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Introduction to the Issue 2019/4

The National University of Public Service has been granted multi-annual research funds from the European Union through the government of Hungary for the purposes of developing good governance practices, adopting best practices in this field, and improving the training, education and work of those employed in the public sector. Within the project funding framework PADOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 "Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance" the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies realised an overarching research project "Strategic Analyses for Supporting Governmental Decision-making in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy". The project was made up of eight pillars, each focusing on a key area of interest for Hungary. Three methodological pillars aimed at gaining access to best practices and lessons learnt in the fields of: 1. Strategic foresight; 2. Strategic guidance and planning; and 3. Analytical methodology, while five pillars were focusing on geographical regions, in order to improve our understanding of drivers, trends and processes that govern foreign and security policies in: 4. Central Europe; 5. the Balkans; 6. the Post-Soviet region; 7. Africa; and 8. the Far East. Scholarly work within the pillars were directed and coordinated by policy field coordinators affiliated with the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies. Research carried out within each pillar included analytical, methodological and comparative study volumes, policy papers, journal articles both in Hungarian and in English, as well as a series of expert workshops, seminars and conferences.

This issue contains ten scholarly and analytical papers that have been drafted either as preliminary studies to the project focus areas or within the project. Among them, two areas are highlighted here: part of the papers deal with security-related issues in the MENA region, while others offer analyses on current Central European defence policy developments. Cyprian Aleksander Kozera and Błażej Popławski compare the working of three extremist violent groups: Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and al-Shabaab. Viktor Marsai analyses the rivalry of al-Shabaab and the Islamic State in the Horn of Africa. Nikolett Pénzváltó examines how securitisation and populist tactics by the Turkish Government might have affected the EU–Turkey visa liberalisation agreement, preventing the successful conclusion of negotiations. Antonio Morone summarises some lessons learnt from Libya regarding the containment policies of the European Union and Italy to tackle irregular migration from Sub-Saharan Africa. Luca Puddu argues that China's development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa is aimed at reproducing centre-periphery relations with China at the centre. Tamás Csiki Varga, Lukáš Dyčka and László Szerencsés offer respective analysis of Hungarian, Czech and Croatian defence policy developments, while Alex Etl measures the balance between reassurance and deterrence regarding the Operation Atlantic Resolve of the U.S.

Cyprian Aleksander Kozera – Błażej Popławski

Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, al-Shabaab – Similarities and Differences

An Analysis of the Genesis, Evolution and Strategies of the Islamist Violent Extremist Groups in Africa[1]

The authors offer an analysis of the genesis, evolution, and strategies of three Islamist extremist groups in three parts of Africa: al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in the borderland of Algeria and Mali; Boko Haram in the borderland of Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon; and al-Shabaab in Eastern Africa. Through examining the three comparative case studies they argue that the religious agenda of these groups plays the role of a façade only. The most important reasons of the spread of terrorism in all three regions are related to the political and economic conditions, feelings of relative deprivation, low level of trust in government authorities and the frustration of marginalised groups.

Keywords: *Boko Haram, al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, Maghreb, terrorism, extremism, Africa*

Introduction

Five years after the tragic events of 9/11, the retribution machinery of the so called "War on Terror" against the global Islamist insurgency was running at full speed. With ongoing military interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and drone strikes or special forces operations in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, the invisible fronts of the conflict were being pushed far away from American and European soil. That time, on the fifth anniversary of the terrorist[2] attacks on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, Ayman az-Zawahiri, a senior member of al-Qaeda, officially recognised the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat,* GSPC) as the al-Qaeda affiliate on the Sahara, declaring the birth of their "blessed union".[3]

[1] This work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project PADOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled "Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance" in the Ludovika Research Group.

[2] Throughout this article, due to the lack of compromise on the definition, terrorism will be understood as any wilful targeting of non-combatants with violence or the threat of violence for political purposes by a non-state actor. Consequently, those committing such deeds will be referred to as terrorists. (Davies, John: Understanding Terrorism in Africa. In: Davies, John [ed.]: *Terrorism in Africa. The Evolving Front in the War on Terror.* Lexington Books, Lanham, 2010, pp. 133–158.)

[3] Pham, J. Peter: Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. *Orbis,* Vol. 55, No. 2, 2011, p. 240.

Thus, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – a terrorist organisation infamous for its numerous kidnappings for million-dollar bounties,[4] filmed executions of Western nationals, and even an attempt to create an Islamist emirate in the Sahara – has been established. The creation of AQIM, or – to be more precise – the incorporation of the Algerian extremist group into the global network of al-Qaeda, although symbolic, did not mark the birth of the radical and violent Islamism on the African continent. Its roots, far too frequently, can be traced back to the Somali Jihad against Ethiopia in the 15th century, the Jihad of Usman dan Fodio (1804–1808), or to the spread of the Salafi movement (19th century).

The spread of Salafism in the Maghreb

Salafism (*as-Salafiya* – the road of forefathers) is a fundamentalist[5] ideology and movement that embraces a "pure" and exclusive form of Islam in all aspects of life, rejects modern "moral corruption", oppose Western ideologies, and associates the West with decadency. The concept is known since at least the 14th century and it has its Saudi branch called Wahhabism since the 18th century. On the African continent, it gained ground in the 19th century Egypt in opposition to the conquest of Napoleon Bonaparte (1798), and the moral and civilizational decline that the French occupation was believed to have brought to the Egyptians. Salafism inspired Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Salafi ideology appeared in Algeria and manifested itself in the formation of the Algerian Association of Muslim Ulema (*Association des Oulémas Musulmans Algériens,* AUMA) in 1931 – an organisation that rejected Maraboutism (local African beliefs incorporated into Islam), Secularism, Socialism, and even the Islamic Sufi brotherhoods, and opted for Islamic Algeria. Thus, Algerian Islamism formed, though it remained in the shadows of secular independence movements (the governing National Liberation Front, *Front de Libération Nationale,* FLN) until the early 1980s.[6]

The history of the politicisation of the Algerian Islamists is highly representative for the analysis of the genesis, evolution and strategies of the violent extremist groups in Africa. Two decades after the independence (1962), the condition of the Algerian state was vulnerable. Throughout the 1980s, the support towards the secular one-party government and military rule that dominated the Algerian politics since the independence, significantly decreased, mostly due to economic hardships and the emergence of the educated but unemployed and marginalised youth. In the early 1980s, the Armed Islamic Movement (*Mouvement Islamique Armé,* MIA) was formed as an armed opposition to the government of the FLN. The popular unrest culminated in riots of *hittistes* (young unemployed urban

[4] The kidnapping income of AQIM between 2008 and 2012 was estimated at 40–65 million USD. See Lacher, Wolfram: *Organized Crime and Conflict in the Sahel-Sahara Region.* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2012, p. 9.

[5] For the purpose of this article fundamentalism is understood, as explained by Malise Ruthven, as "a 'religious way of being' that manifests itself in a strategy by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as a people or group in the face of modernity and secularization." Ruthven, Malise: *Fundamentalism. The Search for Meaning.* Oxford University Press, New York, 2004, p. 8.

[6] Kepel, Gilles: *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam.* Belknap Press, New York, 2002, p. 55.

males) on the streets of Algiers in 1988 that led to reforms and the opening of the political scene. Multiparty elections were held and an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut,* FIS) won the majority in the first round of parliamentary elections. The first Islamic party on the Algerian political scene secured vast support of the devout middle class, and especially of the politically and economically marginalised and jobless youth.[7]

Simultaneously, Algerian veterans of the Afghan war against the Soviet Union returned home. They brought with them the radical ideology, military experience and – most importantly – the faith that with *jihad* they can challenge the 'infidel' secular regime and win over one of the most powerful armies in the world.[8] This external experience was soon to be exploited in their own homeland. Thus *jihad* – in its violent and distorted meaning[9] – became a globalised phenomenon.

Since the very beginning of its formation, FIS has not concealed its goals to introduce sharia law, abolish future elections and create an Islamic state. In the wake of gaining two thirds of the parliamentary seats by FIS, that would allow to change the constitution and democratically introduce the Islamic rule, the acting political elites and the army decided to invalidate the election results and ban FIS. Protests erupted, martial law was introduced, and the military organised a coup d'état in January 1992. The most radical Islamists called to retake power by resorting to violence and the first attack on a military post took place at the end of 1991. A violent Jihad, led by fundamentalist groups against the secular government, was initiated. The following Algerian "dirty war" *(la sale guerre) lasted a decade and* claimed up to two hundred thousand lives, mostly civilians.

The religious component in the Algerian civil war was highly significant as a tool that consolidated the anti-government movements and provided them with a single and coherent identity – in fact Islam had already served as an identity marker in the time of the Algerian independence war. Yet as Amartya Sen noted, "identity can also kill – and kill with abandon. […] Violence is fomented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people, championed by proficient artisans of terror".[10] Although religion was consolidating the anti-governmental movements, the establishment of a religion-based political system seemed to have never been the agenda of the majority of the Algerian population. The societal basis of FIS consisted of the devout (yet not radical) middle-class and the disillusioned youth that faced economic hardships, lack of prospects, and experienced so-called "relative deprivation" (being well educated but lacking the proper employment). It appears that they considered the competing Islamic political system the solution to their

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[7] Harmon, Stephen A.: *Terror and Insurgency in the Sahara-Sahel Region: Corruption, Contraband, Jihad and the Mali War of 2012–2013.* Ashgate, Burlington-Farnham, 2014, pp. 48–49.

[8] Filiu, Jean-Pierre: The Local and Global Jihad of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb. *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 63, No. 2, 2009, pp. 213–226.

[9] The meaning of Jihad, as promoted by the radicals, "the aggressive and violent holy war against the (broadly defined) infidels" has not much to do with the accepted religious meaning of the term which stands for internal and spiritual struggle with one's own weaknesses (according to a popular *hadith,* the prophet Muhammad called this the greater Jihad) and fight against the polytheists (historical meaning) or self-defence of the Muslim community (considered the lesser Jihad). Al-Ashmawy, Muhammad Said: *Islam and the Political Order.* The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C., 1994, pp. 69–76.

[10] Sen, Amartya: *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny.* Norton and Company, New York, 2006, pp. 1–2.

economic and social problems rather than the end-goal. Consequently, the authors claim and intend to validate this in the following paragraphs by showing that motivations of various Islamist groups' members transcend the religious agenda which is rather a façade, founded on social and economic deprivations and political disillusionment. Similarly, the ultimate goals of all further discussed terrorist organisations are solely political, not religious, as they never strive to spread whichever God's word, yet rather seek to overthrow the existing political system and replace it with another.

GIA, GSPC and the emergence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb

Initially, some moderate leaders of FIS called for restoring the democratic order and repeating the elections, yet it soon turned out that the leadership of the party is unable to control its diverse electorate (specifically the youth and unemployed so susceptible to radicalisation). Radical Islamists separated from the core of FIS and created the Islamic Armed Group (*Groupe Islamique Armé, GIA)* to fight with the government. They unilaterally declared FIS and anyone else 'apostates'. *Mourad si Ahmed, known as Djafar el-Afghani, as he fought in Afghanistan, soon became its emir.* The brutal campaign of terror took off in Algeria: GIA targeted not only the government, but also other Islamists and civilians (declaring "the apostasy of society" for failing to support the group), and in 1995 organised a campaign of terror in France. For conducting brutal and indiscriminate attacks against the Algerian civilian population and other Islamists, the group was highly criticised by foreign fundamentalist movements. In 1998 a regional leader, Hassan Hattab quit the organisation and established the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat,* GSPC). In 1999, the ranks of the newly formed group were joined by the Islamists who rejected the peace accord with the government and at the same time opposed the brutal campaign of terror led by GIA. The organisation rose to prominence. In consequence, at the turn of the 21st century, when the Algerian civil war was drawing to an end, only the most radical adepts of "the nihilistic jihad" remained in the battlefield, ready to "drown the Umma[11] in blood in order to save it" – as Alfred de Montesquiou put it.[12]

The initial 'base' of GSPC extended to the territories in North-Eastern Algeria, later though, the organisation expanded their operations southwards to the Sahara, entering Northern Mali, Eastern Mauritania, Western Niger and North-Western Chad. The territorial expansion was followed by broadening the illicit activity of the group. During the 1990s, all armed Islamist groups were financed by common banditry, extortions, robberies and taxing trans-Saharan smuggling and trafficking *(al-Frud)* of both legal *(Frud al-Halal)* and illicit goods *(Frud al-Haram).* Since 2003, though, GSPC engaged into kidnapping of Western nationals – a business that proved to be worth millions of dollars. Kidnapping 32 tourists in the first half of 2003 brought the media attention what might have helped adver-

[11] *Umma* is the global community of all Muslims.

[12] Harmon (2014): *op. cit.* 52–55; De Monetsquiou, Alfred: *Umma. Reporter na Bliskim Wschodzie.* Terra Incognita, Warszawa, 2015, p. 96. [Original title: *Oumma: un grand reporter au Moyent-Orient.* Seuil, Paris, 2013.]; Pham (2011): *op. cit.* 242–243; Schanzer, Jonathan: *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror.* Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., 2004, p. 106.

tise the group to the al-Qaeda core. For GSPC, joining the global network of Jihad under the al-Qaeda brand boasted legitimacy, thus increasing recruitment; for the al-Qaeda core, it helped increasing its global prestige and outreach.[13]

The Algerian Government crackdown on GSPC and the group's increased contacts with al-Qaeda influenced its organisation and tactics. The estimated overall manpower of the group fell from ca. 4,000 in 2002 to not more than 500 in 2006. In such circumstances the Saharan affiliate switched to al-Qaeda's 'weapon of choice', like relying on improvised explosive devices (IED) and suicide bombings, known to be effective from Afghanistan and Iraq. It seemed much more suitable in their situation than the insurgency-like irregular warfare employed previously in the Algerian conflict, especially by GIA. In 2005, under the leadership of Abdelmalek Droukdel (a.k.a. Musab Abdelwadud), the GSPC was still capable of organising several important attacks on targets in Algeria and one on the Lemgheiti military base in Eastern Mauritania, killing there 15 soldiers, and mobilised around 100–150 GSPC fighters. Although the Algerian counterterrorist operations put pressure on the Saharan al-Qaeda affiliate and forced the group to scale down its attacks on governmental and military targets, it seems highly possible that it also pushed the group to change the tactic – since 2008 it has been observed that AQIM increasingly engaged in kidnappings of Western nationals. Obviously, this activity did not entail as much retribution as killing members of the military or public officials and brought much more income.[14]

By 2012, the AQIM operational territory encompassed Southern Algeria and Northern Mali (where the group found its safe haven in Kidal province after repetitive Algerian crackdowns),[15] but its activities were conducted also in the neighbouring states of Mauritania and Niger, and possibly but surely much rarely in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Chad and Libya.[16] Its main income is based on trafficking and taxing the smuggling of licit (e.g. cigarettes) and illicit goods (inter alia arms, cocaine, marihuana) or people via Saharan routes, and kidnappings. Yet the Tuareg rebellion, that AQIM joined in January 2012, gave the group another possibility to manifest its power and to establish an Islamic political entity in the Sahara. Together with other Islamist groups operating in Northern Mali (like Ansar Dine and Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, *Mouvement pour l'Unité et le Jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest,* MUJAO), the extremists overrun and marginalised the secular Tuareg movement within the insurgency and established their sharia-guided rule in the Northern provinces of Mali (Gao, Timbuktu, and Kidal). The territory, similar in size to Western Europe, was run by criminal and terrorist actors for more than half a year until the French intervention, "Operation Serval", in the beginning of 2013 pushed them out and scattered them in the desert. It showed that violent extremist groups, such as GIA/GSPC/AQIM

[13] Harmon (2014): *op. cit.* 13, 52–55; Laub, Zachary – Masters, Jonathan: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), [online], 2015. Source: Council on Foreign Relations [31.08.2017.]

