassing approach to security policy has to become a priority area of the EaP. Therefore, a revision of the institutional setup of the EU policy towards Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus is necessary in the medium-term.

Keywords

Eastern Partnership, Post-Soviet space, EU external relations, CSDP, Security and defence policy, Russian war against Ukraine, Geopolitics

Introduction

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is changing the geopolitical environment in the post-Soviet space and makes a reconsideration of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) necessary, which is the European Union's main instrument to establish closer relations with countries in its Eastern neighbourhood. With the exception of Belarus – whose EaP participation is suspended – the war in Ukraine strengthened the Eastern European states' orientation towards Europe. In December 2023, the EU opened accession negotiations with the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine and granted Georgia a membership perspective. As these countries move from EaP to EU enlargement policy, the question arises, whether the EaP framework is still suitable to address only two remaining partner countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Western orientation of only some of the countries is driven by the wish to become EU member states, but all of them share the expectations that the EU should act as a security provider in its neighbourhood. To take the current geopolitical opportunity and become a stronger international actor, the EU has to deepen its relations with its partner countries in the East. However, the strong focus on the war in Ukraine and the already largely exhausted flexibility of the current Multiannual Financial Framework limit resources available for reinforcing the EU's engagement in this region. Furthermore, the security dimension of the EaP is underdeveloped and hardly allows for fulfilling the partners' demands, such as security sector support and conflict resolution. So far, the EaP has a strong focus on internal security, while defence policy cooperation is limited and the resilience of societies is also within in the EU a newly evolving policy area. To give the EaP a future, however, such an all-encompassing approach to security policy has to become a priority area of the EaP. Therefore, a revision of the institutional setup of the EU policy towards Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus is necessary in the medium-term.

To discuss the options for such a reform, we firstly present an overview of the current institutional setup of the EaP. Secondly, we discuss its security policy dimensions. These include, the CSDP, the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ), as well as the resilience of democratic systems. Thirdly,

we analyse the challenges to the EaP caused by the changing geopolitical environment due to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. This leads fourthly, to possible solutions how to strengthen the security dimension in the EaP. We will focus on what the EU can offer to its neighbours and analyse if there is a window of opportunity for enhancing the EU's role in the post-Soviet space.

The EaP as Eastern Dimension of the ENP

Following the “big bang” enlargement of 2004, the EU needed a new policy instrument for cooperating with new neighbouring countries, which were not on track to join the Union. This gave birth to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), comprising a “Union for the Mediterranean” for all countries around the Mediterranean Sea and an “Eastern Partnership” for all countries in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus.¹ Contributing to the EU's security, the ENP aims at stabilising the EU's close neighbourhood and developing “a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood – a ‘ring of friends’ – with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operative relations.”² It also seeks “to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union”.³

The ENP is not an instrument of traditional foreign policy, but follows an external governance approach: Under its umbrella, the EU seeks to export its own political, economic, and social model to partner countries by stimulating processes of adaptation to European standards (Europeanisation).

¹ The Central Asian countries were excluded from the ENP and addressed under a separate regional policy strategy. Russia did not participate in the ENP, but preferred to have a special relationship with the EU.

² Commission of the European Communities: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104, p. 4.

³ Commission of the European Communities: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. *Wider Europe — Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, COM (2003) 104, p. 4.

Following a logic of appropriateness, the ENP focused in its early years mainly on supporting socialisation processes of voluntary reforms in the neighbouring countries. When this approach failed, as reform progress stalled, the EU started to introduce more conditionality. Partner countries were offered (mainly economic) benefits, if they achieve reform benchmarks (positive conditionality) or threatened to lose benefits (mainly financial support), if transformation progress was reversed (negative conditionality). The objective of the ENP is not to establish just good neighbourly relations, but selectively integrating third countries into EU governance arrangements. As security policy touches upon core state competences, using this approach to strengthen the EaP's security policy dimensions can become a challenge that affects sensitive areas of national sovereignty.

In this role, the EU perceives itself as a “normative power”, which does not coerce neighbouring countries to adapt to EU standards, but supports voluntary reforms with technical assistance and financial support. Applying a realist frame, geopolitical adversaries like the Russian government consider the ENP a strategic instrument, drawing countries located in its sphere of influence to the West. For the geopolitical confrontation, it does not matter, whether containing Russian influence is the hidden agenda behind the ENP or not. The Russian perception of the EU's policy fuels the confrontation.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP), as Eastern Dimension of the ENP, covers the countries West and South-West of Russia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. It combines a bilateral and a multilateral dimension. In addition, regular high-level dialogs between the EU and all partner countries, including summits of the Heads of State or Government, agree on common objectives for the EaP. In the current long-term policy objectives adopted in 2020, security plays just a minor role:

- “together for resilient, sustainable and integrated economies”;
- “together for accountable institutions, the rule of law and security”;
- “together towards environmental and climate resilience”;
- “together for a resilient digital transformation”;

- “together for resilient, gender-equal, fair and inclusive societies”.⁴

In the bilateral dimension of the ENP, the most advanced agreements entered into force with Georgia (2016), Moldova (2016), and Ukraine (2017). These “Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements” (DCFTA) aim at integrating the partner countries into the Common Market of the EU. In addition to establishing free-trade and supporting the approximation to European standards the cover a wide range of policy areas and result in considerable Europeanisation of the partner countries. Armenia ended negotiations on a DCFTA in 2013, when the country decided to join the Eurasian Economic Union. Instead, the EU has negotiated an “Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement” with Armenia, which entered into force in 2021, extending the cooperation between the EU and Armenia to new policy areas, including foreign and security policy as well as conflict prevention. Relations of the EU with Azerbaijan are based on a “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement”, which entered into force in 1999. Since 2016, the EU and Azerbaijan negotiate a new comprehensive agreement, but Azerbaijan’s insufficient progress in accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) remains a major obstacle for upgrading the EU-Azerbaijan relations. In June 2021, Belarus has suspended its participation in the EaP following restrictive measures by the EU in response to the rigged presidential elections in 2020. The EU, however, maintains relations with the Belarussian opposition, mainly in exile. In its multilateral dimension, the EaP has established platforms and panels on different policy areas which allow for the exchange between EU Member States and partner countries on best practices and shall stimulate mutual learning.

⁴ European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, COM(2020)7, p. 4.

Security Dimensions of EaP

There are three main drivers behind the partner countries' demand for increased security cooperation with the EU: Firstly, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the geopolitical confrontation; Secondly, frozen conflicts related to the partially independent internationally non-recognised states of Transnistria in Moldova, Abkhazia and South-Ossetia in Georgia, as well as the tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan; Thirdly, Russian interference in the EU's partner countries, by means of propaganda, disinformation, funding for political parties or restrictive economic measures. So far the EU has little to offer under the EaP to fulfil these multidimensional security demands.

Attempts to enhance “security dialogue and cooperation in the areas of CSDP”⁵ especially with regard to civilian CSDP could be observed before the beginning of the Russian war against Ukraine as e.g. stated the Joint declaration of the EaP Summit in December 2021. Furthermore, it emphasises fostering partner countries engagement in civilian and military CSDP missions and operations with support from the European Peace Facility (EPF). This entails also facilitating “exchanges of experience and knowledge-sharing between the EU and partner countries”⁶ as well as “training opportunities and capacity-building on countering hybrid threats and cybersecurity”⁷. The example of the Republic of Moldova⁸ shows that such offers of cooperation made by the EU in the security sector of the EaP were utilised. Thus, before 2022 Moldova (as well as Georgia and Ukraine) participated in the three EU

⁵ Council of the European Union (2021): Joint declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, 15 December 2021, available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53527/20211215-eap-joint-declaration-en.pdf>

⁶ Council of the European Union (2021): Joint declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, 15 December 2021, available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53527/20211215-eap-joint-declaration-en.pdf>, p. 15.

⁷ Council of the European Union (2021): Joint declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, 15 December 2021, available at <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53527/20211215-eap-joint-declaration-en.pdf>, p. 15.

⁸ In our paper, we focus on the EaP partner countries that are not actively at war, such as Ukraine. A discussion of the EU's assistance to Ukraine in the area of security policy requires a separate presentation.

missions EUMAM RCA, EUTM Mali and EUAM Ukraine⁹, seminars and courses on CSDP and the regular EU-Moldova Consultations on Security and Defence. The Association Agreement with Moldova (2014) aims furthermore at convergence in the area of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), focusing on “conflict prevention, crisis management, regional stability, disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and export control”¹⁰.

CSDP missions in the EaP partner countries have been in place since 2008 with the EUMM Georgia¹¹. The civilian monitoring mission was established after the Russian invasion in Georgia in September 2008. It is intended to ensure that there is no return to violent hostilities and thus facilitate the restoration of a safe and normal life for the inhabitants of both sides of the administrative borders with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. It also aims to build trust between the conflict parties and provide information on EU policy in Georgia and the region. The second civilian mission deployed in the region was EUAM Ukraine in December 2014 with a focus on security, police, judiciary, prosecution, anti-corruption and human rights. The status quo was maintained until 2022. As a reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, three new CSDP missions were established in EaP countries: In Eastern Europe, the military mission EUMAM Ukraine (launched in November 2022)¹², and the civilian mission EUPM Moldova (inaugurated in April 2023)¹³ and in the

⁹ European Union External Action Service (2016): Eastern Partnership Panel on CSDP facilitates the participation by partner countries in the EU-led missions and operations, 28 April 2016, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/8478_en.

¹⁰ Moldovan Constitutional Court (2014): The Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union – constitutional, press release, 9.10.2014, available at: <https://www.constcourt.md/libview.php?l=en&idc=7&id=583&t=/Media/News/The-Association-Agreement-between-the-Republic-of-Moldova-and-the-European-Union-constitutional>.

¹¹ European Union External Action Service (2024): EUMM Georgia Factsheet and Figures, available at: https://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm/facts_and_figures.

¹² Political and Security Committee Decision (CFSP) 2023/495 of 28 February 2023 on the acceptance of a third State’s contribution to the European Union Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM Ukraine), in: Official Journal of the European Union: L 69, 7.3.2023, p. 5.

¹³ Council of the European Union Decision (CFSP) 2023/993 of 24 April 2023 on a European Union Partnership Mission in Moldova (EUPM Moldova), in: Official Journal of the European Union: L 135, 23.5.2023, pp. 118–119.

Southern Caucasus the EU conducts the civilian mission EUMA Armenia (deployed in February 2023)¹⁴. For the very first time, the EU has initiated a military training mission in an interstate war with the EUMAM Ukraine mission. The two civilian missions EUMA Armenia and EUPM Moldova were intended to help stabilise the environment in Ukraine. The latter is specifically aimed at countering Russian attempts at influence and destabilisation by strengthening the resilience of the Moldovan security sector in crisis management and defence against hybrid threats and it assists the border management authorities. It is the first civilian CSDP mission in this field. Furthermore, the EU-Moldova High-level Political and Security Dialogue has been installed and the EU provided 87 million Euro of the EFP to support the army of the Republic of Moldova with defensive equipment since the beginning of the war.¹⁵

The EUMA Armenia mission was intended to create stability in the region and contribute to a solution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh. The civilian mission reports on the security situation on the Armenian side of the border with Azerbaijan.¹⁶ Josep Borrell, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, had announced that the EU's involvement in the South Caucasus was entering a new phase with the EUMA mission¹⁷. However, this new phase has not yet produced any stabilising results after Azerbaijani military recaptured the internationally unrecognised Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh on the country's territory and

¹⁴ Council of the European Union Decision (CFSP) 2023/162 of 23 January 2023 on a European Union mission in Armenia (EUMA), in: Official Journal of the European Union: L 53, 21.2.2023, pp. 17–18.

¹⁵ European External Action Service 2023: The European Union and Moldova. #StrongerTogether, June 2023.

¹⁶ Ertel, Florence/Göler, Daniel (2023): Gemeinsame Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik, in: Weidenfeld, Werner/Wessels, Wolfgang (Hrsg.): Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2022, Baden-Baden 2022, p. 351-356.

¹⁷ European Council/Council of the European Union (2023): Press release. Armenia: EU establishes a civilian mission to contribute to stability in border areas, 23 January 2023, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/01/23/armenia-eu-sets-up-a-civilian-mission-to-ensure-security-in-conflict-affected-and-border-areas/>.

a large part (around 100,000) of the Armenian population left the region in September 2023.

In sum, the Russian war of aggression can be seen as a driver towards more EU security support of EaP partners. Josep Borrell declared during his speech on EaP at the European Parliament Plenary Session on 9 June 2022, that “Support to Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and countries in the South Caucasus is more important than ever”¹⁸ and that the EU “will continue supporting [its] partners and strengthening ties with them”¹⁹. This is also made clear in the Strategic Compass, which states that the EU will “boost [its] cooperation in the area of security and defence with a view to strengthening [...] resilience”²⁰ of the EU’s “Eastern partners”²¹. These statements were further emphasised at the Ukraine support summit in February 2024. Five action categories were defined in which the work had to be intensified. These include, besides military aids for Ukraine, cyber defence and especially support for Moldova, which is facing a direct Russian threat.²² However, in view of the still unresolved conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the escalating situation in the Transnistria region and ongoing tensions in South Ossetia

¹⁸ European External Action Service (2022): Eastern Partnership: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP plenary, 9 June 2022, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/eastern-partnership-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep_en.

¹⁹ European External Action Service (2022): Eastern Partnership: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP plenary, 9 June 2022, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/eastern-partnership-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep_en.

²⁰ Council of the European Union. (2022): A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade, 21 March 2022, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>, p. 56.

²¹ Council of the European Union. (2022): A Strategic Compass for a stronger EU security and defence in the next decade, 21 March 2022, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/>, p. 56.

²² Bourgerie-Gonse, Théo (2024): France’s Macron open to non-EU ammo purchases for Ukraine as Western leaders gather in Paris, Euractiv, 27 February 2024, available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/france-macron-open-to-non-eu-ammo-purchases-for-ukraine-as-western-leaders-gather-in-paris/>.

and Abkhazia, the EU's repertoire is currently not sufficient to meet the partner countries security demands.

While the external security dimension under the EaP is still very limited and received only recently increasing attention in the EU, the internal dimension of security is a longer established and more developed part of the EaP. Promoting European values, including democracy and the rule of law, is a key objective of the EU's policy towards the post-Soviet space since the early 1990s. The "Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States" (TACIS) focused mainly on helping EU partners in becoming market economies and liberal democracies until 2007. The following "European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument" (ENPI), which was the first main funding instrument for the EaP, had more detailed objectives, which also included "promoting the rule of law and good governance", "supporting democratisation", "promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms" as well as "strengthening of national institutions and bodies responsible for the elaboration and the effective implementation of policies".²³ Until these years, the EU's focus was on supporting transformation in a wave of democratisation, which worked well in countries wishing to join the EU, while progress stalled in countries with lower levels of ambition. In response to the lack of progress, the EU introduced conditionality, today called incentive-based approach as a means of setting new reform incentives. The EU considered its measures to support democracy in its Eastern neighbourhood as a rather technical policy of little salience. Signs that Russia regarded the promotion of European values in the post-Soviet space a strategic EU policy challenging Russian global influence were widely ignored²⁴.

²³ Article 2, Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, in: Official Journal of the EU, No. L 301 of 9 November 2006, p. 1

²⁴ Khaake, Anna/Youngs, Richard (2018): Geopolitics and Democracy in the European Neighbourhood Policy, in: Schumacher, Tobias/Marchetti, Andreas/Demmelhuber, Thomas (eds.): The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy, London, pp. 456-466, here p. 457.

While these core objectives of the EU neighbourhood policy remain valid, the focus started to shift with the review of ENP in 2015²⁵, putting democracy promotion in a new context of resilience, which became an increasingly important concept in EU foreign policy during the last 20 years²⁶: “Good governance and democratic institutions, rule of law, successful anti-corruption policies, fight against organised crime, respect of human rights and security, including support to populations affected by conflict, are the backbone of strong and resilient states and societies.”²⁷ The promotion of European values and standards in governance is considered as a means to strengthen “the ability of states and societies to reform, thus withstanding and recovering from internal and external crises”²⁸. These objectives are also reflected in the objectives for the European Neighbourhood Policy under the current funding instrument²⁹ as well as in the partnership agreements under the bilateral dimension of the EaP. In some of the partner countries, linking of democracy promotion to resilience against crises went along with more reform ambition and support for democratisation, how sustainable this new impetus is, remains, however, to be seen.

²⁵ European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, JOIN(2015)50, p. 3.

²⁶ Pascariu, Gabriela Carmen/Rouet, Gilles (2019): Introduction: Resilience and the Eastern Partnership – What Relevance for Politics), in: Rouet, Gilles/Pascariu, Gabriela Carmen (eds.): Resilience and the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Countries. From Theoretical Concepts to a Normative Agenda, London, pp. 3-24, here p. 12.

²⁷ European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, COM(2020)7, p. 8-9.

²⁸ European External Action Service (2016): Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy, Brussels, p. 23

²⁹ Article 18, Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009, in: Official Journal of the EU No. L 209 of 14 June 2021, p. 1.

Starting point of EU promotion of democracy in the Eastern neighbourhood was technical support for reforms and the strengthening of administrative capacities, including many twinning programmes. These initiatives were complemented by policy dialogues on specific topics. In addition, the EaP put a strong focus on strengthening civil society as a societal basis for democracy and, thus, resilience. This includes support for non-governmental institutions based on specifically developed roadmaps³⁰ as well as the involvement of organised civil society in the governance of the EaP, most notably through the EaP Civil Society Forum in the multilateral dimension and civil society platforms with specific partner countries in the bilateral dimension. The EU's initial reaction to the crisis in Ukraine, when Russia occupied Crimea and attacked Eastern Ukraine with proxy fighters in 2014, included the stepping up of support for democracy and civil society in the Eastern neighbourhood³¹. With rising tensions between the West and Russia, the EU added a new component to its approach of stabilising the countries, the fight against foreign interference, propaganda and disinformation. An example is the project "EU vs. disinformation", which specifically encounters disinformation about the EaP and the partner countries.

In addition to strengthening the resilience of democratic systems, the EaP also covers the AFSJ, including the fight against corruption, tax avoidance, terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, and trafficking of humans as well as the area of migration policy. These objectives remain valid under the current reform agenda for the EaP for the period since 2020³². Drivers behind cooperation in the AFSJ threefold: First, strengthening the rule of law

³⁰ Khaake, Anna/Youngs, Richard (2018): Geopolitics and Democracy in the European Neighbourhood Policy, in: Schumacher, Tobias/Marchetti, Andreas/Demmelhuber, Thomas (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, London, pp. 456-466, here p. 458.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 464.

³² European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020. Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all, COM(2020)7.

and judicial sector reform is key for economic cooperation and the EU Common Market, to which the partner countries receive access as a major reform incentive. Second, the fight against international terrorism was of mutual interest of the EU and its EaP partner countries since 9/11. Third, the EU sought cooperation with neighbouring countries to manage migration flows since the number of refugees coming to Europe increased in 2015.

In the area of migration policy, the EU aims at facilitating mobility between the Union and its EaP partner countries, while reducing migration from outside. Visa liberalisation is in addition to access to the Common Market a major incentive, which the EU offers under its conditionality approach in exchange for reforms. It offers also so called “Mobility Partnerships”, which allow for circular migration from selected EaP countries to the EU. The partner countries have to intensify their fight against irregular migration, to approximate of policies under the AFSJ to EU standards and sign readmission agreements. This, however, results in the erection of a dividing-line at the outside borders of EaP countries.³³ As migration policy is increasingly securitised and Russia has used migrants to pressure Poland and Finland, these measures are seen by European decision-makers to strengthen the resilience of partner countries and make them more secure.

The fight against terrorism does not rank among the highest priorities of EU relations with its Eastern partners. The EU has established dialogue fora and cooperation between Europol, Eurojust and Frontex exist,³⁴ however, as corruption is a more serious concern in this region, the EU gives much higher priority to the promotion of rule of law, judicial sector reform and the fight against corruption. While the EU and its member states support reform

³³ Trauner, Florian/Cassarino, Jean-Pierre (2018): Migration. Moving to the centre of the European Neighbourhood Policy, in: Schumacher, Tobias/Marchetti, Andreas/Demmelhuber, Thomas (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, London, pp. 393-404.

³⁴ Lavallée, Chantal/Léonard, Sarah/Kaunert, Christian (2018): Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and the European Neighbourhood Policy, in: Schumacher, Tobias/Marchetti, Andreas/Demmelhuber, Thomas (eds.): *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, London, pp. 405-414.

with considerable resources, national elites often lack the political will to implement reforms or the judicial sector is resisting them. In some countries civil society helped to overcome logjam, however, the overall progress is limited and EU failed to convince crucial veto players in the countries to support reforms, as they would lose political influence and sources of income.

In all three dimensions of security policy, the EU is already engaging with the EaP partner countries, but the policy areas of internal and external security play only a minor role in the EaP so far. Against the backdrop of current international challenges, the EU needs to further step up its engagement and achieve faster progress than in the past.

Challenges to the Eastern Partnership after 2/24

However, three obstacles of fundamental nature hinder the development of the security policy dimension of the EaP: (1) the intergovernmental structure of the policy areas of internal and external security; (2) the lack of a common strategic culture; and (3) the politicisation of European integration and EU policies. Two other obstacles are specific to the ENP: (4) insufficient institutional coherence between intergovernmental and sui-generis areas of EU external relations; and (5) the legacy of EU enlargement policy, which can be found in the European Neighbourhood Policy.

Challenge 1:

Intergovernmental Structure of European Security Policy

Both, European external and internal security policy, are latecomers in the process of European integration. External security policy belongs to the CSDP, which is part of CFSP, while internal security policy is part of the AFSJ. As both policy areas touch upon the core state competences and they are both sensitive to national sovereignty. The member states were cautious in ceding them to EU institutions. The state's legitimate monopoly of the use of force remains with the member states as the EU has neither an army nor a police force, but relies on its member states to execute policies.

CFSP remains one of the most intergovernmental policy areas of the EU, with the member states as decisive actors and little influence of the European Commission and the European Parliament. As most decisions in CFSP are consensual, every national government has a veto, slowing down decision-making processes and favouring decisions on the lowest common denominator. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy and the European External Action Service (EEAS) supporting him are tasked with chairing the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and coordinating CFSP between the member states, but lack sufficient capacities in the area for security and defence policy. Some commentators even criticise that EU foreign policy has lost political impetus, since the chair of the FAC has been handed over from ambitious rotating Council Presidencies to the High Representative and the EEAS. Since 2017, the European Commission tried to supranationalise European defence policy, where it possesses competences. It proposed to complete the European defence market and invest more in military research.

That the EU took swift decisions to support Ukraine has to be attributed to strong external pressure from Ukraine, the public, and allies on EU governments to take actions. Internal fissures between the member states reappeared soon, putting again the European consensus in question. The “European Peace Facility” as the main instrument to support Ukraine with arms, ammunition and other equipment was established outside the EU’s regular budget to limit the influence of the EU’s supranational institutions.

Historically, the policy area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), which is now the AFSJ was established outside the European Treaties and remained for long as intergovernmental as the CFSP, after it was integrated into the EU primary law. It covers border controls, migration policy, police cooperation as well as judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters. To facilitate the fight against international terrorism and to complete the Common Market, the policy area was gradually supranationalised. However, a number of exceptions grant member states more influence on certain aspects of the policy area. In highly politicised areas of the AFSJ, like migration policy, the Council of the EU tends seek consensus even though decisions taken by majority

would be possible. Granting national governments an informal veto in the AFSJ slows considerably down decision-making and favours decisions on the lowest common denominator.

Challenge 2: Lack of a European Strategic Culture

Nation states have distinct ways on how they use or threat the use of force (strategic behaviour). Criticizing realist game theoretical calculations on strategic behaviour from the 1960s, researchers developed the social-constructivist concept of strategic culture, “compris[ing] the persisting [...] socially transmitted ideas, attitudes, traditions, habits of mind, and preferred methods of operation [...]”³⁵ related to strategic behaviour.

Th national strategic culture in the EU differ considerably. Austria, Ireland, and Malta are neutral countries and refrain from actively participating in European military defence policy. Before joining NATO, Finland and Sweden were quite supportive of CSDP as a substitute for their non-alignment. Until 2022, Denmark opted-out from CSDP for reasons of national sovereignty. France and the United Kingdom, as long as it was an EU member state, were supportive of CSDP, allowing them to upload their pro-active national policies to the EU-level. Most recently, the ongoing debate on the support for Ukraine’s defence against the Russian aggression, including the provision of lethal weapons, has revealed the differences of national strategic culture.

Whether the Russian war of aggression might become a catalyst for developing a more profound common strategic culture on the EU level. Some elements of a shared understanding on when the EU should use force or threaten the use of force has been found before February 2021. However, until the approximation of national strategic cultures the existing difference are a major obstacle to strengthening CSDP and developing a security policy dimension of the EaP.

³⁵ Gray, Colin S. (1999): Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back, in: Review of International Studies, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 49-69, here p. 51.

Challenge 3: Politicisation of European Integration

For decades, public interest in the elite-driven project of European integration has been low. The hypothesis of the permissive consensus assumed that European citizens were content with it as long as they do not protest against. This situation has changed since the early 1990s, when the public's interest in European integration increased. This has been mainly attributed to the role of populist challenger parties. While established parties remained supportive of European integration, radical new parties from the right and left side of the political spectrum tried to win voters with Eurosceptic election platforms. Since then, in nearly all EU member states such populist parties became part of the national party systems. In some of the countries, they even governed.

Positions on European integration have also become more polarised with considerably differing views on the future course of European integration, and the topic became more salient in electoral campaigns as well as public debates. This politization of the future of European integration makes it more difficult for national government to support enlargement policy and a new EaP as they face severe criticism from some political parties in opposition. In some countries, the parties in government outright oppose the deepening of European integration.

The politicisation is not limited to the fundamental question of deepening European integration, but affects different policy areas. The threat of international terrorism since 9/11 has led to a securitisation of many policy areas, which is controversially debated along the political spectrum. The crisis in the Common European Asylum System since 2016 has politicised many aspects of the AFSJ. More recently, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has politicised the area of defence policy in some of the EU member states. Drivers are specific national strategic cultures as well as populist pro-Russian parties opposing support for Ukraine.

While the bilateral dimension of the EaP covering accession to the EU's common market was mainly of technical nature in the past, very few aspects of the EaP were politicised. One of the few exceptions in the past was visa

liberalisation for accession and partner countries, causing limited controversial debates in some EU countries. A strengthened security policy dimension of the EaP might change this.

Challenge 4: Insufficient Institutional Coherence in European External Relations

In addition, the particularities of the ENP bear additional obstacles. The CFSP, including the CSDP, is mainly intergovernmental, with a limited role for the European Parliament and the European Commission, while the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU are on a level playing field in most areas of the AFSJ. The ENP belongs to the so-called *sui generis* dimension of the EU's external policies, where the European Commission has a strong role and both the European Parliament and the Council of the EU are involved. The fact, that not the High Representative, but a specific Commissioner for enlargement and neighbourhood covers the topic, illustrates the Commission's increased role compared to CFSP.

Challenge 5: The Legacy of Enlargement Policy in European Neighbourhood Policy

A second policy area specific obstacle to developing a security policy dimension in the EaP results from the history of the ENP. The ENP is a replacement for EU enlargement policy offering relations with the EU to neighbouring countries without a membership perspective. EU enlargement policy, was considered the most successful EU foreign policy until the year 2010.³⁶ Especially the Southern enlargement in the 1980s is a success story of turning autocratic regimes into functioning liberal democracy. The ENP tried to trigger economic and political transformation without offering a membership perspective. One basic assumption of this approach is the partner countries' own interest in transformation. The model for society and economy offered by the EU is so attractive that peoples in other countries want to copy it. The EU supports these ongoing reform processes by means

³⁶ Democratic backsliding in Hungary and Poland has put this success into question.

of the ENP. The EU defines the new normal in international relations and other countries follow suit.³⁷ Establishing a security policy dimension in the ENP, which has a clear geopolitical rationale of containing Russian influence by security policy means, fundamentally challenges the EU's self-perception as a normative power and as a peace project.

Conclusion: Strengthening the Security Dimension in the ENP

To face the geopolitical challenges that have become evident since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to establish closer relations with its neighbours in the post-Soviet space and to meet the security demands of partner countries, the EU has to address the different needs and expectations of its partner countries. Therefore, the main objective of a reconsideration of the EaP should be to intensify the EU's strategic outreach in its neighbourhood from a geopolitical perspective as security provider. An upgraded EaP needs a comprehensive security dimension linking resilience, connectivity, and internal as well as external security policy, including cooperation in the area of CSDP. However, Russia will most likely perceive stronger security cooperation between the EU and Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus as a threat to its own security. Thus, the EU has to consider the impact on Russian policy in its efforts to become a new security provider in an area which Russia sees as its sphere of influence. This means, that not only a security dimension, especially with regard to robust means, of the EaP is needed but also stronger ties from an economic perspective, especially to ensure energy security in Europe as well as counterbalancing Russian, Chinese and US influence on regional markets.

Nevertheless, developing a security policy dimension of the EaP will most likely meet resistance within the EU institutions. The EU has to adapt its self-perception as a geopolitical actor in world politics. The involvement of different actors in CFSP, AFSJ, and ENP results in institutional incoherence as we can expect that the European Parliament, the European Commission, the EEAS and all member states have different goals and priorities for a

³⁷ Manners, Ian (2002): Normative Power Europe. A Contradiction in Terms?, in: *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 235-258.

further developed EaP. The fact that in all three policy areas the actors involved are allowed to influence the political results in different ways makes the task of developing a coherent dimension of internal and external security in the EaP even more difficult. The politicisation of the issues at stake further accelerates the problem. Furthermore, a common understanding on how to use military force is key to further develop CSDP. Divergent strategic cultures and an overly generalised Strategic Compass make it difficult to establish a military security dimension in the EaP. In addition, a common understanding or at least compromise with the partner countries – two of them currently having a conflict – is needed to develop an effective security dimension in the EaP.

In a short-term perspective, to achieve its aim of a stable neighbourhood and being a security provider, the EU should establish a permanent framework for conflict resolution, instead of relying on ad hoc activities as they could be observed since the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008. This framework should be based on three pillars: (1) CFSP missions; (2) diplomatic forums; and (3) incentive structures. To become a fully recognised security actor, the EU should deploy military missions to guarantee ceasefires in conflict regions (if necessary) and continue to deploy civil missions under CSDP to monitor the situation. As each of the conflicts is very specific in its nature, a one-size-fits-all approach would be misleading. However, for each of the conflicts, the EU should establish a diplomatic forum to build trust between the conflict parties by resolving practical cross-order challenges and if possible, improve citizens' lives in the region. Appointing EU Special Representatives to chair the diplomatic forums for each conflict could be a complementary measure. In a new EaP, conditionality should be used to incentivise the partner countries' engagement in conflict resolution by offering concrete economic and security benefits.

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United Europe's Future Security

Babita Evans Kumar

This paper addresses several crucial topics essential for Europe's future security, technology, and the evolving landscape of global threats. Below is an overview crafted from the presentation delivered at the event in September 2023.

The 3-Door Analogy:

The 3 door analogy is about addressing the silos and treating security as a holistic enabler . Imagine a house with three doors, would we just lock one door and leave the other two doors open? The answer is we would need to lock all three doors, to keep the house secure from threats. These three doors represent the physical security, cybersecurity and operational security. And the same analogy can be extended to civilian security, industrial security and national defence security- This analogy point emphasizes the necessity of securing all facets to mitigate diverse threat vectors effectively.

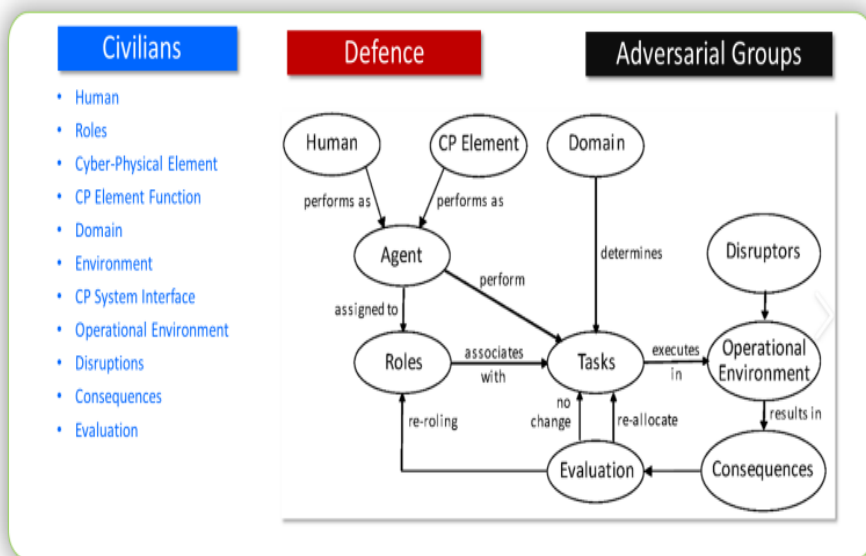
Future State of Technology:

Traditional IT is transitioning rapidly, with physical data centres (the metal racks and lights as we knew them) giving way to cloud-based services.

Digitalization is entrenched in society, with consumers demanding access to applications on-the-go. Cloud offerings are expanding rapidly, providing Infrastructure, Platform, and Software as Services.

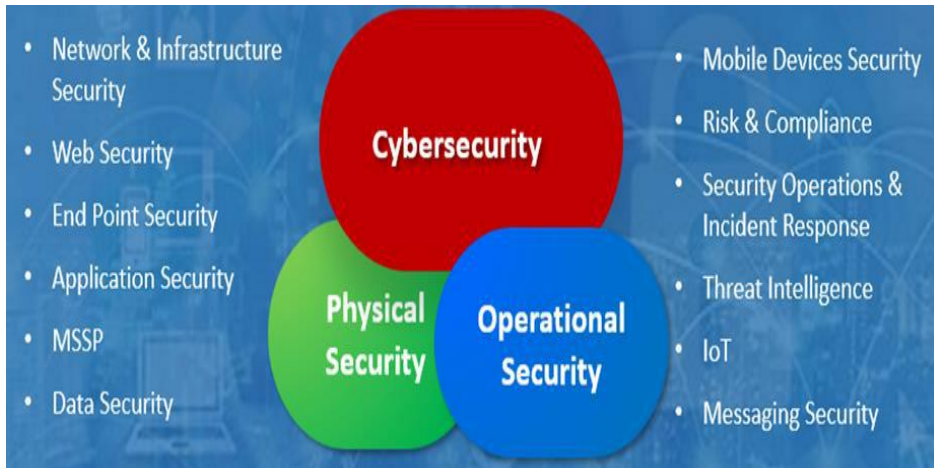
Impact of end-to-end global supply chains:

Global supply chains prioritize bottom-line profits and leverage resources worldwide for economies of scale. Competitive forces and disruptors drive constant organizational adaptation. Human-operated systems with cyber-physical elements are susceptible to adversarial threats.



Understanding Security Convergence:

Security convergence entails identifying overlaps among cyber, physical, and operational security dimensions. Crucial for comprehending vulnerabilities in network infrastructure and mapping robust defines strategies by identifying the touchpoint where the 3 dimensions of hyperphysical and operational security overlap and assess and evaluate the nature of vulnerabilities in network infrastructure security, WSM EPS, AS, MSSP, DS, convergence points of Cybersecurity , Physical and Operational.