[14] Pham (2011): *op. cit.* 244; Fowler, Robert: *A Season in Hell. My 130 Days in the Sahara with Al Qaeda.* Harper Collins, New York, 2011.

[15] McGovern, Mike: Islamist Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?, [online], 2005. Source: International Crisis Group, Africa Report 92. 1 [13.09.2017.]; Pringle, Robert: *Democratization in Mali: Putting History to Work.* U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, 2006, p. 33.

[16] Recently Southern Libya tends to be a terrorist safe haven in the Sahara as the country is torn by civil war, and it is outside the scope of French military counterterrorist operations codenamed "Barkhane", conducted in five Saharan states: Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso.

were capable of conducting an insurgency campaign in Algeria in the 1990s, taxing or trafficking arms, goods and people throughout the whole Sahara, kidnapping Western nationals for million-dollar ransoms. Islamist terrorist groups operating in the Sahara proved to be highly efficient, flexible and adaptive to the circumstances. Thus their 'hybrid' potential cannot be underestimated and even though the rule of law has been restored in the cities of Northern Mali, the extremists remained hidden in the desert and are capable of conducting disruptive terrorist attacks against the United Nations' peacekeepers, national authorities and the civilian population in the Saharan states.

Boko Haram in Nigeria

During the Malian crisis, the linkage between different terrorist groups became clearly visible. Lots of commentators admitted that MUJAO, AQIM, Ansar Dine might have cooperated with the Nigerian organisation, Boko Haram. Boko Haram was founded by a charismatic Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of the state of Borno. Presently the leader of the movement is Abubakar Shekau. The group's official name was Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad.[17] Boko Haram was designated a terrorist group by the U.S. in 2013. The organisation had alleged links to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. In 2015, Boko Haram announced its allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Daesh).[18] Thus, the group's official name was changed to "Islamic State in West Africa."

At the beginning, Boko Haram was a radical but predominantly non-violent sect. People were attracted by the religious ideology and – what is also important to underline – by the micro-lending model (Mohammed Yusuf was able to offer people small amounts of money which they used to set up small businesses).[19] The start-up of Boko Haram resembles the beginnings of many other non-governmental institutions formed in Nigeria after the death of the military dictator, General Sani Abacha in 1998, and the prelude of the democratisation process in the Fourth Nigerian Republic.

After the clashes between Boko Haram and the Nigeria Police Force and Yusuf's death in 2009, the organisation went underground and radicalised its ideology. The group initially focused on withstanding secular education ("boko haram" in the Hausa and Arabic language means "the Western education is forbidden and sinful")[20] and – more broadly – on opposing the Westernisation of Nigeria and the presence of Europeans and Americans in Africa. Its main religious and political goals were to implement the rule of "true" Sharia law and create a separate Islamic state, consisting of the Northern states of

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[17] Murtada, Ahmad: *"Boko Haram" in Nigeria: Its Beginnings, Principles and Actions in Nigeria.* Bayero University, Kano, 2013, pp. 3–4.

[18] Yahaya, Abubakar: Boko Haram and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria: The Nexus. *Polac International Journal of Humanities and Security Studies,* Vol. 2, No. 1, 2016, pp. 299–312.

[19] Boko Haram: An Assessment of Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and Policy Options Report to the Strategic Multilayer Assessment Office, Department of Defense, and the Office of University Programs, Department of Homeland Security, [online], 2015, College Park: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism – University of Maryland. Source: UMD.edu [22.08.2017.]

[20] Moland, Naomi A.: Can Multiculturalism Be Exported? Dilemmas of Diversity on Nigeria's Sesame Square. *Comparative Education Review,* Vol. 59, No. 1, 2015, p. 10.

Nigeria, where the majority of Nigerian Muslims are concentrated in, and – what should be highlighted – where Sharia has been formally instituted (for example: Zamfara, Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Bauchi, Borno, Jigawa, Kebbi, Yobe). Boko Haram also delegitimises the Nigerian state and Islamic leaders who cooperate with the government. The group criticises corruption in Nigeria, the underdevelopment of the Northern states, the concentration of the wealth of the country among members of the political elite, mainly in the Christian South of Nigeria, the grievances over the distribution of federal resources, and the failure of Northern political and religious elites to sufficiently defend Muslim interests.[21]

Boko Haram camps are situated in the Mandara Mountains, close to the border with Cameroon, and the Sambisa Forest, in the marshes between the states of Borno, Yobe, Gombe and Adamawa. Boko Haram is frequently perceived as a kind of Salafi-inspired sect, and Mosques are seen only as places where new recruits can be approached. It is true that the multi-ethnic – but mostly Kanuri-dominated – group attracted followers from unemployed, uneducated, bigoted, young peasants (mostly men) from the states mentioned above. Therefore, it should be emphasised, that the complex of these four factors – young age, poverty, the lack of education and work, religious beliefs – are the main reasons for joining Boko Haram.[22] The total strength of Boko Haram is not clear; it is estimated to control up to 3,000–5,000 people.

The group gets funding from bank robberies, ransoms, human trafficking, donations from Islamist sympathisers and presumably drug trafficking. The group is clearly expanding its activities from raids on motorbikes to killing police officers, politicians, attacks on police stations and other government installations, but also to bombing churches, burning schools, killing teachers and kidnapping children. (For instance, on the night of 14–15 April 2014, 276 female students were kidnapped from a school in the town of Chibok). The strategy of Boko Haram progressively shifted towards mass violence – temporary capture of villages and towns (inhabited by Muslims) and armed struggle with the federal troops.[23] Since the last decade, Boko Haram has killed approximately 20,000 and displaced more than 2 million from their homes. In 2018, Boko Haram presented a very different profile from just a few years earlier. The organisation, once perceived as exclusively "Nigerian", has expanded its presence from the Northern part of the country to the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Chad).[24]

Al-Shabaab in Somalia

Al-Shabaab is a Salafist–Jihadist fundamentalist, clan-based insurgent group based in the Horn of Africa, also active in Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Uganda and Tanzania. It is

[21] Kendhammer, Brandon: The Sharia Controversy in Northern Nigeria and the Politics of Islamic Law in New and Uncertain Democracies. *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 45, No. 3, 2013, p. 296 and 306.

[22] Uzodike, Ufo Okeke – Maiangwa, Benjamin: Boko Haram Terrorism in Nigeria: Casual Factors and Central Problematic. *Africa Renaissance,* Vol. 9, No. 1, 2012, pp. 91–118.

[23] Thomas, Jakana: Rewarding Bad Behavior: How Governments Respond to Terrorism in Civil War. *American Journal of Political Science,* Vol. 58, No. 4, 2014, pp. 808–809.

[24] Angerbrandt, Henrik: Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region Beyond Boko Haram. *Policy Note – the Nordic Africa Institute,* No. 3, 2017, p. 3 and 7.

a successor organisation to the Islamic Courts Union, which controlled most of Southern Somalia in 2006.[25] The first "emirs" of al-Shabaab were Aden Hashi Ayro and Ahmed Abdi Godane. Following the death of Ahmed Abdi Godane in 2014, the leader of the organisation became Abu Ubaydah (also known as Ahmed Diriye). The group's official name is the "Movement of Striving Youth".[26]

Al-Shabaab was designated a terrorist group by the U.S. in 2008. Originally an indigenous, independent group, it gradually moved into the al-Qaeda orbit and announced its allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2009. In 2015, a secessionist al-Shabaab commander, Abdul Qadir Mumin and some of his followers pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, but most members of al-Shabaab remained loyal to al-Qaeda.[27]

Al-Shabaab's main religious and political goals were to support global Jihad, and – on the "national" level – to establish a society based on its rigid interpretation of Sharīʿah law, to create a separate Islamic state incorporating all parts of "Greater Somalia" – the land where ethnic Somalis have historically ever lived (Somalia, Eastern Djibouti, Eastern Kenya, Ogaden and the Haud in Ethiopia).[28]

Al-Shabaab controls parts of Somalia's Southern and Central regions. The composition of the organisation is multi-ethnic, with its leadership positions mainly occupied by Somalis, some of whom were trained in Afghanistan. The core of the organisation consists of veterans of the Somali civil war. Al-Shabaab has also set up a recruiting network in Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and Tanzania. Its propaganda videos appear to show entire East African, Swahili-speaking units training and fighting together inside Somalia. Now the group is hoping to mobilise the Somali Muslim Diaspora in the United States, Canada and in Scandinavia.[29] The total size of Al-Shabaab is not clear, it is estimated to have 5,000–10,000 fighters.

The group received funds and training from al-Qaeda-linked foreign Jihadists. Al-Shabaab also obtained funds from the Somali diaspora communities.[30] Before 2012, al-Shabaab militants controlled Kismayo, an important port city from which they received massive profits in trading charcoal, ivory and sugar exports.[31] It is worth to add that the organisation derives much of its predatory income from the movement of the Asian heroin and locally produced qat.[32]

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[25] Cliffe, Lionel – Love, Roy – Tronvoll, Kjetil: Conflict and Peace in the Horn of Africa. *Review of African Political Economy,* Vol. 36, No. 120, 2009, pp. 155–156.

[26] Chesney, Robert M.: Beyond the Battlefield, Beyond Al Qaeda: The Destabilizing Legal Architecture of Counterterrorism. *Michigan Law Review,* Vol. 112, No. 2, 2013, p. 165.

[27] *Al-Shabaab as a Transnational Security Threat.* IGAD Security Sector Program (ISSP) and Sahan Foundation, Addis Ababa, 2016, pp. 11–12.

[28] Coleman, Katharina P.: Innovations in 'African solutions to African problems': the evolving practice of regional peacekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 49, No. 4, 2011, p. 530.

[29] Klein, Adam: The End of Al Qaeda? Rethinking the Legal End of the War on Terror. *Columbia Law Review,* Vol. 110, No. 7, 2010, pp. 1885–1886.

[30] Cronin, Audrey K.: The evolution of counter-terrorism: will tactics trump strategy? *International Affairs,* Vol. 86, No. 4, 2010, p. 849.

[31] Little, Peter D.: On the Somalia Dilemma: Adding Layers of Complexity to an Already Complex Emergency. *African Studies Review,* Vol. 55, No. 1, 2012, p. 192.

[32] Qat is an Arabian shrub *(Catha edulis),* whose leaves are chewed (or drunk as an infusion) as a stimulant.

Al-Shabaab has claimed responsibility for many bombings, typically targeting Somali government officials, journalists, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and perceived allies of the Federal Government of Somalia.[33] Al-Shabaab used guerrilla and terror tactics against AMISOM troops – perceived as the Christian crusaders, who wanted to defame Islam and its followers. Recent moves by al-Shabaab indicate not only the rejection of foreign interference in the Somali civil war, but also a willingness to export that war to Somalis outside of Somalia – to make it a civil war, not within Somalia, but among Somalis.[34] Since 2010 al-Shabaab has launched high-profile operations in neighbouring countries: suicide bombings carried out against crowds watching a screening of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Final in Kampala (Uganda); the Westgate shopping centre attack in Nairobi in 2013 (Kenya); attack against a restaurant in Djibouti, popular with Westerners in 2014; the massacre of university students in Garissa (Kenya) in 2015. Al-Shabaab also infiltrated Puntland, the alleged home base of many of the Somali pirates.

Summary

The analysis of the genesis, evolution and strategies of the Islamist violent extremist groups in three parts of Africa (the borderland of Algeria and Mali; the borderland of Nigeria, Chad, Niger and Cameroon; and Eastern Africa) shows that religious agenda plays the role of a façade only. The most important reasons of the spread of terrorism are in connection with the political and economic conditions, feelings of relative deprivation, low level of trust in government authorities and the frustration of marginalised groups. It is not an accident that the birthplaces of these organisations are the areas inhabited by unemployed, often poorly educated, bigoted, young people – citizens of the failed and corrupted states, victims and veterans of civil wars. For these people access to a terrorist group is seen as a move up the social ladder and an improvement in standards of living. Where there is injustice, deprivation and desperation, violent extremist ideologies present themselves as a challenge to the status quo and a form of escape.[35] The Salafist discourse and anti-Western sentiment are very useful tolls of social mobilisation. Similarly, despite their claims, the ultimate goals of all discussed terrorist organisations are solely political not religious. They seek to overthrow – or 'cure' – the existing political system and replace it with another (which often existed in the pre-colonial times).

Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and AQIM in 2018 represent very different profiles than just a few years earlier. The organisations once perceived as exclusively 'Algerian', 'Nigerian', and 'Somali' have expanded their presence internationally. The structures of these violent extremist groups are fluent and flexible, and so are their affiliations – some announce their allegiance to Daesh and some to al-Qaeda, yet all adhere to the same extremist, fundamentalist and exclusive ideology to cover their political ambitions. Although their adaptive

[33] Daskal, Jennifer C.: The Geography of the Battlefield: A Framework for Detention and Targeting Outside the 'Hot' Conflict Zone". *University of Pennsylvania Law Review,* Vol. 161, No. 5, 2013, pp. 1197–1198.

[34] Trumbull, George R.: On Piracy and the Afterlives of Failed States. *Middle East Report,* No. 256, 2010, p. 15.

[35] Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment, [online], 2017, United Nations Development Programme. Source: Undp.org [20.02.2018.]

nature and international character is a strength, rivalry in allegiances between particular war-lords and internal struggle for power may weaken the organisations, hopefully rendering the counter-terrorism efforts easier.

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Viktor Marsai

Scramble for the Horn of Africa – Al-Shabaab vs. Islamic State

Over the past three years, the so-called Islamic State (IS) has made significant progress in building an international network of Jihadist groups that pledged allegiance to the organisation. The affiliates of IS are both new-born movements like the Islamic State in Libya, and older groups like Boko Haram in Nigeria. The latter are much more valuable for the 'Caliphate' because they have broad experience and capacities that allow them to operate independently of IS. In its global Jihad, therefore, the Islamic State tried to gain the support of the members of former al-Qaeda franchises, shifting their alliances from Ayman al-Zawahiri to Abu Bakr al-Bagdadi. The paper offers an overview of such IS efforts in the Horn of Africa and an evaluation of how successful this quest had been until 2017.

Keywords: *Somalia, Libya, terrorism, extremism, Africa, Islamic State, al-Shabaab*

Al-Shabaab in Somalia (full name: Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, or 'Movement of Striving Youth') is distinct from other Jihadist organisations. Al-Shabaab established and extended territorial control in Somalia over at least 250,000 square kilometres in 2008–2009 – five years prior to IS.[1] It created effective administrative and judiciary systems and launched military, political and ideological attacks against the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and its foreign supporters. In 2011–2012, offensives of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army (SNA) inflicted serious setbacks on the movement, and it had to vacate the capital, Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab took advantage of the mistakes and failures of its enemies, however, and recovered within half a year, conducting a devastating wave of terrorist attacks not only in Somalia but also abroad in 2013. After the offensives of AMISOM in 2014, the group lost other major cities, and in September 2014, a U.S. airstrike killed its emir, Abu Zubeyr Godane. Yet the movement's operational capabilities remained intact, as demonstrated by various terrorist attacks in Mogadishu.[2] Since summer 2015, al-Shabaab has over-run at least four AMISOM military bases (Leego, Janale, El Adde, Kulbiyow) defended by forces of 150–250 soldiers. They killed some 250–300 African Union (AU) peacekeepers and seized a large amount of weapons and explosive devices to use against AMISOM and SNA. "The calendar year 2016 witnessed the highest number of IED events[3] in Somalia ever recorded."[4]

1 Hansen, Stig Jarle: *Al-Shabaab in Somalia.* Hurst, London, 2013, pp. 83–96.
2 Deaths in al-Shabab attack on AU Somali base, [online], 26.12.2014. Source: Al-Jazeera [31.07.2017.]
3 Improvised explosive devices.
4 Shabaab bombs use explosives seized from Kenyan bases, expert says, [online], 01.07.2017. Source: Hiiraan [31.07.2017.]

Besides its war at home, al-Shabaab started a regionalisation effort, creating or trying to establish local cells in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.[5] The most vulnerable is Kenya: al-Shabaab conducted hundreds of terrorist attacks there in the last six years, including such high-scale assaults as the Westgate incident and the Garissa University massacre. The Jihadists established strong networks in the country,[6] and in the last year shifted to a more alarming insurgency in the Boni forest.[7]

Many scholars therefore write about the resurgence of the Jihadist group, which still controls an area inhabited by at least 2 million people.[8] Its shadow government in the "liberated" cities and its extended intelligence network in Mogadishu allow the Jihadists to maintain their financial resources through the taxation *(zakat)* of trade (livestock, charcoal, sugar) and big companies (telecommunication, money transfer) – not to mention foreign donations. Nobody knows the exact amount of money flowing to the movement monthly, but it could reach tens of millions of dollars. Although taxation sometimes leads to clashes with local communities, few clans and companies dare to reject the demands.[9]

Al-Shabaab therefore is a valuable target for all big Jihadist groups. As security expert Ryan Cummings noted: "Al-Shabaab is the largest jihadi movement in East Africa, and central to the core mandate of ISIS is the unification of the Muslim world, so it would be a significant ideological victory for the group. It would be massive from a public relations perspective, which is central to the Islamic State's operations."[10] The Islamic State therefore made significant efforts almost immediately after its founding to gain the allegiance of the movement and declare it as one of its affiliates.

Until now, this campaign had been fruitless. According to some sources, there were serious debates among the Shura (council), but Al-Shabaab remained loyal to al-Qaeda and introduced sanctions against secessionists.[11] A few lesser commanders and their warriors seceded under the leadership of imam Abdulqadir Mumin, but he could not launch a bigger movement. The core value of al-Shabaab, its unity, remains.

The following analysis examines the history of IS in the Horn of Africa. It will explore the campaign of the 'Caliphate' for gaining the support of Somali Jihadists, and map up their achievements within Mumin's movement, the obstacles to the strengthening of the new group, and the factors which contributed to its stagnation.[12] The main finding is that

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5 Al-Shabaab as a Transnational Security Threat, [online], 15.08.2016. p. 2. Source: IGAD-Sahan [31.07.2017.]

6 Kenya: Al-Shabaab – Closer to Home, [online], 25.09.2014. Source: International Crisis Group [02.08.2017.]

7 Kiser, Margot: Big Game: U.S. Soldiers' Secret Hunt for Jihadists in a Kenyan Forest, [online], 08.02.2017. Source: Dailybeast [02.08.2017.]

8 All-Shabaab's Resurgence in the Horn of Africa: Factors Contributing to the Group's Persistence, [online], 02.07.2017. Source: Hiiraan [31.07.2017.]; Shabaab gains in Somalia due to 'lapses in offensive counterterrorism operations', [online], 23.07.2017. Source: Hiiraan [31.07.2017.]; Burke, Jason: Al-Shabaab militants ban starving Somalis from accessing aid, [online], 27.07.2017. Source: The Guardian [31.07.2017.]

9 Somali civilians clash with al-Shabab over tax dispute, [online], 28.11.2016. Source: Al-Jazeera [31.07.2017.]

10 Kriel, Robyn – Leposo, Lillian: In video, Somali ISIS members court Al-Shabaab, [online], 23.05.2015. Source: Hiiraan [02.08.2017.]

11 Somalia's Shebab loses jihadist lustre, [online], 23.05.2015. Source: Hiiraan [02.08.2017.]

12 When analysing the IS campaign targeting Somalis, we must note some methodological obstacles. Most information available on the inner dynamics of al-Shabaab and the struggle of IS come from media outlets, anonymous diplomatic and security sources – and rumours. Even intelligence agencies have very limited knowledge from the ground about these issues. Therefore, it is almost impossible to verify the validity of such information.

IS lost the momentum in the Horn of Africa because of three reasons: first, it faced a surprisingly hostile environment after the anti-IS decision of al-Shabaab's Shura in which its leadership declared and conducted an extremely effective war against defectors. Second, Mumin – likely not independently of the pressure of Amniyat – revealed his secessionist motives too early and launched an aggressive military attack in the North without a strong background and sufficiently strong basis. It led to the quick defeat of IS militias by Puntland forces which jeopardised its credibility as a potent military actor. Last, but not least, Mumin left his universalist Jihadist ideology too soon, and turned for support to his own clan to gain a stable background for his recruitment and operations. Although this move provided him some additional warriors and safe havens, in the long term it also contributed to the weakening of the cohesion and credibility of the new pro-IS group as a movement which stands above clan-lines.[13]

The Islamic State and the Somalis

In the previous part the strategic value of al-Shabaab for Islamic State was shown. Nevertheless, al-Shabaab members were not the first targets of IS propaganda. First and foremost, the Caliphate had to win the battle of narratives for the leadership of the global Jihadist movement. Namely it had to prove that IS (and Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi) was the only rightful and legitimate 'successor' of Osama bin Laden in heading global Jihad. IS launched an aggressive, highly professional, and extremely successful media campaign for the support of radical Islamists around the world.

The first Somalis who joined the group came from the diaspora. In late 2014 and early 2015, there were regular reports about foreign fighters from Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. killed in fights in Syria and Iraq.[14] Among them there were high-profile figures like Sayid Hussein Feisal Ali, the Finnish-born son of a presidential candidate in Somaliland.[15] According to the report of the Soufan Group in January 2015, some seventy Somali fighters in Syria "appear from their accents to be drawn mainly from the diaspora".[16]

Al-Shabaab-linked websites initially welcomed the rise of IS, shared their news, and made positive reports about developments like the accession of Boko Haram to the

[13] Last, but not least, we must clarify some phrases in the beginning. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has not accepted the allegiance of Mumin yet. Therefore, the use of the term "Islamic State in Somalia" (ISS) is academically inaccurate. It also must be pointed out that the borderline is very thin between: 1. pro-IS groups, who are familiar with the narrative of Islamic State and sympathise with it, but remain loyal to al-Shabaab and its emir, Ahmad Diriye; 2. pro-IS groups in al-Shabaab, who do not agree with its Shura's decision, but instead of secession they try to transform the organisation from an inner position to a pro-IS movement; 3. and the people who – like Mumin – seceded from al-Shabaab and try to launch another movement. As a guideline in this conceptual disorder, the simplest methodology is to follow the approach of al-Shabaab itself. According to its narrative, both the members of the second and the third group are pro-IS warriors who are legitimate targets. Therefore, this paper will also follow this approach, and it will use the term 'Islamic State' – despite the lack of official acceptance from the Caliphate – to avoid confusion with al-Shabaab.

[14] Somali and Libyan Fighters Killed in Sinjar, [online], 13.01.2015. Source: Hiiraan [02.08.2017.]; 3 ISIS recruits from Edmonton believed killed, [online], 15.01.2015. Source: Hiiraan [02.08.2017.]; Somalia's Shebab loses… (2015).

[15] Somalia's Shebab loses… (2015).

[16] Foreign Fighters. An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq, [online], December 2015. Source: Soufan Group [02.08.2017.]

Caliphate. Some scholars thought al-Shabaab would also pledge its loyalty to the organisation.[17]

The Islamic State certainly encouraged the leadership of al-Shabaab to change their alliance. In March 2015, the group's emissary Hamil al-Bushra (the *nom de guerre* used by two media outlets described by Aaron Zelin as "official semi-official accounts" of IS) sent messages to the Horn of Africa. Bushra praised 'brothers in Somalia' and encouraged them to conduct attacks in the region. Bushra asked Ahmad Diriye Umar Abu Ubaidah to pledge loyalty to IS in an audio message on al-Shabaab's official media platform, *al-Kataib.*[18] In May, in a six-minute video that was the first of its kind, five unmasked men of Somali origin speaking in Arabic tried to persuade Somalis and the members of Al-Shabaab, whom they referred to as "truthful mujahedeen" to pledge allegiance to IS.[19] Other videos urged al-Shabaab to join "a coordinated campaign involving militants from various locations in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and West Africa (Boko Haram) in early October 2015".[20] In September 2015, according to local sources, Islamic State sympathisers began recruiting young soldiers for the organisation, and at least forty persons, mostly under 18 years of age, disappeared from the port city of Bossasso, Puntland, in Northeast Somalia.[21]

Some al-Shabaab commanders reportedly were ready to shift the allegiance of the movement to the Islamic State. Among them was the powerful Mahad Karate, the head of the infamous intelligence wing of al-Shabaab, *Amniyat,* and one of the most prominent members of the group's Shura. He thought that the Islamic State could provide more extended financial support for the Somali Jihadists.[22] In addition, IS could help recruit foreign fighters for whom the name 'Islamic State' sounded more attractive than 'al-Qaeda'.[23] As a U.S. intelligence official noted that many Somalis and foreign fighters "probably look to the group as an inspiration to fight for a cause that goes beyond local issues, and we believe that's the case in Somalia".[24]

Nevertheless, the emir, Ahmed Diriye Umar Abu Ubaidah, remained loyal to al-Qaeda.[25] Al-Shabaab established well-working connections with al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), and AQAP in Yemen was the main channel of weapons and explosives for the Somali radicals. A shifting allegiance would have required new routes and mediators, which seemed to be a risky choice.[26] Al-Shabaab remained part of the al-Qaeda network, and subsequent messages from the Caliphate fell on deaf ears. The members of the Shura judged that the unity of al-Shabaab, which guaranteed the survival of the organisation

[17] Somalia's Shebab loses… (2015).
[18] Hellyer, Caroline: ISIL courts al-Shabab as al-Qaeda ties fade away, [online], 23.03.2015. Source: Al Jazeera [02.08.2017.]
[19] Kriel–Leposo (2015): *op. cit.*
[20] Mahmood, Omar S.: Does the Islamic State threaten al-Shabaab's hegemony in Somalia?, [online], 16.11.2016. Source: ISS Africa [02.08.2017.]
[21] ISIL is recruiting fighters in Puntland, [online], 09.09.2015. Source: Hiiraan [02.08.2017.]
[22] Islamic State or Al-Qaeda? Somalia's Shebab mulls future, [online], 24.04.2015. Source: Hiiraan [07.08.2017.]
[23] Somalia's Shebab loses… (2015).
[24] Schachtel, Jordan: Islamic State Builds 'Little Emirate' in Somalia, [online], 25.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]
[25] Somalia's Shebab loses… (2015).
[26] Islamic State or Al-Qaeda? Somalia's Shebab mulls… (2015).

even in the hardest times, was more important than the struggle of different Jihadists ideologies in the Horn.

In September 2015, Ahmad Diriye sent an internal memo stating that anyone who defected from the movement and its leadership would be considered a traitor and punished (executed) by *Amniyat.*[27] This was no empty threat. As Warner writes, "Amniyat has been known to arrest al-Shabaab members who sympathize with ISS. Moreover, a senior official of al-Shabaab in the Middle Juba region of Somalia, who was known to be sympathetic to the al-Shabaab/Islamic State merger, was ambushed and killed by other al-Shabaab members".[28]

The group also detained some foreign fighters. As Ken Menkhaus stated in an interview, "the fact that they (al-Shabaab) appear to have arrested foreigners in southern Somalia, suggest that there also might be a Somali versus non-Somali dimension to it that we have already seen in the past with Al-Shabaab".[29]

Finally, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader of al-Qaeda, accepted the allegiance that Ahmad Diriye had pledged in the previous year.[30] Although some al-Qaeda-linked websites had praised the new leader, it was the first high-level message to the Somalis after the death of the previous emir, Abu Zubeyr Godane.[31] Menkhaus judged the media reactions of al-Qaeda and its affiliates extremely slow and rudimentary, compared to IS.[32]

The split

Although Diriye and the members of al-Shabaab's Shura made their positions clear, the month-long internal debates and the comprehensive propaganda of the Islamic State were not without results. IS grew more popular among foreign fighters, and many Somalis thought the Caliphate could bring a fresh impetus. Leaflets, saying "We support the Islamic State!" and "We are the sons of the caliphate!" appeared in al-Shabaab's stronghold of Jamame, Lower Shabelle, encouraging pro-al-Qaeda factions to shift their allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. In mid-October, al-Shabaab detained thirty warriors suspected of leaning towards IS in Jilib, an al-Shabaab bastion in the Middle Juba region.[33]

The breakthrough for the Islamic State in East Africa came two weeks later. In the last days of October 2015, an audio message circulated on Somali websites. In the recording, which was first published on *YouTube,* Sheikh Abdulqadir Mumin, one of spiritual leaders of al-Shabaab (but not *the chief spiritual leader*) and its commander in Puntland region, declared his allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Approximately twenty warriors accom-

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[27] Warner, Jason: Sub-Saharan Africa's three "new" Islamic State affiliates, [online], 24.01.2017. Source: Hiiraan [07.08.2017.]

[28] Warner (2017): *op. cit.*

[29] Al-Qaida or Islamic State? Issue Simmers Within Al-Shabab, [online], 01.10.2015. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[30] Ibid.

[31] Al-Qaeda backs new Somali Shebab chief: statement, [online], 09.09.2014. Source: Deccan Chronicle [08.08.2017.]

[32] Somalia's Shebab… (2015).