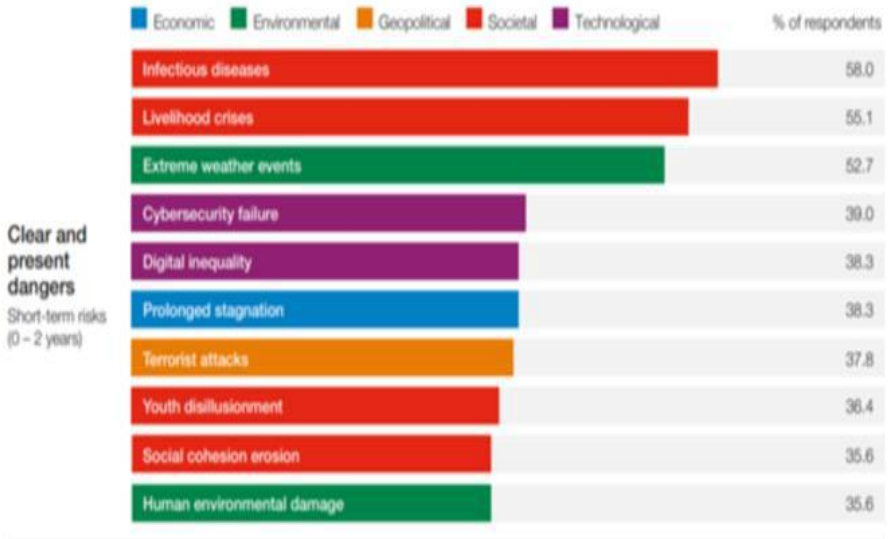


Highest Threats to Civilians and Businesses:

Insights from word economic forum for Threats to Civilians & Businesses reveals that the key threats include hacking, identity theft, and the encroachment of surveillance on personal freedoms. Data breaches pose significant risks, surpassing concerns like climate change and financial crisis inflation and recession. The interconnected nature of the networked with widespread complex supply chain ecosystems amplifies repercussions globally and affect many nations. (Image courtesy WEF)

Global Risks Horizon

When do respondents forecast risks will become a critical threat to the world?



Current Risks and the Way Forward:

Cyber threats have multiplied, necessitating a proactive response from the global business community. National unity, particularly evident in Europe amid the Ukraine War Crisis, is crucial. Culturally sensitive approaches and enhanced cross-border collaboration are imperative. Example: Enhancing security in high-risk zones like international airports through real-time monitoring.

The way forward involves intensified focus on cybersecurity, bolstered by diversity of thought, collaboration, and collective intelligence.

Empowering cross-border teams with advanced tools, transparent communication channels, and shared learnings is essential.

Summary:

Collaboration among European security think tank is vital to combat emerging threat vectors. Emphasis on cross-geographic teamwork, zero-trust security approaches, and robust communication channels.

Tracking international fraud and threats seamlessly is vital for proactive mitigation strategies.

In conclusion, tackling security challenges demands a multifaceted approach that encompasses technology, collaboration, and proactive strategies. “The European Security Think Tank initiatives” could serve as a beacon for navigating the complex landscape of modern threats and bridging gaps between industrial, civilian, and defence collaboration.

Some Threats to the Cohesion of the European Union from a Psychological Point of View

Günther Fleck

The cohesion of the European Union (EU) is being jeopardized by various developments that are affecting it both from within and from outside. The threats from within are mainly due to growing right-wing populist parties in the individual member states, which pay homage to a newly emerging nationalism and question the EU as a whole. Threats from outside, long thought to be non-existent, were suddenly made apparent by Russia's predatory invasion of Ukraine. The EU is confronted with threats that must be countered with appropriate means if it does not want to go under. Psychological factors play an important role here, which will be examined in more detail.

The first step is to outline the national and international challenges and threats that the EU must face and overcome if it does not want to degenerate into insignificance or even disintegrate. This is followed by the conceptualization of a system-theoretical model of the EU, which is intended to provide an understanding of the psychological prerequisites. Finally, the focus is placed on measures that the EU must take to strengthen the psychological preconditions.

I. Problem outline

Since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on February 24, 2022, the security and defense policy situation in Europe has changed radically. If the European states thought they could lull themselves into a sense of unlimited security once and for all, the invasion taught them otherwise. The Europeans'

ideal world suddenly collapsed. Since then, the possibility of Russian aggression spreading to other European countries has been at the heart of the European Union's (EU) security and foreign policy agenda.

The problems that come to the fore in this context primarily concern internal cohesion and the EU's defense capability. It is argued that great efforts are needed to overcome and strengthen the EU's current fragile internal cohesion and to put its currently weak or barely existing defense capability on a new footing. For these efforts to be successful, however, a number of psychological prerequisites need to be met, along with many others. These prerequisites are discussed and examined with regard to indispensable measures to be taken by the EU and its member states.

II. Challenges and threats to the European Union

The cohesion of the EU is endangered by a multitude of challenges and threats, which are caused on the one hand by the drifting apart of particular interests of the individual political parties within the EU and on the other hand are closely linked to globalization.

A. Political polarization trends within the individual EU member states

Since the turn of the century at the latest, right-wing populist parties have enjoyed great popularity in individual EU member states. The right-wing populist party programs often question EU membership or propagate a withdrawal from the EU. The Brexit of the United Kingdom (UK), in which the influence of right-wing populist politician Nigel Farage played a decisive role, can be seen as a prime example of this. However, right-wing populists also pose a major threat to democracy within the country. Suffice it to mention the well-known erosion of democracy in Hungary.

The far right in Europe used a common strategy, which Gray (2002) describes as follows: "The strategic coup of the far right has been to link nationalism with fear of economic insecurity-and to link both with structure of

the EU, some of which are fundamental. There is little democratic accountability in European policy-making. Moreover, despite constant chatter about it, there is no real prospect of remedying this democratic deficit. The nation-state is an extremely ambiguous construction; but with all its faults it remains-for the present and the foreseeable future-the upper limit of democratic participation. Pushing for further European integration in these circumstances means giving more power to a European government that is democratically illegitimate-and, what is worse, is seen to be so. This is a development that can only strengthen extremism, for it gives the parties of the far right a dangerous opportunity to pose as defenders of democracy.”

However, the success of right-wing populists is not only based on the strategy described by Gray, but also on their will to power, which they often display (e.g. marches). This will to power is associated with a fanaticism that acts as a motivator for their political activities. Moderate parties lack this will to power, as well as fanaticism. From a certain perspective, this can be seen as a weakness, as it often takes a long time for moderate parties to finally decide to take political action. Above all, they are often very helpless in the face of the polarization tactics of the right-wing populists.

B. Impact of globalization on EU society and armed forces

At least five major developments can currently be observed worldwide that go hand in hand with globalization and have a formative influence - both negative and positive - on societies and armed forces within the EU (Fleck & Maringer, 2007, pp. 26-27). Among other things, this influence causes the incredible complexity and plurality today's societies as well as their sometimes extremely developed contradictions, which is not without consequences for the armed forces. The respective positions taken by actors within these developments are often characterized by a mixture of factual and emotionally charged arguments (e.g. prejudices). This emotionalization, which in turn manifests itself in the personal sensitivities of the actors involved, makes it difficult or even impossible to find cooperative solutions. In many areas, there is also a politicization of the different positions. "Politicization gener-

ally means (...) the political mobilization of particular interests and, as a consequence, the accentuation of dilemmas in international politics" (Senghaas, 1994, p. 164, translation by me).

The first development to be mentioned refers to the phenomenon of "relativization versus totalization of world views". Regardless of country, culture and social form, a particular form of polarization of world views is taking place: On the one hand, more and more people are realizing that their personal worldview only represents one possibility and that everything could be completely different. As a consequence, the respective world view is therefore represented hypothetically. On the other hand, at the same time, more and more people are joining fundamentalist movements of various origins and claiming to be in possession of the absolute truth (Anderson, 1990).

The second development is expressed in a massive increase in uncertainties in the most diverse areas of life and the corresponding existential insecurity in broad sections of the world's population. The uncertainties relate above all to questions of identity formation in the context of pluralistic socialization (multiculturalism) and to questions of life planning under sometimes very bleak future prospects.

The explosion of knowledge in large parts of the world's population (and therefore also in the armed forces) characterizes the third development. Problems of information overload and the rapid increase in knowledge on the one hand, and unprecedented educational opportunities and possibilities for personal growth on the other, demonstrate the enormous contradictions of the information society (Bühl, 1996).

The fourth development permeates and affects individuals, groups, societies, states and communities of states in equal measure as a phenomenon of one-sided striving for autonomy. The problem that arises here relates to the dynamic relationship between self-interest versus the interests of others. The great danger here lies in the one-sided accentuation of self-interest to the detriment of the interests of others, which makes meaningful and absolutely necessary political compromises difficult or impossible. In particular, attempts at integration in the sense of building a greater whole are doomed to

failure from the outset, which inevitably results in various forms of fragmentation.

The fifth development concerns changes to society as a whole as a result of migration on a scale that will have a massive impact on Western culture and identity. A guiding culture that has yet to be developed on the basis of a consensus of values across society can help to minimize the expected potential for conflict.

III. The European Union as a Janus-faced holon - a system-theoretical model

Both domestically and in international relations, the individual human systems are to a certain extent forced to interact with each other, be it in industry, trade, transportation, etc. This interaction is usually embedded in legal frameworks that are regarded as binding by the partners involved. This interaction is usually embedded in legal frameworks that are regarded as binding by the partners involved. Human systems are characterized not only by their greater or lesser capacity for self-organization, but also by their typical psychological constitution. This means that a certain amount of emotionality is added and becomes effective in the communication and interaction between human systems.

Human thought and action are closely linked to emotions and moods, which have a formative effect (cf. Bless, 1997; Fleck, 1999; Toda, 1980). This applies not only at the individual level, but also at the level of international relations. The psychological constitution of human systems plays an important role in negotiation. It contributes to the negotiation outcome that can be achieved. This situation becomes problematic and dangerous when cooperation between states is broken off and replaced by hostile attitudes and actions.

If we consider people in their position in relation to their environment, we cannot avoid assuming a relationship structure that can be analyzed but cannot be "dissolved". People are connected to their environment in such a way that, on the one hand, they influence it and try to shape it according to their intentions and, on the other hand, the environment in turn influences them and they have to adapt accordingly. At this point, a note on the term environment is necessary. In this context, the term environment includes the social environment, i.e. our fellow human beings.

In my opinion, this interplay, often understood as serial interaction, is better captured by the idea of interaction. The concept of transaction is therefore preferred to the concept of interaction. The transaction, i.e. the interaction between people and the environment, cannot be reduced to either people or the environment. The design process is not only determined by individual wishes and needs as well as situational requirements, but subjective values also play a decisive role here, albeit usually implicitly.

A. The need for a balance between autonomy and integration

An important question that all people (human systems) ask themselves time and again is that of autonomy versus belonging. To what extent am I an autonomous (self-determining) individual, and to what extent am I also always part of a larger whole (e.g. partnership, family, society, state, universe)?

"Using various terms, numerous personality theorists have repeatedly described two fundamental tendencies in people's relationship to their environment and to themselves: a tendency towards autonomy from the environment and a tendency towards integration with the environment (...). The first tendency requires the individual's ability to set boundaries in order to realize it; the second tendency, on the other hand, requires the ability to loosen subjective boundaries, to make them permeable or to transgress them. In this context, Koestler (1972, p. 118) coined the idea of the human being as a "Janus-faced holon" (Fleck, 1999, p. 142, translation by me).

Koestler (1972) describes two fundamental tendencies in this context: "The polarity of these tendencies, or potentials, is a ubiquitous phenomenon in all

domains of life. In the multiplicity of social hierarchies, the self-assertive tendencies are manifested on different levels as selfishness, clannishness, nationalism, and so on; the integrative tendencies as altruism, co-operativeness, internationalism - in general, subordination to the interests of the next higher level in the hierarchy. The stability of organisms and societies depends on the proper balance between the opposite tendencies of its holons. Under normal conditions, the two are in dynamic equilibrium. Under conditions of stress, the affected part of an organism may tend to escape the restraining controls of the whole. The same applies to social groups which, when tension exceeds a critical limit, tend to assert themselves to the detriment of the whole. Vice versa, the whole may exercise an over-strict control of the parts, making lose their individuality (pp. 112-113)."

If Koestler's considerations are applied to the field of politics, their heuristic value becomes immediately apparent. For example, the people in the individual nations of the EU are subject to the same dynamics with regard to Europe-wide political cohesion. In this sense, the individual nation state can also be described as a Janus-faced holon. In his monograph "Wohin driftet die Welt?" (Where is the world drifting to?), Senghaas (1994) summed up the resulting inter-state dynamics with the following central question: "Will the decisive actors in international politics seek to realize their self-interest through uncoordinated, unilateral, i.e. nationalistically motivated measures, or will there be coordinated multilateral behaviour in the sense of >>enlightened<< self-interest oriented towards long-term goals?" (p. 162, translation by me). One thinks here of the withdrawal of Great Britain from the EU, the so-called Brexit on January 31, 2021.

The problem that arises here relates to the dynamic relationship between self-interest and the interests of others. The great danger here is the one-sided accentuation of self-interest to the detriment of the interests of others, which makes meaningful and absolutely necessary political compromises difficult or impossible. In particular, attempts at integration in the sense of building a greater whole are doomed to failure from the outset, which inevitably results in various forms of fragmentation.

"Ideally, people are able to build up or let go of boundaries in a flexible and fluid manner, depending on the demands of the situation. However, there are reasons, which cannot be discussed in detail here, that can lead to rigidities in the respective attitude. This means that certain people have developed fixed boundaries that are impossible to cross or trigger massive anxiety if this is attempted. In extreme cases, there is no sense of connection with the environment. Conversely, the inability to draw boundaries leads to a fragile identity, which in extreme cases is accompanied by a loss of self and a lack of stability. These people react with fear when they try to set boundaries. Conversely, the inability to draw boundaries leads to a fragile identity, which in extreme cases is accompanied by loss of self and lack of stability. These people react with fear when they try to set boundaries" (Fleck, 1999, p. 142, translation by me).

"The constructive handling of these dynamics at the individual level is subsumed under the term personal boundary management (Greene, 1982). This dynamic also applies analogously to nation states and can therefore be understood and described as national state boundary management" (Fleck, 2022, p. 214, translation by me).

B. Shaping the relationship between human systems

Wherever people meet, the question arises as to how the relationship between two actors should be structured (Watzlawick, Bavelas & Jackson, 1967). In doing so, we encounter two central questions that no human system can escape, be it an individual person or a government: 1. how much influence is a person (a state, etc.) willing to grant another person over them? 2. how much influence does one person (state, etc.) want to achieve over another? This directly touches on the problem of reciprocal manipulation.

In principle, human systems can be friendly, neutral, or hostile towards each other. The first variant forms the basis for possible joint cooperation, the second forms the basis for mutual acceptance without the need for a closer interest in the other, and the third forms the basis for competition. In the case of competition between two or more human systems, mutual mistrust can develop very quickly with the appropriate psychological constitution,

which can lead to hostile actions towards the other. The spectrum from verbal threats to the use of (military) force is well known.

In human communication practice, relationship offers are usually articulated, which are then negotiated in discourse, unless they have been accepted in the given way from the outset. Relationship offers can be accepted or rejected, or even imposed by a stronger party on a weaker party. This is sometimes followed by a struggle to define the relationship, the process in which the partners (have to) agree on how they want to relate to each other. Individuals and collectives have always tried and still try to influence or manipulate each other. This is fundamentally something deeply human, but it can take on very destructive forms.

In the context of constructive international relations, understanding each other is of great importance. It is a deeply human characteristic to consider one's own views to be more correct or better than those of others. This personality trait can be found at all levels of society, from ordinary workers to university professors. Just think of the famous scholarly disputes of the past and present.

Whether in everyday life, in politics, in science, in religion or in other cultural areas, the approval or rejection of messages communicated by the communication partners always implies a reference to the quality of the relationship between the partners. In the case of approval, the relationship is affirmed; in the case of rejection, this can lead to a disruption or destruction of the relationship. What is essential for the success or failure of communication is whether the respective partners represent their position absolutely or hypothetically and to what extent the partners are willing to engage with each other.

IV. Measures to develop and strengthen the psychological prerequisites

Selective reference is made to three areas where psychological factors play a decisive role. These are the areas of the EU population's identification with the overarching EU system as a whole, the democratic capacity of individual EU citizens and the individual EU states and the need to make the EU militarily strong.

A. Developing a strong identity for the European

The identification of individual EU citizens and the governments of individual EU states leaves much to be desired. In many parts of the population as well as in the individual governments, a certain disenchantment with the EU, sometimes even open hostility towards the EU, is becoming apparent. What needs to be done to counteract this disenchantment and hostility in a meaningful way?

From a psychological perspective, the hypothesis is put forward that the European identity formation process results from the interaction and interaction of offers of identification and the willingness to identify. The offers of identification may include a variety of desirable aspects of life, such as a high standard of living, a stable economy, a high level of internal and external security, a generally high quality of life, a secure future, a single currency, attractive job opportunities within the EU and much more. However, as Biedenkopf (2003) emphasizes, it is important that the common interests of all EU states (or, with a view to a future united Europe, all states) are developed, which act as the best link in the Union. So, what is the current status quo of European identity?

For historical reasons, the majority of Europeans in general and EU citizens in particular probably still have a more or less strong nation-state mindset. With the emergence of the EU, a European identity or a European consciousness has been and is increasingly being sought, which should serve as the intellectual basis for a united Europe of the future. The central question that comes up again and again is the necessity of the EU.

Who needs the EU? There are still major gaps and misunderstandings among the average citizen. The EU leadership must realize that not everyone automatically recognizes or accepts the sense and necessity of a united Europe. The EU leadership therefore not only needs to carry out intensive educational work in order to increase the willingness of citizens to identify with the EU, but also to provide identification opportunities.

B. Strengthening the democratic capacity of individual EU citizens

If we look at the development of right-wing populist parties in the individual EU member states, we cannot avoid attributing a lack of understanding of democracy to a considerable proportion of the EU population. Analyzing the causes of this in detail would go beyond the scope of this study. We will therefore focus on a few selected aspects.

The rise and spread of right-wing populist ideas is partly to the political failure of left-liberal governments in individual EU countries, particularly with regard to the problem of mass immigration that began in 2015. The election promises of the individual right-wing populist parties lure many EU citizens with simple solutions. Many EU regulations are not understood by large sections of the population and are seen as paternalism. There is a lack of clarification on this from the EU leadership. One example of this is the controversy surrounding the TTIP negotiations. For many people, it was very annoying that a small group of authorized actors began to negotiate a treaty in secret that was kept secret from the public. This approach was seen as deeply undemocratic.

The hypothesis is put forward that the widespread democratic incapacity of many EU citizens is primarily due to a lack of education. The training of the younger generation to become responsible citizens is virtually non-existent. Young people in schools are overloaded with a wealth of learning content, but the teaching of critical thinking is not included in the curricula. A young generation that has learned to critically scrutinize things, events and happenings does not run the risk of believing every nonsense (fake news, conspiracy theories, quackery, etc.). However, a critical youth would be quite challenging, if not unpleasant, for the established parties.

C. Development of a sustainable defense policy and an effective defense capability

Ever since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, alarm bells have been ringing in the EU with regard to an effective overall EU defense. The possibility of Putin using military force to take back former countries of the Soviet empire in the longer term has become likely. At present, the EU, left to its own devices (i.e. without the involvement of the USA), would hardly be able to effectively counter an attack by Russia, or only to a very limited extent. Even if massive efforts are made in the EU states to increase their military defense capabilities due to the current lack of a common political will, questions regarding the combat readiness of soldiers remain unclear from a psychological perspective.

In terms of understanding military readiness, two approaches can be distinguished: the atomistic and the systemic view (Fleck, 2007). The first view is based on the classical analytical approach, which dissects systems down to the smallest components, studies their characteristics and then considers these to be representative of the entire system. The second perspective focuses on the overall behavior of the system, the characteristics of which cannot be found in the individual parts. It is the emergent properties that are of interest here.

According to the atomistic view, the motivation to deploy is understood as a psychological entity that can only be located in the individual. The soldier's identity and the associated motivation for military operations are understood as static and isolated elements that the individual soldier more or less carries (exhibits) within himself. This view corresponds with the trait-centered conception of personality. A certain degree of motivation is attributed to the individual soldier.

In the systemic perspective, the motivation to deploy is understood as a relational phenomenon. Soldier identity and the associated motivation for military operations are a never-ending product of human information processing, embedded in countless interactions at an individual, collective, national, and international level, both in a military and civilian context. Motivation is not a static entity here, but the result of continuous re-evaluation

processes and re-identification. However, if there is no offer of identification, then the question arises as to what form of motivation can be created at all. As the danger of a total loss of meaning hangs over the military and civil society like a threatening sword of Damocles, it is high time to create a military mission statement tailored to the new circumstances and offer it to soldiers as a figure of identification. This mission statement requires political consensus at all levels and across all parties. It is therefore suggested that we reflect and reconsider what answer soldiers would receive if they asked the following questions to the representatives of the EU and the individual EU states: "Who needs me?" and "Why does he need me?"

The EU and its member states are ultimately responsible for offering the population and soldiers security policy goals that make sense and help bridge the gap between the old defense doctrines and the new realities. The EU's current defense policy vacuum must be filled with a meaningful new security philosophy, including the possibility or necessity of military defense.

V. Conclusion

The current threat to the EU requires swift action if we are to be able to effectively counter expected internal and external damage. This requires a basis of political will, which is unfortunately still inadequate at present. However, this is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the creation of firm internal cohesion and a uniform EU foreign and security policy. The development of a strong identity for the European Union, the strengthening of the democratic capacity of individual EU citizens and national governments and the development of a common effective defense capability were identified as urgently needed measures to develop and strengthen the psychological prerequisites.

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Ethical Duties. Military as a Side Profession of All Citizens

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Key words: civilian, duty, ethics, obligation, war

In "Dictionary of War" ("Słownik wojny"), which is a compilation of words that have changed their meaning during the war, we read: "Far means a distance between [...]the place where you are and the place, where is no fear. Near means a distance: to each bullet that hit a target or not far enough not to be afraid of death" (Slywinski 2023, p. 35). The same "Dictionary" shows that even time doesn't mean, what it meant before the war, and that the calendar counts days not using time, but curfews and anti-aircraft alarms (Slywyński 2023, p. 55). These are just a few of how war penetrates everyday life; how it changes the perception of the world and oneself. The war in question - and of which the Russian aggression in Ukraine is a perfect example - apart from military and legal issues, also requires considering the ethical issues related to it. Among them, we find ethical obligations, which are the share of the military and other citizens. Duties of this kind are nothing new, they are part of our history and the civilizational heritage of humanity. Also the war itself - no matter how it perfected its tools – is “as old as the world”. “It really is always the same barbarity. From Troy to Mostar or Sarajevo, it is always the same war” (*vide* Pérez-Reverte 2001). The question is what this particular war adds to our knowledge – but also, what it reminds us about. What the war in Ukraine tells us today about an individual man, about politics, about power, and above all about the ethical/unethical choices made by each side of the conflict. What does this particular war tell us about the ethical choices made by soldiers, but also by citizens who had to decide to defend their country; to change their statute from civilians to combatants? On a huge scale, being a soldier revealed itself as a side profession of all citizens.

Of course, this is not a new idea. This sentence turned out to be extremely timely in the light of the events brought by the war in the Ukraine.

It really is always the same barbarism. In fact... the same war, although perhaps not identical, using new means, but always pursuing similar goals, full of horror, cruelty and terror. The motivations for wars do not change. As Margaret MacMillan wrote, the basis of wars is always either greed, or self-defense, or emotions, or ideas. In other words – values or anti-values (*vide* MacMillan 2020). It hasn't changed, so here wars remain exactly the same. The means has change, the tools has change, the way of conducting war also went through subsequent changes, but from the perspective of the civilian population, these are always personal dramas and tragedies, because they are always the first target of these wars, they are the ones who suffer. The perspective of the civilian population is the worst, because it is they who are surprised by the war. The war comes to their homes unlike virtually all other categories who come to this war, including soldiers. It is the civilian population that has to face this war at home. Often there is no opportunity to leave and think about what to do, because sometimes the war comes overnight, like in Ukraine or during the conflict between Israel and Hamas. So in a sense wars really don't change, even when it comes to cruelty. It became particularly visible during the full-scale war in Ukraine after February 24, 2022. Here arises quite naive question: "How is it possible that this is happening in the 21st century?" This is the best example that what seemed to be the past for many is still, unfortunately, the present.

The war in the Ukraine has posed to the international community questions of a political, economic, social, legal and, last but not least, ethical nature. It clashed the ideas of war with the fact of war; confronted everyday life with the catastrophe caused by the ongoing conflict. It also forced a redefinition of the concepts of everyday ethics with the requirements of the so-called great ethics. It doesn't mean that the principles known from sc. great ethics – grounded mainly in rationality, where all the principles apply universally and unconditionally – lost their meaning. On the contrary, all the requirements we understand as the ethical imperatives had to face the requirements of everyday duties and challenges. So-called small or weak ethics refers here

to all the events that happened between individuals that describe needs, fears, and basic openness to all the needs of the other. Here matters not only requirements of the law, codes of ethics, or duties that come from one's religious beliefs but something more basic, that is grounded in our relation with the „face of the Other“. They also opened the Pandora's Box of war, full of fears, convictions, and dread. The hope that remained stems largely from a certain faith in duty to the fatherland (derived from great ethics) and in the relationship with another person (anchored in the demands of everyday life). The latter issues turns out to be a burning problem posed to researchers by the war in the Ukraine.

Previous wars has already changed the social perception of military ethics to a level where certain things/actions/events seemed unreal to many commentators, but also to the civilian population. The "expectations" centered around blitzkrieg war, war conducted mainly – if not exclusively – with the involvement of modern technology, hybrid warfare, cyber warfare, etc. Almost all of them seemed to assume imaginable remoteness of direct warfare from individual people, precise actions, aimed at wartime goals. However, the wars waged in the 21st century have brutally confronted the beliefs of many commentators – as well as the ideas of war futurists – with reality. Although, on the one hand, we have increasingly better technological equipment (including drones, long-range weapons, and exoskeletons), and parts of the war are indeed fought remotely, the cruelest face of war occurs between people. Examples of such actions can be multiplied here: suffice it to mention wars in Syria, and Afghanistan, the crime against Israelis kidnapped in October 2023 and Israel's response to the people of the Gaza Strip, or finally the war crime that took place in the Ukrainian city Bucha and other towns. Terrifyingly, war has – as it were – become arch-human again. On the other hand, in the face of the situation presented, only people can change its fate.

Every war confronts man with questions about his own morality, about what he means by saying that one should do the right thing. However, while the principles of moral behavior are determined by ethics resulting from the religion or set of beliefs, belonging to a given culture or even philosophical

belief in the Kantian categorical imperative, the liberal principle indicating that the limit of my freedom is the freedom of another human being, or even the simple rule "no do to others what you would not like to do to yourself" (*vide* Kant, de Toqueville, Locke, Mill), then in addition to these general ethics, there are also specific ethics. Among them there are also those called practical ethics, including the one that refers to soldiers/military. Therefore, in addition to general human ethics, which remains unchanged in its foundations, combatants are also bound by ethics directly related to their profession, as well as – rooted in natural law – statutory laws that define the legal limits of military conduct (*vide* Hague Convention, Geneva Convention, Charter of United Nations, Petersburg Declaration or The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court).

The above-mentioned codes of military ethics are of course not a modern idea. The ancient defenders of freedom, property and the dignity of societies – whom we know from stories about the bravery of the Spartans, the honor of warriors described by Homer in "Iliad" or the significance of the soldier caste for Plato's "Republic" – became knights in the Middle Ages. It is to this period that we owe the codification of the chivalric ethos, referring to all those devoting themselves to this – after all, exclusive and limited by status – profession. It was also necessary to develop a set of rules that were binding on combatants. The chivalric code was based on devotion to one's ruler, the mercy that a knight should show to the weaker. The sword was to be blessed with the words: "May you defend the orphan and the widow", so no cruelty towards them could take place. Among rules one will find: ambition, honor, respect, defense of goodness and righteousness, and finally, the desire to become a model for others. However, followers of this model – shaped among the well-born, eager for a place not only in knightly epics and minstrel songs, but above all on the pages of history – had to not only follow the code, but also be guided in life by eight virtues that constituted their honor (*vide* Barber 1996, Baker 2003). The knight's duty was to live in truth, have faith, repent of his sins, show humility, love justice, be merciful, sincere and magnanimous, and endure persecution that he could encounter from both open enemies and false friends. Other duties also flowed from these virtues and codes, the most important of which seem to be: knightly solidarity (today

referred to as soldierly camaraderie), generosity (gaining allies), as well as courage and fidelity to one's word. All of these created a specific combat ethic, appropriate for an honorable knight. Therefore, any battle was to be fought only with someone who had an equal chance in it. This involved not only abandoning the weaker, but even arming the opponent. Honorable combat could only take place face to face, without resorting to tricks or ambushes, and with respect for the opponent. All of them created a specific fighting ethic. And although this code was later subject to many modifications, its heart should remain unchanged.

It was precisely such virtues that the heroes of *chansons de geste*, perhaps the best perpetuation of the principles of chivalric codes, had to live up to. And although this ideal later gained in reality, it remained a point of reference for some of the established codes. Among the more interesting ones, it is worth mentioning the collection of rules from the early 17th century – “Nabożeństwo żołnierskie” (“Soldiers' devotion”) – created by the Polish Jesuit, Piotr Skarga. In ten subsequent teachings, he discusses the duties of a soldier towards the homeland, comrades in arms and the civilian population. Therefore, he describes not only the soldier's state and the possible war, but above all gives clear guidelines regarding the ethics that are binding on combatants. At the same time, he considers the soldier's state to be essential for the proper functioning of the kingdom and the state, at the same time understanding war as an obligation, the fulfillment of which the state (for the defense or protection of rights, but never for revenge) has the right to demand from its soldiers, and then from its citizens (Skarga 1618). Regardless of the legal status of a specific war, Piotr Skarga imposes very clear restrictions on soldiers, which must be described as ethical. "Do not beat anyone. Turn the iron you carry at your side against the enemy of your country and the Holy Church. Leave the innocent neighbor, for whose defense you are called, in peace"(Skarga 1618) – writes the Jesuit, making an important separation between the fighting parties and civilians, who are not directly involved in the war and as such do not take part in the fight. The very same distinction is present in modern code of war ethics. In "The Ninth Sermon", Skarga creates a whole catalogue of necessary virtues, binding both in times

of war and peace. Among them we find: justice (which also includes the concern that no bystander suffers physical or material harm from a fighting soldier), courage and obedience. He also treats the defense of the fatherland as the duty of all citizens.

Soldier's ethics turns out to be a necessity, and although modern times will place it among the so-called specialist ethics, according to many thinkers it will remain an ethic applicable not only to combatants and those who have chosen the military as a profession, but also – due to the fact that it is a "side" profession – all men. In this way, it no longer turns out to be a set of norms defining the abilities and duties of only one professional group, but extends to every citizen (now regardless of gender). Therefore, it becomes a kind of "great ethics" that will require a specific character and at the same time – by its very assumptions – shape the character so that it meets its requirements. However, in order to claim to be a "great ethics", soldier ethics "must justify its basis, namely the permissibility and duty of war, as well as define the conditions under which it is permissible and must be waged" (Bocheński 1995, p. 35).

Above mentioned another Polish thinker, Józef Maria Bocheński, is another philosopher defining the soldier's character. It's worth to underline that in many aspects his words are really up to date. For both – regular militants and civilians who decided to protect their country. Cause here, military indeed is a side profession for all citizens. In one sequence he mentions integrity, obedience, courage and efficiency of combat decisions. It is nothing other than the ancient "conscious and prudent facing of danger and enduring suffering" (Bocheński 1995, p. 34). The same features were instilled in the citizens of Sparta, Roman legionaries and knights going on crusades. This is what the troubadours praised, and even Carl von Clausewitz, who was reluctant to moral analysis, devoted some space to them (*vide* Clausewitz). However, in Bocheński's work it is again very clear how this moral dimension translates into specific battle actions. This aspect, underestimated by Clausewitz and later war theorists, turns out to be a very practical dimension, necessary on the battlefield, but also in ordinary life. Therefore, next to the virtues mentioned above, he places honor and heroism. While the first of them

includes the tendency to give high priority to "respect for greatness of character and the ambition to achieve the highest level in this respect" (Bocheński 1995, p. 45) – which, in simple terms, means that a soldier should not act against chivalric ideals, but always act for the sake of his honor – the second virtue is more complex. Heroism can refer both to an act (when performed in difficult conditions and in relation to a difficult subject, it remains an ethical act) and to a virtue (which is a constant, desired ability in a soldier to perform such acts).

Another soldier's virtue is love of homeland, to which Bocheński subordinates all other soldier's skills. It is a kind of attitude of will, intended to push one to act for the good of the homeland, understood not only as a specific area and the community inhabiting it, but also as the civilization created by it – i.e. language, culture and values. This love is to be developed in the upbringing process, simultaneously present in the sphere of reason, will, memory, imagination and feelings (Bocheński 1995, p. 54). Importantly, the army that loves its homeland places the Polish thinker outside political structures, making them independent of any currents, ideologies or temporary whims of the government. Therefore, one should be a soldier, as it were, beyond parties and above everything that divides politicians. Military is about guarding the state as such and the laws that apply there. At this level, what will be important is the preservation of the homeland, the almost "biological" survival of the state, and not debates about its system and the way of governing it. References to similar values can also be found in very contemporary codes of military ethics (*vide* the Code of Honor of a Professional Soldier of the Polish Army 2018, CAPE 2014).

Patriotism, bravery, honesty, loyalty, responsibility, professional solidarity, justice, truthfulness, caring, helping. It would seem, therefore, that we are once again learning a history lesson, once again pointing to the skills that should characterize the soldier's ideal. These features, to some extent constituting the knightly canon, enrich the state and political dimension of service. The virtues include respect for national symbols, statutory law and social norms applicable to a given society. It should be assumed that this respect includes not only an appropriate attitude towards these "goods" in one's own

country, but also respect for other cultures, symbols, religions, norms and laws – as long as none of them constitutes a source or direct tool of oppression of a given country, nation – encountered during wars, peacekeeping and stabilization missions.

The question of how military ethics extends to citizens. The main research problem turns out to be the clash of military ethics with the ethics of everyday life. War clearly shows that ethics happens at the intersection of professions. In view of the resistance of the Ukrainian population, it is necessary to look at concepts such as "civilians", "non-combatants", "people involved in the war", "war supporters", "combatants" (*vide* McMahan 2009, Orend 2006, Frowe 2011). Here, ethics, which we used to refer to as military ethics, covers with its scope, and therefore with duties/obligations/obligations or virtues, ever wider circles of people. Assuming that – as I already said – in fact "militarism is a side-profession of each citizen" (*vide* Skarga 1618, Bocheński 1995), the question of when civilians become "combatants" should be reconsidered; does it necessarily mean that they lose the privileges legally belonging to the civilian population and does "being a civilian" mean only passivity, defenselessness and waiting for someone to come and save "us" from all this misfortune. Meanwhile, during the war in the Ukraine, citizens often (*vide* Pieniążek 2023) perceive their role in fulfilling the duty of multidimensional resistance as soldiers-defenders of the homeland. In some dimensions, we can speak not so much of a transformation as of successive phases of the civilians becoming defenders of the homeland; troops that, coming from the general mobilization, are trained to be closer to professionals. This, in turn, wasn't done through long-term training/preparations, but through "a jump". Kind of like jumping into the abyss. But at the same time, it's a leap into duty. With regard to the latter, "old themes" return within the framework of war ethics.

If we ask those fighting in the Ukraine today, they will point to the same virtues with greater or lesser precision; for the same reasons of defending their homeland and their fellow citizens. For the same reasons, thousands of civilians take up arms. And we do not mean only those who are obliged to serve in the military, but also those who voluntarily protect the freedom,

sovereignty of their homeland, and the lives of their fellow citizens. It is responsibility for yourself and others, it is the courage to stand on the front line, it is solidarity with every fellow citizen; it is justice – because Ukrainians are fighting in a just war (both in the sense of *ius ad bellum* and *ius in bello*); it is – after all – patriotism, sometimes even of the *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* variety.