[33] Somalia: Fissures emerge within Al Shabaab for merger with ISIL, [online], 15.10.2015. Source: Garoweonline [09.08.2017.]

panied him.[34] The declaration gained significant media coverage and spurred speculations that it could mean a wider break within the movement. It became clear in weeks, however, that Mumin led only a small and marginal faction, and they had to escape into the Northern Galgala Mountains to avoid the agents of *Amniyat.*

Abdulqadir Mumin was born in the Puntland region of Somalia around 1950. According to various sources, he moved to Europe in the 2000s and spent years in Sweden and in the U.K. He acquired British citizenship and quickly gained reputation as an extremist imam. "Monitored by MI5, Britain's domestic intelligence agency, Mumin is thought to have known Mohamed Emwazi, the IS executioner nicknamed 'Jihadi John', and Michael Adebolajo, one of two people convicted over the 2013 murder of British soldier Lee Rigby in London."[35] Because of the increasing pressure from security services, Mumin returned to Somalia in 2010 to fight against 'Crusaders' and joined al-Shabaab. In the first two years he worked closely together with the core leadership of the group. He was chosen to deliver a speech at al-Shabaab's official memorial ceremony for the late Osama bin Laden in May 2011. In the next months, when AMISOM and the Somali National Army started new offensives against the Jihadists in and around Mogadishu, he played an important role in al-Shabaab's attempt to reach out to local communities and clan elders. Mumin and other Jihadist officials from al-Shabaab's shadow government (like the governor of the Banadir region, Muhammad Hasan Umar Abu Abd al-Rahman) met with local community and clan leaders, businessmen, imams and poets in the suburbs and the countryside around Mogadishu to gain their support against African Union peacekeepers and the federal government. Mumin regularly appeared in *al-Kataib* where he spoke about religious issues, the interpretation of Jihad, and he encouraged the Somalis to join and support the fight of al-Shabaab.[36] Because he was coming from the Ali Saleban/Majeerten/Darod clan,[37] he was sent to the relatively remote Northern Puntland region in 2012 to recruit new warriors. It was far from al-Shabaab's primary area of operation, and the organisation had two aims: to secure its main channel of supplies from Yemen and establish/strengthen a new safe haven for its operations. When its military leader of Galgala Mountains, Mohamed Said Atom surrendered to the government in 2014, Mumin took control of the al-Shabaab-affiliated outposts and tried to organise the fight against Garowe.[38] Nevertheless, it became clear soon that Mumin had only a very limited battlefield experience and he was much better in preaching than designing and leading military operations, as he could not reach significant success against the Puntland security forces.

After the first wave of sensational reports and great expectations, it was quickly to be realised that the declaration of Mumin was more a symbolic one. Even most of his own warriors rejected joining the new movement: as we mentioned, only around 20 from his

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[34] Sheikh, Abdi: Small group of Somali al Shabaab swear allegiance to Islamic State, [online], 23.10.2015. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[35] Who is this Islamic State's Abdulqadir Mumin in Somalia?, [online], 02.09.2016. Source: The East African [08.08.2017.]

[36] From al-Shabab to the Islamic State: The Bay'a of 'Abd al-Qadir Mu'min and Its Implications, [online], 30.10.2015. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[37] Yusuf, Zakaria – Khalif, Abdul: The Islamic State Threat in Somalia's Puntland State, [online], 17.10.2016. Source: Crisis Group [08.08.2017.]

[38] Warner (2017): *op. cit.*

original 300 fighters chose the Islamic State. In addition, some experts warned that "there is no doubt that al-Shabaab, whatever internal wrangling is currently going on, remains a deadly force within Somalia and in neighbouring Kenya".[39] Al-Shabaab's governor in the Lower Shabelle region, Abu Abdalla, sent a message that "if anyone says he belongs to another Islamic movement, kill him on the spot […] We will cut the throat of any one […] if they undermine unity". He also added that "the world wanted us to be divided […] This is [to remain loyal to al-Qaeda] a collective decision, and anybody who wants to join another Islamic group must leave the country to meet them where they are". Diriye commented as: "I swear by the name of God we will not tolerate the acts of saboteurs."[40] The official spokesperson of al-Shabaab, Sheikh Mahmud Ali Dheere made similar statements.[41]

Subsequently, on 16 November, another allegedly pro-IS commander, Sheikh Bashir Abu Numan, and eight other fighters died in a factional clash near the town of Saakow.[42] Near Buale, al-Shabaab arrested five other IS sympathisers.[43] At the end of November, al-Shabaab cleric and deputy governor of the Juba region Sheikh Hussein Abdi Gedi and four other members died in an ambush near Gududley. According to rumours, Gedi and his mates seceded from al-Shabaab and tried to persuade others to join Mumin's fraction. It was the third attack against fighters thought to be the supporters of IS.[44]

In the first days of December, *Amniyat* killed a Sudanese pro-IS commander, Mohammed Makkawi Ibrahim, who had taken part in the killing of a USAID representative and his driver in Khartoum in 2008.[45] Foreigners who remembered the inner purge of al-Shabaab in 2013, which also had ideological reasons and was aimed mainly at foreign fighters, defected to the government forces, fearing that they would be killed by their former colleagues on suspicion that they are IS supporters.[46]

But *Amniyat* could not hunt down everybody. On 7 December, the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) claimed that Al-Shabaab's Lower Juba commander, Mohamed Dulyadin Kuno Gamadheere – a Kenyan–Somali considered to be the mastermind behind the 2015 Garissa attack in Kenya that claimed almost 150 lives, and a close confidant of Sheikh Mumin – had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in late November. This appeared to be confirmed after Kuno's militant group captured the strategic town of Dhobley in the Lower Jubba region on 9 December (according to other sources, it was actually not Dhobey, but Tuulo Barwaqo).[47]

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[39] Oladipo, Tom: Al-Shabab wants IS to back off in East Africa, [online], 24.11.2015. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[40] Somalia's Al-Qaeda branch warns members against joining IS, [online], 24.11.2017. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[41] Fight Between Rival Al-Shabab Factions Kills 9, [online], 12.11.2015. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[42] Maruf, Harun: Al-Shabab Official Threatens Pro-Islamic State Fighters, [online], 25.11.2017. Source: Hiiraan [08.08.2017.]

[43] Agnon, Shmuel Yosef: Al Shabaab Militants Execute 5 pro-ISIL Members in Lower Jubba, [online], 23.11.2015. Source: Intelligencebriefs [09.08.2017.]

[44] Suspected Leader of Pro-IS Al-Shabab Faction Reported Killed, [online], 23.11.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

[45] Agnon, Shmuel Yosef: Islamic State Takfiri Militant Group Blames Al Shabaab Terrorists For Killing Jihadi Defectors in Somalia, [online], 13.12.2015. Source: Intelligencebriefs [09.08.2017.]; Sudanese USAID employee assassin killed by al-Shabaab in Somalia, [online], 05.12.2015. Source: Sudantribune [09.08.2017.]

[46] 200 Al-Shabab Fighters Pledge Allegiance to ISIS, [online], 25.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

[47] Al-Shabaab commander's pledge to Islamic State amid in-fighting moderately reduces terrorism risks to Kenyan border region, [online], 09.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]; Somalia: Pro-ISIL fighters take town near Kenyan border, [online], 09.12.2015. Source: Allafrica [09.08.2017.]

According to media reports, Kuno defected with 1,200 fighters, including the members of the elite Kenyan operations unit Jaysh Ayman. It was feared by FGS that Kuno would establish a working link with Sheikh al Somali, a pro-IS radical preacher in Kenya.[48]

Other sources denied Kuno's betrayal though. Matt Bryden, the director of Sahan Research wrote that he had not seen any credible information about Kuno's move and the fact that al-Shabaab praised him after his death contradicted his purported alliance with Mumin.[49] The alliance of Mumin and Kuno would have been a huge symbolic blow for Ahmad Diriye and Mahad Karate. Kuno knew and controlled almost all al-Shabaab operations in Kenya, so his defection threatened the biggest achievement of al-Shabaab: its regionalisation and new bridgeheads in Kenya.

On 11 December, Jihadist militants seized the village of Tuulo Barwaqo, over 120 kilometres Northwest of Kismayu, the capital of Jubaland. The militants insisted that they were IS loyalists who had replaced the Jubaland authority in the area. The chief of the village, who represented the Jubaland Interim Administration (JIA) and other officials fled when they heard that IS fighters were heading towards the area.[50] Nevertheless, the strength of this group must have been limited, because JIA forces recaptured Tuulo Barwaqo without fight within four days.[51]

The in-fighting within the Jihadist movement continued and distrust among members reached the highest level. Foreign fighters, some of whom had spent six or seven years fighting in the Horn of Africa, now were considered unreliable by the Somalis. Dozens of them left al-Shabaab and joined the Islamic State or surrendered to the government. As one of them told reporters, "some mujahedeen fighters are now preferring to fall into the enemy's hands instead of meeting death in the hands of brothers […] they have no choice".[52]

Two months after the split between Diriye and Abdulqadir Mumin, the Islamic State in Somalia seemed to be an emerging power. Mumin's fraction and al-Qaeda-loyal al-Shabaab warriors clashed in Timirshe, Bari region. Al-Shabaab wanted to expel the Islamic State's troops from the area to prevent the arrival of fresh supply of weapons and fighters from Yemen.[53]

The fact that al-Shabaab warriors chose the Islamic State not only in the distant and safe North – far from *Amniyat* – but also some in the Southern core of the movement demonstrated that a wider rift within al-Shabaab was a real threat. There were Islamic State supporters not only in the Galgala Mountains, but also in the Kenyan–Somali border area. According to Joseph Boinett, the Inspector General of the National Police Service of Kenya, Islamic State sympathisers launched two attacks in Mandera county, Kenya, killing one soldier and two civilians, which was the first reported attack of the group.[54] According to

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48 Garissa massacre planner Mohamed Kuno joins ISIS, [online], 09.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

49 The author's interview with Matt Bryden, September 2017.

50 Fear as Islamic State fighters 'invade' village in Somalia, [online], 11.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

51 Somalia forces recapture village from militants, [online], 12.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

52 Tensions rise as al-Shabaab foreign fighters consider supporting Isis, [online], 09.12.2017. Source: Hiiraan [14.08.2017.]

53 Somalia: Pro-ISIL militants, Al Shabaab clash in deadly Puntland infighting, [online], 24.12.2017. Source: Garoweonline [14.08.2017.]

54 200 Al-Shabab Fighters Pledge Allegiance… (2015); Al Shabaab now split in two and competing to show lethalness, IG Boinnet says, [online], 24.12.2015. Source: Hiiraan [09.08.2017.]

Kenyan security services, by the end of December 2015, at least 200 fighters left al-Shabaab for the Islamic State in the border region.[55]

In January, IS continued its media-campaign for al-Shabaab. The Somali fighters of the Islamic State in Libya sent a message to their brothers in the Horn to join the Caliphate: "To the mujahideens in al-Shabaab, we call upon you to put aside your pride and arrogance and your blind following of your leaders who lack wisdom. […] O mujahideen in Somalia, o mujahideen who give bayah (allegiance) to the caliphate. Congratulations. We love you for the sake of Allah […] We call upon you to be steadfast, to be firm, to always be strong and know that Allah is with you."[56]

After the honeymoon

Mumin and other commanders spent the next few months reorganising their supporters and building up the new movement which, under the shadow of *Amniyat,* was a slow process. In April, a new IS affiliate called Jabhat East Africa (JEA) pledged allegiance to the Caliphate, rejecting the approach of al-Shabaab and its allies in the Horn. According to its declaration "we in Jahba[t] East Africa are advising all East Africans to leave al-Shabaab and their sponsor groups, like Al-Muhajiroun, Al-Hijra and Ansar Islam […] Like Al-Shabaab the sponsor groups have not understood the binding obligation of the Khalifah (caliphate) […] We are telling the mujahideen in East Africa that al-Shabaab has now become a psychological and physical prison […] To pledge bayah to Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is freedom for the mujahideen in East Africa and opportunity to wage jihad according to the Sunnah against the enemies of Allah".[57]

The relationship between ISS and JAE was not entirely clear; there was some overlap and, as with other IS groups, JAE was organised on a territorial basis and aimed at the young people of the wider region – Somalia, but more Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Jabhat East Africa was more a new ideological movement than a potential insurgency. According to Jason Warner, the group had limited operational capacities and its leader, Mohamed Abdi Ali, was arrested by Kenyan security forces in May 2016.[58]

Thus, the first physical attack claimed by ISS took place only in April 2016, when they hit an AMISOM vehicle in the Taridish area of Mogadishu with an IED.[59] Although this garnered extensive media attention, "setting off an IED is hardly a major achievement in Somalia. […] But it does testify to the presence of Islamic State sympathizers on the ground in Somalia, and the potential for the group to inspire fissures among al-Shabab fighters and sympathizers".[60] Two weeks later, the Islamic State's official media outlet, Amaq

[55] 200 Al-Shabab Fighters Pledge Allegiance… (2015); Al Shabaab now split in two and competing to show lethalness … (2015)

[56] ISIS call for al-Shabaab fighters to defect and join them in Somalia as Islamic State tries to expand in Africa, [online], 12.01.2016. Source: Hiiraan [14.08.2017.]

[57] Dearden, Lizzie: Isis: New terrorist group Jahba East Africa pledges allegiance to "Islamic State" in Somalia, [online], 08.04.2016. Source: Independent [28.08.2017.]

[58] Warner (2017): *op. cit.*

[59] Corey, Charlton: ISIL claims responsibility for bombing of African Union vehicle in Mogadishu marking its first ever attack in Somalia, [online], 25.04.2016. Source: Dailymail [14.08.2017.]

[60] Winsor, Morgan: ISIS In Somalia: Islamic State Claims First-Ever Attack In Mogadishu While Courting Al-Shabab, [online], 26.04.2016. Source: Ibitimes [29.08.2017.]

News Agency, published a report about the second attack of ISS in Mogadishu against NISA forces.[61] SNA forces killed twelve ISS fighters, including foreigners, in Janale, Lower Shabelle.[62]

Abdi Hassan Hussein, the former director of the Puntland Intelligence Agency, noted that the number of Mumin followers had increased from 20–30 to 100–150. According to Hussein, "they received military supplies from Yemen – weapons, uniform, ISIS sent trainers who inspected their bases, and they have started sending financial support. The weapons shipment was delivered by sea from Mukallah city in Hadramouth; it arrived from the Red Sea coast of Somalia in February and March this year".[63] The former director blamed the Somali Government for not taking seriously the threat ISS posed to the country.

In June, Somali Jihadists – both al-Shabaab and IS – suffered a great setback: Jubaland security forces killed Mohamed Kuno in an ambush in Kismayo.[64] Interestingly, on pro-al-Shabaab Andalus Radio, a commander subsequently stated that "avenging the death of our scholars and leaders is a binding obligation on our shoulders that we will never relinquish nor forget no matter how long it takes".[65] Nevertheless, the death of its most experienced and sophisticated (potential) commander in the South degraded the pro-IS fraction's capabilities.