A story about war and analysis of war are in fact stories about people and analysis of their ethical/un-ethical behavior. Those are “stories” the accelerating war machine, but above all about how – in his individuality – a single man stands in its way. About how you can't escape from war, and sometimes you just don't want to. During war, people often make choices that we are unable to realize/understand. For example, the dilemma whether to run away or stay/leave or stay in home very often involves a number of other things. Many people stay because, for example, they have a sick person in a family, they have elderly parents or grandparents who could not move and for this reason they decided to stay in their homes, even though it was associated with great danger – in fact, the desire to protect a loved one could be for them it is associated with death. Another thing is that people do not want to leave home because they are afraid for the house itself, for their four walls and any memories associated with them. It is often the most valuable thing in their lives and it is difficult for them to imagine being anywhere else. The more open a society is to movement, the more difficult it is to imagine this perspective. This is a very important thing for many people – this closeness to the earth and their home. This is part of this resistance against the invader – that a person decides to resist in a simple way: by staying at home, trying to maintain his normal life, which the war is trying to crush. From a purely rational point of view, it seems to us that the answer here is zero, but in the meantime it turns out that there are many, many answers and only our imagination is what limits us.

On the one hand, war brings helplessness, fear and anxiety. One of the heroines of Paweł Pieniążek's book, *Opór. “Ukraińcy wobec rosyjskiej inwazji”/“Resistance. Ukrainians Face Russian Invasion”* (Pieniążek 2023), Margarita from Konstantynówka, says: "When the threat of death hangs over

you, you can not sleep for days"(Pieniżek 20023, p. 194). And this threat is real. And not only in the frontline Donbas, because Konstantynivka is a town where the front line is slowly approaching, especially in the face of the ongoing offensive on Bakhmut, but also in further towns, further from the front, because you never know when a missile that happens to be hit fired, it will fall on your house. In places like Donbas, where not only long-range rockets but also artillery fire at the inhabitants and their homes, you can expect something terrible to happen at any time. Serhiy Zhadan wrote on the Internet: "Fear is an invisible, but all-consuming thing - you don't see any threat, it's quiet around and even the sky above is shiny with metal ribbons, and the mere awareness that they have you in their sights and that they can hit you at any time moment" (Pieniżek 2006, p. 127). So this threat is real and you constantly have the feeling (which you try to push away, but it keeps coming back) that you can simply die at any moment. People try to push it away so as not to go crazy, but it comes back like it or not.

"It's impossible to completely get used to war, but it's terrible how quickly fear and survival instincts become dull (...) When we get home, it will be too quiet to fall asleep" – one can hear from Jarosław, another civilian interview by Paweł Pieniżek in his reportage (Pieniżek 2023, p. 209). And there is a moment here of a clear and actually uttered with certainty not "if", but "when we come back". Because Ukrainians, despite the scale and cruelty of this war, have no doubts about it. This is a huge motivation and in fact it does not decrease, sometimes it even increases. In comparison, from February 24 to the present, the number of people who believe in victory has increased, although it was very high from the very beginning. Ukrainians have no doubt that they will win this war, sometimes even disregarding their opponent, but this feeling that everything will work out, that they will return to their homes and regain these territories (and possibly even those lost in 2014) is because These initial defeats of Russia greatly boosted morale and mood. And then also later military successes, including: in the Kharkiv Oblast or Kherson Oblast, Mykolaiv Oblast, resulted in this self-confidence significantly increasing.

On the other hand, we also have tenacity and solidarity. We have those who help each other. We care for each other. And something else. In almost one voice, people repeat in unison: "This is my country." And this has its consequences. A full-scale war is simply zero-sum. Many Ukrainians understood this, even those who were passive towards the war that began in 2014. They understood that it was a game for everything and that if they lost, Ukraine would no longer exist, they would not be able to live as before, their cities would be destroyed or life would simply die in them, even if they were not destroyed, but they occupied. So they decided that there was something to oppose, something to fight for, something to do. The fact that they are not fighting for some abstract goal, but for their homes, means that they are ready to sacrifice much more than in any other situation. A defensive war always gives you enormous motivation when you know whose side to side with. It is also a matter of the fact that this is not a war where all parties are involved, where affiliations are unclear (as, for example, in the case of the war in Syria), but there are very specific parties here. And even if you are a critic of the Ukrainian state and did not like it, you know that you can change something here. Because this is your country, today you defend it, tomorrow you will work on its development. However, the condition for making such work possible – and therefore for returning to the ethics of everyday life – is victory.

Among the many images and figures cited in the report from war-torn Ukraine, two attract particular attention. Oleksandr, "a cheerful retiree" (Pieniążek 2023, p. 71), and Valentyna, who trims the hedge "to even things out" in the turmoil of war. For me, it's like an image from Czesław Miłosz, from "A Song on the End of the World", where you gain distance, where "there will be no other end of the world" (Miłosz 1944). However, although the sky – often quite literally – is falling down on your interlocutors, there is still hope in them. Those who live in the occupied territories believe that the Ukraine will "return to them" and when it returns, it is a great joy for them, an example of which is the Kharkov region or Kherson. The return of their country, winning even for a moment, possibility to see the progress of their national army and the failure of Russian forces, means that there is a future, that they can live, they can change, they have the right to everything (despite

all the criticism I mentioned earlier, because they feel that they can change it) – so they are fighting for it country. In interviews with civilians fighting and those supporting the armies, one hears talk of war fatigue, but also of the values and long-term goals that keep them alive.

The very same hope was present in Iziium. Because although the city is burnt out, although it is permeated by the characteristic smell of war, although – somewhat similarly to Severodonetsk – the buildings can be divided into "shot at, riddled with holes, with roofs chipped off, on fire, already burnt to the ground and finally saved", still Freedom returns to Iziium. Lyubov says: "It's not just blue and yellow flags. It's something else" (Pieniązek 2023, p. 219). It's much more than that, because life comes back to the places, in which war is still present. How is this possible? Life truly dies when cities are ruthlessly destroyed. This was visible, for example, in Severodonetsk and in Bahmut. But this is the most optimistic story possible about the war, that this place in a city or town is very difficult to finish off, that people persist and fight to survive because they believe in the future. Resistance understood as an ethical value chosen by civilians sometimes means stubbornly clinging to life, all those "little signs of life", e.g. that someone hasn't left, planted flowers, cleaned their house or the basement they are in, often make that person believe that something is waiting for them. Despite everything, people are fighting for their survival, they are fighting to maintain their everyday life – they are resisting. This resistance is an element of both great ethics and everyday ethics. This is what it's all about when civilians take on the responsibilities and risks of combatants.

In times of war, everyday ethics, also known as "weak" ethics, approach great ethics, indicating necessities, duties and obligations. However, the latter are not accepted exclusively as obligations of a duty nature, but as a conscious choice. The latter is combined in the ethics of care - care for maintaining territorial, political and cultural sovereignty; independence (in the case of countries and societies that have become the subject of attack and aggression). It is also care for the life and well-being of oneself, fellow citizens, and finally the homeland, when its defense becomes a conscious choice. In countries at war, thousands of citizens make such choices every day. This choice

means not only accepting duty, but treating it as an ethical obligation towards what is closest in the human and identity sense. Defense of the homeland as a "secondary profession of all citizens", even when the balance between what is civilian and military is disturbed, is a fact.

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Social and Economic Impact of the Ukraine-Russia War – an Overview

René Cerne

The primary impact of the conflict in Ukraine is the loss of human life and the humanitarian crisis resulting from the displacement or siege of significant numbers of people. In addition, there are significant economic impacts.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, most global macroeconomic measures were expected to return to pre-crisis levels by 2022-23.

In 2023, global growth is projected to return to rates similar to the period immediately before the pandemic.

The war will hinder global growth and aggravate inflationary pressures

The war in Ukraine has created a new negative supply shock for the world economy, just when some of the supply-chain challenges seen since the beginning of the pandemic appeared to be starting to fade. The effects of the war will operate through many different channels, and are likely to evolve if the conflict deepens further.

In some respects, the direct role of Russia and Ukraine in the global economy is small. Together, they account for only about 2% of global GDP at market prices and a similar proportion of total global trade, with limited bilateral trade for most countries (Figure 1). Financial linkages with other countries are also generally modest. Stocks of foreign direct investment in Russia, and by Russia in other economies, account for between 1-1½ per

cent of the global total. Consolidated cross-border bank claims by BIS reporting banks on residents of Russia and Ukraine represented less than 0.5% of the global total as of the third quarter of 2021.

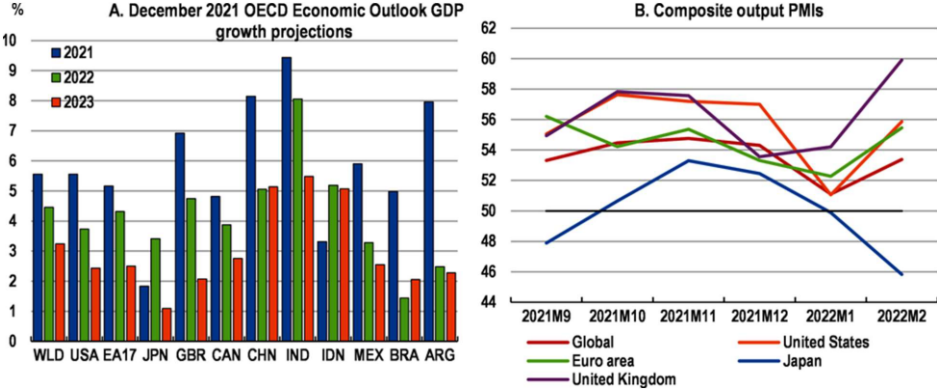


Fig 1: GDP & output PMIs

Most OECD economies are expected to achieve full employment by 2023, and inflation is anticipated to approach levels close to policy targets, albeit later and from higher levels than previously experienced in most countries.

The policy environment was also anticipated to return to normalcy, with the gradual lifting of extraordinary monetary easing and the phasing out of emergency fiscal measures taken in response to the pandemic.

Despite being relatively small in terms of output, both Russia and Ukraine are significant producers and exporters of crucial food, minerals, and energy resources. The war has already caused major economic and financial shocks, particularly in commodity markets. This has led to sharp increases in the prices of oil, gas and wheat.

The volatility in commodity prices and financial markets since the start of the war, if prolonged, could reduce global GDP growth by more than one percentage point in the first year, triggering a significant downturn in Russia. This would also lead to an increase in global consumer price inflation of 2½ percentage points.

These simulations provide an initial look at the potential impact of the conflict based on the market dislocations observed in the first two weeks of the war. They do not incorporate many factors that could intensify the adverse effects of the conflict, such as further sanctions or consumer and business boycotts, disruptions to shipping and air traffic, the unavailability of key products from Russia, trade restrictions such as export bans on food commodities, or undermined consumer confidence.

A key potential economic risk is that energy exports from Russia to the EU could cease completely. The impact of such a shock is difficult to quantify, but could be abrupt given limited possibilities to substitute to supplies from world markets in the short term and low levels of gas reserves. One illustration of the possible additional pressures is provided by the one-day peak in European gas prices since the start of the conflict. Prices that day were 170% higher than in January, twice the size of the gas price shock assumed in the simulations above. A persistent return to prices at this level would add an additional 1¼ percentage point to inflation in Europe (taking the full shock on euro area inflation to over 3½ percentage points) and further reduce European growth by over ½ percentage point.

Input-output tables can also be used to assess the direct effects on output of a reduction in energy inputs. An illustrative decline of 20% in imported energy inputs (from direct and indirect imports of fossil fuels, refined fuel products and electricity and gas supply) would reduce gross output in the European economies by over 1 percentage point, with significant differences across countries. The hardest hit would be the domestic energy-producing sectors, air transport, chemicals and metals manufacturing. These estimates may understate the disruptions from lower energy availability as there could

be discontinuities in the impact on output, rather than the smooth adjustment implicitly assumed in the calculations. However, it is also possible that some reduction in imported energy could be offset by stronger domestic production, drawing on reserves or improved energy efficiency.

In one respect, however, Russia and Ukraine do have an important influence on the global economy. This is via their role as major suppliers in a number of commodity markets. Russia and Ukraine together account for about 30% of global exports of wheat, 20% for corn, mineral fertilisers and natural gas, and 11% for oil. In addition, supply chains around the world are dependent on exports of metals from Russia and Ukraine. Russia is a key supplier of palladium, used in catalytic converters for cars, and nickel, used in steel production and the manufacture of batteries. Russia and Ukraine are also sources of inert gases such as argon and neon, used in the production of semiconductors, and large producers of titanium sponge, used in aircraft. Both countries also have globally important reserves of uranium. The prices of many of these commodities have increased sharply since the onset of the war, even in the absence of any significant disruption of production or export volumes (Figure 2).

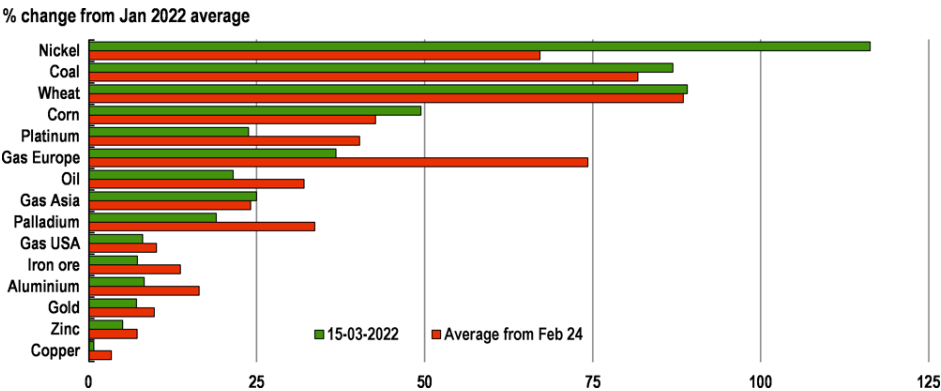


Fig. 2: Production/Export volumes

Model simulations suggest a sizeable hit to global growth and higher prices if the conflict persists

The magnitude of the economic impact of the conflict is highly uncertain, and will depend in part on the duration of the war and the policy responses, but it is clear that the war will result in a substantial near-term drag on global growth and significantly stronger inflationary pressures.

Illustrative simulations suggest that global growth could be reduced by over 1 percentage point, and global inflation raised by close to 2½ percentage points in the first full year after the start of the conflict. These estimates are based on the assumption that the commodity and financial market shocks seen in the first two weeks of the conflict persist for at least one year, and include a deep recession in Russia, with output declining by over 10% and inflation rising by close to 15 percentage points. (The full set of factors considered are set out in the Technical Appendix.)

The impact of the shocks differs across regions, with the European economies collectively being the hardest hit, particularly those that have a common border with either Russia or Ukraine. This reflects greater gas price rises in Europe than in other parts of the world and the relative strength of business and energy linkages with Russia prior to the conflict.

Advanced economies in the Asia-Pacific region and the Americas have weaker trade and investment links with Russia, and some are commodity producers, but growth is still hit by weaker global demand and the impact of higher prices on household incomes and spending.

Growth outcomes in the emerging-market economies reflect a balance between stronger output in some commodity-producing economies and deeper declines in the major commodity-importing economies, and the adverse impact of higher investment risk premia. Higher food and energy prices also push up inflation more than in the advanced economies.

Monetary policy reacts to the upturn in inflation around the world, with policy interest rates raised by a little over 1 percentage point on average in the

major advanced economies and 1½ percentage point in the major emerging-market economies.

A complete cessation of wheat exports from Russia and Ukraine would result in serious shortages in many emerging-market and developing economies. There would be an acute risk not only of economic crises in some countries but also humanitarian disasters, with a sharp increase in poverty and hunger. The disruption in fertiliser manufacturing risks making these disruptions more long lasting, by putting next years' agricultural supply under stress. In many economies in the Middle East, wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine represent around 75% of total wheat imports (Figure 3).

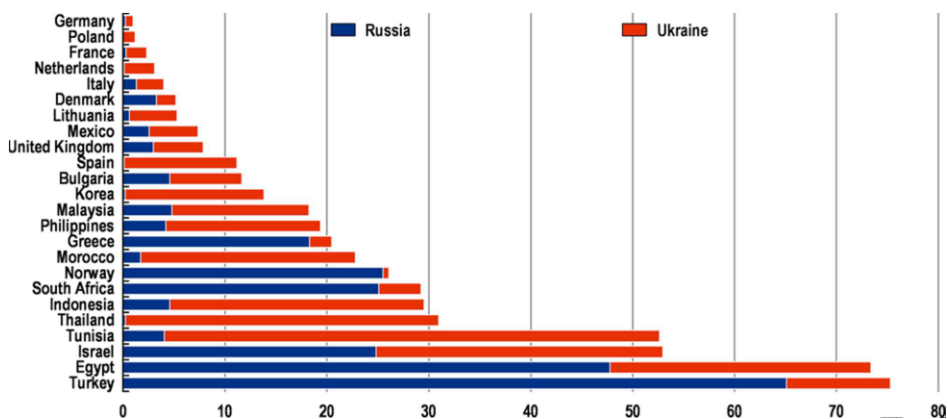


Fig. 3: Wheat imports

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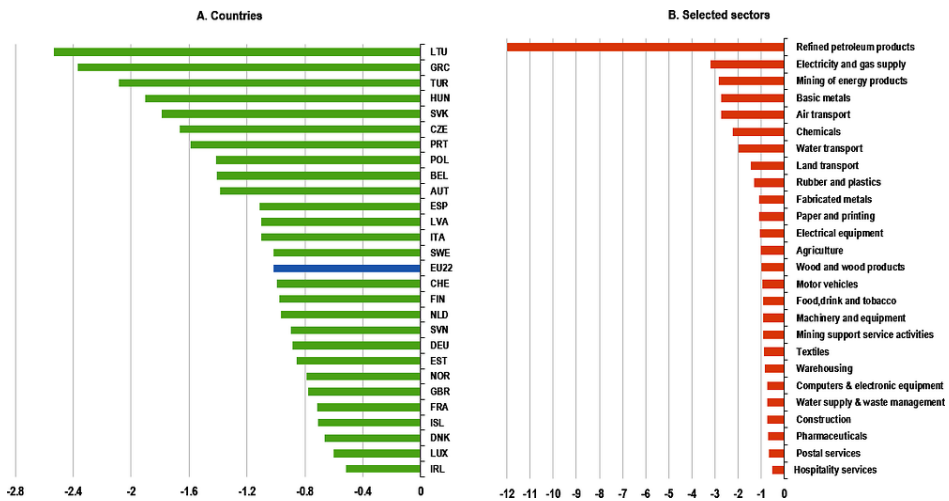


Fig. 5: Countries & production sectors

Input-output tables can also be used to assess the direct effects on output of a reduction in energy inputs. An illustrative decline of 20% in imported energy inputs (from direct and indirect imports of fossil fuels, refined fuel products and electricity and gas supply) would reduce gross output in the European economies by over 1 percentage point, with significant differences

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The fastest refugee flow in Europe since the end of the Second World War is underway

The humanitarian cost of the war is high and growing. Around three million people have already fled Ukraine in the first three weeks of the war and that number is likely to increase further. This is considerably more than the annual flow of asylum-seekers into European countries at the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015-16. Looking after the refugees from Ukraine will require spending on social and housing assistance, food provision, medical assistance and childcare and schooling.

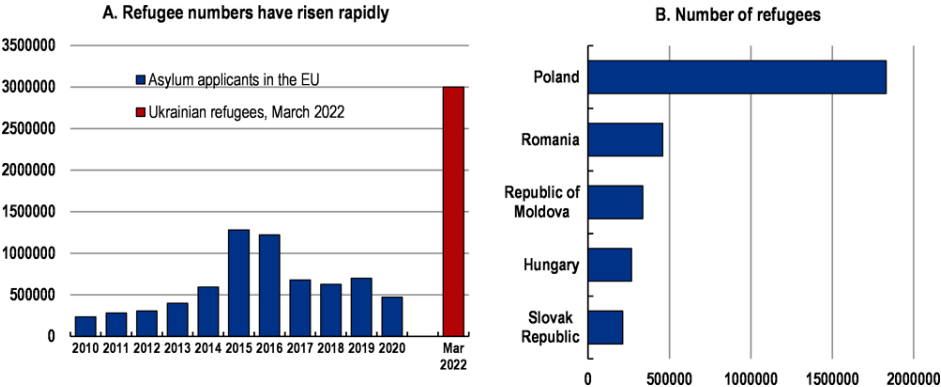


Fig. 6: Refugee numbers

The spending challenge is difficult to predict due to uncertainty about the number of refugees, the length of time they will stay, and the amount of spending per refugee. The cost for processing and accommodating asylum seekers for the first year in 2015-16 was estimated to be around EUR 10 000 per application by the OECD, and up to EUR 12 500 per refugee in national studies for Germany –though to varying extent across countries, depending on the level of support. At this level, the inflow of 3 million refugees seen so far could result in a direct first year cost of at least 0.25% of EU GDP, and much more in the major host economies. So far, refugees have primarily gone to a small number of countries, with Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia taking in large shares. The initial costs are manageable for the EU as a whole, but difficult to support – and deliver – by individual neighbouring countries. Burden sharing and EU support to the major host countries would allow support to be delivered more effectively.

Remarks and Conclusion

- Austria has been growing for decades primarily through immigration, last year particularly due to refugee migration from Ukraine
- Since 2015, the strongest increases in absolute numbers have been among people with Romanian (+74,100), Ukrainian (+71,000), Syrian (+70,900) and German (+54,500) citizenship
- The lowest perceived belonging to Austria is among immigrants from Ukraine (54%)
- The use of language is closely related to the knowledge of the German language. (...) This proportion is lowest among immigrants from Ukraine, Syria and Turkey

Ukrainian refugees in other countries. Status: September 2023
Millions of people have been displaced since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The most important numbers: According to the UNHCR, 5,832,400 people from Ukraine are provisionally registered as refugees in Europe (as of September

6, 2023). Source According to Eurostat, around 4.07 million war refugees from Ukraine were protected in European countries under the temporary mass protection directive (as of June 30, 2023). Source According to the IOM, around 5.1 million people are currently refugees in their own country (as of May 23rd). According to the IOM, 4.8 million people have returned to their place of residence in Ukraine (as of May 25). Source Where are most of the war refugees from Ukraine? Shortly after the start of the war, most people initially fled to the nearest neighboring countries - especially to Poland: In the meantime, around 1,668,000 war refugees were officially registered there, as the Polish Federal Statistical Office confirmed to the MEDIA SERVICE. However, Germany is currently reporting the highest number of war refugees from Ukraine. A Eurostat evaluation from June 2023 also came to this conclusion.

Cluster Munitions for Ukraine: a Case Study in the Ethics of Military Technology

Maciek Zajac

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Abstract: Critics of the Ukrainian use of cluster munitions (CMs) fail to acknowledge several key details of the case: Ukraine's lack of alternatives, use in own, already heavily mined territory, the existential threat the country is facing or the fact the less harmful class of CMs is being used in finite and pre-determined amounts as a stop-gap measure. Given these circumstances, standard arguments against CM use fail to convince. The case of Ukraine's CM use also showcases several weaknesses of the contemporary prohibition-focused approach to weapons law, such as a failure to deliver alternatives, to acknowledge outlier cases and to be more aware of organizational biases that may affect NGOs and IGOs advocating for new bans and restrictions.

Keywords: *cluster munitions, War in Ukraine, ethics of military technology, arms control, weapons law*

In July 2023, after long deliberations, the US decided to transfer substantial amounts of DPICM cluster munitions to Ukraine in order to aid the latter in its defense against the ongoing Russian invasion¹. This decision has been subject to morally-grounded criticism from both prominent human rights

¹Ward, Alexander; Seligman, Lara; Gould, Jay & McLeary, Paul. "U.S. to include controversial cluster munitions in new Ukraine weapons package." *Politico*, July 7th, 2023, www.politico.com/news/2023/07/06/decision-to-send-cluster-munitions-to-ukraine-on-bidens-desk-00104903

NGOs, such as Amnesty International² and Human Rights Watch³, and from the coalition of state-parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)⁴. My goal in this article is to display why in that particular case these critiques are ultimately unsound and misguided. I also want to show how their failure demonstrates the perils of trying to limit the destructiveness of war by prohibiting successive weapon classes, instead of focusing on regulating weapon use. While the former approach may be well suited to certain cases, such as that of biological weapons or chemical weapons, the latter, being more ethically subtle and flexible, should be preferred in most cases and remain a default.

I begin by briefly describing what cluster munitions (CMs) are and the undeniable negative consequences of their use; I also specify the circumstances and the ends of the Ukrainian decision to ask for their delivery and use them. This establishes the values and goals to be weighed against each other within this dilemma. I follow by analyzing possible arguments against CMs being delivered to or used by Ukraine, and showing that despite some initial plausibility they fail upon closer examination. I conclude by trying to draw some lessons from this case study.

Before I start, one general caveat is in order – even though I will sometimes adopt the language of the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or talk about the need to shape or approach it in a certain way, this is an article about ethics, not about the law as it exists today. So far as I speak about IHL principles, I treat them as moral ones; as so far as I postulate them, I do so for ethical reasons and out of a desire for the legal order to reflect the ethical

² Amnesty International “Ukraine: US transfer of cluster munitions to Ukraine undermines international efforts to safeguard civilians from indiscriminate weapons.” July 7th, 2023, www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/07/ukraine-us-plan-to-transfer-cluster-munitions-to-ukraine-undermines-international-efforts-to-safeguard-civilians-from-indiscriminate-weapons/

³Docherty, Bonnie. „US Cluster Munition Transfer to Ukraine Ignores History of Civilian Harm.” July 14th, 2023, www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/14/us-cluster-munition-transfer-ukraine-ignores-history-civilian-harm

⁴Hernandez, Gabriela I. R. “States Condemn All Cluster Munitions Use.” October 2023, www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-10/news/states-condemn-cluster-munitions-use

one. Keeping the discussion on the moral plain is made easier by the fact that none of the countries involved – neither Ukraine, Russia, or the US – are parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions⁵, as acknowledged by aforementioned critics⁶. Consequently, only the more general and universal principles of IHL apply, and these are closely aligned with relevant ethical principles.

Cluster Munitions – Definition & Flaws

“Cluster munitions can, in general terms, be defined as ‘weapons that open in mid-air and disperse smaller sub-munitions—anything from a few dozen to hundreds—into an area. They can be delivered by aircraft or from ground systems, such as artillery, rockets and missiles’.”⁷ The ethical problems are caused by the fact that the submunitions being released, sometimes in scores or hundreds, do not always explode on impact as intended by the weapon’s user. The unexploded submunitions then pollute the place where they were released, lingering for years or decades unless removed by a painstaking, expensive and time-consuming clearance operations⁸. For these reasons cluster munitions are highly analogous to anti-personnel landmines, and can be considered a weapon that is indiscriminate not in space but in time, failing to stop causing damage once the battle, or even the war, is over.

Not all cluster munitions are, of course, identical, and therefore they are not all equally harmful. The key difference, ethically, is made by their respective dud rates, or by the percentage of submunitions that fail to explode. The dud rates of legacy Soviet cluster munitions can be as bad as 40%, while the DPICM (Dual Purpose Improved Conventional Munitions) variants being shipped to Ukraine are claimed by American officials to have a dud rate of

⁵ Boothby, William H. „Cluster Munitions and the Ukraine War.” *Articles of War*, February 28th, 2022,

⁶ Amnesty International, op. cit.

⁷ Boothby, op.cit.

⁸ Docherty, op. cit.

2,35%⁹. Even if practically achievable and invariant across different types of terrain or circumstances of combat¹⁰, this rate would be in excess of the 1% dud rate sought by 2008 US cluster munitions policy because of the aforementioned humanitarian concerns¹¹.

There is, consequently, an undeniable price to be paid for any CM use. The areas where they were used, if they are clearly delineated (and this can be either subject to negligence or physical impossibility, for example when water flow moves submunitions from place to place), need to remain closed to civilians until they are thoroughly cleared. Absent this, death and injury will inevitably follow. While the harms caused by cluster munitions used may be somewhat mitigated by the circumstances obtaining right now on the front, there is no magic way of making them disappear. Cluster munitions do cause real, substantial harm, and in the presence of feasible alternatives, they should never be used. However, as I will now demonstrate, Ukraine has had no such alternatives.

Key Context

To ask whether Ukraine should use cluster munitions is to ask too general a question. After all, Ukraine is not trying to increase its stockpile of CMs for some unspecified purpose, to be used in a vague future contingency. The question should instead be: “should Ukraine use already produced cluster munitions slated for destruction in its own territory in order to address a debilitating ammunition shortage during an existential war against genocidal

⁹ Transcript of a Press briefing given by the US Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl on July 7th, 2023, www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3452000/under-secretary-of-defense-for-policy-dr-colin-kahl-holds-press-briefing/

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, “Off Target The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq”, 2003, pp. 104-10. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/usa1203/usa1203.pdf>

¹¹ Cancian, Mark F. „Cluster Munitions: What Are They, and Why Is the United States Sending Them to Ukraine?“, July 10th, 2023, www.csis.org/analysis/cluster-munitions-what-are-they-and-why-united-states-sending-them-ukraine; Congressional research Service, “Cluster Munitions: Background and Issues for Congress”, updated September 6th, 2023, pp. 5-6, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/weapons/RS22907.pdf>

threat?”. Only by asking this specific question can we address key facts that need to be acknowledged in any fair and thorough study of the case.

Already produced cluster munitions, slated for destruction. The DCIPM munitions being delivered to Ukraine are not, unlike most other weapons provided by Ukraine’s allies, items in current production that have been specifically produced for Ukraine’s use or that were drawn down from other nation’s stockpiles only to be replaced later by newly produced batches. These are instead munitions slated for destruction as soon as they can be replaced by unitary munitions or cluster munitions with dud-rates below 1%¹². The same is true for another, much rarer kind of CMs – older, M39 Block I version of ATACMS missile that have been first used in combat by Ukraine in October 2023¹³. These weapons being delivered to Ukraine cannot cause any new CMs to be produced or designed, nor any production of CMs to be started or re-started. Consequently, it can hardly engender a global resurgence in CM use. If anything, transfers to Ukraine will force a military superpower, the US, to cease relying on them as a deep strategic reserve¹⁴ and to accelerate transition towards unitary munitions and/or less harmful, below-1%-dud-rate cluster munitions.

Used within Ukraine’s own territory. The overwhelming majority of fighting in the Russo-Ukrainian war took place on the territory of Ukraine¹⁵, and absent a total (and unlikely) collapse of the Russian military it is bound to remain so. Ukrainian officials have explicitly stated that CMs will be used

¹² Congressional Research Service, op. Cit., pp. 5-6.

¹³ Reuters, “US-supplied ATACMS enter the Ukraine war”, October 19th, 2023, www.reuters.com/world/atacms-us-may-send-ukraine-their-cluster-bomb-payloads-2023-10-19/.

¹⁴ Zeigler, Sean M. “Why Biden Was Justified to Send Cluster Munitions to Ukraine.”, August 14th, 2023, www.rand.org/blog/2023/08/why-biden-was-justified-to-send-cluster-munitions-to.html

¹⁵ Territorial extent of fighting and control has been meticulously documented by many open intelligence researchers, for example at <https://www.warmapper.org/interactive-map>

only on their own sovereign territory¹⁶, and have provided the US government with written assurances to that effect¹⁷. For both military and foreign policy reasons Ukraine is highly unlikely to violate this promise. It also has a perfect record of keeping such promises to their allies since the beginning of the war.

This matters for ethical analysis for two reasons. First, the very people who have to bear the harms of Ukraine's CMs use – Ukrainians living in territories occupied by Russia – are simultaneously the people who stand to benefit from the Ukrainian military being empowered to use such weapons. This simplifies the ethical calculus, since we are not talking about burdening one group of people with certain harms in order to spare another group, but only about which harms potentially affecting the same group would be worse. Secondly, military commanders failing to value the lives of enemy nation civilians equally to the lives of their countrymen is a perennial problem in war. Ukrainian commanders using CMs are aware they pollute their own land and cause (potential) harm to their own countrymen. Consequently, moral callousness and cavalierly use of such weapons are likely to be present to a lesser degree than they would be in a war fought on foreign territory.

Debilitating Ammunition Shortage. The bulk of US deliveries of CMs to Ukraine, the DCIPM munitions, have not been delivered because their military utility exceeds that of unitary munitions, although against some types of targets it does¹⁸, but chiefly to plug a steadily widening ammunition gap between Ukraine and Russia until the West will be able to ramp up unitary munition production¹⁹. Given that both sides of the war rely very heavily on

¹⁶ See for example the July 7th, 2023 statement by the then-minister of defense Oleksiy Reznikov, <https://twitter.com/oleksiireznikov/status/1677410470108471298>

¹⁷ Congressional Research Service, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁸ Cancian, op. cit., discusses CMs several times greater utility against exposed infantry and soft-skinned vehicles.

¹⁹ Kahl Transcript, op. cit.; Cancian, op. cit.; Bertrand, Natasha et al. "US and NATO grapple with critical ammo shortage for Ukraine." July 18th, 2023, edition.cnn.com/2023/07/18/politics/ukraine-critical-ammo-shortage-us-nato-grapple/index.html

artillery²⁰, and that an attritional approach of this sort “plays to Ukraine’s strengths”²¹ and allows to compensate for the almost complete lack of air support, shortages in manpower and specialized breaching equipment, and deficiencies in combined arms capabilities, artillery munitions supply is absolutely critical issue in the war²², perhaps the most critical single factor. The bottom line is that these weapons are not being used wantonly, but as a virtual necessity and as a last resort after all other sources of conventional ammunition have become nearly exhausted. Nor is their use supposed to become a new norm; given both the fact that the supply of DCIPMs is final, and that the production of conventional artillery ammunition is being ramped up all over the West²³, the period of CM use in Ukraine is bound to be finite, albeit probably much longer than one would wish.

Existential War. The overwhelming wrongness of Russian aggression against Ukraine is hard to express succinctly. Yet its purpose is also freely admitted, unconcealed and obvious, so that there is no need to document it at length. Russia has openly stated that it’s war goal was the destruction of

²⁰Crammy-Evans, Sam. “Russia’s Artillery War in Ukraine: Challenges and Innovations.” August 9th, 2023, rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russias-artillery-war-ukraine-challenges-and-innovations

²¹Kofman, Michael and Lee, Rob. “Perseverance and Adaptation: Ukraine’s Offensive at Three Months”, September 23rd, 2023, warontherocks.com/2023/09/perseverance-and-adaptation-ukraines-counteroffensive-at-three-months/

²²Waling, Jack and Bronk, Justin. “Giving Ukraine Cluster Munitions is Necessary, Legal and Morally Justified.” July 10th, 2023, www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/giving-ukraine-cluster-munitions-necessary-legal-and-morally-justified

²³Jakes, Lara. “Europe Made a Bold Pledge of Ammunition for Ukraine. Now Comes the Hard Part.” *New York Times*, September 23rd, 2023, www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/world/europe/eu-ukraine-war-ammunition.html; Tucker, Patrick. “Army aims to make 1 million artillery shells a year, starting in fiscal 2025.” August 7th, 2023, www.defenseone.com/technology/2023/08/army-aims-make-1-million-artillery-shells-year-starting-fiscal-2025/389202/

the Ukrainian state and of the Ukrainian nation, denying that it has ever existed in the first place²⁴; it formally annexed occupied Ukrainian lands, forcing their inhabitants on a massive scale to accept Russian passports²⁵; conscripting them to fight for Russia and/or to work for the Russian war effort²⁶; and separating thousands of children from their parents and transferring them into Russia with the purpose of indoctrination or forced adoption by Russian families²⁷. Any Ukrainians that resisted and the representatives of local elites were subject to extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary imprisonment on a widespread and massive scale²⁸. In short, Russia can be credibly accused of committing genocide against the Ukrainians it conquered²⁹, and it has sought to conquer all or most of them, with the end goal of forcing them to live as Russians under its own semi-totalitarian regime,

²⁴ Andrejsons, Kristaps. “Putin’s Speech Laid Out a Dark Vision of Russian History.” February 22nd, 2022, foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/22/putin-speech-ukraine-war-history-russia/

²⁵ Yale School of Public Health Humanitarian Research Lab, “Forced Passportization in Russia-Occupied Areas of Ukraine”, August 2nd, 2023, hub.conflictobservatory.org/portal/apps/sites/#/home/pages/passport-1

²⁶ Arhirova, Hanna et al. “Thousands of Ukraine civilians are being held in Russian prisons. Russia plans to build many more.” July 13th, 2023, apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-prisons-civilians-torture-detainees-88b4abf2efbf383272eed9378be13c72

²⁷ Bilkova, Veronika et al. “REPORT ON VIOLATIONS AND ABUSES OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW, WAR CRIMES AND CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, RELATED TO THE FORCIBLE TRANSFER AND/OR DEPORTATION OF UKRAINIAN CHILDREN TO THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION”, May 4th, 2023, www.osce.org/files/f/documents/7/7/542751.pdf. See also the official statement by the International Criminal Court’s Pre-Trial Chamber II, March 17th 2023, icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and

²⁸ Hinnant, Lori et al. “10 torture sites in 1 town: Russia sowed pain, fear in Iziium.” October 2nd, 2022,

apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-business-treatment-of-prisoners-government-and-politics-aec9afe8d6631795ae9f9478a4ede4cc; Office of the High Commissioner For Human Rights, “UN report details summary executions of civilians by Russian troops in northern Ukraine.” December 7th, 2022, ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/12/un-report-details-summary-executions-civilians-russian-troops-northern;

²⁹ Finkel, Eugene. „What’s Happening in Ukraine Is Genocide. Period.” *Washington Post*, April 5th, 2022, [washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/05/russia-is-committing-genocide-in-ukraine/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/04/05/russia-is-committing-genocide-in-ukraine/); Snyder, Timothy. “The War in Ukraine and the Question of Genocide.” Lecture given at Boston University, October 28th, 2022, audio recording available at snyder.substack.com/p/the-war-in-ukraine-and-the-question#details

subject to severe and regular violations of human rights even in the absence of any resistance.

This situation creates a supreme emergency – a state of existential threat to their very existence as a community and as individuals. Some of the most prominent ethicists of war believe that in such circumstances the normal ethical rules of conduct in war can be relaxed or even wholly suspended³⁰. While the extent to which this could be justified in Ukraine is worth contemplating, one needs not evoke supreme emergency to point out that the unequivocal status of this war matters. It is enough to say that Ukraine's war is as just as they come, and indeed as just as a war can theoretically be; that the stakes for the victims of war are enormous, indeed, that almost everything is at stake for them; and that it is these stakes that need to be weighed against the inevitable harms that come with the use of cluster munitions. Given that both groups of harms threaten the same group of people, as already established, this is indeed a matter of simply comparing these harms, multiplied by the respective probabilities of them occurring. I proceed to do just that.

Possible Arguments Against CM Use by Ukraine

Discussing various possible objections to the CM use by Ukraine, I will refer to the idealized versions of these arguments. Some of these are only being implied by the explicit statements of critics; others may not have been formulated publicly, yet should be addressed for the sake of completeness. Consequently I will not attribute the criticized arguments to any particular authors, but simply refute them, starting with the weakest ones and ending with those that can be seriously considered by reasonable thinkers but nonetheless ultimately fail to convince.

Absolutist Argument. “Any use of cluster munitions is intrinsically wrong and no possible good can outweigh it”. This extremely strong statement is both far-fetched and quite common, and thus worth addressing. It seems to

³⁰ Walzer, Michael. „Just and Unjust Wars”, Basic Books 1992, Second Edition, Chapter XVI; Orend, Brian. “Morality of War”, Broadview Press 2013, Second Edition, Chapter 5. See also Smilansky, Saul. "Terrorism, justification, and illusion." *Ethics* 114.4 (2004): 790-805.

suggest that the harm caused by any instance of CM use is simply incomparable; it should never be effected, period, because of how wrong it is by itself. Ethics of war does indeed know such instances – intentional murder of innocents, sexual violence and, according to many, torture constitute deeds of this kind. But the collateral damage that follows, or is likely to follow the use of CMs is nothing of the sort. First, it does not occur necessarily; if the polluted land is cleared quickly, or if it is effectively closed to civilians, no bodily harm needs to occur whatsoever. An area being closed to humans for decades may be and usually is a great loss, although this depends on what it is exactly. Not being able to step into the village when you have lived half one's life is to be wronged indeed; but not being able to hike in a certain forest is less harmful. Secondly, even if casualties do indeed occur, the harms are analogous to those caused by other kinds of weapons; they are lamentable and very serious, but subject to the principles of distinction, precautions and proportionality, such harms are an inevitable and accepted part of war. If it was not so, war, and consequently effective defense of basic human rights against agents unresponsive to moral reasons, would have to be made illegal³¹. CMs are not harmful in a way that is different to other weapons; they are merely more harmful and harmful in a less predictable and quantifiable way. Additionally, they are not the only weapons polluting the battlefield with unexploded ordnance; almost all munitions do, it is just that the dud-rates of most CMs are worse, and the duds less easily detectable, than those of unitary munitions. All these are differences of degree, not differences of kind; but the absolutist argument relies on arguing that the difference is in the kind, not in the quantity or likelihood of harm.

The Stochastic Argument. The anti-CM stance can take a more plausible, stochastic form. It is not that every single instance of CM use will render more harm than good for the Ukrainian inhabitants of the areas where they are used; it is that it will be more harmful in aggregate. Some instances of clearly non-harmful use are possible (a recent ATACMS strike on Russian military airfields where civilians have no business being present is probably

³¹ Orend, *op. cit.*, Chapter 9.

a good real-life example³²). However, on average, civilians will be harmed more than they will gain from being protected by their CM-wielding military. This is, indeed, the logic behind both the CM and anti-personnel landmine bans. It is not that these weapons cannot ever be used discriminately; it is that their discriminate use is, on the long run, (far) less likely than indiscriminate one.

This argument has substantial plausibility, especially over long time scales and across multiple conflicts. Replacing CMs with other, less harmful types of munitions is by all means a worthy goal in general. The plausibility of the argument is, however, lowered in the specific case of Ukraine. The fact that Ukraine will use CMs on their own territory; that they will use them in already heavily mined and UXO-polluted areas that will have to be closed to civilians and demined anyway; the fact that the Ukrainian war goals are uncharacteristically and unequivocally just; and the fact that there is currently no alternative to CM use all diminish the plausibility of the stochastic argument. At the very least, the stakes involved incline one not to rely on a general rule that may render faulty judgments in particular instances, but instead to judge every instance of potential use on its own, that is, proceed as one does with most other weapons. With the stakes so high the Ukrainians need to get things right every time, not only most of the time; and it makes sense to trust Ukrainian officials and military officers with these case-by-case judgments, since they represent the very people who are going to be affected both by the use and the non-use of CMs.

Let us stress how highly untypical this combination of: CMs large availability, unavailability of unitary munitions, and the stakes involved is. In its absence reasonable people could disagree about the virtues of the stochastic argument, of trusting military organizations to complete complex procedures and conduct sophisticated moral reasoning versus tying their hands prior to fighting in order to avoid certain outcomes at the expense of certain oppor-

³² For the description of the strike and its effects, see twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1714797845457350817

tunities. Yet these circumstances do hold. A thought experiment may illustrate this point more clearly: we all know asbestos is a harmful material, and there are no asbestos advocates. However, if a parent caught in a blizzard has to choose between sheltering themselves and their family in an old house containing asbestos for a couple of days, or exposing them to the elements, then the general case against letting one's children stay in asbestos-laced houses is not really applicable to the situation at hand.

A critic may reply that claiming emergency circumstances obtain is hardly a rare move; all conflicts are emergencies from the perspectives of their participants. Most if not all belligerents believe, or plausibly pretend to believe, that their circumstances are unique and that their cause is (exceptionally) just. Surely this cannot be accepted at face value every time. I agree; this, however, does not mean that we cannot know a genuine exception when we see one. Insisting that a general rule be followed all the time because genuine exceptions are rare is not very sophisticated ethical thinking; indeed, genuinely sophisticated moral reasoning must be flexible enough to recognize and allow rare exceptions when they are valid, and so needs not to tie itself to simplistic if useful rules of thumb, but rather proceed on a deeper understanding of values and moral goals underlying these rules. The general IHL framework of selecting weapons most fitting the circumstances of an individual attack in accordance with the principles of distinction, precautions and proportionality does allow such flexibility rooted in moral values; it should and must govern CM use in those rare cases when CM use in just cause is judged to be truly inevitable.

Argument From The Value of Precedent. This argument focuses on the consequences beyond the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. It can be argued that any use or transfer of CMs shatters the nascent international norm and increases the probability of CM use in conflicts yet to come. When harms to the victims of these conflicts are considered, the moral balance changes.

Considerations of space prevent me from engaging fully with this argument and its assumptions; I will just make three brief points. Firstly, no truly global

norm exists yet. While 112 countries are parties to the Cluster Munition Convention³³, the list does not include 7 out of 9 nuclear powers, many other military powers and/or countries located in conflict-prone regions such as the Middle East-North Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe. Since most actual practitioners reserve their right to use CMs in at least some circumstances, existence of a firm norm cannot be alleged. This is in contrast with, for example, Biological Weapons Convention that really does establish a firm norm that has not been violated by a state actor for decades, and therefore an actual precedent of substantial value.

Given this fundamental fact, the argument from the value of precedent loses much of its strength; but what strength is left is additionally sapped by two other points. The very existence of a precedent does not guarantee that it will not be broken, and hence its own value; the degree to which the existence of a precedent reinforces itself may be different (and speculative), but it is surely possible for a norm to fall into obsolescence. Even if Ukraine declined to use CMs, the norm could be shattered in the very next conflict.

This leads to another observation – either the norm is brittle, that is, a violation by one country leads to a cascade of violations by other countries, or it is not, perhaps because the benefits of following the norm are independent of other countries' compliance. If the CM taboo is brittle, than the supposed precedent is too. But if the norm is not brittle, than Ukraine's refusal to honor it in this particular conflict will do little damage in the long run. No parties to the CCM have withdrawn since July, and it is hard to see why they would do so – the reasons that propelled their accession have little to do with unanimity or general compliance. Ukraine claiming an exception does not threaten any of the CCM parties, prove CM use to be morally unproblematic nor infuse the global weapons market with new CMs. It is a last resort action that others will be prudent to avoid having to take in the future. A family sheltering in a house laced with asbestos for a night will not bring building with asbestos back into vogue.

³³ clusterconvention.org/states-parties/

Lessons to be Learned

In this brief last section I want to sketch some general takeaways from this case study for the ethics of military technology.

Create and distribute alternatives to ethically problematic weapons. In order to effectively ban a weapon, one has to encourage the development and/or proliferation of an ethically superior and militarily viable alternative. No matter how horrific, weapons will be used until an alternative becomes available – and countries will revert to using them when the supply of this alternative weapon is exhausted. Promoting cleaner weapons and effective and ways of using them, making military organizations invested in these systems and habituated to their use, creating sufficient stockpiles – all this is necessary to make the transition permanent and irreversible.

Needless to say, this approach is incompatible with general hostility to armaments industry, weapon acquisitions and military-technological endeavors in general. Prohibitory efforts that are aimed not at a weapon system but at a military capability as such are bound to fail. If they are aimed at the armed forces of a legitimate state exercising its duty of providing security for its citizens, this is indeed a welcome result. It is imperative to communicate and prove that weapon restrictions, as well as other ethical restrictions, do not have to sap military power, but can indeed engender military excellence, as in the case of precision-guided munitions.

Focusing on weapon bans, rather than use restrictions, can produce crude judgments and fallible rules. With some exceptions weapons that have been banned by (some) countries or targeted for such bans are ethically suspect because they cause problems in many or most cases, not in all cases of their use. A general ban is always bound to bar use in instances when such use could be legitimate, that is, when it could spare lives or protect rights worth protecting. Making weapon or even weapon class bans a go-to method for humanizing war is therefore a questionable idea. Bans are a tool with its

own limitations, even in cases where a weapon really does have inherent flaws, and one does well to remember that there are alternatives.

Account for organizational biases in humanitarian advocacy. ‘Organizational biases’ are not ones originating in ill will or specific prejudice; rather they are ones an organization acquires just in virtue of being an organization. Military organizations have them, and NGOs and IGOs have them as well – it would indeed be astonishing if they have not had these. A bias towards quantifiability and verifiability of results will exist in any organization interested in measuring its impact. And it just so happens that compliance with unequivocal weapon bans is easier to measure and verify than compliance with restrictions on their use. As a matter for further research, it is indeed worth investigating the extent to which the clarity and susceptibility to bureaucratic quantification may be driving the preference for outright bans over more nuanced and context-sensitive approaches, observable among contemporary humanitarian NGOs. That does not mean that one should favor policies whose success is unverifiable, or undervalue efforts to measure and document compliance. Still, the ethics and laws of war should generally evolve towards greater sensitivity to morally relevant facts, and when they stop doing that, an attempt at diagnosis is in order. Acknowledging organizational biases towards solutions that are simpler to market, introduce, monitor and quantify, but not necessarily morally superior, and acting on this awareness may be a step worth exploring.

Autonomous Weapons for Humanity: Lessons from the Russo-Ukrainian War

Nathan Wood

Abstract

Though autonomous weapon systems (AWS) fulfill a number of critical combat roles, and have done so for decades, ethical and legal worries have been raised in relation to recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and the possibility for more open-ended or versatile deployments of these systems. In particular, the potential for AWS to be used in anti-personnel roles is argued by many to present especially difficult issues ranging from concerns over the dignity of those targeted by such systems to practical worries that AWS will be incapable of making the nuanced judgments required for distinguishing combatants from civilians. However, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War highlights a potential response to these objections, namely that autonomous weapons may be deployed in order to further humanitarian aims by providing a means for would-be interveners to create humanitarian corridors for fleeing civilians. The argument focuses on one of the most objectionable forms of AWS, namely explicitly anti-personnel systems which aim to kill combatants, and argues that even rudimentary AWS with limited abilities of distinction could be used to bolster humanitarian aims while adding only a minimal risk to civilians. This is because object recognition in computer systems has reached a level where such systems would be able to rather reliably determine whether an individual is armed or not (and these capabilities are continually improving), and based on this criterion alone AWS could be deployed to create safe corridors of retreat for fleeing civilians. Such corridors could be marked to all sides in a conflict, their locations communicated to civilians seeking refuge, and the AWS programmed to lethally engage anyone entering the designated corridor who is armed. As the purpose of humanitarian corridors is to enable civilians to safely exit a combat zone, there is no

good reason for armed units of either side to enter such a space, and so targeting based solely on whether or not one is armed could also be used as a means to show resolve in furthering humanitarian aims while taking a decidedly neutral position in the conflict itself. AWS deployed for such purposes could thus engage armed units with far less discrimination, aiming at anyone who is armed, rather than only “enemy” combatants, and the securing of such corridors through wholly unmanned systems has the added benefit that it risks no lives of would-be interveners, making participation more likely. The general simplicity of the targeting parameters for AWS deployed to such tasks (if armed, engage, otherwise, not) would furthermore ensure that the interveners could only be utilizing their autonomous weapons for purely humanitarian aims rather than as a cover for bolstering the position of one side in a conflict. The arguments further highlight a potential use-case for what is widely considered one of the most objectionable forms of AWS, presenting a counterpoint to critics’ claims.

Keywords: *Autonomous Weapon Systems, International Humanitarian Law, Distinction, Humanitarian Intervention*

Introduction

Autonomous weapon systems (AWS) have been in use for decades, performing a number of unobjectionable combat roles around the world. However, as artificial intelligence (AI) is incorporated to an ever-greater degree in these systems, creating risks of opaque decision-making and potential unpredictability, critics of autonomous and AI-enabled weapon systems have become increasingly vocal in their objections to these. One of the most widely criticized types of such platforms, and certainly one of those bringing with it the greatest ethical and legal challenges, are lethal anti-personnel systems. In the literature critical of AWS, these are what are most emblematic of the charged terminology of “killer robots”.¹ However, as I have argued elsewhere, it is not the

¹ See, e.g., Asaro (2012); Human Rights Watch (2012); Sparrow (2016).

systems themselves that present ethical or legal challenges, but rather uses (and misuses) of those systems.² In particular, though almost any system can be used in an unethical or illegal fashion, nearly all see at least some permissible use cases, and some cases where use of these weapons is arguably superior, on not only moral and legal grounds, but also on broader pragmatic or strategic grounds such as deterrence or strategic stability. In this article, I present and defend one such use case for lethal autonomous anti-personnel systems, namely the establishment of humanitarian corridors (HCs) in active war zones, demonstrating that even these platforms most subject to critique (and rightly so) may find situations where their deployment is morally, legally, and strategically sound. Importantly, the argument does not imply that such systems are in general permissible, as there are many contextual factors that impact on the permissibility of a certain weapon's use in discrete warfighting roles. However, it shows that blanket prohibitions may undercut certain uses which are compliant with both the ethics and laws of war, and are moreover of a purely humanitarian nature. The upshot of the arguments is thus that we should not seek overarching positions on AWS, but instead look to each potential system, its potential uses, and the contexts of such use, developing rules and best practices to guide these while recognizing that nearly all weapons, despite their destructive potential, can be used for good or ill.

The arguments are structured as follows. I begin in Section 2 by discussing the importance of humanitarian corridors for protecting civilians fleeing from war, highlighting what is necessary for an HC to be effective, respected by all sides, and properly neutral. In Section 3, I examine what minimal targeting parameters would need to be instituted in order for an AWS-secured HC to meet the requirements sketched in the previous section. As the arguments focus on AWS deployed for humanitarian purposes by states not party to the conflict, Section 4 addresses the potential objection that deploying *lethal* autonomous *weapon* systems may

² Wood (2023b); Wood (unpublished manuscript).

expand the conflict, drawing in neutral parties. Finally, Section 5 concludes by making clear that the arguments are not in defense of anti-personnel systems *per se*, but rather are meant to indicate that overarching positions or blanket prohibitions are apt to be too broad, as there will exist legitimate use cases for almost every type of system we might develop. Moreover, though systems can (and likely will) be misused, good actors can utilize AWS to bolster human rights and respect for life, and we have a responsibility to be mindful of each and every use case which can further these important goals.

However, before moving onto the arguments, there are two points in need of addressing. First, it is critical that we are clear on what we mean by “autonomous weapon system”.³ Though there exist many competing definitions in both academic and governmental positions,⁴ there is a growing consensus which follows the views of the United States Department of Defense (DoD) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in treating as AWS all systems which, “once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human operator”.⁵ This view, moreover, is closely followed by many critics of AWS, including the civil society group known as the Campaign to Ban Killer Robots.⁶ As the arguments to come resist the conclusions of these critical voices, the broad definition of AWS provided by the DoD and ICRC and echoed by critics thus provides a useful departure point.

Second, it is worth stating clearly that the arguments of this article focus exclusively on (potentially) lethal *anti-personnel* autonomous weapon systems. Anti-personnel systems pose the most incisive moral and legal challenges, and beyond this, anti-material systems would seem

³ See Wood (2023a) for a defense of the need for definitional clarity.

⁴ Williams (2015); Boothby (2016); Altmann and Sauer (2017); Caron (2020); Taddeo and Blanchard (2022); Oimann (2023) all provide useful exploration of varying definitions. See also Wood (2023a).

⁵ US Department of Defense (2023), pp. 21. See also International Committee of the Red Cross (2014), p. 5 and International Committee of the Red Cross (2021), p. 1.

⁶ See, e.g., Asaro (2019); Human Rights Watch (2020), p. 2; Stop Killer Robots (2022), p. 6.

to be transparently acceptable when used to prevent incursion into HCs by belligerent armored vehicles or combat aircraft. More than this, HCs ought not have any combat assets within them, and the ease with which anti-material systems can identify vehicles and incoming ordnance that may be intercepted makes clear their permissibility. It is also worth making clear that the autonomous systems being discussed are ones where there is neither contemporaneous human input to the AWS' decisions, nor is there a possibility for a human to override those decisions. Using alternate terminology, the focus is on "human off-the-loop" systems rather than those with a human "in-the-loop" or "on-the-loop". The purpose of this limitation is to target the discussion to the most morally and legally challenging types of AWS, namely anti-personnel systems where a human cannot contribute to or override the decisions of the system. If the arguments developed below are able to show that even these systems have an ethical and legal use case, then this serves as a particularly strong objection to arguments for partial or total bans of AWS development and deployment.

1 Humanitarian Corridors

Warfare has never been a clean enterprise, but in modern conflict the costs which civilians bear are often truly terrible. More than this, civilians are often intentionally targeted by belligerent parties, and are sometimes used as a moral or legal shield by bad actors who either hide within the civilian population or place civilians between themselves and opposition forces. As cases in point, the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine has seen regular and immense bombardment of Ukrainian civilian sites by Russian forces, and the recent Hamas incursion into Israel and subsequent Israeli counterattack highlight the precarious situation of civilians on all sides of conflict. In any war where hostilities take place at least partly within populated areas, or where military forces have clear and legitimate objectives within cities or civilian spaces, there is moral and humanitarian value in doing all that we can to remove civilians from

combat zones before hostilities place them at severe risk.⁷ Additionally, international humanitarian law (IHL) requires that certain precautions in attack be taken when conducting hostilities which may be expected to incidentally harm civilians. All of these factors argue for the establishment of humanitarian corridors when combat is expected to spill over into civilian spaces. But how exactly should such corridors be established? More importantly, who is to establish such corridors, through what means, and if fighting is required to protect the civilians fleeing, how is that to be done in a non-escalatory manner which does not risk exacerbating the conflict by drawing more parties into it? The remainder of this section will be devoted to discussing four elements which are required for a humanitarian corridor to be effective and sustainable,⁸ and the following section will present a potential means for fulfilling these criteria.

The first and arguably most important element of any effective humanitarian operation, be it the creation of a safe zone, establishment of a corridor through which to flee the fighting, or even the instatement of a temporary ceasefire, is that it is properly protective; merely indicating that an HC exists will not suffice. Nor is it acceptable to have demarcated corridors which are unsafe for civilians or which take civilians into danger. Thus, HCs which lead through mined areas, which are not protected, or which take civilians into hostile zones (or into captivity) are all insufficient. More than this, such corridors would be in breach of both the ethics and laws of war which prohibit subjecting civilians to disproportionate and unnecessary harms. A humanitarian corridor must help civilians to escape the fighting, and it cannot subject them to more risks than would be suffered if they remained where they were.

⁷ It is likely infeasible for civilians to be evacuated before hostilities commence at all, and it is likewise often tactically problematic to provide warning too far in advance. However, there are many cases where civilians can and should be removed, such as during prolonged sieges of urban areas, or in combat where combatants have dug in to such an extent that significant destruction and use of less accurate munitions is expected during the course of fighting.

⁸ This is not to be taken as an exhaustive list of the necessary components, but rather a sketch of the broad elements needed.

Second, in order for an HC to remain effective, it will likely need to be neutral. What this means is that the corridor cannot present any side to a conflict with some clear military advantage. It may not seem immediately clear how this even could be the case, but if one imagines a corridor as an inviolable space, and that corridor is stretched across a state, then this would create an effective barrier to operations, potentially allowing one side to dig in, prepare an assault, or consolidate gains behind the corridor's line of march. As the tempo of war may ebb and flow, such a corridor may be a hindrance to a party one day, a boon the next. But importantly, if the corridor provides any substantive advantages for any significant amount of time, it is likely to be crossed by combat units, risking the chance that fighting erupts within its bounds, and thereby creating grave risks for the civilians traversing it (who may also be more tightly grouped within that space, compounding the risks to them).

Third, civilians within an HC are likely to be at even greater potential danger than if they were in their homes waiting out the fighting. This is because they will often be in the open and presented with much less cover in the event of fighting, they will be traveling in easily distinguishable civilian groups (putting them at risk of strike from criminal belligerents who may seek to actively target them), and they will almost certainly be more densely grouped than if they were each hiding on their own. Because of these factors, it is critical that HCs are robust. What this means is that an HC, once established, has mechanisms for guaranteeing that it remains truly protective for those within it for so long as the corridor is being maintained. The central element of robustness is that the HC is manned or covered by combat units which are prepared to use force to guarantee the safety of civilians. If this is not the case, then the corridor cannot be seen to be truly protective, as a criminal belligerent may strike the civilians there at any moment. Thus, the capacity to use lethal force, and the clear and transparent intention to do so when necessary, are central to building effective HCs in areas where some belligerents refuse to afford civilians their due protections under IHL.

If would-be interveners are prepared to use lethal force to guarantee the safety of those within a humanitarian corridor, a fourth and final element which is critical is that this force (and thus the corridor itself) not prove escalatory or risk drawing additional states or groups into the conflict. It may seem obvious, but if the establishment of an HC presents serious risks of intensifying a conflict and expanding it, then any gains it may provide for discrete civilians fleeing at that moment are apt to be overshadowed by the far larger risks of exacerbating the situation. Thus, humanitarian corridors, while almost certainly requiring guarantees of safety backed by the threat of force, cannot be set up in a manner expected to intensify, extend, or expand the fighting.

2 AWS for Humanity: Design requirements and targeting parameters

Humanitarian corridors must be designed to be truly protective of civilians, robust in the protections they offer, neutral enough to be respected by all sides to conflict,⁹ and careful enough to be non-escalatory in nature. One may propose different means of achieving these goals, but in this section we will focus on only one such possibility, namely the use of AWS as defenders of civilians fleeing along an HC. In developing this point, I will focus on the minimal capabilities such AWS must have and the targeting parameters which are necessary in order for the HC to be protective, robust, neutral, and non-escalatory.

In this article, we are focusing on explicitly anti-personnel AWS, but it is worth reiterating that effective HCs will likely require anti-materiel systems as well, either of an autonomous or manned variety, in order to prevent combat vehicles and long-range weapons from being used against civilians. This is especially important if one considers the regu-

⁹ This requirement is qualified as HCs are apt to always present at least some passing advantage to one side in a conflict. The critical point is that the advantage not be great enough, or favor one side often enough, that it undermines the general respect for the HC by all sides.

larity of Russian attacks on civilians in Ukraine through the use of artillery and long-range missiles, making clear that any attempt to protect civilians, including those who are fleeing, will require systems to counter these threats. Anti-materiel systems present far fewer ethical or legal hurdles though (targeting mistakes are far less likely in anti-materiel systems, and systems countering artillery or missile batteries which are firing on civilians do not raise special problems). Given this, in discussing what is needed for establishing effective HCs, we will take for granted that anti-materiel systems are in place and focus on what capabilities and targeting parameters must be present in order for anti-personnel systems to also be permissibly deployed.

With regards to design needs and capabilities, anti-personnel AWS must, at a minimum, be able to reliably recognize small arms, be able to be geolocked to certain areas of activity, be capable of targeting and engaging individuals (lethally, if necessary), and be highly accurate in their engagements. The ability to recognize small arms is central to locating individuals who may potentially threaten civilians in the HC, the ability to target and engage such individuals is necessary for the HC to be properly protective, geo-locking allows one to limit the AWS to operations only within the HC (preventing spillover conflict that may be escalatory), and accuracy is required to prevent incidental harms to civilians. Accuracy is indeed doubly important, as not only ought civilians not be harmed by the AWS' operations, but an AWS that collaterally harms some civilians in the protection of others may undermine civilians' overall trust in the AWS and the humanitarian corridor, reducing their reliance on it and limiting its humanitarian value. If an AWS, however, can competently recognize small arms (subject to extensive testing and evaluation to demonstrate robustness in that capacity), can accurately engage armed individuals entering the corridor, and can be suitably limited to only engaging armed individuals within the bounds of the corridor, then it may be given targeting parameters which would allow it to be effectively used, and used in accordance with the four broad requirements of protectiveness, robustness, neutrality, and non-escalation.

Technical capabilities form only a part of responsibly and reliably utilizing AWS for establishing HCs though. In addition to these minimal hardware and software requirements, an AWS must be given targeting parameters which foster and promote the four essential values listed above. One might imagine that these targeting parameters would of necessity be complex, or require a nuanced approach to identifying potential risks to civilians. However, this could not be farther from the truth. If the aim is to create a safe space for civilians, and to do so in a maximally neutral and ideally transparent fashion, then an AWS may be programmed to simply target any and all individuals who are visibly armed and within the bounds of the HC.

These parameters are straightforward, making compliance with them clear for civilians who are entering the corridor. This is critical given that civilians in war zones may often be armed themselves, and it will be necessary that they lay down arms (ideally, at a point where they can be tagged and collected by humanitarian workers or autonomous systems). Moreover, given that geo-location is a standard and reliable capability for modern platforms, the only real task the AWS must carry out is an object recognition exercise in determining whether or not small arms are being carried by any individual. This task is increasingly within the capacity of current systems,¹⁰ and will only become more reliable as further developments are made in AI and AWS. One might object that if the AWS is only recognizing *visible* arms, but not actively searching individuals entering the corridor, then it would still be possible for bad actors to sneak weapons into the HC and then fire on civilians. Sadly, this is true, and cannot be easily dealt with in a straightforward fashion. However, it bears emphasizing that the moment an individual brandishes arms, they will be targetable for the AWS. Sufficient coverage of the HC by autonomous systems thus might allow for covert infiltration

¹⁰ Winter (2020) provides useful discussion of object recognition capabilities in AWS. See also Scharre and Sayler (2016) and Scharre (2023) for more in-depth discussion of AI capabilities relevant to this task.

by criminally-minded combatants, but it would also guarantee that the moment, they open fire they are likely to be found and engaged.

On a similar note, one might also object that a corridor monitored only for openly carried arms would allow for terrorists or infiltrators to use the HC to sneak into enemy positions or through otherwise secured locations. To this, it is worth stating that while this is a real risk, and not to be discounted or brushed away, it is a risk attending any mass movement of civilians; individuals will always find better opportunity to mask their movements within such groupings, and it will be difficult to root out those utilizing the HC as a source of cover. However, it is also worth stating that it will likely be clear in many cases when individuals *exit* the HC at points other than within refugee camps or transfer facilities, and so many instances of combatants using the corridor as cover may be discovered as they leave it. Moreover, as AWS can rather easily be outfitted with video recording devices, footage of such combatants could be used against them later, as their surreptitious use of civilians for cover would in most cases be in breach of IHL and ground their being tried as war criminals.

Looking only to whether or not individuals are armed provides a simpler targeting profile for AWS, making them likely to be much more reliable in their role as protectors of civilians. However, this extremely bare target profile is also critical for anchoring the value of neutrality in humanitarian corridors. This is because, by targeting anyone who is armed, the HC by default will not be tied to one side in the conflict. Moreover, this matches the neutral humanitarian nature, which such corridors should have, as these should be tracking basic human needs and not bolstering one party to a conflict. A transparent implementation of AWS with such bare target profiles signals to all parties that the HC really is of a purely humanitarian nature, and moreover provides no side with a clear way to make use of or exploit the HC. There will exist larger strategic considerations necessary for ensuring that the HC is properly neutral and non-escalatory, but the basic target profile used by the AWS sets a

foundational element of neutrality critical for long-term success in such humanitarian missions.

3 Strategic Stability and (De-)Escalation

Deploying autonomous weapons with the above target profile may allow interveners to claim, in good faith, that they are acting as neutral parties securing human rights and are not themselves engaging in the conflict. However, it remains true that these AWS are capable of engaging belligerents from all sides of a conflict, and we can expect at least some such engagements to occur. After all, even a party wholly intending to respect the HC will likely have some combatants who mistakenly enter its area and are thereby (lethally) engaged. Such violence risks expansion of the conflict, and for HCs to be truly effective in their humanitarian mission, this objection from escalation must be addressed. More than this, Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine has been attended by a series of threats against would-be interveners, either in the form of veiled statements about "consequences... such as you have never seen in your entire history"¹¹ to regular efforts to inspire fear of nuclear responses against those who might seek to actively support Ukraine's fight of self-defense.¹² These threats have proven to be hollow, and future threats should also be so treated, but even so, a belligerent who treats *any* outside "interference" in such a highly charged manner would be likely to cast efforts to create HCs as somehow direct attacks on their state. As such, it is critical that the establishment of humanitarian corridors through the deployment of AWS be done in such a way as to minimize these expectable risks of escalation and ensure that strategic stability is maintained.

The first point worth strongly reiterating is that properly neutral humanitarian corridors can greatly mitigate the escalatory potential of deploying combat systems to ongoing conflicts. In particular, if the

¹¹ Excerpt from Putin's February 24th address. Official transcript available at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>.

¹² Pifer (2023).

rather open targeting parameters sketched above are utilized, then *all* sides to conflict can expect their troops to be engaged when armed and entering a corridor. Such impartiality in attack can go a long way to making clear that one is not taking sides in a conflict. More than this, when a party providing the AWS to secure the corridor strongly supports one belligerent actor in the conflict, maintaining this neutrality in targeting is all the more important to ensure that the intervener itself does not violate the humanitarian nature of their mission. This is worth stating, as it would be all too easy for well-meaning rights respecting regimes to subtly alter the programming and target profiles of their AWS to make them less likely to target combatants from the group they support. However, such duplicity in deed would undermine the HC itself, inviting attacks from belligerents who feel it is being used as cover for military intervention. This would place civilians within the corridor at grave risk, and strongly speaks against such actions.

A second factor which is important in the establishment of HCs is transparency, and in order for civilians to make use of the corridor and belligerents to respect it, there are a number of points which must be clearly conveyed to all relevant parties. First, it must be entirely clear what the targeting parameters of the AWS are so that civilians can avoid being targeted. Second, the exact route of the corridor must be given to all belligerents so that they may direct their forces around it. Similarly, civilians must be made aware of the corridor's location so that they know both where they should flee to, and also at what point they must disarm themselves.¹³ Third, potential limitations of the AWS deployed must be communicated to belligerents and civilians so that they know what sorts of action or what sorts of items may be apt to lead to targeting mistakes. Fourth, the automaticity of the AWS, and the impossibility of override by humans, must be made unmistakably clear to belligerents, so that

¹³ To the latter point, there would ideally be weapon collection points, where civilians can register their name and weapon with intervener forces so that they could collect their weapons at a later time. Such collection points would moreover provide clear reference points for where the edge of the corridor lays.

they are fully aware that failure to respect the HC will result in guaranteed lethal response. With parties like Russia, this is even more important, as it shifts the escalation ladder back onto them, thereby preventing them from committing breaches in order to “test resolve” of humanitarian actors; by making lethal responses to incursion into the HC a foregone conclusion, those breaching the HC are left with virtually no recourse to claim they were wrongfully attacked, which thereby dampens possibilities of escalation. Furthermore, the clear communication of exactly where the corridor is prevents any potentially escalatory “mistakes” from occurring; combatants know where they should (not) be, and if they enter the HC and are targeted, that is their own fault.