In early September, four members of ISS were arrested in Bay Region by SNA.[66] According to the security forces of South–West Interim Administration (SWIA), among them was the regional commander of ISS.[67] Mumin's faction later published a new video in which around seventy masked men – both Somalis and foreigners – speaking in Somali, English, Swahili and Arabic encouraged the audience to carry out a Jihad against the government and its supporters. The fighters celebrated Eid Adha. According to sources close to Garoweonline, the venue was bin Ja'el, a valley located east to the port city of Bossasso. One member of the group said in English that "the Caliphate of Prophet-hood came into effect now and it's spreading everywhere and it's in Somalia now".[68]

Nevertheless, almost a year after its establishment, these results and the visibility of the organisation remained limited. Mumin's support came mainly from his own Ali Saleban/Majerteen sub-clan. Recruitment was so slow, that according to reports, he had to kidnap young boys for his movement.

Mumin tried to strengthen his movement through two initiatives. First, he promised reduced taxation and more focus on holy war instead of the never-ending political (clan) struggle in Somalia. ISS also promised less corruption and fewer abuses. This moderate approach provided some supports for ISS.[69]

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[61] Islamic State says it carried out 2nd attack in Somalia, [online], 06.05.2017. Source: Idalenews [28.08.2017.]
[62] Somalia army kills 12 Islamic State militants, [online], 05.05.2017. Source: Hiiraan [28.08.2017.]
[63] Intelligence Official: Islamic State Growing in Somalia, [online], 05.05.2016. Source: Hiiraan [28.08.2017.]
[64] Garissa university attack plotter Mohammed Kuno 'dead', [online], 01.06.2016. Source: BBC [28.08.2017.]
[65] Al-Shabaab confirms death of Dulyadayn, [online], 18.06.2016. Source: Goobjoog [28.08.2017.]
[66] Four IS fighters arrested in southwest Somalia, [online], 04 09 2016, Source: Hiiraan [29.08.2017.]
[67] Somalia: ISWA parades captured ISIL commander in Baidoa, [online], 02.09.2016. Source: Allafrica [29.08.2017.]
[68] ISIS in Puntland releases new video declaring Caliphate in East Africa, [online], 19.09.2016. Source: Garoweonline [29.08.2017.]
[69] Vogt, Heidi: Islamic State in Africa Tries to Lure Members From al-Shabaab, [online], 28.10.2016. Source: Hiiraan [29.08.2017.]

The organisation launched its first large-scale military operation in Qandala, in the Bari region of Puntland, in late October 2016. Approximately 100 ISS soldiers captured the city without any resistance.[70] This marked the first time that the group managed to conquer territories in the Horn. Their strategic aims were both ideological and practical. They wanted to demonstrate that ISS could control the area, a precondition for establishing an 'Islamic State' in Somalia. In addition, the port of Qandala could serve as a communication and supply centre for the wider Middle East region.[71]

Qandala was also inhabited by Mumin's Ali Saleban clan, so the emir could count on the support of his clansmen. As the Crisis Group's analysts Zakaria Yusuf and Abdul Khalif pointed out, clan factors could play a decisive role. They emphasised that "the largest active clan militia is led by the former Bari region governor, Abdisamad Mohamed Galan, an outspoken critic of the current Puntland administration. He hails from the same clan family as Sheikh Mumin and enjoys the support of other minority clans. He and other armed clans in the Bari region operate largely outside the control of the Puntland government".[72] Therefore, Galan could provide military, political and logistical support for the movement. Local elders tried to persuade ISS fighters to leave the city though, so it is hard to judge how firmly the Ali Saleban clan supported Mumin.[73]

Qandala thus demonstrated the weaknesses of ISS. Although Mumin wanted to conduct a Universalist movement, ISS failed to break free from clan dynamics. This limited its ability to build a wider national network.[74] The capture of the small port city relied not on the strength of ISS, but on the temporary weakness of Puntland. The forces of Garowe[75] were "severely overstretched, policing the long frontier with South and Central Somalia, keeping an eye on rebellious clans in Sool and Sanaag (regions also claimed by neighbouring Somaliland), or battling hostile armed groups in Galkayo (against GIA[76] forces), in Galgala Mountains (against Al-Shabaab) and in Qandala (against Galan's militia)".[77]

The Puntland authorities also responded very slowly. Although the president of Puntland, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali Gaas, declared war against ISS in early November,[78] with the exception of a small raid by the Puntland Maritime Police Forces (PMPF) on 10 November,[79] he took no significant military steps against the Jihadists in Qandala. Only at the end of November, after negotiations between Puntland forces and militias from the Ali Saleban clan did fighters start their move towards the port.[80] Roadblocks erected by ISS and the fear of alienating the Ali Saleban clan made it a slow process though.[81]

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70 IS Militants Seize Town in Somalia's Puntland, [online], 26.10.2016. Source: Hiiraan [29.08.2017.]
71 Mahmood (2016): *op. cit.*
72 Yusuf–Khalif (2016): *op. cit.*
73 IS Militants Seize Town… (2016).
74 Mahmood (2016): *op. cit.*
75 The capital of Puntland.
76 Galmudug Interim Administration.
77 Yusuf–Khalif (2016): *op. cit.*
78 Puntland president declares war on Islamic State, [online], 04.11.2016. Source: Hiiraan [30.08.2017.]
79 Somalia: Puntland forces raid militant bases in Qandala city, [online], 10.11.2016. Source: Allafrica [30.08.2017.]
80 Hassen, Abdiqani: Somali forces approach port town, ready to attack Islamic State, [online], 29.11.2016. Source: Hiiraan [30.08.2017.]
81 Somalia: Puntland forces approach Qandala, led by Bari Governor, [online], 03.12.2016. Source: Garoweonline [30.08.2017.]

The first direct clash between Puntland forces and ISS happened in Bashashin village, 50 kilometres west of Qandala, when regional troops stopped to dismantle landmines planted by Jihadists.[82] The fighting continued in the coming days, and it is unclear when the Puntland forces liberated the city.[83] According to Shabellenews, NATO warships patrolling the coast of Somalia were also involved in the battle.[84] By 7 December, Mumin's forces withdrew to the nearby mountains and the Bin Ja'ael valley.[85]

After Qandala

The recapture of Qandala demonstrated the limited military potentials of ISS well. Mumin took a risk and he lost. By the time of concluding this analysis (30 October 2017), almost one year after the Qandala operations, the conquest of the port was the only big military achievement of pro-IS fractions in the Horn and the only step towards the control of a bigger area, a basic condition for the establishment of a de facto Islamic State. But ISS could hold its position only for a month and it seemed that its military power and public support were not enough to maintain its rule.

As Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Nathaniel Barr stated, "IS managed to establish only a small and tenuous foothold in Somalia".[86] A report in *Hiiraan* went further, noting that "arguably, Mumin's biggest success is his designation by the U.S. as a serious terrorist threat – making him the potential target of a drone strike".[87] In the same paper, Matt Bryden argued that IS "prospects for expansion are limited".[88]

Yet by the end of November 2016, according to the analysis of Omar Mahmood, ISS had launched ten attacks in Somalia, mainly in Mogadishu and in the North. As Mahmood emphasised, "it is unclear if these cells maintain links and function as a cohesive unit, or even receive any assistance from the Islamic State. More likely, they represent a collection of disparate but ideologically aligned al-Shabaab defectors, operating in distinct geographic zones".[89] This situation has not changed in recent months: the Islamic State in Somalia remains a loose (sometimes hardly existing) network of militias.

Puntland forces continued the operations against ISS in early 2017, destroying some military bases in the North.[90] In January, Puntland forces paraded with the captured weapons and explosives of ISS in Bossasso, while President Gaas visited the liberated city.[91] In early

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[82] Maruf, Harun: Somalia security forces and IS fighters directly clash for first time, [online], 03.12.2016. Source: Hiiraan [30.08.2017.]

[83] Somalia: Puntland forces haven't recaptured Qandala, says security official, [online], 05.12.2016. Source: Garoweonline [30.08.2017.]

[84] Puntland army launch anti-ISIL offensive in Qandala, [online], 03.12.2016. Source: Baydhabo [30.08.2017.]

[85] Somalia: Puntland security forces recaptured port town from ISIS, [online], 07.12.2016. Source: Garoweonline [30.08.2017.]

[86] Gartenstein-Ross, Daveed – Barr, Nathaniel: How al-Qaeda Survived the Islamic State Challenge, [online], 01.03.2017. Source: Hudson [29.08.2017.]

[87] Who Is The US-Designated 'Terrorist' Leading ISIS in Somalia?, [online], 02.09.2016. Source: Hiiraan [29.08.2017.]

[88] Ibid.

[89] Mahmood (2016): *op. cit.*

[90] Hassan, Mohamed Olad: Regional Somali forces 'destroy' Islamic State base, [online], 19.12.2016. Source: Hiiraan [30.08.2017.]

[91] Somalia: Puntland parades weapons seized from IS fighters, [online], 11.01.2017. Source: Garoweonline [30.08.2017.]

February, the residents of Karin, a small village 35 kilometres outside of Bossasso, reported that they found the decapitated bodies of three men believed to have been kidnapped by pro-IS fighters days earlier.[92] A week later, ISS claimed responsibility for the attack on the Village Hotel in Bossasso, in which Jihadists killed four soldiers on the national election's day.[93] On 28 March, a roadside bomb hit the convoy of Puntland forces near Qandalda, killing a soldier and wounding another. Garowe blamed ISS for the attack.[94] In mid-April, fighters who were believed to be pro-IS sympathisers captured a small village, Dasan near Qandala and then suddenly deserted it.[95]

One month later, ISS conducted its first reported suicide bombing in Somalia. Its fighter tried to attack a hotel in Bossasso which was frequently visited by government officials, but according to the local police chief "security forces stopped the suspect when he approached, but he detonated himself leaving five people dead. One of the security officers and four civilians were killed in the blast".[96]

These attacks had limited effects. According to the senior military officer of the Puntland force, Ahmed Mahmoud Yusuf, the number of ISS fighters was only around seventy at that time (much less than a small-clan militia) and they survived only by stealing from the local population.[97] Other experts were not so optimistic. Matt Bryden estimated that ISS still had at least 200–300 men, and although Puntland "does have a well-trained and relatively cohesive paramilitary force in the Darawish, and it has an effective command strike force in the Puntland security forces […] But clearly fighting both to the west and east of Bossasso it found itself on the defensive".[98]

Summary – Moving towards 'al-Shabaabisation'?

The two-year history of the Islamic State in Somalia is not, however, a success story. ISS failed to break through in the Horn, and its biggest success is that it has survived. As Stig Jarle Hansen pointed out, the Islamic State "has achieved a number of symbolic victories – a pledge of allegiance from Boko Haram in Nigeria, the loyalty of at least one faction of the militant group al-Mourabitoun in Mali, and the support of a few minor al-Shabab sellouts like Mumin – but it has failed to displace al Qaeda as the continent's premier Jihadist franchise".[99]

Moreover, since the battle for Qandala, reports indicated that ISS has changed tactics. Because it lacks the capacity to control territories, the Islamic State in Somalia uses the current tactics, techniques and procedures of al-Shabaab. It conducts small-scale terrorist

[92] Pro-ISIS militants abduct and behead three outside Qandala, [online], 01.02.2017. Source: Hiiraan [30.08.2017.]
[93] Somalia: ISIL claims responsibility for attack on Village Hotel in Bosaso, [online], 08.02.2017. Source: Garoweonline [30.08.2017.]
[94] One soldier killed, one wounded by roadside bomb in Somalia's Puntland, [online], 28.03.2017. Source: Reuters [31.08.2017.]
[95] Somalia: Militants linked to ISIS briefly size village near Qandala, [online], 16.04.2017. Source: Garoweonline [31.08.2017.]
[96] Islamic state claims first suicide attack in Somalia, kills 5, [online], 24.05.2017. Source: Hiiraan [31.08.2017.]
[97] Somalia: ISIS fighter surrenders to Puntland authorities, [online], 06.06.2017. Source: Garoweonline [31.08.2017.]
[98] Maruf, Harun: Somali Officials Condemn Attacks, Vow Revenge, [online], 09.06.2017. Source: VOA [31.08.2017.]
[99] Hansen, Stig Jarle: The Islamic State Is Losing in Africa, [online], 13.12.2016. Source: Foreign Policy [01.09.2017.]

and guerrilla attacks against relatively soft targets. Mumin appears to have accepted the reality of the situation and started a more systematic build-up of an insurgency movement.

This realistic approach, ironically, could mean the end of his movement. After a decade of a prolonged Jihadist insurgency, the Islamic State brought fresh air to the fight against "crusaders and their puppets", aiming the purification of the movement from the 'Somali' elements (clannism, corruption, alienation of the local population by taxation, forced recruitment and atrocities) and offering better living circumstances to the Somalis. Although this agenda was extremely optimistic, and ISS had modest capacities to realise it, many weary Islamist fighters were ready to support the group. The use of clans, terrorist attacks against Somali targets, taxing and looting the local population, and other such measures might mean in the long term, that ISS could degrade, losing its foreign recruitment and the chance for wider financial support. Mumin neglected his own ideological agenda, and therefore, it is unlikely that ISS will reach even the level of successes al-Shabaab did.

As of October 2017, though, the agenda of ISS had not entirely failed. There were reports about the inner clashes of Somali Jihadists in the South, which demonstrate that the debate between pro-IS sympathisers and hard-core al-Qaeda supporters is not over, even in the core areas and groups of al-Shabaab.[100] The continued IS propaganda to gain the support of low- and mid-ranking fighters[101] also shows that a pro-IS change in the leadership of the movement could mean a general shift to the Islamic State. Sympathy for the Caliphate might be wider than it seems. Diriye has been strong and determined enough to hold together his movement, however, the members of the Shura have remained unified, which was and perhaps is the biggest weapon of al-Shabaab.

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[100] Wabala, Dominic: Al-Shabaab in a major split over mistrust, [online], 13.08.2017. Source: Hiiraan [01.09.2017.]

[101] Mahmood (2016): *op. cit.*

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Nikolett Pénzváltó

The EU–Turkey Visa Liberalisation Agreement: A Victim of Populist and Securitisation Practices?

The negotiation process of the visa liberalisation between Turkey and the European Union came to a sudden halt in May 2016 when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that Turkey would not amend its anti-terrorism law as a precondition for the visa waiver deal. Going beyond the approach of general policy analyses, the paper draws inspiration from the postmodern or interpretive–discursive political tradition, and proposes discourse analysis, populism and securitisation theories as a theoretical background for finding an explanation to this abrupt move. As the author examines the visa liberalisation discourse in Turkey at the official level from May 2016 to April 2017, she points out how the government's framing connects with the wider securitisation discourse of the previous years and shows what makes it extremely difficult to challenge or counter the official narrative(s).

Keywords: *European Union, Turkey, visa, asylum, refugee, securitisation*

Introduction

The visa liberalisation process between Turkey and the European Union came to a halt in May 2016. That was the first time when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan stated that Turkey would not amend its anti-terrorism law as a precondition for the visa waiver deal. The agreement would grant Turkish citizens to enter the Schengen zone without a visa for up to 90 days for tourism or business trips. After the migration agreement in March 2016, Ankara accelerated the pace of reforms aiming to fulfil the criteria on the visa liberalisation roadmap. This is why the president's announcement came as a surprise just two months later with yet only 5 of the 72 benchmarks fulfilled.

This paper raises the question of how the sudden stop so close to the long-awaited visa agreement can be explained. Europeanisation is probably the most dominant theoretical approach in studying the EU–Turkish relations.[1] Based on this approach we can make an important observation concerning our research question: two crucial criteria for the success of conditionality are missing in the visa case, similarly to the whole EU-accession process. These two lacking preconditions are credibility on the EU's side and political will on the Turkish side. It is doubtful, whether the political leaders of the member states

[1] For more background see Schimmelfennig, Frank – Engert, Stefan – Knobel, Heiko: Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey. *JCMS,* Vol. 41, No. 3, 2003, pp. 495–518; Eralp, Atila: The EU Accession Process and Europeanization in Turkey. In: *Turkey, Sweden and the European Union: Experiences and Expectation,* Sieps, Stockholm, 2006, pp. 147–168; Alessandri, Emiliano: Democratization and Europeanization in Turkey After the September 12 Referendum. *Insight Turkey,* Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 23–30; Cavlak, Hakan – Işık, Hayriye: The Limits of Conditionality: Turkey–EU Taxation Negotiations. *International Journal of Finance & Banking Studies,* Vol. 4, No. 4, 2015, p. 29; Buhari-Gulmez, Didem: *Europeanization in a Global Context: Integrating Turkey into the World Polity.* Palgrave MacMillan, 2017.

would grant Turkey the visa-free travel even if Ankara meets every necessary criterion. Nevertheless, we argue that it would be worth President Erdoğan's going along with the visa liberalisation roadmap in order to put the EU in a normatively/rhetorically entrapped situation. In this regard, our real research puzzle is why there is no political will in Ankara to take at least symbolic measures toward fulfilling the remaining criteria, especially when taking into consideration that the anti-terrorism law[2] has already been amended multiple times during the accession negotiations.

There are several possible answers to this question. A common argument is that Erdoğan simply does not want to let certain people flee from Turkey and this is why he is not interested in the deal. However, visa liberalisation has almost nothing to do with border control in this sense. The Turkish authorities would still be able to control who can leave the country at the border crossing points. Also, authorities can reject issuing passports to any citizen. This fact gains more importance considering that newly introduced biometric passports would be required to enter the EU after the deal comes into force. There is another argument, namely, that terrorism is just a cover and the real issue is the other delicate criterion on the roadmap: the requirement of a more effective fight against corruption. However, it still does not give an answer to the question why Ankara is not willing to take at least symbolic measures towards its fulfilment, like for example Ukraine did – so far without a real solution to the corruption problem. This is why we started to look for an alternative explanation.

Although there are several analyses focusing on the EU–Turkey visa issue in general, there is a lack of studies that explicitly explain why the visa negotiation process stopped at the Turkish side. Most articles introduce the background and the history of the visa negotiations.[3] The possible effects and the potential security implications of the Turkish visa free access are also widely analysed.[4] Relatively few studies investigate the reasons why this issue is so delicate, and even those texts attempt to answer the question why Europeans

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[2] Terrorism has no consensual international definition that has been underlined several times by the Turkish authorities. Nevertheless, the Turkish anti-terror law is long disputed by different international organisations because of its extensive definition. To take an example, 'offences against the government', more closely 'attempts to remove the Government of the Republic of Turkey from power or to prevent it from performing its duties in whole or in part' can be considered terrorist offences, together with the violation of the Constitution, supplying arms or the assassination of the President. Categories like supporter of terrorism and distributing terrorist propaganda are also very widely defined. The Turkish anti-terror law entered into force years before the Justice and Development Party (AKP) was established, so it is not the party's invention, yet this law made it possible to legally accuse plenty of people with terrorist charges during the last few years.

[3] For more background see Knaus, Gerald: EU–Turkey Relations: A Visa Breakthrough?, *Global Turkey in Europe Policy Brief 11,* March 2014. [18.09.2017.]; Özler, Zeynep: Breaking the Vicious Circle in EU-Turkey Relations: Visa Negotiations. *Turkish Policy Quarterly,* Vol. 11, No. 1, 2012, pp. 121–131. [18.09.2017.]; Paul, Amanda – Seyrek, Demir Murat: EU visa-liberalisation for Turks: just around the corner? *EPC Commentary, 03.05.2016.* [10.09.2017.]; Peťková, Lenka: EU's Readmission Agreement And Visa Liberalization Talks With Turkey: Backing Up Turkey's Protracted Way To The EU, *GpoT Policy Brief,* No. 33, August 2012. [04.09.2017.]

[4] The European Commission provides probably the best assessments regarding this topic. European Commission: Assessment of the Migratory Impact of Visa Liberalisation. In: *Second Report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalisation roadmap*, [online], 04.03.2016a, pp. 28–46. Source: eur-lex.europa.eu [12.09.2017.]; European Commission: Assessment of the Security Impact of Visa Liberalisation. In: *Third Report on progress by Turkey in fulfilling the requirements of its visa liberalization roadmap,* [online], 04.05.2016b. Source: eur-lex.europa.eu [12.09.2017.]

are 'afraid of' the Turks.[5] Nevertheless, we argue that it is equally vital to understand the Turkish side.

In an attempt to fill this gap in the literature, the paper draws inspiration from the postmodern or interpretive-discursive political tradition, and proposes discourse analysis, populism and securitisation theories as a theoretical background. In this theoretical frame, the study analyses the discourse (selected speeches, statements, interviews) of prominent Turkish governmental actors. The reason for this limitation is that we are primarily interested in the process of how the official narratives influence people's perceptions. The official framing is getting more and more important, considering that the government's narratives on different issues have become unquestionably hegemonic, especially after last year's attempted coup.[6]

The paper is structured the following way. It introduces the theoretical background first. Secondly, it applies populism and securitisation theories in the context of the Turkish politics. It introduces the government's 'othering' practices and then suggests that the extensive use of the 'terrorist' label strongly contributed to the securitisation of the Turkish political environment. As a result, any opposing voice became an 'enemy' that poses an 'existential threat' to Turkey. Moreover, the paper argues that the above presented framework is useful for examining the Turkey–EU relations, as well. Populism made the EU an external 'Other', and the 'supporter of terrorists' label securitised the EU's demands mostly by evoking the so called Tanzimat and Sèvres Syndromes. Finally, the paper examines the visa liberalisation discourse in Turkey at the official level from May 2016 to April 2017. The study points out how the government's framing connects with the wider securitisation discourse of the previous years and shows what makes it extremely difficult to challenge or counter the official narrative(s).

Theoretical background

After describing the discourse analytical approach as a broader frame of our analysis, this chapter examines two important theories which play a crucial role in understanding contemporary Turkish politics and the EU–Turkey relations: populism and securitisation. Our aim is not a detailed analysis of the concepts but to give a brief introduction in order to build a common conceptual understanding and to situate our work within the literature.

What is new in our contribution from a theoretical perspective is that we combine populism and securitisation theories in an innovative way. We argue that populism and securitisation can be seen as marking two different intensity levels on a scale. The 'Manichean' distinction of populism can be raised to the level of an 'existential threat' by discursive actions. In the following chapters, we test our idea in the context of the EU–Turkey visa liberalisation process.

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[5] See e.g. Baysan, Alper: Multiple Arenas and Diverse Techniques of Securitisation: The Case of the EU's Visa Regime towards Turkey. *Journal of Contemporary European Research,* Vol. 9, No. 5, 2013, pp. 740–758; Schaefer, Sarah – Austin, Greg – Parker, Kate: Turks in Europe: Why are we afraid? Foreign Policy Centre, London, 2005. [01.09.2017.]

[6] For further details see the 2017 report of Freedom House on Turkey. Freedom House: Freedom on the Net, Turkey, [online], 2017. Source: freedomhouse.org [05.01.2018.]

The discourse analytical approach

As Marianne Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips[7] have pointed out, discourse analysis is not just one approach but a series of interdisciplinary approaches which stem from social constructivism and post-structuralist linguistics. Discourse analytical approaches all share the starting point that "our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations but rather play an active role in creating and changing them".[8] This viewpoint implies that there is a constant struggle at the discursive level for constructing and reproducing social reality.

Discourse analysts rely primarily on the analysis of texts as a component of discourse. Under text both the written texts and all forms of verbal products are understood. Following Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak,[9] discourse is defined in our article as "language use in speech and writing" and is conceptualised as "a form of social practice". We also use the term narratives which are simply understood as particular interpretations of events in the paper.

Discourse analytical approaches have been used more and more frequently in the context of the EU–Turkey relations.[10]

Populism

Although there are numerous definitions of populism, in this paper we follow Ernesto Laclau's approach. According to Laclau, populism is not 'a *type* of movement – identifiable with either a special social base or a particular ideological orientation – but a *political logic*",[11] or as he puts it "a particular mode of articulation".[12] He deprives the concept from its pejorative overtone and identifies populism as an inseparable part of politics. Consequently, populism becomes not a question of *existence* in any given political activity but a matter of *extent.* Laclau's approach can also explain earlier ideas found very hard to comprehend, namely how can populist parties remain populist after getting into power.

Summarising Laclau's approach, populism occurs when social space is simplified into the opposition of two antagonistic camps along with a discursively constructed frontier. Society becomes symbolically divided between 'the people' and its 'other' as a consequence of a series of politico-discursive practices.[13] It is important to highlight that the identities

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[7] Jørgensen, Marianne – Phillips, Louise J.: *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method.* SAGE Publications, London, 2002, p. 3.

[8] Jørgensen–Phillips (2002): *op. cit.* 1.

[9] Wodak, Ruth – Fairclough, Norman: Critical Discourse Analysis. In: van Dijk, Teun A. (ed.): *Discourse as Social Interaction.* SAGE Publications, London, 1997, p. 258.

[10] See e.g. Tekin, Beyza Ç.: *Representations and Othering in Discourse: The construction of Turkey in the EU context.* John Benjamins Pub Co., Amsterdam, 2010; Burak, Begüm: The Image of the "Undesired Citizen" in Turkey: A Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of Hurriyet and Zaman Newspapers. *The GW Post Research Paper,* December 2012; Hauge, Hanna-Lisa et al.: Mapping milestones and periods of past EU–Turkey relations. *FEUTURE Working Paper*, September 2016.

[11] Laclau, Ernesto: *On Populist Reason.* Verso, London, 2005a, p. 117.

[12] Laclau, Ernesto: Populism: What's in a Name? In: Panizza, Francisco (ed.): *Populism and the Mirror of Democracy.* Verso, London, 2005b, p. 34.

[13] Laclau, Ernesto: *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory.* NLB, London, 1977.

on both sides of the antagonistic frontier are political constructs rather than sociological categories. Group-construction happens along the following logic. Firstly, an equivalent chain between different unfulfilled social demands is created. Secondly, this equivalent chain has to be consolidated, which happens through the emergence of a so called 'empty signifier'. An empty signifier is not a signifier without a signified but "a signifier which becomes detached from its *particular meaning* in order to provide an empty space that can be filled with *universal meanings*".[14] It functions as a point of identification for various groups of society.[15] The empty signifier "gives coherence to the chain by signifying it as a totality".[16]

Securitisation

Following the Copenhagen School of Security Studies, securitisation is conceptualised as a speech act in which the securitising actor (mostly the political elite) states that a certain matter poses threat to the survival of the referent object (usually, but not exclusively the state/society).[17] From this point of view it is irrelevant whether something is objectively threatening or not. The urgency and the existential nature of the presented threat legitimise the use of extraordinary measures and the breaking of normal (democratic) rules. Costs do not matter and there is almost no debate over the government's measures since it is about the neutralisation of the threat or what the government declares to be a threat. Another politically beneficial feature of these security situations is that they usually increase the popularity of the governing parties, almost independently from their real performance. An average citizen in every modern society gains their knowledge of security through mass media and political discourse. Therefore, their perception of security is not based on direct experience. As a result of this, finding acceptance among the members of the audience for the securitisation of any issue is not very difficult.[18]

Populism and securitisation as main characteristics of the Turkish politics – Introducing the context

Populism in Turkey during the AKP era (2002–2017)

Based on populism theory we can state that the key factor behind the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) success[19] in its early years was twofold. First, the party managed

[14] Wullweber, Joscha: Global politics and empty signifiers: the political construction of high technology. *Critical Policy Studies,* Vol. 9, No. 1, 2014, p. 82.

[15] Thomassen, Lasse: Hegemony, populism and democracy: Laclau and Mouffe today. *Revista Española de Ciencia Política,* No. 40, March 2016, p. 166. [20.09.2017.]

[16] Laclau (2005b): *op. cit.* 44.

[17] Buzan, Barry – Wæver, Ole – Wilde, Jaap de: *Security: A New Framework for Analysis.* Routledge, London, 1998.

[18] Tálas, Péter: A terrorveszélyhelyzet-diskurzus margójára. *Nemzet és Biztonság,* Vol. 9, No. 1, 2016, p. 41.

[19] Since 2002, the AKP has gained absolute majority in every parliamentary election. It is important to highlight that the fairness of the elections between 2002 and 2015 has not been questioned either by the Turkish opposition or by international monitoring groups.

to unite different social demands under the empty signifier 'Muslim democracy'. Second, it successfully identified the Kemalist elite as the opponent of the newly constructed 'people'.

Anti-elitist feelings are deep-rooted in the majority of the Turks. After the death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) stepped up as the guardian of the newly established secular state. In the following decades, the Kemalist regime was sustained by force, failing to gain the support of the majority of the people. Therefore, the AKP did not have to try too hard to construct the image of the 'Other'.

Based on historical experience, a coup by the TAF or the closure of the party by the Constitutional Court was a possible scenario all along, given the AKP's Islamist roots. For this reason, after gaining enough confidence by the landslide victory on its second parliamentary elections, the AKP started to eliminate its Kemalist opponents in the name of 'the people'. Ergenekon and Balyoz trials were the two most emblematic cases. 'Advanced democracy' has emerged as a new empty signifier in 2007, which showed the newly gained confidence of the party.

As Başak Alpan highlights, 'national will' has moved to the forefront of the AKP's rhetoric during these years.[20] In 2008 a closure trial started against the AKP at the Constitutional Court. Erdoğan evaluated this trial as "an attack not on the AKP as such, but on the national will".[21] The AKP's understanding of democracy can be observed regarding these events. Every attack on the AKP has been considered as an attack against the Turkish nation. This is the very feature of populism: one part of the society identifies itself as 'the whole'. With Laclau's words, the 'plebs' is claiming to be identical with the 'populus'. The understanding of democracy was narrowed further after the election of Erdoğan from prime minister to president in 2014. Every critique of Erdoğan was taken as an attack against democracy, since according to the government's approach the leader embodies the nation's interest. One indicator of this tendency is the number of trials initiated because of the 'insult' of the president and which number increased from 132 in 2014 to 1,953 in 2015.[22]

Checks and balances were removed from the Turkish political system also by referring to the 'national will'. Erdoğan presented these mechanisms as "the last vestiges of tutelage on popular will". According to this reasoning, an independent judiciary, for example, which is not controlled by 'national will' could prevent the fulfilment of the nation's interests and that is why it is necessary to take measures to subordinate this institution.[23]

After annihilating the threat posed by the Kemalists, the government turned toward the sole remaining rival power centre: the Hizmet movement. Since the antagonistic frontier between 'the people' and 'the Other' is discursively constructed, it can be easily displaced. The former AKP ally Fethullah Gülen and his followers were accused of attempting a 'judicial coup' against the legitimately elected government by initiating corruption investigations and supporting the Gezi protests in 2013. Although the reason

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[20] Alpan, Başak: From AKP's 'Conservative Democracy' to 'Advanced Democracy': Shifts and Challenges in the Debate on 'Europe'. *South European Society and Politics,* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2016, p. 20.