Finally, related to the points on neutrality discussed above, it is likely that HCs will need to be periodically opened to allow combat units to cross them. Scheduled openings with clearly marked “safe zones” where civilians can securely group may serve to ensure that the corridor does not present a persistent barrier to operations, while still allowing it to convey civilians across large swaths of land. Such temporal limits bolster the image of the intervener as a purely humanitarian actor and not an active party in the hostilities. Moreover, it undermines any argument from military necessity a belligerent may give for justifying incursions into the HC outside of scheduled opening times. Ultimately, the regular scheduled opening of the corridor, and in many locations, is necessary for strategic stability as it ensures that the corridor itself does not (greatly) alter the strategic considerations of any belligerent to a conflict.

As a final point, no one should be aiming to strike civilians, and so no one can object on strategic grounds to a platform, which is deployed specifically to secure civilians, and is limited in its operations to the area of a humanitarian corridor. There are clear military grounds for needing to move across the area covered by an HC, especially if that corridor is lengthy or bisects areas of strategic relevance, but the corridor may be opened regularly enough to eliminate even this objection. And while one may argue that an AWS capable of lethally engaging combatants presents serious risks of escalation, there is also an important sense in which this

shows resolve on the part of would-be interveners.¹⁴ In fact, setting an AWS into fully autonomous mode makes clear that any breach of the HC will result in engagement, and will cause this without human agency being brought into the picture at all. Transparent communication of this fact will give potential breachers of the corridor pause, and set them in a poor position to claim they were “wrongfully” targeted by the AWS. These factors conspire to make the AWS potentially more deescalatory than flesh-and-blood combatants might be, and give interveners a means of establishing effective humanitarian corridors without putting their own boots on the ground.

Conclusion

Successfully establishing humanitarian corridors is as much a political task as a military one, and the arguments developed here should be taken as nothing more than a brief sketch of some of the factors involved. However, even from this cursory presentation, it is clear that anti-personnel autonomous weapons may find a legitimate use case in this type of scenario. In particular, anti-personnel AWS present a politically viable, strategically sound, and robust means for would-be interveners to put the needed “boots on the ground” for a corridor to be maintained. Transparent communication of the AWS’ exact targeting parameters, the exact location of the corridor, the ways in which one can safely enter and exit it, and the times and places when the corridor will be opened for combat units passing through all show how such corridors may moreover be established to be properly neutral and maximally non-escalatory. Removing civilians from combat zones moreover reduces the overall civilian harms which may be suffered in war, lowering the total grievances a party may have, and increasing the chances of a lasting peace being secured as quickly as possible.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Wong et al. (2020).

In closing, it is worth stating clearly that the presence of a use case for anti-personnel autonomous weapons does not indicate that these would in general be permissible to deploy. The capabilities of a particular system and its particular context of use will greatly impact on its overall permissibility (moral or legal) in discrete scenarios. The critical lesson to be taken away is that we ought not search for overarching arguments for or against (classes of) systems, but instead craft rules and best practices for how systems are used across an array of contexts. This is especially so, given that even the most seemingly morally objectionable types of platform – lethal anti-personnel off-the-loop autonomous weapons – may be used in an ethical and legal manner, and for the purposes of protecting humanity and bolstering the laws of war.

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Evaluation of Swarm Systems for Military Applications

Cristian Molder

Abstract: Swarm intelligence has emerged as a promising concept in military applications, offering enhanced operational effectiveness, resilience, and adaptability. This paper evaluates some of the swarm system architectures, their components, and their applicability in military scenarios. The study is currently conducted under NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) Research Task Group SCI-334, provides insights into swarm taxonomy, mission-oriented swarm behaviors, and challenges associated with deployment. Additionally, this paper discusses potential countermeasures and regulatory considerations associated with swarm technologies.

Keywords: *swarm intelligence, autonomous systems, military applications, UAV swarms, decentralized control*

I. Introduction

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems has led to the development of swarms, defined as groups of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or autonomous agents operating collectively with decentralized control. Swarm systems are inspired by biological systems, such as flocks of birds or schools of fish, where collective intelligence emerges through simple interaction rules among individual agents. In military applications, swarm systems provide a strategic advantage by enabling large-scale, coordinated operations with minimal human intervention. Their ability to execute complex tasks autonomously while maintaining adaptability to changing battlefield conditions makes them a critical asset for modern defense strategies. The NATO STO SCI-334 Research Task Group has undertaken a comprehensive study to assess the viability of swarm-based operations in diverse

mission scenarios, providing a framework for their deployment in real-world combat and reconnaissance missions.

II. Swarm System Architecture

A swarm system is fundamentally defined by its ability to operate as a collective, autonomous entity, with individual agents functioning in a highly cooperative and decentralized manner. In technical terms, a swarm is a group of autonomous platforms — often unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or robotic units — that communicate and coordinate their actions based on artificial intelligence-driven algorithms. These systems emulate behaviors observed in natural swarms, such as flocks of birds or schools of fish, where simple local interactions give rise to complex global behaviors. The defining characteristics of a true swarm include cooperative autonomous work, collective intelligence, and adaptability to changing environmental conditions *without centralized control*. In military applications, swarms leverage these properties to conduct missions with enhanced resilience, scalability, and efficiency, ensuring that even if some units are lost, the overall system remains operational (see Figure 1).

Conversely, not all *formations* of multiple autonomous systems qualify as swarms. A coordinated group of drones operating under direct human control or pre-programmed, rule-based instructions *does not constitute a swarm*, as it lacks emergent intelligence and self-organization. For instance, choreographed drone light shows or groups of UAVs executing synchronized but pre-determined movements are not true swarms, as they depend on explicit, top-down instructions rather than decentralized autonomy. Similarly, coordinated airstrikes involving multiple UAVs that follow predefined attack patterns do not exhibit the adaptive, self-organizing capabilities characteristic of swarm systems. The distinction between a true swarm and a simple coordinated group lies in the ability of the individual units to make autonomous, collective decisions that optimize mission success in real-time, without human intervention.

Swarm systems can be organized into different topologies that define how individual agents interact, communicate, and coordinate their actions. The choice of topology plays a crucial role in determining the swarm’s resilience, efficiency, and adaptability to mission constraints. These topologies vary in terms of centralization, decision-making structures, and communication dependencies, influencing the overall effectiveness of the swarm in military applications.

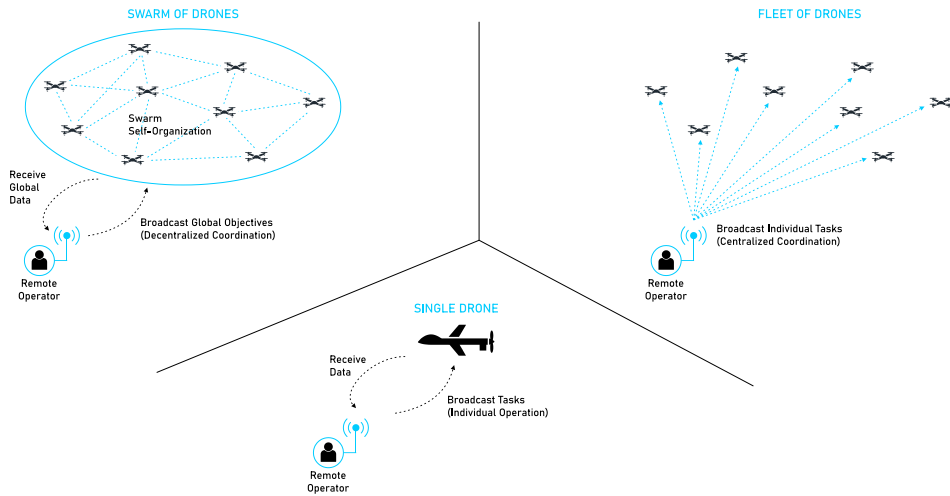


Figure 1: What is and what is not a swarm of drones?

One of the simplest swarm topologies is the *centralized topology*, where a single command unit — such as a ground control station or a lead drone—dictates the actions of all other swarm agents. This configuration allows for structured and predictable operations, as all decisions originate from a central source. However, the main drawback of this approach is its vulnerability to a single point of failure; if the control unit is neutralized, the entire swarm may become ineffective. Centralized swarms are useful for missions that require precise execution under human supervision, such as controlled battle-field reconnaissance, formation flying, and logistics operations.

A more flexible approach is the *hierarchical (hybrid) topology*, which introduces multiple layers of control within the swarm. In this configuration, a few leader drones oversee the activities of smaller groups of follower agents, while a higher-tier command structure provides overall mission objectives. This hybrid model balances autonomy and control, allowing for structured coordination while reducing reliance on a single command unit. The loss of a leader drone does not cripple the entire swarm, as lower-tier agents can still function based on local decision-making. Hierarchical swarm systems are particularly effective for multi-unit reconnaissance, distributed electronic warfare operations, and coordinated search-and-rescue missions.

For higher levels of autonomy and resilience, *decentralized topologies* eliminate central control entirely, allowing each swarm agent to operate independently while still contributing to collective goals. Coordination is achieved through swarm intelligence algorithms, where agents communicate locally and make real-time adjustments based on shared information. This self-organizing capability makes decentralized swarms highly robust against electronic warfare, signal jamming, and other adversarial countermeasures. These swarms are particularly suited for military applications where resilience is critical, such as contested environments, surveillance missions, and combat operations requiring adaptive behaviors.

Swarm systems consist of several key components that define their operational capabilities:

- *Communication*: Swarm intelligence relies heavily on dynamic and decentralized communication networks that enable real-time data exchange between agents. Effective communication ensures synchronization and coordination of tasks, allowing individual drones to respond to environmental changes, reassign roles, and optimize mission performance. However, in contested electronic warfare environments, maintaining secure and robust communication remains a significant challenge.

- *Artificial Intelligence*: The intelligence driving a swarm system is based on decentralized control algorithms that allow individual units to operate autonomously while contributing to collective objectives. These algorithms employ

cooperative control strategies, including consensus mechanisms, perimeter defense, aggregation, and path planning. The primary goal is to ensure that the swarm can function as a single entity, adapt to mission demands, and make autonomous decisions with minimal human oversight.

- *Sensors*: Swarm systems are equipped with a variety of sensors that provide critical information for navigation, target identification, and mission execution. These sensors include electro-optical (EO), infrared (IR), hyperspectral, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), and radio frequency (RF) receivers. The integration of multi-modal sensor suites enhances situational awareness and facilitates the execution of complex missions such as surveillance, target tracking, and electronic warfare operations.

- *Processing*: The processing architecture of a swarm system can be categorized into local (on-board) and remote processing. Local processing enables individual agents to perform real-time decision-making and execute tasks independently, while remote processing allows for centralized data analysis and coordination. The choice between these approaches depends on mission requirements, available bandwidth, and the level of autonomy required.

III. Mission-Oriented Swarm Behaviors

Swarm systems are designed to perform a variety of missions, each requiring specific behaviors and operational frameworks. These missions include ISTAR, combat and kinetic operations, electronic warfare, logistics and resupply, psyops and deception.

Swarms for Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR)

ISTAR operations are among the most critical military applications of swarm systems, providing real-time battlefield awareness, threat detection, and situational intelligence. Unlike traditional reconnaissance methods, which rely on manned aircraft, satellites, or single UAVs, ISTAR swarms leverage large-scale autonomous collaboration to cover vast areas, operate in challenging

environments, and provide persistent monitoring with minimal human intervention. These swarms are composed of numerous small, cost-effective unmanned systems equipped with advanced sensor payloads, including electro-optical (EO), infrared (IR), hyperspectral imaging, synthetic aperture radar (SAR), and radio frequency (RF) receivers. By integrating these diverse sensing capabilities, ISTAR swarms can detect enemy movements, identify high-value targets, and map complex environments in real time, offering a significant tactical advantage over conventional intelligence-gathering platforms.

A key advantage of ISTAR swarms is their scalability and redundancy, which allows them to operate effectively even in the face of attrition. Unlike a single high-value reconnaissance drone that could be neutralized by enemy air defenses, a swarm of smaller, expendable UAVs can continue its mission even if several units are lost. This resilience is further enhanced by their distributed processing and decentralized control, where each agent contributes to the overall intelligence-gathering process while maintaining the ability to function autonomously if communication with other units is lost. These capabilities make ISTAR swarms particularly valuable for deep reconnaissance in enemy-controlled areas, where traditional aircraft would be at high risk. Furthermore, the ability to operate beyond the line of sight (BLoS) and in GPS-denied environments ensures that these systems remain operational even under electronic warfare conditions, where adversaries may attempt to disrupt navigation and communication systems.

Another critical aspect of ISTAR swarms is their adaptive mission execution, which enables them to respond dynamically to real-time intelligence. For example, a swarm deployed for broad-area surveillance can automatically shift its focus upon detecting suspicious activity, with certain drones breaking off to conduct closer investigation or target tracking while others continue scanning the environment. This autonomous decision-making process is governed by AI-driven algorithms, which optimize swarm behavior based on mission objectives, threat assessment, and environmental conditions. Some ISTAR swarms can also be capable of collaborative target acquisition, where multiple agents combine sensor data to enhance detection accuracy, reducing

the risk of false positives and ensuring that high-value targets are correctly identified before engagement.

In addition to traditional battlefield applications, ISTAR swarms can be used for urban surveillance, counter-insurgency, and border security operations, where complex terrains and civilian presence require precision intelligence gathering. Their ability to navigate dense environments, differentiate between combatants and non-combatants, and provide real-time updates makes them invaluable tools for modern security forces. As swarm technology continues to advance, the future of ISTAR operations will likely involve greater levels of autonomy, enhanced multi-sensor integration, and improved countermeasures against adversarial threats, further solidifying their role as a key asset in military intelligence and surveillance strategies.

Swarms for Combat and Kinetic Operations

Swarm systems have significant potential in combat and kinetic operations, offering a transformative approach to modern warfare by leveraging autonomous, decentralized, and adaptive capabilities. Unlike traditional military assets, which rely on centralized control and predictable engagement tactics, swarm-based combat systems introduce a high degree of redundancy, unpredictability, and survivability. In kinetic operations, swarms can be deployed for precision strikes, saturation attacks, and target engagement in contested environments where conventional forces may struggle. By utilizing a large number of low-cost, expendable drones, swarms overwhelm enemy defenses through sheer numbers and unpredictable attack patterns. These drones can be equipped with various payloads, including lethal ordnance, electronic warfare modules, and reconnaissance sensors, allowing for highly versatile engagement strategies that can dynamically adapt to battlefield conditions. One of the major advantages of swarm-based combat systems is their resilience to countermeasures — if individual drones are neutralized, the remaining agents in the swarm can autonomously adjust their tactics, redistribute tasks, and continue executing the mission without centralized intervention.

Another key characteristic of combat-oriented swarms is their ability to perform cooperative attacks using real-time target-sharing and collective intelligence. Unlike conventional weapon systems that follow pre-programmed trajectories, swarm entities continuously communicate and share situational awareness, ensuring that attack strategies evolve dynamically based on enemy movements, defense mechanisms, and environmental factors. For instance, a swarm engaging a heavily fortified target can autonomously divide into subgroups, with some drones executing decoy maneuvers to draw enemy fire while others conduct precision strikes on vulnerable areas. Swarm algorithms can also optimize multi-axis attacks, where drones approach a target from multiple directions simultaneously, reducing the effectiveness of point-defense systems like radar-guided turrets, missile interceptors, or directed-energy weapons. Additionally, combat swarms can operate autonomously beyond the line of sight (BLoS), using onboard sensors and AI-driven decision-making to navigate complex terrains, identify priority targets, and execute surgical strikes without direct human oversight.

Beyond direct offensive capabilities, combat swarms play a crucial role in asymmetric warfare and force multiplication, providing an advantage to forces that may not have air superiority or advanced strike assets. Swarms can be used for urban combat, ambush tactics, and counterinsurgency operations, where their ability to navigate confined spaces and maintain persistent aerial coverage provides a significant tactical edge. Moreover, swarm-based kinetic operations can be seamlessly integrated with electronic warfare (EW) and cyber warfare, using drones to simultaneously jam enemy communications, disable radar systems, and conduct reconnaissance while executing kinetic strikes. The adaptability of combat swarms extends to defensive and reactive operations, where autonomous drones can intercept incoming missile threats, engage hostile UAVs, or disrupt enemy formations using high-speed interception maneuvers and coordinated blocking strategies.

However, despite their advantages, combat-oriented swarms face several challenges that must be addressed for effective deployment. Secure and robust communication networks are critical, as enemy forces may attempt to disrupt swarm coordination through jamming, spoofing, or cyberattacks.

Autonomous decision-making also raises ethical and regulatory concerns, particularly in the context of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), where minimizing unintended engagements and ensuring human oversight remain key priorities. Additionally, logistics and sustainment must be considered, as combat swarms require reliable power sources, rapid deployment mechanisms, and maintenance protocols to remain effective in prolonged engagements. Future developments in AI, swarm intelligence, and advanced materials will continue to shape the evolution of swarm-based combat systems, making them an increasingly dominant force in modern military operations.

Swarms for Electronic Warfare Operations

Electronic Warfare (EW) operations rely heavily on the ability to dominate and manipulate the electromagnetic spectrum, a task for which swarm systems are particularly well suited. By leveraging large numbers of autonomous, networked platforms equipped with advanced radio frequency (RF) sensors, emitters, and jamming devices, swarm systems can execute a wide range of EW missions, including signal interception, jamming, deception, and spectrum dominance. Unlike traditional electronic warfare platforms, which often operate as singular, high-value assets vulnerable to enemy countermeasures, swarms offer a distributed, resilient, and adaptive alternative. Each drone in the swarm can function as part of a coordinated network, ensuring that even if some units are lost due to enemy engagement or interference, the overall EW operation remains effective. Furthermore, the decentralized nature of swarm systems allows them to react autonomously to changing battlefield conditions, dynamically adapting their signal interference or electronic attack strategies without the need for constant human oversight.

One of the primary advantages of using swarms for EW is their ability to conduct wide-area electronic surveillance and signal intelligence (SIGINT) operations. Equipped with passive RF sensors, swarm agents can systematically scan large portions of the electromagnetic spectrum, detecting and tri-

angulating enemy communications, radar emissions, and electronic signatures. This capability enables real-time electronic order of battle (EOB) mapping, allowing military forces to locate and characterize adversary electronic assets with high precision. Compared to traditional EW platforms, swarms have the benefit of mobility and redundancy, ensuring that the loss of individual drones does not compromise the intelligence-gathering mission. Additionally, swarms can be used for communications relay and interference detection, ensuring that friendly forces maintain secure and uninterrupted communication channels while simultaneously identifying and neutralizing enemy jamming threats.

Another critical application of swarm-based EW operations is electronic attack (EA) and jamming, where swarms are deployed to disrupt enemy communication networks, radar systems, and electronic guidance mechanisms. Swarms equipped with electronic warfare payloads can employ distributed jamming techniques, effectively overwhelming enemy receivers by broadcasting interference from multiple directions. Unlike conventional jamming platforms that emit from a single point and are thus more susceptible to countermeasures, swarm-based jammers can operate in coordinated patterns, dynamically adjusting their positions and signal outputs to maximize disruption. This distributed approach complicates enemy efforts to isolate and neutralize the jamming source, making swarm-based EW operations significantly more resilient against counter-jamming techniques. Swarms can also engage in coordinated deception and electronic decoy operations, where they generate false signals or mimic the signatures of larger, high-value assets to mislead enemy targeting systems. This tactic, known as electronic deception, can be used to lure enemy air defenses into engaging non-existent threats, thereby exposing their locations and vulnerabilities to friendly forces.

Additionally, swarms play a crucial role in counter-EW operations, where they are tasked with neutralizing or mitigating adversary electronic attacks. In environments where enemy forces employ their own jamming techniques to disrupt friendly communications and sensor networks, swarm-based electronic warfare platforms can be programmed to identify, geolocate, and sup-

press enemy jamming sources through directional interference or cyber-electronic countermeasures. Furthermore, AI-driven swarm autonomy allows these systems to recognize and adapt to enemy electronic warfare tactics in real-time, adjusting their frequency hopping, power output, and transmission patterns to maintain operational effectiveness despite hostile EW interference. The ability to operate in contested electromagnetic environments is a key advantage of swarm-based EW, ensuring that military forces retain spectrum superiority even in highly dynamic combat scenarios.

The integration of AI-driven decision-making, decentralized control, and adaptive communication networks makes swarm systems a revolutionary tool in modern electronic warfare. Their ability to operate autonomously, resist countermeasures, and conduct distributed, large-scale electronic attacks significantly enhances the effectiveness of military EW operations. As adversaries develop more sophisticated electronic warfare capabilities, the use of swarm-enabled EW tactics will become increasingly critical for maintaining dominance in the electromagnetic spectrum. Future research in swarm-based EW will likely focus on improving cooperative AI decision-making, self-healing communication networks, and the fusion of electronic warfare with cyber capabilities, ensuring that autonomous swarms remain a key asset in modern and future battlefields.

Swarms for Logistics and Resupply

Swarm systems present a groundbreaking approach to logistics and resupply operations, particularly in military environments where speed, flexibility, and resilience are critical. Traditional resupply methods, such as ground convoys and manned aerial missions, are often exposed to significant risks, including ambushes, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and adverse terrain conditions. In contrast, autonomous swarms of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or ground-based robots can deliver essential supplies — including ammunition, medical equipment, food, and water — without placing human operators in harm's way. These swarm systems can navigate complex and contested environments autonomously, reducing the dependency on traditional supply chains that are often slow and vulnerable.

Swarm systems offer considerable flexibility in terms of payload and delivery methods. Depending on the mission requirements, a single drone can be tasked with transporting lightweight supplies, or multiple drones can collaborate to carry heavier payloads through coordinated flight and cooperative lifting mechanisms. This modularity allows swarm logistics systems to adapt to varying mission scales and payload demands. In high-risk or denied areas, expendable drones can be deployed for one-way delivery missions, ensuring that vital supplies reach forward-deployed units even when retrieval is not possible.

In addition to physical delivery, swarm systems can leverage advanced sensing and artificial intelligence technologies to autonomously identify optimal drop zones, avoid obstacles, and respond to dynamic battlefield conditions. Navigation systems incorporating simultaneous localization and mapping (SLAM), computer vision, and relative positioning enable swarm agents to operate effectively in GPS-denied or degraded environments. This capability significantly enhances their utility in contested areas where traditional navigation aids may be unavailable.

Swarm-enabled logistics operations offer autonomous solutions for last-mile delivery, transportation of critical supplies, and medical evacuation. By leveraging swarm intelligence, logistics drones can navigate complex environments, identify optimal delivery routes, and ensure timely resupply to front-line units without exposing human operators to enemy threats.

Swarms for PsyOps and Deception

Swarm systems hold significant potential for Psychological Operations (PsyOps) and deception strategies in military contexts, offering novel ways to influence, disrupt, and manipulate adversary perceptions and decision-making processes. By leveraging their ability to operate autonomously, coordinate complex maneuvers, and create visual, auditory, or electronic effects, swarms can be employed to create confusion and uncertainty on the battlefield. A well-coordinated swarm can simulate the appearance of a much larger force, overwhelm enemy sensors, or present false targets, thereby

compelling adversaries to misallocate resources, delay actions, or make flawed tactical decisions.

One of the most effective applications of swarms in PsyOps is their ability to execute *deceptive formations* and maneuvers that mislead enemy surveillance and reconnaissance systems. For example, swarms of drones can be deployed to mimic the radar signature or movement patterns of traditional military assets such as aircraft, ground vehicles, or infantry formations. This tactic can force enemy forces to overreact, reposition their assets unnecessarily, or divert attention away from the actual operational focus of friendly forces. Additionally, by generating electromagnetic signals that imitate friendly communications or emit false signals, swarm systems can disrupt enemy electronic intelligence and electronic support measures.

Auditory and visual deception can also play a vital role in PsyOps operations. Swarm drones equipped with loudspeakers or light systems can create disorienting noise, simulate troop movements, or even broadcast psychological warfare messages directly into contested areas. In urban environments, such operations can erode enemy morale, instill fear, and create the illusion of an impending larger-scale assault. The psychological impact of a coordinated swarm attack — whether lethal or non-lethal — can induce panic and confusion within enemy ranks, reducing their combat effectiveness and degrading their will to fight.

Another powerful aspect of swarms in PsyOps is their capacity to sustain persistent operations. Unlike traditional deception units that may require significant logistical support and human oversight, autonomous swarms can remain operational for extended periods with minimal intervention. They can be rapidly re-tasked, repositioned, and reconfigured to exploit enemy weaknesses and adapt to unfolding battlefield conditions. This persistence enhances their ability to continually disrupt the adversary's situational awareness and create uncertainty in their operational picture.

IV. Challenges and Countermeasures

Communication Reliability

A critical factor in the effectiveness and survivability of swarm systems, particularly in military applications where operational environments are often contested, dynamic, and hostile, is the communication reliability. Swarm systems rely on continuous, robust, and secure communication links between individual agents to coordinate actions, share sensor data, and maintain collective situational awareness. In decentralized and distributed swarm architectures, reliable communication is essential for ensuring that autonomous agents can work cooperatively, make consensus-based decisions, and adapt their behavior to changing mission parameters in real time.

One of the primary challenges to communication reliability in swarm systems is electromagnetic interference, whether intentional or unintentional. Adversaries may deploy electronic warfare (EW) measures such as jamming, spoofing, or signal interception to disrupt swarm communication channels. Jamming can block or degrade the wireless signals used for intra-swarm coordination, causing agents to lose synchronization or behave unpredictably. Spoofing attacks can feed false information into the swarm, potentially leading to mission failure or exploitation by enemy forces. In addition to intentional disruption, environmental factors such as terrain, weather conditions, and obstacles in urban or forested areas can also degrade communication signals, reducing their range and reliability.

Another significant issue is network congestion, particularly in dense swarm configurations with large numbers of agents. As the number of nodes in a swarm increases, so does the volume of data that needs to be transmitted across the network. Without efficient communication protocols, the swarm network can become overwhelmed, resulting in latency, packet loss, or even communication breakdowns. Effective data management strategies, such as prioritizing mission-critical information and employing adaptive bandwidth allocation, are necessary to mitigate these issues.

Swarm systems operating in beyond-line-of-sight (BLoS) scenarios face additional communication challenges. Maintaining reliable links over long distances often requires the use of satellite communications or relay drones, which introduce additional latency and complexity. In GPS-denied environments, the swarm must rely on alternative positioning and communication techniques, such as mesh networking and peer-to-peer links, to maintain coherence and achieve mission objectives.

To address communication reliability issues, modern swarm systems incorporate redundant communication pathways, self-healing mesh networks, and decentralized decision-making algorithms that allow individual agents to continue operating autonomously, even when communication is partially degraded. Advanced encryption and frequency-hopping techniques are also employed to enhance the security and resilience of communication links against electronic warfare threats.

Communication reliability is a fundamental concern in the design and operation of swarm systems. Ensuring continuous, secure, and efficient communication among agents is essential for maintaining swarm integrity, achieving mission success, and countering adversary attempts to disrupt operations. Ongoing research into robust communication protocols, adaptive networking strategies, and resilient swarm architectures is critical to overcoming these challenges in future military swarm deployments.

Autonomy and Decision-Making

Autonomy and decision-making are at the core of any effective swarm system, particularly in military applications where real-time responsiveness, adaptability, and reliability are mission-critical. While swarm systems offer the promise of decentralized control and collective intelligence, several technical and operational challenges arise when implementing autonomous decision-making in complex and dynamic environments.

One of the primary issues in swarm autonomy is distributed decision-making without centralized control. In a true swarm system, there is no single leader or command node; instead, each individual agent must be capable of making

local decisions based on limited information from its sensors and neighboring agents. This requires sophisticated algorithms that enable consensus-building, conflict resolution, and coordination of actions among swarm members. Ensuring that local decision-making contributes to the achievement of global mission objectives is a non-trivial problem, especially when operating in contested environments with incomplete or degraded information.

Another major challenge lies in ensuring robustness and adaptability to unpredictable scenarios. Military missions often take place in highly dynamic environments, where threats, obstacles, and mission objectives can change rapidly. Autonomous swarm systems must be able to assess these changes in real-time and make collective decisions to reconfigure, reallocate resources, or adapt their behavior accordingly. This demands the integration of advanced artificial intelligence (AI) techniques, such as machine learning, reinforcement learning, and behavior-based control, to enable agents to learn from experience and optimize their actions autonomously. However, the use of AI introduces additional complexities related to computational load, energy consumption, and the need for reliable on-board processing capabilities.

As previously seen, communication constraints also pose a significant issue in autonomous decision-making. In decentralized swarms, continuous communication among agents is critical for sharing situational data and maintaining coordination. However, in contested or hostile environments, communication links may be subject to jamming, interference, or loss. Swarm systems must be capable of operating with intermittent or degraded communications, relying on local decision rules and predictive models to continue functioning effectively. This increases the complexity of decision-making, as agents must often act with incomplete or outdated information while still contributing to the swarm's collective objectives.

Another critical concern is ensuring safety and preventing emergent undesirable behaviors. In highly autonomous systems, there is a risk of unanticipated interactions leading to swarm instability or unintended consequences, such as collisions, mission drift, or self-destructive behaviors. Rigorous testing,

validation, and verification of swarm algorithms are required to minimize these risks, along with the implementation of fail-safe mechanisms, collision avoidance systems, and ethical decision frameworks that govern autonomous actions, particularly in scenarios involving lethal force.

Human-swarm interaction (HSI) presents additional decision-making challenges. While autonomy is a defining feature of swarm systems, human operators often need to maintain a degree of oversight and control, particularly in high-stakes military missions. Balancing autonomy with human-in-the-loop or human-on-the-loop decision frameworks requires intuitive interfaces, transparent decision-making processes, and clear mechanisms for intervention when necessary. Ensuring trust in the swarm's autonomous decisions and providing operators with situational awareness without overwhelming them with data is a significant design challenge.

Counter-Swarm Strategies

As swarm systems will become increasingly integrated into military operations, they inevitably attract the focus of countermeasure development by adversaries. Counter-swarm strategies aim to disrupt, degrade, or neutralize the effectiveness of swarming systems before they can achieve their objectives. Understanding and addressing these counter-strategies is essential for ensuring the resilience and operational success of swarm deployments. Several challenges arise when defending swarm systems against targeted attacks, ranging from vulnerabilities in communication networks to the physical destruction of agents.

One of the most significant challenges in counter-swarm strategies is communication disruption, particularly through electronic warfare (EW) techniques such as jamming and spoofing. Swarm systems typically rely on decentralized communication networks to maintain coordination and situational awareness. Adversaries may exploit these dependencies by deploying electronic countermeasures designed to interfere with inter-agent communication links, causing disorganization, loss of swarm coherence, or complete mission failure. This threat is especially critical in decentralized swarms

where continuous data exchange is essential for real-time decision-making and adaptive behaviors.

Another key vulnerability lies in cybersecurity threats, including hacking, malware injection, and data manipulation attacks. If an adversary is able to breach the swarm's control algorithms or communication protocols, they may gain the ability to hijack individual agents or even take control of the entire swarm. Cyberattacks could also corrupt sensor inputs or spread false information within the swarm, causing agents to behave unpredictably, abandon their missions, or become a threat to friendly forces. Therefore, implementing robust encryption, secure communication protocols, and anomaly detection systems is critical for defending swarm architectures.

Directed energy weapons (DEWs) and other kinetic countermeasures represent an increasingly viable strategy for physically neutralizing swarm agents. High-powered lasers, microwave weapons, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) devices can target and disable small, low-cost drones in large numbers. These technologies are particularly effective when swarms rely on lightweight and minimally protected platforms that lack sophisticated shielding or defensive capabilities. To mitigate this risk, swarm systems need to incorporate redundancy and dispersion strategies, ensuring that the loss of individual units does not compromise the entire mission.

Additionally, autonomous counter-swarm systems — sometimes referred to as “anti-swarms” — are being developed to engage hostile swarms in real time. These systems may consist of defensive drone swarms designed to intercept, jam, or physically collide with attacking swarms, neutralizing them before they reach critical assets. Deploying autonomous counter-swarms introduces an escalating arms race in autonomy and artificial intelligence, requiring continuous advancements in swarm resilience, maneuverability, and defensive capabilities.

A further complication is the need for ethical and legal compliance in deploying counter-swarm tactics. Certain countermeasures, such as EMPs or DEWs, can have indiscriminate effects on civilian infrastructure, communi-

cations, and non-combatant systems. Therefore, military planners must carefully consider the rules of engagement and collateral damage risks associated with various counter-swarm strategies. This requires the development of precise, proportional, and accountable countermeasures that comply with international laws of armed conflict.

Regulatory and Ethical Considerations

The deployment of autonomous swarm systems in military operations raises significant regulatory and ethical considerations that must be addressed to ensure compliance with international law, maintain accountability, and uphold moral responsibilities. As swarm technologies advance — particularly those capable of lethal force and autonomous decision-making — governments, military organizations, and international bodies face complex challenges related to governance, legality, and ethics.

From a regulatory perspective, swarm systems must comply with existing international humanitarian law (IHL), including the principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity. Swarm systems used in combat must be able to reliably distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, ensuring that attacks are directed only at legitimate military targets. The decentralized and autonomous nature of swarms complicates this requirement, as the decision-making process is often distributed across numerous agents, making real-time human oversight difficult or, in some cases, impossible. Consequently, there is an urgent need for clear regulatory frameworks and standards that define the acceptable parameters for swarm system deployment, including requirements for testing, validation, and verification of their decision-making algorithms.

Another critical regulatory concern involves accountability and responsibility for the actions taken by swarm systems. Determining who is legally responsible when a swarm malfunctions, violates rules of engagement, or causes unintended harm is a significant challenge. Current legal frameworks are primarily designed to hold human operators accountable; however, with increasing autonomy, the lines of responsibility blur between developers, manufacturers, military commanders, and autonomous agents themselves. There

is a growing consensus among legal scholars and policymakers that regulations must address these accountability gaps by establishing liability frameworks and ensuring human operators remain “in-the-loop” or “on-the-loop” for critical decisions, especially in the use of lethal force.

Ethically, the use of autonomous swarms introduces serious concerns about the delegation of life-and-death decisions to machines. The prospect of machines independently making decisions about the application of lethal force without meaningful human control raises profound moral questions. Many ethicists argue that removing humans from these critical decisions undermines moral accountability and erodes the ethical principles that underpin the laws of armed conflict. Moreover, there are concerns about dehumanization — the risk that adversaries and non-combatants may be treated as mere data points in algorithmic decision-making processes, devoid of the empathy and judgment humans bring to warfare.

Additionally, the potential for misuse and proliferation of swarm technology adds another layer of ethical concern. Swarm systems, especially low-cost and expendable versions, may be susceptible to misuse by non-state actors, terrorist organizations, or rogue states. Regulatory bodies need to consider arms control measures, export restrictions, and international agreements to prevent the unchecked spread of autonomous swarm technologies that could destabilize global security.

Privacy and data security considerations must be addressed, particularly in scenarios where swarm systems collect and process large amounts of sensor data for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. Safeguards should be in place to prevent unauthorized surveillance, ensure data protection, and comply with applicable privacy laws.

V. Conclusion

Swarm systems represent a transformative capability in modern military operations, offering unprecedented flexibility, resilience, and autonomy. Their

ability to operate collectively, self-organize, and execute complex missions without centralized control makes them highly effective across a wide range of applications, from intelligence gathering and reconnaissance to combat operations, electronic warfare, logistics, and psychological operations. The decentralized nature of swarm systems allows them to adapt to dynamic environments, maintain mission continuity despite losses, and offer scalable solutions suited for both large-scale strategic objectives and small-unit tactical operations. As military forces increasingly adopt these technologies, swarms are poised to redefine concepts of maneuver, force projection, and battlefield dominance.

However, the deployment of swarm systems also introduces significant technical and operational challenges. Maintaining reliable and secure communication between swarm agents in contested environments is critical, particularly in the face of electronic warfare threats and jamming. Advances in autonomous decision-making are necessary to ensure that swarms can operate effectively without human intervention while adhering to mission constraints and adapting to real-time threats. Furthermore, the growing proliferation of swarm technologies has prompted the development of sophisticated counter-swarm strategies, including directed-energy weapons, cyberattacks, and autonomous counter-drone systems designed to neutralize swarm threats before they can achieve their objectives. These factors underscore the importance of continuous research and innovation in swarm defense and resilience strategies.

Beyond the technical and tactical aspects, swarm systems raise complex regulatory and ethical considerations that must be addressed to ensure their responsible and lawful use. Regulatory frameworks are needed to establish accountability for autonomous actions, particularly in lethal missions where the delegation of decision-making to machines presents profound moral dilemmas. Clear guidelines must be developed for testing, validating, and certifying swarm behaviors to comply with international humanitarian law and rules of engagement. Additionally, the potential for misuse and proliferation of swarm technology by non-state actors and rogue states poses a significant

security risk, requiring international cooperation to develop arms control measures and non-proliferation agreements.

While swarm systems offer transformative advantages for military operations, their development and deployment must be approached with caution and foresight. Technological advancements must be matched with rigorous regulatory oversight and ethical scrutiny to ensure that swarms are used in ways that are lawful, accountable, and aligned with international norms. As these systems become more autonomous and capable, the importance of maintaining human control, ensuring accountability, and safeguarding against unintended consequences will be paramount. By addressing these challenges comprehensively, military organizations can leverage the full potential of swarm systems while upholding their legal and ethical responsibilities in modern warfare.

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Future OSINT - Between Artificial Intelligence, Transparency, and Propaganda

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Abstract: Based on the corresponding talk at the CMR-23 conference, the report presents a nuanced analysis of the evolving role of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) in an era increasingly dominated by artificial intelligence with increasing fragmented information realms. It examines the potential of AI to revolutionize information gathering, while also scrutinizing the ethical dilemma of mass surveillance and risks associated with its adoption. The report explores the dichotomy between the enhanced capabilities provided by AI and the imperative of maintaining transparency to prevent the spread of propaganda in increasing fragmented information realms. As OSINT stands at the intersection of technological innovation and information integrity, this document provides strategic insights into navigating the challenges ahead, emphasizing the need for an ethical framework that aligns with the principles of open intelligence and societal trust.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Transparency, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), Propaganda, Horizon Scanning*

Introduction

In the actual geopolitical situation, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) has established itself as a pivotal tool in information gathering, with a huge boost because of the digital age and AI. It relies on publicly available data to garner valuable insights typically for various sectors such as governmental organizations, law enforcement, intelligence services, companies, organized crime

organization¹ and finally civil organizations. Open source research by civil organizations such as Bellingcat often leads to criminal prosecution.²

However, the evolving nature of the internet, especially in the concept of a "metaverse" poses new challenges and questions for the future of OSINT and the never-ending influence of propaganda. This report delves into the current landscape of OSINT, examines the potential impacts of a fragmented internet, and discusses adaptation strategies to meet these challenges. By analysing hypothetical scenarios and historical precedents, a comprehensive overview of the resilience and adaptability of OSINT methodologies in an increasingly uncertain digital future is provided.

The term "open source information" exclusively refers to general information that is available to the public without restriction. Evangelista et.al (2020) derive the term from the US Department of the Army and divide it into two terms.³

- **Open sources:** An individual, group or system which provides information with no confidentiality requirement. The information contained in these sources is not protected from public disclosure. Although this information will be in the public domain.
- **Public information available:** Data, facts, instructions or other material that is published, disclosed or transmitted for general public use and can be legally accessed by any person.

¹ Nihad, H. (2020). A guide to social media intelligence gathering (SOCMINT). Secjuice. <https://www.secjuice.com/social-media-intelligence-socmint/>

Nihad, H. (2019). Gathering evidence from OSINT sources. In *Digital Forensics Basics* (pp. 311–322). Apress. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4842-3838-7_10

² Basu, T. (2022). OSINT: Wie Online-Freiwillige Kriegsverbrechen in der Ukraine aufdecken. MIT Technology Review. Abgerufen am 7. November 2023, von <https://www.heise.de/hintergrund/OSINT-Wie-Online-Freiwillige-Kriegsverbrechen-in-der-Ukraine-aufdecken-6567702.html>

³ Evangelista, J.R.G., Sassi, R.J., Romero, M., & Napolitano, D.M. (2020). Systematic literature review to investigate the application of open source intelligence (OSINT) with artificial intelligence. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 16.

According to Austrian law, the retrieval or collection of this information does not require special authorization and can be stored and retained. In the academic research literature, open source information is divided into four categories.

- Generally accessible data and information (including web, deep web and dark nets)
- Target-oriented commercial data
- Expert knowledge (information)
- Grey literature⁴

The data sources in the four categories encompass the entire spectrum of the information landscape: Newspapers, journals, magazines, television, radio, internet, official as well as unofficial government reports, academic sources and studies but also information that is not directly declared classified but may still contain sensitive and proprietary content.⁵

Publicly accessible internet blogs are a rather new, but nevertheless very valuable source of information on general aspects of the population, such as opinions, but also other social perspectives.⁶

The entire spectrum of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) enables users in the most multifarious application areas and continuously developed methods to achieve a broad spectrum of information requirements by generating information from open sources in order to generate an additional advantage.

The various purposes for so-called OSINT investigations are as diverse as the recipients and often very controversial. The spectrum extends from intelligence services, which increasingly rely on openly available information in addition to confidential and secret data, to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which expose a wide range of illegal activities by creating transparency. The success of social media applications has made it more difficult to

⁴ Origin, quality and availability often unknown or limited

⁵ Evangelista et al., 2020; NATO. (2001). *Open source intelligence handbook*.

⁶ See 9

maintain an overview. And the changing structure of the internet is causing challenges, as well as opportunities. In response to this situation, OSINT tools have evolved and improved over time.

The Current Landscape of OSINT

The landscape of **Open Source Intelligence (OSINT)** is as dynamic as it is expansive, reflecting the rapid technological advancements and the ever-increasing volume of publicly accessible information. This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the current state of OSINT, highlighting the plethora of topics about global research on tools, techniques, and platforms that have become integral to modern intelligence gathering. With the internet serving as a pivotal backbone, OSINT practices have evolved to harness the vast array of data available online, from social media feeds and news outlets to public records and academic publications.

This chapter not only showcases the diversity and sophistication of research topics about these tools but also emphasizes the critical role the internet plays in enabling and enhancing OSINT capabilities. As we navigate through this landscape, we gain insights into how professionals across various sectors leverage open-source information to inform decisions, shape strategies, and anticipate future developments.

The following graphic shows core topic cluster of actual scientific publications in the last three years (2021-2024) about active OSINT research and publications. The different color of the nodes reflect the different identified core topic cluster.

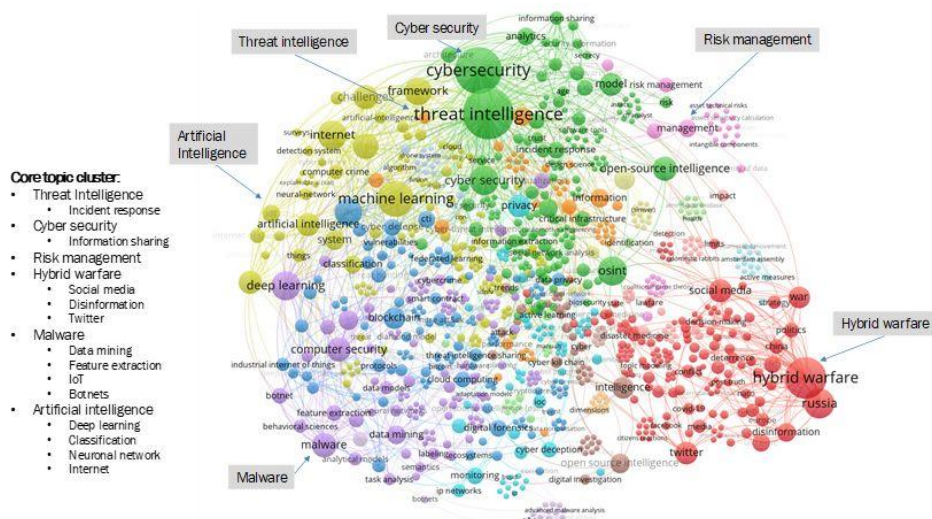


Figure 1: Topic map of actual OSINT publications (2021-2024)

Source: own calculation, based on Web of Science data

The topics listed in the core cluster are all integral to the future of OSINT, each contributing in unique ways and indicating the semantic structure of the actual OSINT research.

- **Threat Intelligence**⁷ forms the foundation for proactive technologies in cyber security OSINT. By analyzing threats, OSINT in threat intelligence can offer predictive insights in actual campaigns and prepare for defensive measures in time. Typical analytics refers to Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) messages, well known in the cyber security domain.
 1. **Incident Response:** Effective incident response relies on swift access to accurate information. AI generated OSINT helps in quickly gathering intel to manage and mitigate cyber

⁷ Cherqi O, Moukafih Y, Ghogho M and Benbrahim H (2023) Enhancing Cyber Threat Identification in Open-Source Intelligence Feeds Through an Improved Semi-Supervised Generative Adversarial Learning Approach With Contrastive Learning. Ieee Access 11, 84440-84452. <https://doi.org/10.1109/access.2023.3299604>

incidents. However, this is only possible with proper knowledge modelling in the preparation phase.

- **Cyber Security**⁸: As a broader field of actual OSINT research interest, cyber security encompasses many of the listed topics. OSINT supports cyber security by providing information on threats, vulnerabilities, and ongoing attacks.
 1. **Information Sharing**: The practice of sharing information between entities enhances collective knowledge and response to cyber threats⁹. OSINT facilitates the gathering and dissemination of this information.
- **Risk Management**: OSINT contributes to risk management by identifying potential threats and vulnerabilities, allowing for informed decision-making to mitigate risk. Risk management on the other side can give a formulated motivation with structured responses.
- **Hybrid Warfare**¹⁰: This form of warfare involves a combination of conventional and non-conventional tactics, including cyber-attacks and adversarial reconnaissance¹¹. OSINT is essential to prepare tool for the tactical supremacy to identify and understand these complex threats and to counter them.

⁸ Wekesa EN, DeCusatis C and Zhu A (2023) A Black Box Comparison of Machine Learning Reverse Image Search for Cybersecurity OSINT Applications. Electronics 12(23). <https://doi.org/10.3390/electronics12234822>.

⁹ Yadav A, Kumar A and Singh V (2023) Open-source intelligence: a comprehensive review of the current state, applications and future perspectives in cyber security. Artificial Intelligence Review 56(11), 12407-12438. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-023-10454-y>.

¹⁰ Jiang HJ and Minami K (2023) The Eyes and Ears of the Dragon: Open-Source Intelligence and Chinese Foreign Policy during the Cold War. Journal of Cold War Studies 25(2), 41-63. https://doi.org/10.1162/jcws_a_01141.

¹¹ Roy S, Sharmin N, Acosta JC, Kiekintveld C and Laszka A (2023) Survey and Taxonomy of Adversarial Reconnaissance Techniques. Acm Computing Surveys 55(6). <https://doi.org/10.1145/3538704>.

1. **Social Media:** A rich source of real-time data, social media platforms are valuable for OSINT for gauging public sentiment, tracking events, and detecting misinformation. This includes social media and deep web and on dark nets, as well as in games and in the metaverse.
 2. **Disinformation:** OSINT tools can create, detect and analyse patterns of disinformation, aiding in the fight against false information spread online.
 3. **Twitter:** Specifically, X's stream of real-time data is a vital source for OSINT practitioners, offering insights into public opinion, emotions¹², trends, and breaking news. However, to understand the stream of information, it is essential to use the media shared in links on X.
- **Malware:** Understanding the spread and impact of malicious software is part of OSINT, which can inform the development of protective measures. Thus cyber security and OSINT are closely related and will be related even more in the future, together with AI.
 1. **Data Mining**¹³: OSINT relies on data mining to process large datasets and extract actionable information, a key component in many of the listed topics.
 2. **Feature Extraction:** This technique is used in data mining to identify distinctive attributes in data, which is crucial for pattern recognition in OSINT.

¹² Kotisová J and van der Velden L (2023) [The Affective Epistemology of Digital Journalism: Emotions as Knowledge Among On-the-Ground and OSINT Media Practitioners Covering the Russo-Ukrainian War](https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2273531). Digital Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2023.2273531>.

¹³ Hoffman CJ, Howell CJ, Perkins RC, Maimon D and Antonaccio O (2024) [Predicting new hackers' criminal careers: A group-based trajectory approach](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2023.103649). Computers & Security 137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2023.103649>.

3. **IoT (Internet of Things)**¹⁴: IoT devices contribute to the data landscape OSINT operates within, offering new sources of intelligence and, conversely, new vulnerabilities. With expected increase in the amount and capabilities of future IoT devices, the potential for OSINT and SIGINT.
 4. **Botnets**: The analysis of botnet behaviour and communication patterns is a part of OSINT, particularly relevant for cyber security and incident response. Operating botnets could be an activity of SIGINT or HUMINT.
- **Artificial Intelligence**: AI enhances OSINT capabilities through automation, analytics, pattern recognition and advanced reasoning.
 1. **Deep Learning**: A subset of machine learning, deep learning can process vast amounts of online data to uncover patterns that inform OSINT.
 2. **Classification**: This concept refers to organizing data into categories, crucial for managing and interpreting the vast amounts of information relevant to OSINT.
 3. **Neuronal Network**: Neural networks, mimicking human brain function, can analyze complex data patterns, offering profound insights for OSINT applications. In recent time, the combination of different AI models, together with neuronal networks have been very successful in the context of OSINT.
 4. **Internet**: The backbone of OSINT is the internet. As primary source of open-source data it is very important to understand the different sub networks, their advantages and disadvantages, as well as the limitations.

¹⁴ Shin DH, Han SJ, Kim YB and Euom IC (2024) Research on Digital Forensics Analyzing Heterogeneous Internet of Things Incident Investigations. Applied Sciences-Basel 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/app14031128>

In the context of a "disintegrated internet," the reliance on OSINT will shift, adapting to new methodologies that account for disrupted or compromised digital channels. Aspects like AI and deep learning could become even more critical, making sense of fragmented data landscapes, while hybrid warfare and the spread of disinformation present ongoing challenges that OSINT must evolve to address. The future of OSINT will likely involve a synergy of these elements, focusing on adaptability and resilience in the face of a changing digital ecosystem. More details in chapter 6. To complete the landscape, it is essential to look closer into AI and OSINT.

The narrative of artificial intelligence (AI) encompasses several different subdivisions. This refers to the set of applications that can provide human-like intelligence. Categories and disciplines of AI are, for example, machine learning, pattern recognition or natural language processing. All of these generic terms are subdivided into further areas of application, such as AI in industry, robotics, the medical sector and the trend towards automated information retrieval with OSINT.

Evangelista et al (2020) investigated potential use cases of OSINT involving AI through a systematic literature analysis. In their publication, the researchers found that around 24% of OSINT use cases are already carried out with AI. Among the use cases of OSINT using AI, almost 41% of the applications focused on cybersecurity - almost half more than social media (19%) and military applications (15%). The following figure illustrates the statistics of all the application areas of OSINT with AI analysed in the literature review.¹⁵

¹⁵ Evangelista et al., 2020

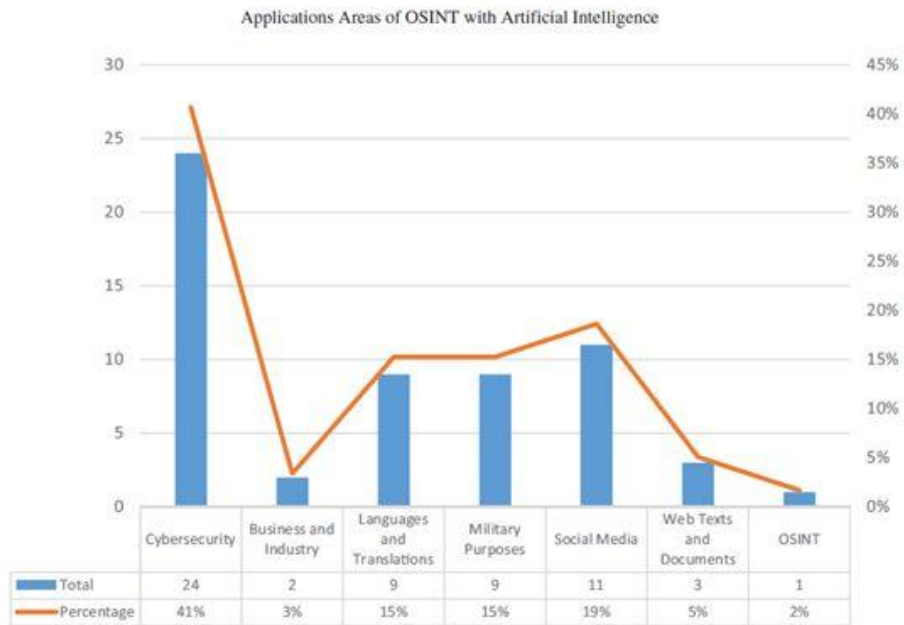


Figure 1: OSINT sections supported by AI

Source: Evangelista ¹⁶

Recent technological advances have led OSINT to evolve at a rapid speed, offering innovative data-driven and AI-powered applications for politics, business and society, as well as new ways to combat cyber threats and cyber-crime.¹⁷

The enormous technological advances in the field of software and hardware ensure that OSINT is continuously being developed at a dynamic pace. Innovative data applications supported by artificial intelligence are enabling a broad horizon of different possible applications. The spectrum of potential applications covers all aspects of politics, business and society and offers many new opportunities as well as risks. Pastor-Galindo et al (2019) describe various main use cases in their study. In one use case, OSINT-generated data

¹⁶ Evangelista et al., 2020

¹⁷ Pastor-Galindo, J., Pantaleone, S., Mármol, F. G., & Martínez Pérez, G. (2019). *The not yet exploited goldmine of OSINT: Opportunities, open challenges and future trends*. Department of Information and Communications Engineering, University of Murcia.

collections about users are collected in order to derive social opinion and sentiment analyses. This is actually offered by social media analytics by extracting and analysing messages and interactions. Potential end users of these analyses may include the marketing sector as well as political campaigns. It is also feasible to perform an automatic truth evaluation in order to verify fake news, hate speech or deep fakes.¹⁸

Pattern recognition of language provides the ability to offer different intentions both preventive and curative in all perspectives. In operational use, government institutions and intelligence agencies use abstracted data sets and aggregation of patterns to perform predictive cyber defence, forensic investigations and prosecution of perpetrators of cyber attacks and other crimes and terrorist intentions.¹⁹

Different EU projects did focus on AI and OSINT in the last years. The DiSIEM (Diversity-enhancements for Security Information and Event Management) project integrated into the EU Horizon 2020 program, describes the integration of different OSINT data sources. The databases and platforms that provide information about vulnerabilities in computer networks are distributed by government institutions as well as security experts and bloggers via social networks, in particular Twitter and Facebook. In order to predict threats, the data obtained must be analysed, shaped and combined to identify trends and anomalies.²⁰ DANTE did focus in particular on terrorism²¹ and OSINT, ANITA on organized crime and OSINT intelligence and TRACE on OSINT, hidden network detection²² and money laundering. The results are often comparable. It is essential to improve existing frameworks and make the capabilities accessible to the usual analyst, by making them more user friendly.

¹⁸ (Evangelista u. a. 2020; PASTOR-GALINDO u. a. 2019)

¹⁹ (PASTOR-GALINDO u. a. 2019)

²⁰ Bessani, A. (2016). *DiSIEM: Diversity-enhancements for Security Information and Event Management*. H2020.

²¹ **Cross MKD** (2023) Counter-terrorism & the intelligence network in Europe. International Journal of Law Crime and Justice 72. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijlcrj.2019.100368>

²² Joachim Klerx, Claudia Steindl, *Detecting Hidden Innovative Networks in Hacker Communities, Innovations for Community Services*, Verlag: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023

However, these projects did not address the big grey elephant in the room. A disintegration of the internet and fragmented information spaces are a huge challenge for future OSINT.

The increasing fragmented information realms of OSINT

In envisioning a scenario where the free information flow on the internet as we know it is compromised, we step into a realm where domain blacklisting, sophisticated hacking attacks, tightly managed information flows, and alternative realities like the metaverse become prominent features of a digital dystopia. This chapter delves into a detailed exploration of what a destroyed "internet" might entail, not just in terms of physical infrastructure damage but also through the lens of cyber warfare, censorship, and the fragmentation of digital spaces. We will examine the potential catalysts for such a scenario, from coordinated cyber-attacks targeting critical internet nodes to government-imposed information controls that stifle free exchange. Furthermore, the chapter will navigate the emerging concept of the metaverse, a parallel digital universe that could either offer a refuge from a beleaguered internet or become a new battleground for digital dominance. Through this scenario analysis, we aim to uncover the multifaceted impacts on global communication, the exchange of information, and the very fabric of our digital society, urging us to confront the vulnerabilities and dependencies inherent in our current digital ecosystem. There are two different types of disintegration and fragmentation, technical fragmentation and geopolitical fragmentation. Both will pose a huge challenge to OSINT as we know it today.

Technological fragmentation

The technical fragmentation of the internet refers to multifaceted issues that contribute to the partitioning of what was once envisioned as a global and unified digital information space. At this time, Internet was accessible from various computer with various operating systems. Only a compatible web browser was necessary. This fragmentation manifests in various forms, from content filtering and blacklisting by governments and institutions aiming to

control the flow of information, to geo-blocking practices employed by companies to restrict access to services and different content based on language selection or geographic location. These practices not only curtail the free exchange of ideas and access to digital resources but also create a fragmented experience for users worldwide. The following graphic shows the different sub networks from the actual internet in autumn 2023. These sub networks are used for geo-blocking, blacklisting and georeferenced content management. Critical for OSINT, the effects are only visible by comparing the results visible from different sub-networks. Transferring information from one sub-network to another one can have unpredictable results. By not making this transparent, this can contribute to an increasing divide in and between societal.

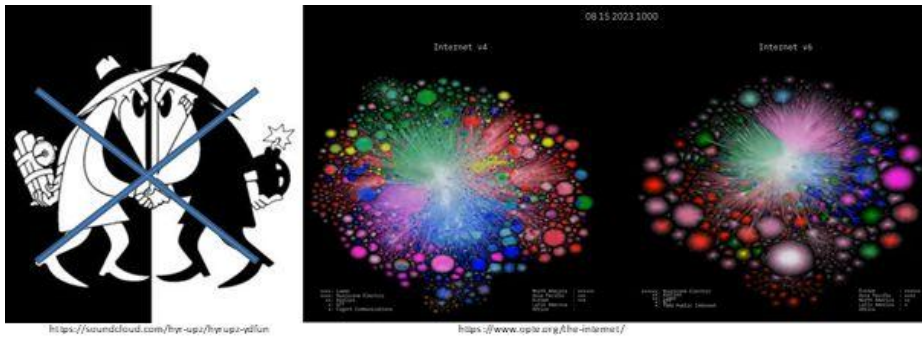


Figure 2: The different sub-networks of the Internet in 2023 with ipv4 and ipv6

Source: own compilation, based on Soundcloud²³ and Opte²⁴

A next step in the evolution of the OSINT information realm are large language models. Riveraa did discover that there is an escalation risks from language models in military and diplomatic decision-making²⁵. This needs to be further evaluated.

²³ <https://soundcloud.com/hyr-upz/hyrupz-ydfun>

²⁴ <https://www.opte.org/the-internet/>

²⁵ Juan-Pablo Riveraa, et al., Escalation Risks from Language Models in Military and Diplomatic Decision-Making, arXiv:2401.03408v1 [cs.AI] 7 Jan 2024

Finally, by looking further into the future of the OSINT information realm, the rise of proprietary metaverse platforms introduces a new layer of complexity to internet fragmentation. Each metaverse, with its unique set of rules, technologies, and access requirements, acts as a silo, potentially limiting interoperability and the seamless exchange of digital assets and experiences across different virtual environments. The following figure explores these issues in depth, examining the implications for users, developers, and the overarching ideal of an open and interconnected internet.

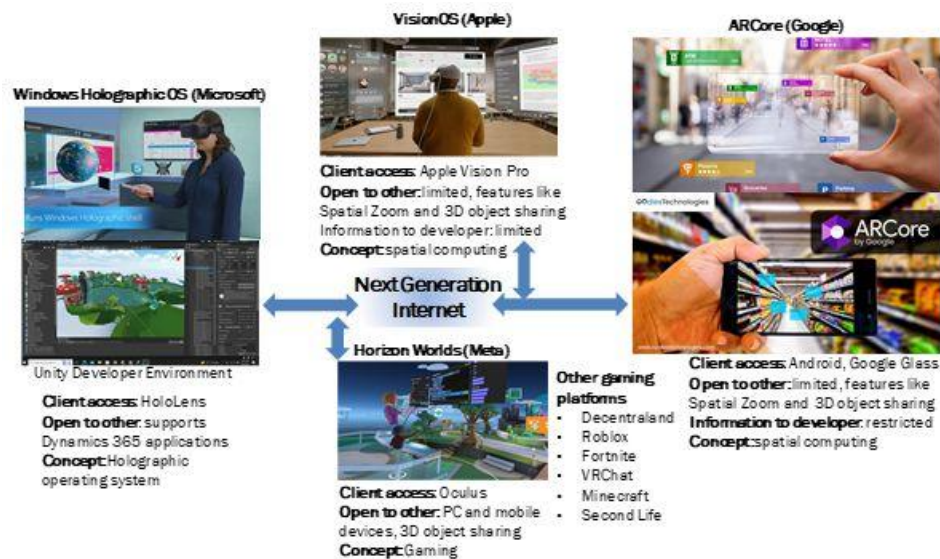


Figure 3: Data exchange and OSINT in the next generation 3d internet with spatial computing

Source: own compilation, GUI pics from different internet sources

The graphic summarizes a scenario where the internet, as we currently know it, evolves or 'disintegrates' into various proprietary metaverse platforms. In this potential future, instead of a singular, unified online experience, the internet could be fragmented across multiple metaverse environments, each owned and operated by different companies with their own sets of rules and systems.

The potential challenge this presents to OSINT is that the seamless and universal nature of the current internet might be lost, with users needing to navigate multiple, possibly incompatible metaverses to engage in different online activities. There is no possibility for a general search index. This could raise concerns about interoperability, data portability, and the open nature of the internet, as of today.

Geopolitical fragmentation

Geopolitical fragmentation works on a different level. The possibility of NATO and BRICS countries entering a new Cold War, often referred to as Cold War 2.0, arises from the growing geopolitical tensions and ideological differences between these two groups. NATO, primarily composed of Western countries, promotes democratic values and collective defence. BRICS, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and a lot of new and interested countries represents a coalition of emerging economies with diverse political systems and a common interest in reshaping the global economic and political order to reflect their growing influence in the neighbourhood of the EU.

Geopolitical Challenges in EU Neighborhood

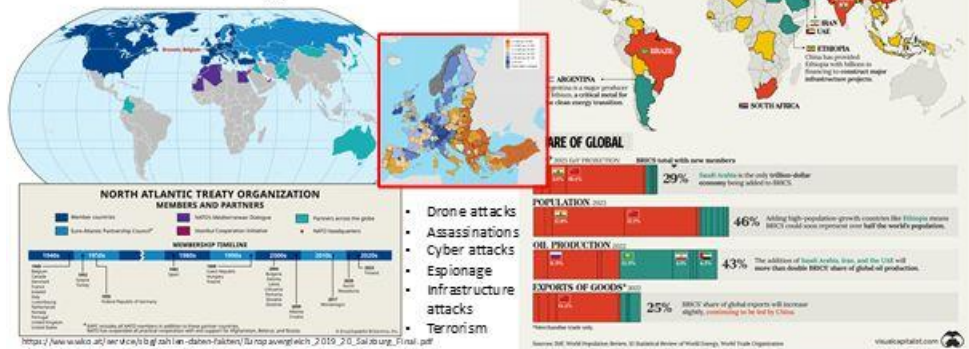


Figure 4: BRICS and NATO a Cold war 2.0?

Source: own compilation, different sources²⁶

On the economic front, the competition for natural resources, access to markets, and technological supremacy could further strain relations. BRICS nations might seek to challenge the existing Western-led financial systems by promoting alternative institutions and payment mechanisms, undermining the economic leverage traditionally held by Western powers.

Additionally, the ideological clash between the democratic, liberal values promoted by NATO countries and the varied political systems within BRICS, ranging from autocratic to democratic, could exacerbate mutual suspicions. This ideological divide might manifest in global forums, where BRICS countries could counter NATO members' initiatives, leading to gridlock and a fractured international community.

This influences the OSINT information realm. Cybersecurity and the digital domain could become a major battleground, with both sides engaging in

²⁶ https://www.wko.at/service/sbg/zahlen-daten-fakten/Europavergleich_2019_20_Salzburg_Final.pdf, and IMF on visualcapitalist.com

cyber espionage, misinformation campaigns, and efforts to sway global opinion through digital means, further deepening the divide. In this scenario, rather than direct military confrontation, the new Cold War would likely be characterized by proxy conflicts, economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and intense competition for influence in third-party nations, particularly in regions such as Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia, where both NATO and BRICS seek to expand their influence.

The geopolitical tension is reflected in the information realm. All of the elements of technological fragmentation are becoming visible and because of experience more common. This causes challenges, which are discussed in the next chapter.

How to respond to the fragmentation

The scenario of a fragmented information space in line with a fragmented digital world, rife with isolated data islands, compromised connectivity, and the loss of centralized platforms that have traditionally been instrumental to OSINT operations, like internet search engines is transformational for OSINT. In this chapter will explore the hurdles in maintaining the accuracy and reliability of OSINT in an era marked by digital echo chambers and the rise of autonomous, decentralized information networks. It is a future that compels OSINT practitioners to innovate, adapt, and prepare for a world where the usual streams of open-source data are no longer a given. The challenges to OSINT are:

- Loss of primary data sources and platforms.
- Increased difficulties in data verification and cross-referencing.
- Legal and ethical considerations in a fragmented digital landscape, where illegal information is only visible to a target audience for a very short time.

It is necessary to prepare for two different scenarios. For a practical approach, the following figure shows **scenario one** in which valuable information to the right and propaganda to the left, are published on Telegram, a OSINT source, which is accessible via client, but also via web.

Telegram Ukraine

Wide variety of different information!

Actual trend: still escalation

Satellite images of the last strike of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in the Yevpatoriya region. As a result of the incident, one S-300 (400?) air defense missile launcher was lost. Traces of burning grass are visible in the southern area.

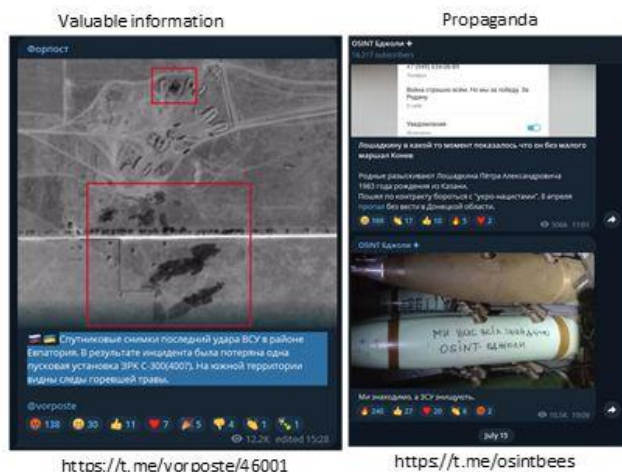
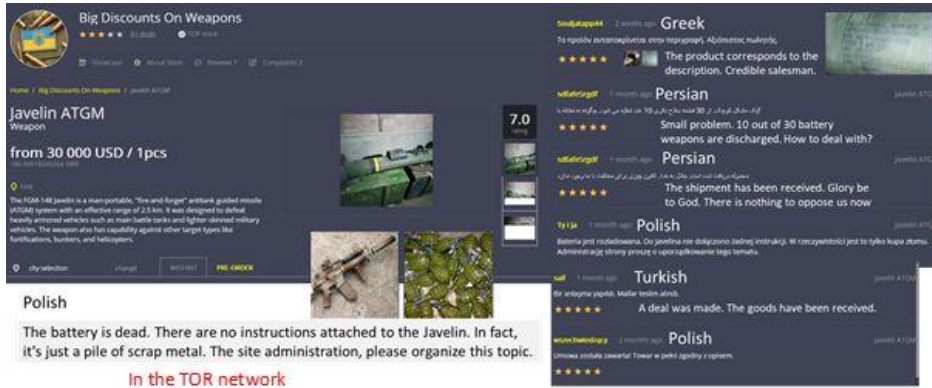


Figure 5: Telegram from valuable Information to Propaganda

Source: Telegram

The reliability in this scenario is tested with a classical approach, based on a combination of source reliability and message reliability, testing plausibility, repetition on different sources and motivation.

In scenario two, valuable information is identified on a black market in the TOR network. The TOR network is only accessible with a specific client and thus is not indexed in a web search engine.



**Figure 6: Black market for military weapons,
two weeks after the Ukraine war**

Source: Black market in the TOR network

This shows that the problem of fragmented information realm is not new, but will be worse in the future. Possible risks can arise from applications that are used by criminals or hostile-minded individuals or groups. This includes, among other things, the automated creation of personal profiles for misuse through social engineering or other attack methods and techniques to exploit the large amount of data, as illustrated by Edwards et al (2017). In their study, a framework for the automated generation of social engineering attack vectors and defense strategies through OSINT data collections in social networks was created.

The ability to collect OSINT data and generate information can be seen as a mandatory prerequisite of a security strategy at the national level. In particular, the increasing number of terrorist attacks and the spread and dominance of social media channels with relevant content for manipulation or even criminal and terrorist content have caused a vulnerability of nations. The development of OSINT situation centres, which have the ability to collect, analyse OSINT data and combine this data into relevant information, are increasingly considered as essential elements of national security strategies. Based on experiences with the “Centre of Excellence in Terrorism, Resilience, Intelligence & Organised Crime Research” (CENTRIC) founded in

2012 as a research and development facility for operational OSINT competencies,

As the digital environment undergoes relentless change, the methodologies underpinning OSINT must evolve correspondingly. The role of human intelligence (HUMINT) and signals intelligence (SIGINT) in complementing to OSINT will increase, with the very large amount of HUMINT (organized via social media) and SIGINT (Space data, IoT data, black markets for leaked data). The following figure shows very common, but rather old style OSINT tools.

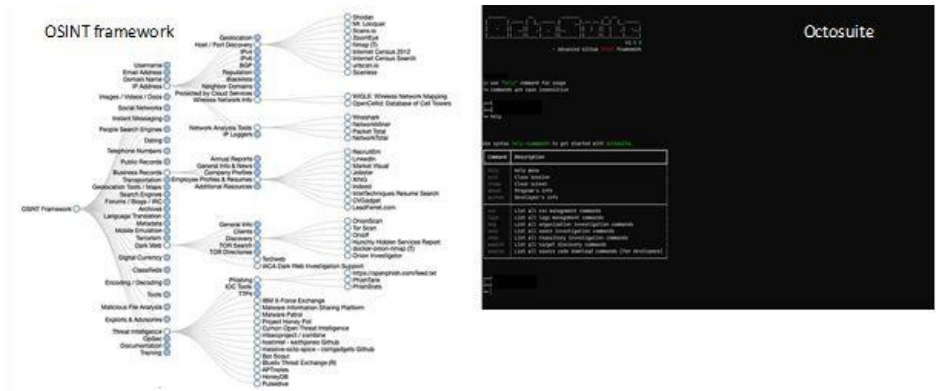


Figure 7: Most prominent OSINT frameworks, 2024

Source: OSINT framework²⁷, Octosuite²⁸, Bellingcat

The OSINT framework is a decision tree, to support the selection of tools. The OctoSuite as an example OSINT tool is a rather old style yet powerful framework designed for investigating publicly-visible GitHub accounts and repositories. Utilizing GitHub's Public APIs, OctoSuite allows for efficient analysis and exploration of data related to GitHub users, organizations, repositories, commits, and issues. It supports a wide array of commands for

²⁷ Illicit Activities Beneath the Surface Web Investigating Domestic Extremism on Anonymous Social Media Platforms, April 2021, HOLISTICA – Journal of Business and Public Administration 12(1):27-40DOI:10.2478/hjbpa-2021-0003 <https://medium.com/@shyamavwork/osint-frameworks-9df3d2839822>

²⁸ <https://github.com/bellingcat/octosuite>

gathering detailed information, such as user profile details, organization memberships, repository contributors, and more. Hypothetical scenarios demonstrating how OSINT could be conducted in a post-internet world.