[21] CNN Türk: "Millet iradesi hiçe sayılamaz", [online], 15.03.2008. Source: cnnturk.com [20.09.2017.]

[22] ECHR: European Court of Human Rights Judgment in the Case of Artun and Güvener v. Turkey, [online], 2016. Source: aihmiz.org.tr [12.09.2017.]

[23] Kaynak, Akif Bahadır: Rise of Neo-Populism and the Decline of European Agenda in Turkey. *BUJSS,* Vol. 9, No. 1. 2016, p. 182.

behind the clash was merely power political in nature, Erdoğan made it look like Hizmet directly attacked the Turkish nation. The reconstruction of 'the people' happened along with the empty signifier of 'New Turkey'.

Securitisation through the 'terrorist' label

Turkey indisputably suffered a lot from terrorism in 2015–2016. According to the Global Terrorism Database, 490 people died in 421 incidents in 2015, and 1,004 died in 540 incidents in 2016,[24] making it one of Turkey's deadliest years. However, after comparing the data with the numbers of those who have been dismissed from their workplaces (146,674) and have been arrested (59,254) in the post-coup purge, one has the feeling that these measures are about something else than solely preventing terrorist attacks.[25]

The AKP took advantage of the country's facing a major crisis since in time of a terrorist attack every citizen turns to the government in power for defence and support and expects the executive to solve it. In June 2015, the AKP faced the possibility of losing the absolute majority in the parliament the first time in the party's history. Therefore, new-old ways had to be found to remain in power.[26]

Hence, terrorism was made a central element of the government's discourse from 2015. As a first step, the government's rhetoric exaggerated the terror threat. A dichotomy was set up between chaos and stability where the AKP with absolute majority represents stability and any other possibility leads to chaos, threatening the very survival of the state. The message of the AKP's campaign was clear: only the AKP's majority and a presidential system led by Erdoğan can guarantee stability and can fight effectively against terrorism.

As a second step, terrorism was made an empty signifier which helped in securitising the 'Other'. Through the extensive use of the 'terrorist' label, every opponent became an enemy that posed an existential threat to the survival of the Turkish nation. Consequently, extraordinary means against them gained legitimacy.

Linking terrorism with populism and exaggerating the threat it poses have given a powerful tool to the Turkish Government. Furthermore, it strongly contributed to terrorism being the number one security threat in the eyes of the Turkish public.[27] The 'terrorist' signifier was built into the populist frontier. In this new setting there is 'we' on the one side and 'they', that refers to the terrorists, as well as the supporters of terrorists, on the other side. The 'Other' is not solely someone who opposes 'the popular will' anymore but a threat to the nation's survival.

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[24] Data includes the fatalities of the July 2016 coup attempt.

[25] Source of data: https://turkeypurge.com [28.09.2017.]

[26] About securitisation in the EU–Turkish context see more from Noi, Aylin Ünver: Securitization's impacts on the democratization process in Turkey. In: Noi, Aylin Ünver – Toperich, Sasha (eds.): *Challenges of Democracy in the European Union and Its Neighbors,* Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2016, pp. 45–73. [18.09.2017.]; Açikmeşe, Sinem Akgül: EU Conditionality and De-securitization Nexus in Turkey. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies,* Vol. 13, No. 3, 2013, pp. 303–323.

[27] 13.9% of the respondents saw terrorism Turkey's biggest problem in 2014 and 39.3% in 2015. Kadir Has Üniversitesi: Türkiye Sosyal-Siyasal Eğilimler Araştırması, [online], 2016. Source: khas.edu.tr [13.09.2017.] In 2016, FETÖ stepped up to the second place from 1.3% to 25.2%. Kadir Has Üniversitesi: Türkiye Sosyal-Siyasal Eğilimler Araştırması, [online], 2017. Source: khas.edu.tr [13.09.2017.]

The example of the Gülen movement illustrates the mentioned two-step process very well. In 2013, from being a friend Hizmet became the most important internal 'Other'. Later, in October 2015, Fethullah Gülen was already listed as one of the most-wanted terrorists. On 31 May 2016 (six weeks before the July coup attempt), Hizmet was renamed to Fethullah Terror Organisation (FETÖ) and officially considered a terrorist organisation by the Turkish authorities. The July 2016 coup attempt speeded up the above described process, thus we do not consider it a turning point. FETÖ was immediately accused of the coup. The official discourse simplified the political space into a plain dichotomy: there are those who have been supporting the coup ('terrorists') and those who are against it ('the people').

The authoritarian character of the current Turkish political regime and the control it exercises over the media prevent any alternative explanation on terrorism. In February 2017, Erdoğan took one more step towards monopolising the interpretation of terrorism. A new measure was introduced by the Supreme Council of Radio and Television (RTÜK) which strictly limited the broadcasting on terrorist attacks, making the government's hegemony persistent in the discursive field.[28]

The EU as an external 'Other' and an 'existential threat'?

The above described process of enemy construction through populist and securitisation discourse can be applied to construct *external* 'Others' and threats. As Senem-Aydin Düzgit demonstrates in her analysis, between 2011–2015, the EU was mainly represented in the AKP's discourse as "an unwanted intruder in Turkish politics", "an essentially discriminatory entity" and "inferior" to Turkey on political and economic (and sometimes normative) grounds.[29] We claim that after 2015, mostly by the frequent use of the 'supporter of terrorists' label, the image of a direct threat complemented the notion of the 'Other'. A recent survey of the Kadir Has University[30] shows the success of the government's rhetoric: in 2017, Turks perceived the EU as the third biggest threat to Turkey after the United States and Israel, overtaking the place of Russia and Armenia. The EU's perception as a threat increased more than 100% from 2016, which is striking.

We argue that using positive or negative narratives regarding the EU and certain member states is a strategic choice of the Turkish Government which is largely internally driven. The EU was mobilised as a normative political context from time to time in order to satisfy internal political demands.[31] To put it another way, the EU was used to help the empty signifiers operate.[32] The EU was an essential legitimatisation tool for the AKP vis-a-vis the Kemalists, in the early years of its ruling. The party was able to limit the armed forces'

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[28] Hürriyet Daily News: Turkey's TV watchdog introduces new measures limiting terror attacks broadcasting, [online], 02.02.2017. Source: hurriyetdailynews.com [12.09.2017.]

[29] Aydin-Düzgit, Senem: De-Europeanisation through Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of AKP's Election Speeches. *South European Society and Politics,* Vol. 21, No. 1, 2016, pp. 45–58.

[30] Kadir Has Üniversitesi: Türkiye Sosyal-Siyasal… (2017).

[31] The definition of Europeanisation as a normative political context comes from Alper Kaliber. Kaliber, Alper: Contextual and Contested: Reassessing Europeanization in the Case of Turkey. *International Relations,* Vol. 27, No. 1, 2012, pp. 52–73. [13.09.2017.]

[32] Alpan (2016): *op. cit.* 18.

power and prevent a coup through referring to the reforms requested by the EU. However, the EU soon became the main source of external critique and one of the most important external 'Others'. Two parallel developments played a significant role in this change: on the one hand, the increasing self-confidence of the AKP and the decreasing credibility of the EU on the other. These two factors together led to the slowdown of the Turkish–EU accession process.

It is important to note that the negative portrayal of the EU does not exist in a vacuum: a strong interdiscursivity can be identified "between Erdoğan's discourse and some of the widely established discourses on the EU across Turkish society, which makes Erdoğan's discourse resonate across the broader public".[33] In our article we only refer to the so-called Tanzimat and Sèvres Syndromes. According to the propagators of these ideas, Europe has had a hidden agenda since the time of the Crusaders which aims to drive the Turks out of Anatolia. The two 'syndromes' represent the embedded fear of Turks that Western powers' real intention is to weaken and divide Turkey. They would do that in two ways: either from the inside or from the outside. Tanzimat Syndrome suggests that the EU demands more rights for the minorities living in Turkey because it wants their secession. According to the Sèvres Syndrome, the Europeans want to divide Turkey up among themselves, like it was envisaged in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920.

The consistent use of negative narratives on the EU gives the Turkish Government not just more power in general but one more legitimising argument why not to take further steps on the visa liberalisation roadmap. If we accept the strategic character of this usage, we can come to the following conclusion: Erdoğan may think that keeping the conflict-based message on the EU coherent can give him more supporters at the domestic political level than breaking it with cooperation and reforms. The next chapter's case study shows several examples of *how* populist and securitisation techniques work in the context of the visa liberalisation negotiation.

The official Turkish discourse on the EU-Turkey visa liberalisation negotiation

We chose ten texts (5 political speeches, 2 parliamentary speeches, 3 transcripts of press conferences) from Turkish governmental actors (6 from President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, 2 from Presidential Spokesperson İbrahim Kalın, 1 from former Minister of European Union Affairs Volkan Bozkır, 1 from Minister of European Union Affairs Ömer Çelik) about the EU and the visa issue so that we can shed a light on how the articulatory processes of including and excluding meaning take place. The reason of the predominance of the presidency's speeches among the selected texts is that according to our view, the president's word is decisive in the current Turkish political setting. We analyse the events that took place from 6 May 2016 to 16 April 2017. The former is the date when President

[33] Aydın-Düzgit (2016): *op. cit*. 56.

Erdoğan announced not amending the anti-terrorism law and the latter is the date of the Turkish constitutional referendum on the presidential system. It is important to highlight that the examined, approximately one-year period is in the run-up to the referendum and therefore the campaign was a major driver behind the harsh rhetoric. Our intention in the selection of the texts was to include all major arguments regarding the topic. The list of the analysed texts can be found at the end of the study; we solely specify our results in this chapter of the article.

The following claims were identified in the argumentation structure of the selected texts:

Claim 1: Turkey has fulfilled the criteria on the visa roadmap. It is the EU's turn.
Claim 2: Turkey should have been included in the Schengen Visa System much earlier. It is a grave shortcoming of the EU that Turkey has not been included.
Claim 3: Turkey definitely wishes a resolution to the visa issue and wants its citizens to be included in the Schengen Visa System.
Claim 4: The EU does not want to keep its promises made to Turkey. The EU is not open, transparent or sincere.
Claim 5: Exclusionist discourses (discrimination, cultural racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia) became widespread across the continent, which is poisoning the Turkey–EU relations and threatening Europe's future.
Claim 6: Any amendment on the anti-terror law is not a possible scenario. The EU should not request anything that may compromise or diminish the capacity of Turkey's fight against terror.
Claim 7: The EU has no authority to decide in the internal matters of Turkey.
Claim 8: The EU does not see Turkey's realities.
Claim 9: The EU does not stand beside Turkey in the fight against terror.
Claim 10: The EU finds it unacceptable that Turkey would fight terrorism.
Claim 11: The EU directly or indirectly supports terrorist organisations and anti-Turkey formations with the aim of weakening Turkey, as it was its purpose earlier in history.
Claim 12: The security of Turkey is inseparable from the security of Europe. Therefore, the EU is also interested in the effective Turkish fight against terrorism.
Claim 13: In the upcoming period Turkey will either continue dealing with the EU or it will set a new path for itself. Ankara will possibly announce a referendum on the continuation of the EU accession process.
Claim 14: Turkey will break the migration deal with the EU if visa-free travel is not granted to the Turks soon.

The discourse on the visa negotiation constructs not only the *knowledge* about Turkey, the EU and the criteria for the visa-free travel but also the *relationship* between Turkey and

the EU along with the Turkish and European *identity* at the same time.[34] The analysed texts describe the visa negotiations as a process in which all responsibilities lie with the EU. The Turkish Government is not responsible for any shortcomings; Turkey sufficiently fulfilled the required criteria. As for the characteristics of the relationship, the texts show that the EU applies double standards and does not consider Turkey as an 'equal' partner. Yet, Turkey can stand without the EU, if it continues this 'discriminatory' and 'insincere' attitude. The EU is presented only negatively, and Turkey is presented only positively in the texts, which serve as the basis of the othering process described earlier. We have not found any exceptions to that in the examined period. The EU appears as an actor which does not want to keep its promises, constantly raises obstacles, is hypocrite, shows no solidarity and its approach is incompatible with the European values. These nominators question and make the very principles of the European identity uncertain. In contrast, Turkey is portrayed as a country which wants to cooperate, has been waiting for the decision of its 'European friends', is heroically struggling against terrorism, has been simultaneously defending Europe, and can find new, independent ways for itself whenever it decides to do so.

Concerning our analytical focus, every claim can be classified as either a populist action (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9) or a securitisation attempt (6, 10, 11, 12, 14) or simultaneously both (5, 8, 13). The estrangement of the EU was taken to the level of an 'existential threat' by using the 'terrorist' label. According to the analysed texts the EU allows terrorists to put up tents close to the European Parliament, finds unacceptable for Turkey to fight against terrorism, and even finances terrorists. The accusations resonate well with the Tanzimat and Sèvres Syndromes. It should be noted that not only the EU's securitisation has been attempted in the process. With the same rhetorical actions, Turkey can also make itself securitised in the eyes of the Europeans, primarily through referring to the migration issue (12, 14).

Conclusions

The paper examined why there is no political will on the Turkish side toward fulfilling the criteria on the EU–Turkey visa liberalisation roadmap. Based on the proposed theories and methodology, two main reasons were identified. Firstly, terrorism has become a too central element of the governmental discourse. Secondly, the Turkish Government finds the negative rhetoric on the EU profitable in terms of votes. The visa liberalisation deal is on the one hand a victim of the populist and securitisation techniques but on the other, it is used as a tool in reconstructing and strengthening the wider populist and securitisation discourse. The EU gives a context to the Turkish political infighting, which context can be discursively mobilised to strengthen the government's position. So that the internal power games have a strong influence on the EU–Turkey relations, as well.

[34] Hülsse, Rainer: The Discursive Construction of Identity and Difference – Turkey as Europe's Other? Discussion paper presented at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops, Mannheim, 26–31 March, 1999, [online], 2000, p. 16. Source: ecpr.eu [05.01.2018.] Based on Michael Halliday's work (1973) Norman Fairclough identifies three functions of language: ideational, relational and identity functions. Fairclough, Norman: *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Longman, London, 1995, p. 131.

Challenging or countering the official narratives is extremely difficult due to at least three reasons. First, the government has an unquestionably hegemonic position in the discursive field in Turkey. Second, the government's framing resonates well with both the earlier negative narratives on the EU and the wider securitisation discourse of the previous years. It helps the public internalise the official narrative on the visa issue. Finally, probably the biggest challenge is that every de-securitisation attempt or even every critique of the government, by either internal or external actors, can be translated within this well-built discursive frame into a direct threat to Turkey as a whole, thus pictured as an existential threat. As a consequence, there is a paradox situation where the EU gets securitised right through its de-securitisation attempts. The only question seems remaining is whether Erdoğan is determined to continue this practice to the 2019 parliamentary and presidential elections in order to keep the 51% of the votes together and ignores the damages he causes.