Future OSINT frameworks need to prepare for information gathering in restricted environments with proprietary clients. They need to prepare for new data formats, specific to special computing and IoT.

Future OSINT Roadmap 2040

As we turn our gaze towards the horizon in the "Future Prospects for OSINT and Roadmap 2040" chapter, we endeavour to chart the course of Open Source Intelligence as it sails into uncharted waters of innovation and challenge. This chapter will lay out a visionary path for OSINT, contemplating the rapid developments in artificial intelligence, global connectivity, and data analytics that are set to reshape the intelligence landscape by 2040. We will explore how anticipated technological advancements, emerging geopolitical realities, and the shifting sands of cyber warfare will redefine what it means to gather, analyse, and disseminate information. By anticipating these changes, we aim to provide strategic foresight that prepares us for a future where OSINT not only adapts but thrives in the face of evolving global narratives.

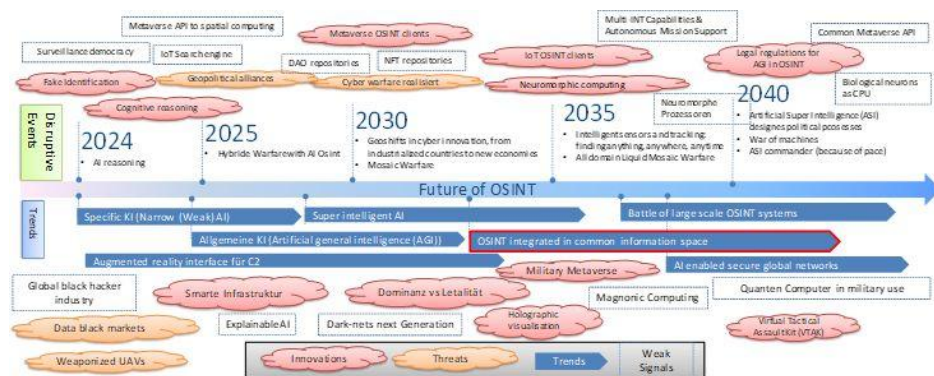


Figure 8: OSINT Roadmap

Source: own compilation

The roadmap is structured around a timeline that intersects with disruptive events, innovations, threats, and trends that drive the narrative of OSINT's future. Here is a synthesis of the roadmap depicted:

2024 (State of the Art)

- In 2024 the core topic is AI reasoning with trends in specific AI, focusing on narrow or weak AI capabilities.
- Disruptive events could be the first surveillance democracy and arise of fake identifications.
- Main OSINT innovations are OSINT C2 (Command and Control) systems, with automatic monitoring, the appearance of a global black hacker industry and black markets for leaked data

2025 (Near future)

- In the near future hybrid warfare with AI OSINT is still ongoing, suggesting a blend of conventional combat and cyber operations using AI-driven intelligence in actual conflict situations
- Disruptive events such as changing geopolitical alliances and the advent of cyber warfare are anticipated.
- Smart infrastructure and data black markets appear as innovations, while weaponized UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) are an increasing surveillance threat.

2030 (mid future)

- A major shift in cyber innovation from industrialized to new economies is expected, leading to mosaic warfare conflicts with hybrid components, where diverse combat elements are seamlessly integrated. OSINT is still dependent from good human analytics but supported by very capable AI.

- Dominance versus lethality becomes a focal point for conflict innovations, and dark-nets next-generation from organised crime networks emerges as a threat. OSINT is becoming more difficult, as these networks are communicating via encrypted direct messages.

2035 (mid future)

- Intelligent sensors and tracking systems become capable of finding anything, anywhere, anytime, hinting at near-omniscient surveillance capabilities. The evolution of IoT information space and spatial computing information space.
- All-domain Liquid Mosaic Warfare points to a fluid, adaptable approach to warfare across all spheres, respecting and using the different new information realms.
- Innovations like the military metaverse and holographic visualisation are noted, while the trend is towards weak signals, possibly indicating subtle, hard-to-detect cyber threats continues to be a challenge.

2040 (long term future)

- Artificial Super Intelligence (ASI) is expected to design political processes and command wars due to its speed, indicating a pivotal role in decision-making and operational command.
- Neuromorphic processors and biological neurons as CPU represent the cutting-edge of computing innovation.
- Quantum computing in military use is listed as a trend, with virtual tactical assault kits (VTAK) as an emerging threat.
- Finally, the different metaverse provider where force to create a common metaverse standard, which makes metaverse objects accessible with a common metaverse API.

Throughout the timeline, several overarching themes and innovations could be considered as long-term trends:

- The battle of large-scale OSINT systems, which likely refers to the competition between nation-states or organizations in developing superior intelligence capabilities.
- OSINT becoming integrated into the common information space, suggesting a seamless fusion of open-source data into the broader intelligence framework.
- AI-enabled secure global networks, pointing to the importance of robust, AI-secured communication channels for intelligence sharing.

The roadmap visualizes a future where OSINT evolves alongside advances in technology, particularly AI, and adapts to emerging threats and the changing nature of warfare and global security. The integration of sophisticated AI and the adaptation to innovative technologies like the metaverse, quantum computing, and neuromorphic processors will be crucial for the effective gathering, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence in the expected future.

Strategic Recommendations to Austria and EU

Given the sophisticated and fast-evolving landscape of OSINT depicted in the roadmap, strategic recommendations for Austria and the EU are centred on several key areas of development and preparedness, which are in the centre of future developments.

Firstly, there should be a significant investment in AI research and development, specifically in areas of weak, general, and super AI, to keep pace with the anticipated advancements in artificial intelligence and its application in OSINT.

Simultaneously, developing resilient and secure communication networks is crucial. This includes AI-enabled networks that can counter threats and ensure the integrity of information flows within the military, intelligence communities, and civilian sectors.

Next, adopting and adapting to emergent technologies like the military metaverse, quantum computing, and neuromorphic computing is essential. This not only bolsters defence mechanisms but also equips the intelligence

community with advanced tools for gathering and analysing data. Preparing for hybrid and mosaic warfare²⁹ involves interdisciplinary strategies combining cyber defence, traditional military preparedness, and public-private partnerships to reinforce national and EU-wide security.

There's also a need for a comprehensive legal and ethical framework, particularly in the governance of AI in OSINT, to navigate the complex moral landscape and ensure the ethical use of technology.

Additionally, fostering international cooperation and information sharing among allies will be instrumental in mitigating global threats and enhancing collective security. Being a high value partner in the future is essential for getting a good position in possible future OSINT cooperation.

Lastly but most important, continuous education and training³⁰ for intelligence analysts are indispensable to keep skills relevant and sharp in the face of rapidly changing OSINT methodologies and technologies.

Conclusion and outlook

As conclusion, it became clear that the landscape of OSINT is on the cusp of a transformative era. As AI technologies advance, they promise to significantly enhance the efficiency and capabilities of OSINT tools and methodologies. However, with great power comes the need for responsible governance; transparency must be the cornerstone of future OSINT endeavours to ensure ethical compliance and maintain public trust.

AI, which can decipher vast amounts of data to unearth critical insights, can also be employed to craft and spread sophisticated propaganda. Therefore,

²⁹ Flamer N (2023) 'The enemy teaches us how to operate': Palestinian Hamas use of open source intelligence (OSINT) in its intelligence warfare against Israel (1987-2012). Intelligence and National Security 38(7), 1171-1188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02684527.2023.2212556>.

³⁰ Larsen OH, Ngo HQ and Le-Khac NA (2023) A quantitative study of the law enforcement in using open source intelligence techniques through undergraduate practical training. Forensic Science International-Digital Investigation 47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fsidi.2023.301622>.

the future of OSINT will be defined by the strategies adopted to manage this balance—leveraging the strengths of AI while mitigating its potential misuse.

Looking ahead, the OSINT community must remain vigilant and adaptive. The integration of AI into OSINT processes is inevitable, and with it, the ability to process information at unprecedented speed and scale. This capability, when paired with a steadfast commitment to transparency and ethical practices, will be crucial in combating propaganda and misinformation.

As we stand at this technological crossroads, the enduring challenge for OSINT practitioners, policymakers, and technologists is to navigate the complexities of a digitally interconnected world. It will require collaborative efforts to manage the tensions between openness and security, innovation and regulation, and intelligence gathering and privacy concerns.

The future of OSINT, therefore, is not just about adopting new technologies; it's about shaping a resilient and ethical framework that can withstand the pressures of a rapidly evolving digital landscape, ensuring that the quest for intelligence does not come at the cost of the very principles it seeks to protect.

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Europe: „Security through unity“? It is not as simple as that!

Alexander Balthasar

I.

At first sight, the suggestion made by the Conference title: providing in *Europe* **more security** by **more unity** - is

- not only fully in line with the overall vision still enshrined at the very top of our European constitutional framework, i. e. in Article 1 TEU („process of creating an **ever closer union** among the peoples of Europe“),

but, what is more,

- seems to have intuitive plausibility, because:

If it is true (in the line of thinking of *Carl Schmitt*) that our security is not endangered by „us“ or our „friends“, but only by „others“, not belonging to „us“ (thus being, at least ultimately, our „enemies“ [„hostes“]),

then

- the most *simple* and *effective* way of providing a *maximum* of *our* security is indeed the **complete ontological destruction** of **every** „non-us“/“other“/„enemy“.

Of course, this *ontological* destruction of the „other“ *needs not* to imply *physical* destruction, but might also be gained by

- complete *integration*/“*assimilation*“ of the (former) „other“ *in our own world*,

- or by *amalgamation/fusion* of „us“ and „them“ to a new, common, entity,

whereas, in this line of thinking

- it would be only *second best* option to enlarge the range of **our own world** *as far as ever possible*, at least, however, to such an extent of **self-sufficiency** (i.e. the classic Greek ideal of „*αὐτάρκεια*“) that we may just **ignore** the remaining „others“, because
 - *we do not need* to have any relations to them
 - *they are too weak/ too far away* to endanger us.

II.

As may be inferred from the second sentence of my presentation („It is not as simple as that!“) I am not at all convinced that this „intuitive plausibility“ – this *pure logic of power* – is correct, at least **not in Europe**, at least **not without inherent limits**.

For this scepticism I will right hereinafter put forward some *general* arguments rooted in the overall European tradition.

We should, however, not neglect a very *specific*, most recent experience in EU’s contemporary history:

Apparently it had been exactly the aforementioned vision of an „ever closer union“ which had been a major motivation for UK’s leaving the EU – a fact not only *realized* but even *accepted as legitimate* (at least with regard to the UK) by the European Council’s Conclusions of 19 February 2016, although *by far to late*, and, therefore, in the end *in vain*.

In my opinion „**lessons learnt**“ by the **Brexit** should indeed imply at least **solid reflexion** (on the level of an „*orange card*“) **whether** – in the respec-

tive field of policies - further „unification“ really means strengthening Europe’s unity & security instead of strengthening *centrifugal* tendencies (with rather detrimental effects on our common security), fully in line with the EU motto: „united **in diversity**“.

III.

With regard to the general arguments just promised, I would like to **start** with a

A. General Historical Observation

Although the **ideal of a universal State** (in the traditional form of a monarchy) dates back, in our own space of history, to *Mesopotamia* and *Egypt*, it has **very rarely ever been realized**, and certainly **not for a longer period of time**, at least **not when what is now Europe had been involved**:

As it is well-known,

- not only *Alexander’s* realm broke immediately after his death into peaces,
- but also *Augustus* accepted *inherent limits* of the „imperium Romanum“ (with regard to Persia as well as with regard to Germania).

What is more, it seems that **Europe’s identity** has, at several occasions, actually been **built on refuting** this dream of unity,

- in the resistance of the **small Greek *πολεῖς*** against the Persian Great Kings (at *Marathon*, *Salamis* and *Plataiai*)
- at *Actium* (where the „Western“ conception of inherent limits of a *res publica* prevailed over *Antonius* & *Cleopatra’s* oriental vision)

- in the constant division (starting with *Diocletian's* reform) of „Rome“ (political & [lateron also] ecclesiastical) in a western and an eastern part („Sacrum Imperium“ vs Byzanz).

In my opinion it is exactly this **European heritage** (invoked in the famous second recital to the preamble of the TEU) which

- not only *prevented*, in modern times,
 - European powers, in particular England and France, to establish longer-lasting *coloni-al empires*
 - and, a fortiori, the success of attempts of European rulers (*Napoleon* and *Hitler*) or of *Stalin* to *dominate Europe itself*
- but is also felt
 - in the long-lasting „**multi-level**“ - **federal** - tradition (originally expressed in *feudal* forms) of most parts of the former „Sacrum Imperium“ which
 - has even influenced considerable parts *outside* of Europe (USA, Canada/Australia/New Zealand/India/South Africa/Nigeria, Brazil)
 - *and has during the last deacades again gained additional ground* also in Europe (in particular in the UK and in Spain)
 - as well as in the **principle of subsidiarity** developed in Catholic tradition and now enshrined also in EU constitutional framework (Art 5 TEU)
- and may very well also have *underpinned* Austria's „permanent *neutrality*“ after 1955 (fully in line with *Franz Grillparzer's* dictum: „Und die Größe ist gefährlich ...“; also *Leopold Kohr's* [and *Ernst Schubmacher's*] „small is beautiful“ might be cited in this context).

B. The value of „freedom“

When we look for a *common denominator* of this empirical finding, we will identify quite easily the value of „**freedom**“ (also enshrined in Article 2 TEU), **implemented** by *several* „**limites imperii**“ or *dimensions* of the principle of „**checks & balances**“:

- the most fundamental „*limites imperii*“ is that of the „*imperium*“ *as such*, expressed by the notion of „**res publica**“ which logically implies that there remains still a complementary part (the „**res privatae**“ not only of individuals, but also of several kinds of non-governmental entities [families/households, moral persons of any size and purpose, associations of **civil**, even international **society** included]) where interference of the „*imperium*“ needs specific legitimation
- *within* the sphere of „*imperium*“,
 - the first corollary of „multi-level governance“ is, of course, that **neither the top level nor the subordinated** levels dispose alone of the full range of („sovereign“) power, this *double vertical limitation* being a fundamental **prerequisite that the „rule of law“** (one of the core values mentioned in Article 2 TEU) may govern also in the field of *public* law, because the **sole** holder of power could **not** be **bound** by any other’s will (thus rendering any „law“ or „right“ accorded by him „*precarious*“, as already *Adolf Merkel* pointed out)
 - the second corollary of “multi-level governance“, however, being the existence of *several* entities on the *same* level, this **horizontal** limitation of power does not only provide a **safeguard** of liberty at least for those subjects willing to *move* (themselves or their belongings) from one entity to another, but may also offer the necessary preconditions for

the **evolution of competing creativity** (both elements being present already in the famous notion coined by *Friedrich Klopstock* of a „scholars‘ republic“ developed in 18th century Germany exactly *across* the multitude of principalities)

- but we face „checks & balances“ („fragmentation“, „separation of powers“) even on the very *same* level of an „imperium“, be it
 - originally emperor versus pope (or, more generally, „temporal“ versus „spiritual“ power)
 - the „spiritual“ sphere further developing into (at least) „autonomy“ of
 - universities
 - public media
 - several judiciaries
 - other „independent“ bodies (courts of auditors, ombudsmen, regulatory agencies, ...)
 - but nowadays, in the system of „parliamentary government“, also the institutional interplay between the political parties endorsing the government and the „opposition“.

C. „Freedom“ ≠ Anarchy

„Freedom“, however, does not mean „anarchy“, but **sufficient space of manoeuvre for every** – even a very small - **entity within a reasonable structure of** – horizontal as well as vertical - **mutual cooperation** („governance“) on, in principle, **all** levels, the global one included.

Hence, in this *moderate* meaning – fully in line with the abovementioned **principle of subsidiarity** (according to which action should *only* be taken on the higher level **if** the objectives at issue „cannot be sufficiently achieved by the“ *lower level* - the Conference title may indeed be justified, in particular in

our modern world where, due to its **complexity**, „**division of labour**“ is **simply a necessity**.

D. Awareness

Nevertheless:

The quest for „unity“ should never turn over into one for „uniformity“ – not least for cognitive reasons:

As already mentioned, **plurality of entities** is an indispensable prerequisite of **creativity**. This is, how-ever,

- not only true due to the already mentioned **external** reason that the probability of innovative solutions is increased when several entities compete,
- but also due to **internal** reasons: **uniformity** tends, at least ultimately, to a *narrowing of mind*, to a *collective* form of *narcissism* (*Erich Fromm*) or *solipsism*, which **disables** man to accept that *anyone different* from himself (with regard to culture, language, thinking, mentality) could have an „**equal right**“ to live, together with himself, in the **one common world** (the existence of which was stressed e.g. by *Maurice Merleau-Ponty*)
- Put it this way, *resistance to uniformity*, or, in positive semantics, **interest for other** cultures, languages, thinking, mentalities
 - **not only enables** us to **recognize** the „other“ in his **own** right (as empha-sized by *Emmanuel Lévinas* or by *Edith Stein*)
 - but **enlarges our own cognitive capacities** (as already pointed out e.g. by *Wolfgang Schadewaldt* or *Max Imboden*; also Mt 5, 44 – the command to „love your enemies“ - could be understood exactly in this epistemological way).

IV.

How can these principles be applied to the specific context of the „Ukraine Crisis“?

A. General Considerations with regard to the CSDP

From a *lawyer's* view I would suggest:

- Neither
 - the ultimate goal of a „common defence“ of the EU as such – i.e. the establishment of a **single EU army replacing** the armies of the Member States - envisaged in Article 42 (2) TEU

nor

- a modification of Article 31 (4) TEU barring outright any „**passerelle**“ **from unanimity to qualified majority** with regard to „decisions having military or defence implications“

needs to be strived for in the near future (being, by the way, not in the least realistic prospect we may leave it open whether this goal be a „vision“, an „utopia“ or rather a dystopia)

- What is really needed already right now, however, is **better internal coordination** of all EU Member States
 - in the common internal framework of the CSDP (implying that *purely national actions* in this field should be avoided)
 - but also in **all** relevant external formats EU Member States take part in (UN, OSCE, NATO)
- Moreover, full consequences should be drawn to **implement** already existing obligations as well as opportunities, as

- the „obligation of aid and assistance“ enshrined in Article **42 (7)** TEU,

and, as means for effectively fulfilling this obligation, participation in

- the work of the European Defence Agency (Article **45** TEU)
- the permanent structured cooperation (Article **46** TEU).

B. Specifically to „Sky Shield“

In essence, „Sky shield“ is a **form of horizontal military defence cooperation** (procurement, training, information exchange & beyond), of several European **states** for the sake of enhancing common security with regard to foreign aggression in the air dimension and thus, fully in line with the principles outlined above.

Nevertheless, I would like to add two remarks:

- „Sky Shield“ has **not** been developed **within** the framework of the EU-**CSDP** and might, therefore, even hamper the desirable „better internal coordination of all EU Member States“ with regard to military affairs (in particular, if this example were copied in the future).

Of course, this by-passing of the CSDP is due to the fact that an important partner, the UK, left the EU; what we see here is in fact **that avoiding the Brexit by more flexibility shown in time could have paid** (in the sense of more cohesion of the CSDP compared with the current situation)

- The participation also of *Switzerland* demonstrates **how limited** the *international* law institute of „**neutrality**“ really has become nowadays:

- on the one hand, **any aggressive action is prohibited generally**, not only for neutral states
- on the other hand,
 - as long as participation in this defensive cooperation cannot be interpreted as to be partisan of one side in a military conflict, even „permanently neutral“ states are not barred
 - from the moment, however, when a cooperating state has been victim of an „ag-gression“ prohibited by international law *even permanently neutral states are*, by virtue of Article 51 of the UN Charter, *entitled to providing „collective self-defence“*.

This finding might be an indication that the *current* state of international law indeed **requires some more solidarity** than before and, thus, is less favourable to the *pure* „small is beautiful“-doctrine mentioned above.

“Just War as a Strategy for Victory! “
On the Ontology of War and the Power of Natural Law,
Illustrated by the Example of the Ukrainian Struggle for
Freedom and Justice

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1. On Notion and Nature of “Polemology”

The following thoughts concerning the Nature of War shall help to understand in a deeper sense what is happening in Europe since February 24th, 2022. We will try to develop a hermeneutical approach which opens eyes and broadens the insight into the different dimensions of “War”. As it was expressed by Gaston Bouthoul: “*Si tu veux la paix, il faut comprendre la guerre*” – if you want Peace, you need to understand War. It is about understanding, what war is really all about. This was called “*polémologie*” and developed by Bouthoul about 50 years ago. This “understanding” refers to a philosophical discipline, hermeneutics, and has nothing to do with a moral position of forgiving and pardoning. To understand a phenomenon gives you knowledge about this phenomenon – and *Knowledge is Power* (Francis Bacon). So Polemology makes it possible to analyse deeply the origin and nature of a war, which helps either to win or at least to survive it. Not to be informed of all dimensions of war – in any case – leads to one’s bloody failure, be it militarily, be it politically, be it physically. So what are the basic teachings of “Polemology”? And why is this science called “Polemology”?

Philosophia perennis from Heraclitus to Heidegger tells us, that War is one possible manifestation of “*Polemos*”, which means in reality much more than only war, but also conflict, tension, contradiction, etc. - Polemos is therefore not only a kind of practical (conflictual) intersubjective behaviour, but also rooted in an ontological noumenon, which means it expresses a principle of Being itself. This finding means that one can deny, one can ignore, but one can never overcome this ontological principle of conflictuality.

To show the radical meaning of all that let's again look back to Heraclitus, who knew that War has not only this ontological dimension, but also a socio-cultural one: War is the father of all things (ontological dimension), he decides who is GOD (socio-cultural dimension) and who is SLAVE (socio-economic dimension). These words are outrageous for Heraclitus' time: the ancient Greek polis of Ephesus at about 500 BC: at those times in his part of the world there was a "Zeitenwende" underway – the possible change away from the Olympic order towards the order of Zarathustra (to put it short and simple): the intercultural war will decide who the new God will be – still old Olympic Zeus or new Persian Zarathustra.

This is true even in a broader sense: we can watch a radical cultural shift within the Greek culture: the thousand years of Mythos ended, and the period of Logos began (Wilhelm Nestle), the period of rational-analytic Enlightenment. Radical social frictions regularly lead to radical spiritual reorientation: the ancient Greeks had to choose between – to make it short - Zeus and Zarathustra, and they took Logos, the laughing third: they overcame the Mythos-normativity and switched forward to modern Logos-normativity, which is in Modern Times better known as "Natural Law". This reason and reflection-legitimated orientation for a society is the modern way of Europe, which initiated the period of both Enlightenment and Secularism, not only in ancient Greece, but also in central Europe, remember the impact of the Mongolian threat of 1240! Kyiv fell in this year, and the Mongolians conquered all of Central Europe up to the borders of Vienna at 1243. Only thanks to a miracle, Vienna was spared from the Mongol hordes: the Khan died, and the Mongols retreated unbeatenly. So the lessons learnt are: *If Kyiv falls, Vienna is lost!* That period again was already a "Zeitenwende", there was an interregnum in the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation (and also in little Austria), the bloody, century lasting Crusades were finally lost and the highly spiritual Platonic-Patristic Tradition of the Catholic Church (together with the Franciscan pacifism) was changed into the new pragmatic

¹ To make the argument complete: And if Kharkiv falls, Kyiv is lost! So watch out what happens every day in Eastern Ukraine, in order to anticipate our fate here in Central Europe!

Aristotelian-Scholastic Theology² of pragmatism and power, which meant: Power Politics had to be projected not only by Kings, but also by God (resp. his representative on Earth, the Pope), so the Vatican built a strong fortress in front of the new St Peter's Basilica and organised with the Swiss Guard the most powerful and effective armed forces of the 14th and 15th Century.

When we jump forward to our times, we have again a war based "Zeitenwende" (Olaf Scholz) to observe: the Russian full scale war against the Ukraine since February 2022 shows us that we have - regardless of the fact that we live in a post-religious age - again to ask the Heraclitean question: which "God" will be installed by War, which set of social and spiritual values will be binding in our future? The answer must take into consideration not only questions of social self-determination, but also the surrounding power structure, which has an enormous impact on the socio-cultural fate of our society. So, if Heraclitus is right and War is of higher might than Gods and Kings, so we have to watch out what political fate is waiting for us here in the European Union.

2. On the interdependence of Ontology and Ethics of War

From Heraclitean Antiquity up to Grotius and Hegel, we know, that *Being*, the true substance of Reality, is good and reasonable, because it is - Logos-based. If one undertakes something which is not good and reasonable, that means who acts against the grounding Logos, then he needs a lot of power and energy to force reality against its true nature. So, if you do not live according to the true reality you have to act strongly to prevail. With that the question of Ethics is arising in combination with Ontology. This is not new. The key question in philosophy was from the ancient beginning on up to our days ("*Philosophia Perennis*") the relationship between Ontology (What can we really know?) and Ethics (What shall we do?). This relationship is crucial even for our topic of Just War and Victory.

² Already the Holy Bernhard of Clairvaux referred in his 12th Century Church reformation argumentation back to Aristotle.

It was thanks to Immanuel Kant that we are in the fortunate position to solve this problem systematically: the Categorical Imperative of Kant shows us the way how: *Behave in such a way that you **can** will that your personal conduct could be a general law.* What does that mean for us? The point is not, that you *should* will that, but that you *can* will that! It is about possibilities, not about intentions. So, Kant indicates that there is an interrelation between reality and reasonableness. Hegel will work that out saying that what is reasonable is real; and what is real is reasonable. Hegel is not naïve, but he indicates that Reason and Reality are identical in the sense that Reason is the truth, the reality of what seems to us to be real. And Reason is also the sphere of Morality, the Good is the Core of Reason, see Plato: The highest idea is the Idea of the Good. We cannot explain these philosophical arguments in detail, these short hints must be enough to outline the philosophical depths of our topic.

For the political argument we sum up: if you establish an immoral political order, you have to be aware of the fact that you establish an unreasonable political order, what means that this order can only exist as long as you invest a lot of power to keep it standing against the deep forces of its own true nature – and this power, this energy is not endless, as history proves many times.

3. On the Meaning of “Justice” in War

What does it therefore mean to wage a „Just War“? Is it a question of „goodness“, „consciousness“, „weakness“ - or is it a consequence of reason and reflection? The concept of Just War has its origin in the Antiquity, in the writings of both Plato and Cicero. We have to go back to Plato to introduce (or to recall) the moral difference, which was made both in Plato and in the Holy Script between the Excellence-War within the cultural community (Hellenic or Jewish community) and the Existence-War with outside (cultural) powers (e.g. Persian for the Greek, e.g. Egyptian for the Jewish); the first kind of war was called “Stasis” (a kind of culture-internal Civil War), the second kind of war was called “Polemos” (a kind of culture-external Annihilation War). The theory of Just War was primarily developed for the case

of “Stasis”, in order to hold on to the common values of the cultural community with the perspective to continue a kind of living together after the war ends. In the case of a threat of annihilation, these cultural values do not apply any longer, because there is only the choice between victory or destruction. A kind of “living together” is no option for the time after war.

The first step over and beyond that position was introduced by Cicero, based on his stoic approach to public and state morality. All men are reasonable beings and therefore we have something existential in common: Humanity. Rome understood itself as the stronghold of stoic civilization and therefore Cicero argued that in such a case every enemy – even a destructive one – has this basic value in himself, being part of the common humanity. Therefore, he developed standards of a just war faring, which were applicable to every kind of enemy in the known world of Antiquity.

The Platonist Augustine referred both to Cicero and the Holy Scripture, where – via Stoa or via Revelation – Humanity was again and for the next 500 years the common ground of a kind of Catholic Humanism. This was challenged by the Aristotelian approach of Bernhard de Clairvaux, who saw in the Muslim conquest of the “Holy Sites” in Palestine not only an excellence conflict, but an existential threat to Christianity. Therefore, he argued beyond Good and Evil for a destructive war against the Muslim Forces in the Holy Land, without limits of brutality.

Again 500 years later we saw again a bloody nightmare in Europe, the 30-years-war between two Christian denominations: Catholicism and Protestantism. The common value basis was left by the argument, that the other party was of devilish character: who does not follow the only right and faithful interpretation of the bible – which is always their own interpretation – has therefore to be an ally of Devil. So, this devilish people have to be destroyed for God’s sake. Hugo Grotius was the man who decided for himself, that this slaughter cannot be neither Christian nor rational. So, he argued – referring mainly back to Cicero and Augustine -, that War has no longer to be legitimated in a moral, but in a legal way: the modern version of the Theory of “Just War” was born: in reality, it is less a theory of Justice, but of

Rules of Natural Law: Grotius developed a system of argumentative barriers to make a war not longer easily justifiable. Only very special people have the right to war (*ius belli*), only very few reasons legitimate a war (*ius ad bellum*) and one has to observe a lot of rules of engagement in order not to commit a war crime and loose the “Justice” of the war (*ius in bello*).

As we mentioned above, the thinkers of German Idealism (Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Schelling, Krause) developed the legal concept of “Just War” of Grotius deeper into their metaphysical insight, that (1) Morality is a kind of manifestation of Logos and (2) Logos is the true Reality of the visible world. So, Hegel summed up, as already mentioned above: the Real is reasonable and the Reasonable is real. Against the background of Grotius's teaching on the "Just War", one can therefore deduce that the Justice of War is also metaphysically relevant in that it establishes the connection to the reasonable Reality of War. What does it mean in the real world that you rely on the reasonable arché of this world? In other words: what does it mean in the world of beings, that you rely on the *Being* itself, which makes all the beings *being* (Heidegger)? You rely on the common Spirit behind all the Matter (Plotin). You have exactly that knowledge about matter, which means real power (Bacon). It is Power over matter, which enables you to reflect the past, to understand the present and to shape the future – be it in civil life, be it in war.

This metaphysical gate between beings and *Being* is normativity based on Natural Law, as Fichte and Hegel put it. Natural Law is the normative manifestation of the Logos, the Spirit, the Reason. And it is thanks to Natural Law, that Reason is realized in the visible world. Natural Law transforms spiritual Legitimacy into material Legality. As Fichte wrote in his “Natural Law” (1796): without Law, the Absolute cannot become concrete and visible; Jesus was the Word of God, and he, the Word, became material (bodily) by giving norms, orders. In the same moment the miracle took place a second time (after the Old Testament’s 10 Commandments): Freedom through Order! Who receives an order, has the certainty to be valued as a free person who can decide: to obey or not to obey.

So, Philosophy gives us a vague hint, that “morality” is not only an ethical (intersubjective) phenomenon, but also a metaphysical one. And the transformation from metaphysics to physics takes place via normativity, via the order! We cannot explain this metamorphosis in deep detail, but that little note should be sufficient in order to continue with our strategic argumentation.

4. On the Strategic Impact of “Justice” in War

Just War means „reasonable war“, that is if you manage to wage a war in a just way, then you will win that war *at the end of the day*, if you are able to keep the war in this just level throughout the whole time. As the thinkers of the School of Salamanca put it already in the 16th Century: only the mightiest powers are able to wage a war in a just way, because Justice means to keep to values and rules; for the weak the only way to win against a strong & just power is to switch to unjust war faring. So, to be just means that one has to be strong. Who wants to be just has therefore to prepare for war with all strength in order to wage the war – as a just war – with sustainable stability. Who accepts to be weak risks in case of war to be forced to wage it in an unjust way – or to lose without any chance to survive it.

We can learn by studying Kant that there is a regular interrelation between reasonable “morality” and pragmatical “success”, like a physical formula: Morality x Time => Success, in words of war: Just War x Time => Victory. If Kant explains that we need stable state infrastructure in order to maintain a just law-based society, so we would need – in case of international relations – a just rule-based international organisation. Kant thought about such an organisation in his short piece: On Eternal Peace, but he admitted that such a global organisation cannot work without tyrannic instruments of power. This would contradict the end of such an organisation, which should provide Freedom and Peace, and could only work with Suppression and Fear. So, the concept of an organisation of collective security (like the UN) cannot work in reality without rule-based force and power. And if such an organisation does not use rule-based force and power (like the UN who have those who

injure its principles and rules are themselves members of the UNSC), it will have no security impact and is only a toothless bureaucratic tiger. Kant's successor in the philosophical Olympus, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, changed the concept of "collective security" into "collective defence", which could avoid the key problem of "collective security": the group of states which unite to defend their rule-based order have not to include such states which are not part of this rule-based order themselves. So between partners of similar fundamental values, you need not to use force or power to function or to exist and provide stable structures of defence. And stable structures of defence make it possible to wage a – just – defence war in a just way. So, it is not only about: "Peace through strength" (Ronald Reagan), but also: "Justice through strength"!

Therefore it is not a big surprise that those "pseudo-powers" who wage unjust aggression wars need a very rapid "success", because they – in the long run – cannot provide such a high investment into counter-reason power, they exhaust sooner or later in their "power play", which in that sense has to be brutal, rule-neglecting and inhumane, in order to frighten the civilized world which has to defend itself against the unjust attack. You can call that the "Mongolian Approach" to war, as it was practised by Genghis Khan in the 13th Century conquering almost all of northern Eurasia from Far East to Kyiv and (almost also) Vienna, as mentioned above. So, an unjust attack has, analogue to Machiavelli's advice for the "Prince" in the internal power play, to be carried out very quickly, very toughly and very bloody and inhumane.

Again: what makes a just war? According to Cicero, Augustine and their Modern Times follower Grotius, it is a legal, rule-based war, according to the standards of Natural Law:

ius belli -> those who wage war must be the real representatives of the nations
ius ad bellum -> the key reason to wage war is to defend oneself from destruction

ius in bello -> while waging this defensive war of self-determination, you are not allowed to commit atrocities, but to use that amount of power which is necessary to stop (lasting) the unjust threat.

In the younger history, all in that understanding *unjust* (= ideologically driven) wars therefore have been in any case rule-breaking (e.g. WWII or now Ukraine War) and have – in a strategic perspective - no chance to be won if they take too long time to „succeed” in their perspective; the longer it takes, the stronger the true actors of reason and justice will become and organise firstly resistance and secondly counterattack which leads finally to the downfall and destruction of the aggressor and his ideological power structures, which are simply exhausted by resisting the forces of *Being* within the visible world.

5. On the Ukrainian War between Justice and Existence

If we look now at the Ukrainian War, what are we watching? We have a democratic nation which was attacked without any rational reason³ by its many times bigger and mightier totalitarian neighbour. So, the question of “*ius ad bellum*” can be answered very easily. The Russians had no right to attack, the Ukrainians have any right to defend themselves in a substantial and sustainable way. As far as the “*ius belli*” question is concerned, the problem is a little more complicated. Without doubt the Ukrainian president was elected by his people in fair and open elections. The Russian President is based on a totalitarian regime with indirectly not to neglect public approval, which rises the question of (collective?) responsibility of the Russian population for the war - atrocities of their overwhelmingly approved president⁴ committed by his army. The last question is again quite clear: the “*ius in bello*” aspect can be watched every day in the Media, the bloody killing of civilians, of civil infrastructure, of schools, museums, churches, hospitals, kindergartens etc. by the Russian forces. In Russia there are so far almost no civilian

³ There are ideological reasons based in the world view of the aggressor, but that is no legitimate motivation but reveals a deep problem of the aggressor himself.

⁴ Sociological research speaks about still more than 75% of the Russian population which agrees with the bloody and brutal war itself but is not satisfied with the “poor” success of their army.

casualties, all the blood of civilian people is spread in Ukraine. Now the Russian forces try to trigger a second wave of mass migration⁵ to weaken both Ukraine and EU-Europe by systematically destroying the energy infrastructure and by carrying out terrorist attacks with flying bombs, killer drones or rockets against civilian peaceful cities – and that every night! So, this is exactly the case of an unjust war faring!

And what does Ukraine right now? She is legitimately governed, was attacked without any reason by its overwhelmingly powerful neighbour and tries very hard to wage her defence war along the rules of the civilized world. So, Ukraine is waging a completely just defence war against Russia - she wages a just war in the sense of Hugo Grotius. And looking back to our argument above, what does that mean in a strategic sense? That Ukraine will win in the end and the aggressor will lose his strength to keep the counter-reasonable power at high tension. But what is the precondition of that final victory of Ukraine, Freedom and Justice? The stable structures of a rule-based powerful order in Europe. And here arises our responsibility in the free and wealthy part of Europe: are we really prepared to maintain our rule-based order, are we prepared to defend our rule-based order – or are we the traitors to this order, which is the precondition of our humane world order? I know, rule-based order and security is not all in life, but without such a rule-based order everything in life is threatened and at disposal – to remember again ancient Heraclitus: War is the Father of all Things, he decides who is God and who is Slave...

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⁵ See Kelly Greenhill: *The Weapons of Mass Migration*. Cornell University Press 2010.

Part D

The Way Ahead

World Café: How to achieve a Future worth Living in

Paul Ertl

Workshop;

Chairs: Nathan Wood, Patricia Glazebrook, and Raphael Rupprecht

The conference, planned as a lecture, networking and discussion event, lived largely up to this character. However, I have found in many conferences that pure lecture symposia (despite the necessity of this format) produce far less output and generate less participation than it could do, and thus fall short of many expectations. Therefore, the National Defense Academy also included a practical, workshop-based part on the last day of the conference. On the one hand, this had didactic reasons: On the third day of such an intellectually challenging event, everyone should be enabled/allowed to delve into the topic again from a practical point of view, contribute their personal expertise and opinions. On the other hand, there were socio-scientific reasons for this. By the third day, most participants are likely to be familiar with each other, so that free discussion and extrapolation can take place in a relatively positive and personal atmosphere. This means that many more details can be discussed and integrated, thus creating greater benefit. It is a promising concept to take this rather practical approach after a “familiarization phase” and getting to know the other participants, and then to return to academic heights and deal with greater theoretical depth.

The World Café – Questions and Tables

A collaborative Workshop was therefore organized at the beginning of the last day of the conference. The topic “How to achieve a future worth living in?” was discussed in a World Café format. This is an interactive method that aims to exchange ideas and experiences in an informal setting. The process

took place in three rounds, with participants working together in small groups.

First, the conference participants were divided into groups and located at tables. Each table had a specific question to discuss. After 30 minutes, the participants split up into two groups and rotated to another table to discuss the other assigned topic. And lastly, after another 30 minutes, all split up again and went to the last table to discuss the remaining theme, so that everyone was at every table and contributed to every subject.

Before this a group leader was named for each table who remained there and was responsible for the specific topic. The first question, “*How can we understand the Ukraine Conflict and what future responses are thinkable?*”, served to cover the basics and approach the conflict. This generalistic table was led by Dr. Nathan Wood. The second, more in-depth question was: “*What are the grievances and aspirations in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict?*” This tough table led Prof. Trish Glazebrook. Finally, the third table discussed practical implementations and the question: “*How is rebuilding and respecting cultural, social, and economic diversity in the context of the Ukraine Conflict possible?*” This table was led by the scientific assistant of the conference, Raphael Rupprecht.

Since an important element of every World Café is documentation, large sheets of paper were set up at each table to record the results, ideas, and suggestions during the discussion. This created visual minutes of the discussions that could be evaluated later.

At the end of the workshop, all participants gathered to share the most important insights and topics in plenary and to discuss them further. This joint reflection not only promoted understanding of the different perspectives, but also the development of specific measures and solutions for the issues discussed. I have compiled the main parts of the knowledge we have acquired and developed at this point and present it hereafter.

Table 1 Summary: Understanding the Ukraine Conflict and Future Responses

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has deep-rooted causes that intertwine national, historical, economic, and geopolitical dimensions. By examining the underlying issues, this first table aimed to offer insights to understand the past and pave the way for future responses.

1. Imperialism and Geopolitical Hegemony

At the heart of the conflict lies a form of modern imperialism led by Russia, which reflects both an ancient and contemporary struggle for power in Eastern Europe. This "Russian pest" seeks to secure a "Russian future" by re-establishing control over neighboring territories, reminiscent of historical imperialist ambitions. Such aspirations align with a broader trend of "return to great power politics," indicating a shift away from cooperative international relations towards competition for geopolitical dominance.

These imperialistic pursuits are indicative of Moscow's desire to reclaim what it perceives as its rightful sphere of influence. This sentiment is mirrored in the geopolitical struggle where global power dynamics shape regional conflicts. The West's perceived disunity and weaknesses, particularly highlighted by events like the January 6th insurrection in the U.S. and the chaos following NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, have emboldened Russia. Moscow sees these crises as indicators that it can challenge Western authority with less fear of retaliation.

2. Demographics and Domestic Politics

Demographic trends further complicate the landscape of the Ukraine conflict. The notion of "fight now OR don't fight" underscores a pressing urgency felt within the affected populations, which may lead to entrenched hostility. In Russia, a populace that faces socio-economic challenges often

rallies behind state narratives that fuel nationalism, whether through a failure to adapt to a rapidly changing world or a lack of understanding of the broader implications of their government's actions. This environment supports domestic politics that not only enables violence but also demands it as a mechanism to unify citizens against external foes.

3. Economic Motivations and Institutional Failures

Economic motivations play a crucial role in exacerbating the conflict. The desire to retain economic advantages is paramount, as Russia often attempts to disrupt Ukraine's economic systems, particularly essential resources like grain. The failure of domestic institutions in both Ukraine and Russia contributes to a volatile backdrop. Ineffective governance and institutional decay in these countries stymie efforts to address grievances peacefully and productively.

Moreover, the historical lack of another way out—alternative diplomatic solutions—has led to entrenched conflicts with minimal attempts at reconciliation or peaceful negotiation. This atmosphere leaves room for powerful individuals to consolidate personal and institutional wealth, often at the expense of broader societal needs.

4. Global Rights and Information Failures

The global community's failure to entrench rights and laws consistently jeopardizes diplomatic relations and international norms, leading to perceived impunity for aggressive actions. The international response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 exemplifies this; the lack of a decisive reaction allowed Russia to further its ambitions without fear of significant consequences.

Information failures in Russia serve to create an echo chamber, where state narratives dominate public discourse and inhibit the populace's comprehension of international contexts. The failure of the European Union and other actors to build and integrate Russia effectively has also obstructed pathways for better international relations. These strategic missteps have enabled Russia to recast itself as a victim of Western encroachment while justifying its oppressive actions in the region.

5. US Foreign Policy and Historical Context

US foreign policy, characterized by a sense of containment regarding Russia, resonates with Russia's historical analog to the Monroe Doctrine. This comparison illuminates how both nations view their respective spheres of influence as crucial to national security, often leading to friction when interests collide.

Historically, Ukraine has experienced multiple revolutions and quarrels (e.c. color revolution), asserting its complex identity juxtaposed against Russian and/or other states' dominance. This long-standing affinity between historical narratives and modern geopolitical struggles highlights the significance of national identity in understanding the conflict's roots and the motivations behind state actions.

World-Café Table 1 Conclusion:

Responding to these underlying causes requires a multifaceted approach. First and foremost, addressing demographic challenges and engaging in inclusive political dialogues can help quell internal tensions. Implementing robust institutional reforms, both domestically within Ukraine and Russia, is essential to create systems that can manage grievances more effectively and equitably.

Furthermore, adopting a proactive stance towards establishing universally respected rights and international laws is fundamental in deterring future aggression. This may involve re-evaluating and strengthening alliances within the West while addressing the root causes of perceived disunity. In conjunction with these efforts, fostering better understanding through educational programs and sharing unbiased information can break the cycle of misinformation that fuels conflict. Finally, historical context should inform contemporary policy, recognizing the complex interdependencies that shape regional interactions while encouraging collaborative international frameworks. Ultimately, comprehending the confluence of these factors not only helps frame the history behind the Ukraine conflict but also illuminates a path forward to mitigate future hostilities through informed, strategic responses.

Table 2 Summary: Grievances and Aspirations in the Ukraine-Russia Conflict

This second table explored the grievances and aspirations of various groups and communities involved in or impacted by the Ukraine-Russia conflict. The discussion encompassed political alliances, nations, age groups, and economic regions, aiming to address their diverse concerns and ambitions amidst one of the most significant geopolitical crises of the 21st century. This intermediate table was intended to bridge the gap between the fundamental issues and the practical end products for maintaining peace.

Topics according to interest groups

NATO: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is one of the central players in the conflict, offering military and logistical support to Ukraine. NATO countries aspire to ensure regional stability and prevent Russian aggression

from escalating further into Europe. However, their involvement has provoked grievances from Russia, which views NATO's eastward expansion as a direct threat to its sovereignty and sphere of influence.

Russia: Russia seeks to reassert itself as a global power, claiming grievances about NATO expansion and alleged threats to ethnic Russians in Ukraine. It aspires to maintain its geopolitical influence by asserting control over Ukraine, particularly in regions like Crimea and the Donbas.

Ukraine: Ukraine is the epicenter of the conflict, with its population suffering immense human and material losses. The country's aspiration is clear: to maintain territorial integrity, secure independence from Russian influence, and achieve closer integration with the European Union (EU).

China: China's grievances lie in the conflict's impact on global trade and its strategic partnerships. Its aspirations are to maintain neutrality while benefiting economically, particularly by purchasing discounted Russian energy and expanding influence in a polarized global landscape.

EU: The EU faces the dual burden of managing migration flows and addressing economic disruptions. While some member states emphasize peace and diplomacy, others focus on bolstering Ukraine's resistance. The EU aspires to enhance unity and self-reliance in key commodities like energy and agriculture.

USA: The United States plays a critical role, supporting Ukraine militarily and economically while imposing sanctions on Russia. Its aspirations are to uphold democratic values, counter Russian aggression, and strengthen its global leadership.

Africa and Egypt: These regions face grievances related to the disruption of food supply chains, particularly grain imports from Ukraine and Russia. Their aspiration is to secure stable trade relations and mitigate the risk of food insecurity.

BRICS States: Nations like India and Brazil highlight grievances over the global economic fallout and rising energy costs. Their aspiration is to promote multipolarity, avoiding alignment with either NATO or Russia while seeking opportunities for economic growth.

Neighboring Countries: Countries such as Poland, Moldova, and the Baltic states express grievances over refugee influxes and security threats. Their aspiration is to maintain peace and protect their sovereignty.

Age Groups: Younger generations in Ukraine and Russia bear the brunt of the war, with grievances tied to loss of life, disrupted education, and uncertain futures. Older generations aspire to see peace restored and stability achieved in their lifetimes.

Economic Impacts Worldwide

The conflict has produced far-reaching economic consequences, which are both positive and negative.

Negative Impacts: Automotive Industry: BMW and other manufacturers have faced production delays due to a lack of essential components like wiring harnesses sourced from Ukraine.

Food Supply Chains: Ukraine and Russia, major exporters of grain, wheat, and soy, have disrupted global markets. African nations, in particular, face food insecurity due to this disruption.

Electronics: The war has exacerbated shortages of electronic chips, as key raw materials like neon gas (used in chip production) come from the region.

Positive Impacts: Countries like India and China benefit from discounted Russian oil and gas. The conflict has accelerated innovation in renewable energy and agricultural self-sufficiency in regions like the EU.

Grievances

1. **Humanitarian Loss:** The death toll continues to rise, with thousands experiencing torture, displacement, and the destruction of homes. The psychological toll on families and communities is immense.
2. **Environmental Deterioration:** While not directly caused by the conflict, environmental degradation worsens due to military activities, industrial damage, and disrupted agricultural practices.
3. **Migration and Cultural Conflicts:** Millions of refugees have fled Ukraine, creating pressures on neighboring countries and cultural tensions in host communities.

Aspirations

1. **Political and Military Aspirations:** Ukraine aims to "win" the war by reclaiming all occupied territories and achieving long-term security guarantees. Russia aspires to solidify its hold over annexed regions and reassert its global power. NATO and the EU seek a stable, democratic Ukraine while preventing further Russian aggression.
2. **Economic Independence:** The EU aspires to reduce its reliance on Russian energy and diversify its supply chains, particularly in food and raw materials. Ukraine hopes for post-war reconstruction supported by international aid and investments.
3. **Cultural and Social Aspirations:** Refugees and displaced communities aspire to return home and rebuild their lives. Younger generations aspire to live in a peaceful and prosperous Europe, free from the specter of war.
4. **Global Stability:** Developing nations aspire to secure stable food supplies and mitigate the economic shocks caused by the conflict. International organizations, including the United Nations, aim for a diplomatic resolution that addresses the root causes of the conflict.

World-Café Table 2 Conclusion:

The Ukraine-Russia conflict has laid bare the grievances and aspirations of a wide array of stakeholders, from global superpowers to ordinary citizens. While the grievances—loss of life, economic hardship, and cultural disruption—are immense, the aspirations for peace, independence, and stability provide a roadmap for future resolutions. The workshop emphasized the need for sustained dialogue, humanitarian aid, and innovative economic strategies to mitigate the conflict’s impact and pave the way for a more stable global order.

Table 3 Summary: Rebuilding and Respecting Cultural, Social, and Economic Diversity in the Context of the Ukraine Conflict

The last table centered on the pressing question of how to rebuild and respect cultural, social, and economic diversity in the aftermath of the Ukraine conflict. As nations grapple with the consequences of war, the significance of diversity in fostering resilience and unity comes to the forefront. This piece delves into critical areas of economic diversity, political freedom, and societal cohesion, highlighting the multi-faceted approaches essential for sustainable rebuilding in Ukraine and beyond. So here is the result of this very central group:

Celebrating Economic Diversity

The discussion began with a vital premise: economic diversity is integral to the resilience of any nation. It is important to recognize and celebrate the varied economic structures that exist globally, including contrasting models like the affluent economies of the West compared to the developing economies of the Global South. Notably, the question arose: “Do we respect and

celebrate the Chinese economy?” Given China's emerging status as a major global player, the nuances of economic respect become even more complex.

1. **Poor vs. Rich Economies:** Recognizing the differences between wealth levels empowers dialogues that challenge simplistic narratives about development. Acknowledging varying levels of economic prosperity enables richer discussions around mutual respect and cooperation.

2. **Mutual Respect:** For true diversity to thrive, respect must be reciprocal. Developed economies should engage with emerging ones on equal footing, recognizing their potential contributions rather than imposing hegemonic models.

3. **Economic as Competition:** Understanding that economies operate within competitive frameworks invites collaboration over conflict. Fostering environments where economic strategizing and innovation are celebrated paves the way for diverse practices to coexist.

4. **Capability for Respect:** Honoring the contributions of all economies, regardless of their stage of development, can build a more inclusive global community where economic interactions are seen as opportunities for growth rather than mere competition. Thus, a foundational step in rebuilding economic diversity involves validating different economic systems while promoting mutual respect and collaboration.

Freedom in the Political System

An essential pillar of a resilient society is the political structure that governs it. The workshop emphasized how political freedom enables the flourishing of cultural and social diversity.

1. **Liberal Democracy:** Countries operating under liberal democratic frameworks showcase how inclusive governance can promote diverse voices. The success of liberal democracies demonstrates that electoral representation and civic engagement cultivate mutual respect and collaboration.

2. United Nations and Human Rights: The role of international bodies like the UN in promoting human rights highlights the importance of global cooperation in maintaining peace and encouraging cultural diversity. By endorsing human rights, a universal standard for respect is established, promoting global unity.

3. Prospecting Different Opinions: Cultivating an environment that invites diverse opinions fosters dialogue and respect among differing viewpoints. This variety engenders an enriched societal fabric where multiplicity is not only accepted but embraced.

4. Empowering Citizens: A core metaphor emerged: "Teach a man to fish, and he becomes free." This reflects the necessity of empowering individuals through education and skill-building, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to society while fostering a spirit of mutual respect.

Building a Cohesive Society

To truly respect and rebuild diversity, efforts must extend beyond economic and political domains into the very fabric of society.

1. Open Society Concept: Promoting an open society allows for the flow of ideas and interactions across cultural divides. An open society nurtures innovation and collaboration, vital for a post-conflict landscape.

2. Promotion Across All Strata of Society: Economic and social advancement should cascade throughout various societal layers. Equal opportunities for all, including marginalized groups, ensure that everyone's voice matters.

3. Whole of Government Approach: To effectively address challenges and promote diversity, a coordinated approach across government levels and sectors is essential. Collaboration improves strategy coherence and resource allocation.

4. **Shared Human Experiences:** Emphasizing shared human experiences such as hardship, sadness, joy, and success connects individuals within a society. Such shared narratives bind people, creating a sense of belonging regardless of individual backgrounds.
5. **Rule of Law:** Upholding the rule of law is foundational in establishing trust and ensuring fairness in society. A judicial system that respects rights equally fortifies the societal structure necessary to support diversity.
6. **Education and Exchange:** Educational exchanges not only broaden perspectives but also build networks of understanding across cultures. Tailoring educational approaches towards inclusivity fosters communities that celebrate diversity.
7. **Media and Public Discourse:** Encouraging free debates through responsible media engagement can combat the spread of misinformation. Media literacy initiatives can empower citizens to discern credible information and actively participate in societal discourse.
8. **Cross-Cultural Interaction:** Facilitating opportunities for cross-cultural engagement fosters respect and mutual understanding. Harnessing cultural exchanges can diminish prejudices while instilling appreciation for diversity.
9. **Volunteer Exchange:** Volunteering programs, especially non-academic ones, provide avenues for individuals to engage across cultures. Such experiences can enrich personal narratives and foster community bonds through shared service.

World-Café Table 3 Conclusion:

Rebuilding and respecting cultural, social, and economic diversity post-conflict requires a multifaceted, cooperative approach. By fostering economic respect, political freedom, and societal cohesion, stakeholders can revitalize communities and enhance resilience. As we reflect upon the key areas discussed, the commitment to a diverse, inclusive future must remain at the

forefront, ensuring that every voice is celebrated and respected. The Ukraine conflict serves as a poignant reminder of the essential nature of diversity, one that thrives on collaboration, understanding, and mutual respect.

Instead of a summary: A Christian-Conservative Outlook

Klaus Zapotoczky and Paul Ertl

One of the two authors of this concluding article (Klaus Zapotoczky) was called upon to summarize the CMR-23 conference on the last day and to accompany it into the future. This presentation turned into a double conference with the organizer of the CMR-23 (Paul Ertl) and so we are both the authors of the final part of this publication. Mind you: conclusion - not the end! Because a topic like this, like many dissertations and studies, can never be declared finished. The range of topics is too extensive, the areas that need to be considered too diverse and the goal too high.

At this point - some time after the Civil-Military Relations Conference 2023 and the receipt of all contributions to it - we reflect on both of our summaries at the time and feel compelled to make a few additions and point out further perspectives. These should be included here and serve as an outlook for what has been intended with the organization of all CMR conferences since the beginning in 1998: the establishment of a better, more livable world for all. Supported by community, in our sense exemplified by the Christian community and an ideology, an attitude of mind that is capable of uniting many things. But without bringing everything to the table, without accepting everything and thus losing itself. We see this best realized in a moderate conservatism with large liberal sprinklings.

1. Fourfold thanks

First of all, we would like to thank the National Defense Academy of the Republic of Austria and the Order of St. George, A European Order of the House of Habsburg-Lorraine, for creating the conditions that allowed this three-day event to take place in this very fruitful and professional, yet amicable form.

Secondly, we would like to thank the Centre for People-Oriented Leadership and Defence Policy at the National Defence Academy for the prudent organization of the conference. A great deal of work was done¹ and much has been done since the end of the conference.

But what would have been the use of providing the conditions and all the planning if the speakers and participants at the conference had not accepted, had not prepared and presented their contributions or if the conference participants had not attended or had not actively participated. This publication is also part of this and disseminates the knowledge and thoughts of the participants.

Therefore, thirdly, many thanks to the 3 keynote speakers, Boguslav Pacek (Poland), Janez Jansa (Slovenia) and Stefan Zapotocky (Austria) and the 22 speakers of the 6 workshops from 11 countries.

Last but not least, we would also like to thank all participants for their open, lively and committed participation.

2. Doing „all the work“

According to Max Scheler (1874-1928), in order to be “whole work”, “work” means both the plan and the (production) activity and, last but not least, the product (and use) of planning and activity.² Many contributions are now also available in written form and have been formed into an overall product. Many thanks to everyone for their efforts. However, in order to achieve “complete work” together, we should all make an effort to continue working on this important problem.

Inspired by the presentations, discussions and talks at the CMR Conference 2023, I feel compelled to make two proposals below. Firstly, a further development of Catholic social teaching to include two dimensions that have al-

¹ We will come back to the term “whole work” later.

² Scheler Max: Arbeit und Ethik, in: Scheler Max: Frühe Schriften, in: Scheler Maria, Frings Manfred (Hrsg.): Gesammelte Werke, Band 1, Francke Verlag, Bern und München 1971, S. 161 ff.

ways been important in Christianity, but are now gaining new relevance: Renew versus preserve and unity versus diversity. Secondly, the challenge to Christians and people of good will to take concrete action, to overcome the bystander attitude that has (almost) become the norm. We can all do our “full work” if we not only make security and unity an issue in our own environments, but also make concrete use of our creative possibilities in all areas of life and thus contribute to the practical realization of security and unity and thus do our “full work” in the field of security and unity, from the plan to the use of the product.

3. Some remarks on Conservatism and (Catholic) Christianity

A sufficient balance of all four dimensions and the eight goal principles should be sought in the area of life and society. Everyone can do something in a world characterized by uncertainty and threats. It is crucial that (moderately) conservative values and principles promote unity and stability in society as a whole. Such a philosophy emphasizes the importance of tradition, order and sovereignty to ensure a strong and secure society. At the same time, however, other, unfamiliar things must also be allowed, change must be made possible and exchange must be created. On the one hand, this requires values such as preservation, protection and conservation. On the other hand, things such as openness, tolerance and assistance, allowing attitudes other than one's own, are also indispensable if one does not want to remain rigid, cemented in and isolated. These values are closely linked to Christian social teaching, which emphasizes the dignity of every human being and solidarity between people.

These insights in the area of community are based on the understanding that strong autonomy and clear boundaries are crucial to ensure the security of a country, a society, an entity. It is evident that this can never be achieved alone, but only in conjunction with other people, other groups, states and institutions. Individual as well as social, cultural, economic or political security also includes not only the physical security of people, but also the protection of intangible things such as cultural identity and the respective values, beliefs and much more.

Another important principle for this is the emphasized importance of cooperation and unity among citizens. A unified world view, sharing common values and working together to achieve common goals. This makes us much more resilient to external threats. Fostering a sense of community, solidarity and cohesion is crucial to building a strong and secure society.

Catholic social teaching supports these moderate-conservative insights in the area of security by emphasizing the importance of solidarity, charity and shared responsibility. Christian doctrine teaches that all people are children of God and therefore have a common destiny to love and support one another. By promoting solidarity and shared responsibility, conservative governments and institutions can build a strong and secure community based on the principles of the dignity of each individual.

The aforementioned Catholic social teaching also supports the inherently conservative view of the importance of individual responsibility and personal freedom. It teaches that every person has a unique dignity and therefore has the right to protect his or her life and the life of his or her family. By promoting individual responsibility and personal freedom, conservative governments and societies can build a culture of self-responsibility and mutual support that strengthens the security and stability of society, where individuals are strong, self-reliant and resilient.

4. Further development of Catholic social teaching.

Markus Schlagnitweit calls personality, solidarity, subsidiarity and the common good the “classical” principles of Catholic social teaching.³ All four “classical” basic principles of Catholic social teaching have developed over time from the disadvantage of the working class, beginning with the industrial revolution and the democratization of “modern” societies, and have largely shaped the entire 20th century and its crises. Today, this approach no longer seems sufficient to us.

³ Schlagnitweit Markus: Einführung in die Katholische Soziallehre. Kompass für Wirtschaft, Politik und Gesellschaft, Herder, Freiburg, Basel, Vienna 2021.

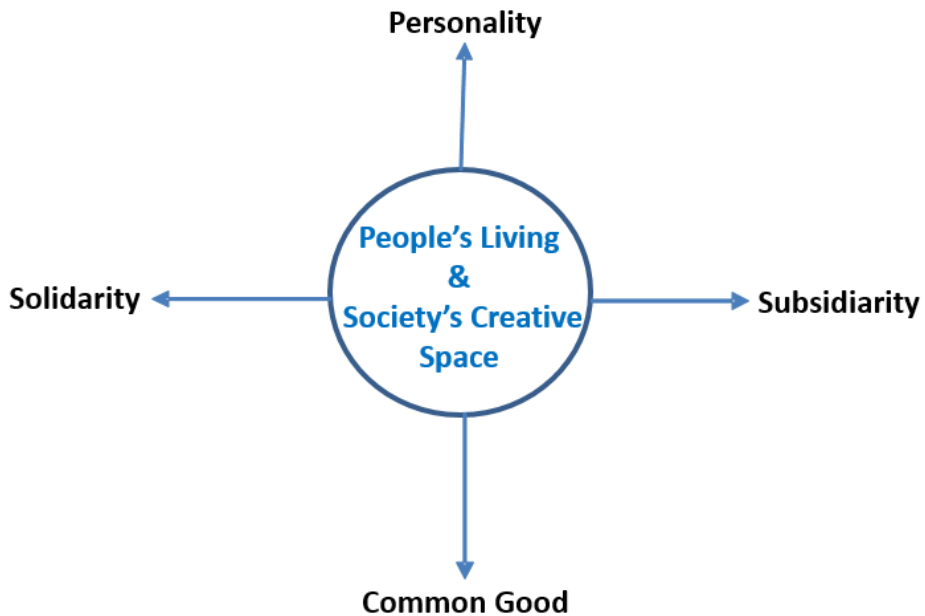


Fig 1: Fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching according to Schlagnitweit 2021 (Graphic: Ertl/Zapotoczky)

It is striking that although Schlagnitweit⁴ mentions the reciprocal connection between personality and the common good as well as solidarity and subsidiarity, in his presentation of the four “classical” basic principles of Catholic social teaching, he only mentions five essential characteristics of personality, namely unavailability or uniqueness, sociality or dialogicity, freedom and responsibility, historicity and language as well as religious reference and dignity, but does not do so in a similar way for the other basic principles. This may be due to the fact that since the middle of the 19th century, the egocentricity of modern people has grown steadily⁵ and at the same time the importance of smaller communities, such as family, neighborhood, community, which

⁴ Schlagnitweit Markus, op. cit. p. 85 ff.

⁵ Stirner Max: Der Einzige und sei Eigentum und andere Schriften, Carl Hanser, 2nd edition, Munich 1969.

René König (1906-1992) still called basic forms of society,⁶ has declined sharply in importance or their forms have become significantly differentiated.⁷ At the same time, new challenges have emerged - not least as a result of the dramatic events in Europe in the 20th century - which have recently intensified in Europe in the form of the climate crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine and are now challenging not only Europe, but the whole world.

The Christian churches (not only in Europe) have always emphasized two further dimensions of humane behavior, namely “renewal and preservation” and “unity and diversity”. In my opinion, not overemphasizing the extremes and striking a balance between all four basic dimensions of an expanded Catholic social teaching should be or become a central task of shaping Christian life and society. The octagon of Christian shaping of life and society can illustrate this and could become a model for shaping the world.

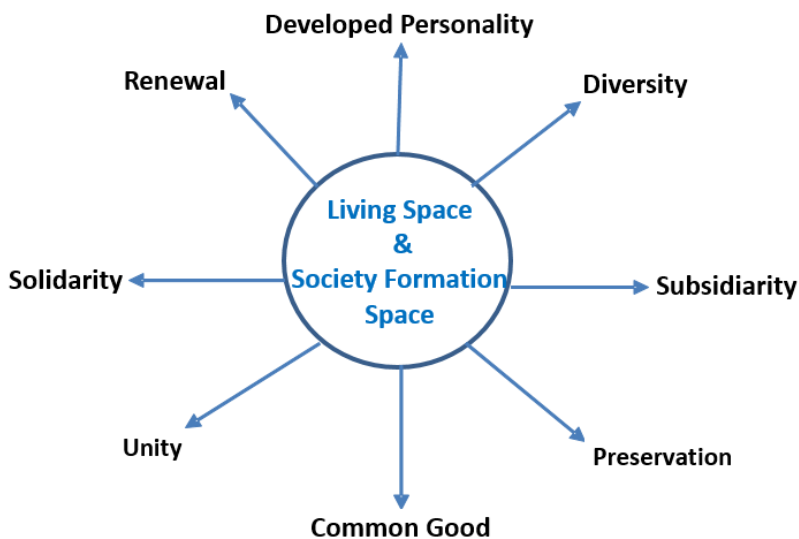


Fig 2: Octagon of Christian Living and Society Formation Space

⁶ König René: Grundformen der Gesellschaft: Die Gemeinde, Rowohlt, Reinbek 1958.

⁷ Treibel Annette: Einführung in soziologische Theorien der Gegenwart, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 7th updated edition, Wiesbaden 2006.

5. Shaping Christian life and the world

A sufficient balance of all four dimensions or the eight target principles should be sought in the area of life and society. Each person can contribute or not contribute to personality and the common good or to solidarity and subsidiarity, to renewal and preservation or to unity and diversity. Every contribution - even the smallest one - is important because it can add exactly what is missing to the balance or leave a - perhaps painful - gap. We do not know the overall plan, nor the possibilities and willingness to contribute, let alone the final result. But people are always trying to create scenarios that can often be helpful, but can also turn into horror scenarios.

The subtitle of the Club of Rome's last major report was "What we need to change if we want to stay"⁸ and can be understood as a concrete suggestion for shaping the dimension of renewal - preservation. Jacques Delors also contributed to the same dimension as President of the Commission of the European Union when he said "Europe needs a soul", which led to discussions and interesting proposals, particularly in Austria,⁹ and when, as Chairman of the 15-member UNESCO working group, he proposed four equally important educational goals - learning, acquiring knowledge, learning to act, learning to live together and learning for life - in the education report for the 21st century "Learning ability: our hidden wealth"¹⁰ and thus gave important impetus to the Renew - Preserve dimension. Today, many people long for security and peace without realizing that absolute security is never possible

⁸ Weizsäcker Ernst Ulrich, Wijkman Anders u.a.: Club of Rome. Der große Bericht. Wir sind dran. Was wir ändern müssen, wenn wir bleiben wollen. Eine neue Aufklärung für die volle Welt, Verlag Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 4th updated edition, Gütersloh 2018.

⁹ Busek Erhard: Europa und seine Seele, in: Busek Erhard: AEIOU Europa. Eine Auswahl von Vorträgen und Referaten von Erhard Busek mit einem ausführlichen Interview von Roland Adrowitzer, Hermagoras, Mohorjeva, Klagenfurt, Ljubljana, Vienna 2012. Also: Neisser Heinrich: Auf der Suche nach Europa, in: Denz Hermann (Hrsg.): Die europäische Seele. Leben und Glauben in Europa, Czernin, Vienna 2002.

¹⁰ Deutsche UNESCO Kommission (Hrsg.): Lernfähigkeit: Unser verborgener Reichtum. UNESCO Bericht zur Bildung für das 21. Jahrhundert, Luchterhand, Neuwied, Kriftel, Berlin 1997.

and that “eternal peace” is unattainable.¹¹ Such peace remains a gift that people cannot achieve on their own, but which they can wish for and prepare for themselves and others.

People today also have major problems with the fourth dimension of unity versus diversity. On the one hand, all areas of people's lives are becoming more and more differentiated and the complexity of societies is increasing, as is the desire to reduce this complexity¹² and, on the other hand, people are constantly developing new attempts to create unity. This is particularly painful for Christians, who have been told that they should all be one, just as Christ himself is one with the Father as a role model. But Christians are divided in many ways and many attempts at unity have not only been unsuccessful, but further divisions have arisen. Hans Küng has proposed unification through the creation of a global ethic and in the Christian churches, efforts are being made in many ways to unite different (world) religions, as the Pope's recent trip clearly shows.

Recently, Korbinian Birnbacher, the Archabbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Peter in Salzburg - on the basis of the Rule of St. Benedict from the 6th century and the approx. 1500 years of experience of spirituality lived since then for the coexistence of people - has derived the following 7 wisdoms, which can be described as *Sapientia Benedictina* and could be groundbreaking for today:¹³ Leadership is collegial or not at all.

2. Living together is respectful or not at all.
3. Community is communicative and dynamic.
4. Peace begins within you or not at all.
5. All life is beginning or not at all.
6. All life is of equal value or not at all.

¹¹ Kant Immanuel: Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophier Entwurf, in: Kant Immanuel: Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik 1, in: Weischedel Wilhelm (ed.): Werksausgabe Band XI, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/Main 1977, p. 193 ff.

¹² Luhmann Niklas: Vertrauen. Ein Mechanismus der Reduktion sozialer Komplexität, UTB, 4th edition, Stuttgart 2000.

¹³ Birnbacher Korbinian: Weites Leben, weites Herz. Gut leben nach dem Bauplan des heiligen Benedikt, Tyrolia, Innsbruck, Vienna 2024.

7. All life is open or not at all.

Many of these “words of wisdom” stand in contrast to justifications for the use of force, such as those recently cited and attempted to refute by Gunnar Hindrichs.¹⁴ At the same time, warnings of a third world war are also on the rise - especially in the German-speaking world - because the awareness of living in a “full world” is particularly high here and the long period of relative prosperity has created a “spoiled society” that is not very resilient, but very sensitive. Everyone longs for peace, but unlearning violence and winning peace is¹⁵ possible without a sufficient willingness to cooperate. Peace can be established or come about in different ways: With and without (human) life. This means that everyone who engages with security and unity and makes a constructive contribution to the discussion and to the behavior and actions of everyone and the responsible decision-makers is of the utmost importance. A small flap of wings can cause a storm or not. It depends on everyone, today and in the future, in Europe and around the world.

¹⁴ Hindrichs Gunnar: *Abseits des Krieges. Ein philosophischer Essay*, C. H. Beck, Munich 2024.

¹⁵ Prantl Herbert: *Den Frieden gewinnen. Die Gewalt verlernen*, Wilhelm Heyne, Munich 2024.

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This pioneering publication brings together contributions from the 2023 International Civil-Military Relations Conference in Vienna, where experts from politics, the military, academia and civil society shed light on the contemporary urgent challenges facing Europe. Organized by the National Defense Academy in cooperation with the Order of St. George, the contributions offer valuable insights into strategies for ensuring European security in the post Russia-Ukrainian war era. Discussed are best practices, the role of women in military and civilian structures, strategic communication in times of disinformation, the planning to respond to hybrid threats and other valuable insights. This collection is an indispensable contribution to the holistic dialog on unity and security in Europe.

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