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Antonio M. Morone

International Migration and Containment Policies: Lessons from Libya[1]

The author argues in this study that over the past three decades Libya has been a true laboratory for European and especially Italian migration policies. The years from the 1990s until the present have been characterised by two conflicting tendencies in Libya: on the one hand, the policies of the Qadhafi regime, characterised by an open-door policy towards the influx of low-cost labour from sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab countries; on the other hand, the containment policies put in place by Italy to halt illegal migration flows through the Mediterranean Sea, which were however an infinitely small proportion of the total number of migrants in Libya. Therefore, the study offers an analysis of the objectives of the migration containment policies in the international relations between Italy and Libya, as well as their current extension to other African countries and regions, also examining the effectiveness of these policies.

Keywords: *migration, Libya, Qadhafi, Mediterranean, Italy*

Since the late 1990s, Libya has become a privileged destination for important international migration flows from other Arab states, from different countries in Africa to the South of the Sahara, and even from Asian countries such as Bangladesh, India and China. Since the Libyan situation is complex, rapidly evolving and not always easy to study due to the difficult conditions of access to the country, the international press have often focused on the issue of illegal migrants who embark from Libya and head for Italy and the rest of Europe. For this reason, Libya has often been seen as a transit country, despite the objective fact that "most migrants remained in Libya"[2] when Muʿammar al-Qadhafi was in power, and for the most part continued to remain there even after the fall of his regime in 2011, despite the rapid increase in landings on the Italian coasts.[3] There is no doubt that the dynamics of the conflict have opened up unimaginable opportunities of manoeuvre for the criminal networks that manage trans-Mediterranean migration. On the other hand, the country's

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[2] Paoletti, Emanuela – Pastore, Ferruccio: Sharing the dirty job on the southern front? Italian Libyan relations on migration and their impact on the European Union, [online], *IMI Working Papers Series,* 29.12.2010, p. 11. Source: International Migration Institute [15.09.2017.]

[3] More than one filed research confirm that point: Danish Refugee Council (DRC): "We risk our lives for our daily bread". Finding of the Danish Refugee Council Study on mixed migration in Libya, [online], December 2013. Source: DRC [13.08.2017.]; Al-Tarhouni, Hani: دراسة ميدانية عن الهجرة غير النظامية في ليبيا [dirasat maīdanīa ʿan al-hijra ghīr al-nizamīata fi libia: Field Study of Irregular Migration in Libya]. *Libyan Affairs,* No. 1, 2016, pp. 36–46; Morone, Antonio M.: Policies, Practices, and Representations Regarding Sub-Saharan Migrants in Libya: From the Partnership with Italy to the Post-Qadhafi Era. In: Gaibazzi, Paolo – Dünnwald, Stephan – Bellagamba, Alice (eds.): *Euro–African Borders and Migration Management. Political Cultures, Contested Spaces, and Ordinary Lives.* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2017, pp. 129–155.

economy, though increasingly dependent on a predatory logic linked to the society's institutional fragility and factionalism, continued to grow at a rate of 116% in 2012, according to International Monetary Fund data.[4] Post-Qadhafi Libya has thus continued to attract cheap labour from both sub-Saharan countries and other Asian or Mediterranean Arab countries.

Therefore, between 2011 and 2014 a situation came about in which the conflict in Libya increased both human mobility to Europe and continued to stimulate human mobility from neighbouring countries, and subsequently from sub-Saharan Africa, towards Libya. These were not two distinct processes, but were interconnected, since residence and work in Libya for a more or less lengthy period often determines the basis of selection between a first migration towards Libya and a second one to Europe. Exception is made for those migrants determined to seek political asylum or humanitarian protection in Europe from the start of their migratory project, as for example Somalis and Eritreans. In these cases, migrants move along networks well-structured and well-financed by friends, relatives or simple fellow countrymen already resident in Europe, especially in Northern Europe, who invest in a relatively rapid journey of their loved ones or acquaintances by identifying Libya as the most favourable illegal passage for reaching Europe. In many other instances, surely the majority, migrants headed for Libya have neither a predetermined migration project nor even readily available resources, so that it is usually during their work period in Libya that they come to the decision of trying to cross the Mediterranean, based mainly on the resources and opportunities at their disposal. They may instead decide to extend their residence in Libya or undertake a successful return migration if they have succeeded in saving enough money to meet their prior expectations or, if this would fail, take stock of the failure of their migration project. From the summer of 2014 to today, the dynamics of the conflict have grown exponentially, causing the fragmentation and multiplication of the last remaining national institutions and generating an economic and banking crisis that has rapidly impoverished a large sector of the population. In this new situation, perhaps the balance between the different migratory paths has been further modified in favour of an increase in departures to Italy and the rest of Europe.

Because of this complex migratory situation, over the past three decades Libya has been a true laboratory for European and especially Italian migration policies. The years from the 1990s until the present have been characterised by two conflicting tendencies in Libya: on the one hand, the policies of the Qadhafi regime, characterised by an open-door policy towards the influx of low-cost labour from sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab countries; on the other hand, the containment policies put in place by Italy to halt illegal migration flows through the Mediterranean Sea, which were however an infinitely small proportion of the total number of migrants in Libya. Italian–Libyan bilateral relations were thus much characterised by the restrictions Libya imposed over the migration flows, which Italy requited with its commitment to support the end of the international embargo

[4] St. John, Ronald B.: The Post-Qadhafi Economy. In: Pack, Jason (ed.): *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future.* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2013, p. 106.

on Libya and its readmission to the international community.[5] With the collapse of the regime in 2011 and the beginning of the civil war, a new phase opened up in which the very distinction between legal and illegal migrants has progressively lost meaning, inasmuch as the weakness, if not the actual disintegration of Libyan institutions, has led informality to prevail over the rule of law. Italy and, increasingly, the rest of Europe have continued to exert a series of direct and indirect pressures on the new Libyan authorities with the aim of reaffirming the policies of migratory containment, but political instability and the persistence of conflict have strongly compromised the effectiveness of this attempt, urging rather a further extension of containment policies to other African countries to the South of Libya, from which migrants leave or transit. This study aims at analysing the objectives of the containment policies of migration flows in the international relations between Italy and Libya, as well as their current extension to other African countries and regions, also examining the effectiveness of these policies.

Qadhafi bargaining with Italy

During the 1990s, Qadhafi's foreign policy progressively veered away from Pan-Arabism toward Pan-Africanism, with the idea of making Libya a regional power on the African continent, and especially in the process of reforming the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which culminated in the creation of the new African Union (AU) at the Durban Summit in South Africa in 2002. Libya was actually one of the most committed countries to promote the reform of the continental African organisation, supporting it with both a lavish international cooperation program, financed by Libya's oil revenues, and by opening up the Libyan labour market to cheap labour from abroad. Qadhafi had already opened Libya's borders to foreign workers in 1998 by promoting the creation of the organisation of Sahel–Saharan States, which established among the participating countries (soon all the North African countries and those of Sahel–Saharan Africa, with the exceptions of Algeria and Ethiopia) a vast area of free trade and free movement of workers. In 2002, the same year as the new AU was founded, Qadhafi launched what was called Libya's development program through African labour, literally opening Libya's Southern border to foreign workers, who could not only gain access to the country solely with passports and in some cases with a simple national identity document, but could also find work without being obliged to submit to formal contractual, trade union and insurance regulations. Obviously, this arrangement substantially prefigured the exploitation of foreign labour in the absence of the minimal protection of workers' rights, but for many poor or very poor migrants the chance to easily find a relatively well-paid job in Libya became a very attractive factor, such as to stimulate very considerable migration flows. Over the new millennium the number of legal migrants grew rapidly in Libya, reaching 10.4% of the Libyan population in 2010, and estimated at 6.5 million people, while the number of illegal migrants ranged from 1.5 to 2 million people.[6]

[5] Paoletti, Emanuela: *The Migration of Power and North-South Inequalities: The Case of Italy and Libya.* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2011.

[6] MCP migration profile: Libya, [online], June 2013. Source: migrationpolicycentre.eu [13.08.2017.]

Libya's open door to international migrants was accompanied, as a reaction, by the progressive creation of policies promoted by Italy to contain illegal migration across the Mediterranean. While the numbers of migrants directed towards Europe were relatively small in relation to the total number of those in Libya,[7] the political need for Italy to control the flows transformed irregular migrants into a bargaining chip in Italian and European relations with Libya. On December 13, 2000, Italy signed an agreement with Libya to cooperate against terrorism, drug trafficking and irregular migration. This agreement was the basis for the subsequent secret and never publicised agreement of 2003, on the basis of which Italian patrols could enter Libyan waters and Italian police were sent to Libyan ports, while Tripoli obtained military means and materiel to control its borders. According to this 2003 agreement, Libya was also willing to readmit irregular migrants that arrived in Italy. In 2004 and 2005 Italy intensified its collective repatriation activities, which were actual deportations, despite the condemnations of the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights. In reality, Italian operations were not particularly contested since, although the European Parliament's 2005 condemnation was indisputable, "the European Commission took refuge in its lack of jurisdiction over the matter".[8] In 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Italian Minister of the Interior and his Libyan counterpart, which established, at least in theory, Italian Navy patrol units with mixed crews in Libyan territorial waters, with the intention of halting migrant sea craft. The 2007 agreement finally became operative in 2009, following ratification by the Italian Parliament of the Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Italy and Libya, signed in 2008. The Treaty marked a historic step in the relations between the two countries owing to Italy's excuses for colonial crimes, but they ended up being "mendacious" because they functioned "as a mutual cover of the two leaders before their respective public opinion" for quite different interests.[9] It was Berlusconi who on his return from Benghazi triumphantly announced to the Italian press that the Treaty would soon mean "fewer illegal migrants and more gas and oil."[10] Beyond the manifest inconsistency of the colonial history in the present Italian discourse over the national past and memories,[11] the 2008 Treaty paved the way for those Italian–Libyan joint patrol activities and the so-called push-back strategy in order to halt migrants at sea and to forcibly bring them back to Libya. In a few months, landings on Italy's coasts thus nearly ground to a halt.

The refoulement of those migrants, which in 2008 was presented by the Italian Ministry of the Interior as the most effective means of "international co-operation on illegal immigration and the traffic in human beings,"[12] actually undermined the rights of migrants in

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[7] The average annual arrivals on the Italian coasts during the 2000s amounted to about 26,000 people, considering not only arrivals from Libya, but also those from other routes, such as Tunisian and Egyptian ones. The data are derived from Papavero, Giorgia: Sbarchi, richiedenti asilo e presenze irregolari, February 2015. p. 6. Source: ismu.org [31.07.2017.]

[8] Perrin, Delphine: Fin de régime et migrations en Libye. Les enseignements juridiques d'un pays en feu. *L'Année du Maghreb,* No. 7, 2011, p. 297.

[9] Labanca, Nicola: La guerra di Libia nelle pubblicazioni e negli studi italiani degli ultimi venticinque anni. *I Sentieri della Ricerca,* No. 13, 2011, p. 42.

[10] Di Carlo, Paola: Berlusconi, patto con Gheddafi «Ora meno clandestini e più gas». *Corriere della Sera,* 31.08.2008.

[11] Morone, Antonio M.: Asimmetrie postcoloniali: le relazioni italo-libiche tra storia e memoria. In: Sinopoli, Franca (ed.): *Postcoloniale italiano. Tra letteratura e storia.* Novalogos, Roma, 2013, pp. 174–187.

[12] Iniziative dell'Italia. Sicurezza, immigrazione e asilo, [online], 02.02.2010, p. 17. Source: Interno.int [04.09.2017.]

their ability to seek asylum or humanitarian protection in Italy, and constituted an exception to the rule of law, with the result that Italy was found guilty of such acts on June 6, 2012 by the judges of the European Court of Human Rights. The judgment in that case referred to the fact that the refoulements at sea did not respect the principle of non-refoulement and prevented potential refugees from applying for asylum.[13] The international ruling revealed all of Italy's hypocrisy in accusing Qadhafi of never having signed the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees and failing to respect the human rights of migrants, when it was really Italy that shoved onto Libya the task of receiving, accepting and assessing any right to asylum or protection of those who were turned back at sea. On the other hand, Qadhafi himself left no room for doubt on this point when, shortly after signing the 2008 Treaty, he proceeded to shut down the offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which until then had operated in his country without any official recognition, precisely because Libya was not a signatory to the 1951 Convention. Qadhafi left no alibi to his European partners over the fact that it was entirely up to them to address the question of protecting migrants' rights, since the very concept of human rights was not recognised by the theory of the Libyan Revolution, which "did not guarantee civil and political rights because it did not recognize the concept of citizenship."[14]

The push-back strategy was founded as a safeguard mechanism of the Mediterranean Sea and as a process of externalising the Southern border between Italy and the EU onto Libyan soil, which represented a real qualitative leap in the various rejection policies until then conceived and implemented in North–South relations in the Mediterranean region. From the 1990s, Italy promoted a migration diplomacy aimed at enacting a number of agreements with several Mediterranean states, not only Libya, with the objective of countering irregular migrant flows. In 1998, the Italian–Tunisian agreement, which entered into force the following year, was signed, on the basis of which Italy offered Tunisia for the three-year period (1999–2001) the sum of 20 million Euros (further integrated with cooperation funds) to finance the technology for controlling its borders,[15] and Tunisia in turn committed itself to a readmission clause. Also, in 1998, a similar readmission agreement was signed with Morocco. In 1999, Italy signed a police cooperation agreement with Algeria and in 2000 one on readmission. In 2000, Italy concluded another treaty with Egypt, which provided for close cooperation in policing, and specifically aimed at controlling the irregular migration flows through the Suez Canal and by ship from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In this instance too, cooperation on security was linked to a readmission clause signed in 2007.[16]

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[13] Conseil de l'Europe, Secrétariat Général: *Plans d'action du Gouvernement italien dans l'affaire Hirsi Jamaa et autres c. Italie,* requête no. 27765/09, réunion 1150 DH, 06.07.2012.

[14] Baldinetti, Anna: Le istanze amazigh in Libia: la nascita di una società civile? In: Maneggia, Amina (ed.): *Processi politici nel Mediterraneo: dinamiche e prospettive.* Morlacchi Editore, Perugia, 2009, p. 232.

[15] Cuttitta, Paolo: I confini d'Europa a Sud del Mediterraneo. Strumenti e incentivi per l'esternalizzazione dei controlli. In: Vassallo Paleologo, Fulvio (ed.): *Migrazioni, frontiere, diritti.* Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli, 2006, pp. 16–17.

[16] Ibid. 18.

The instruments of international cooperation varied according to the circumstances: joint security activities between the Italian police and partner countries, the provision of means and technology, the willingness to readmit irregular migrants, whether individually or collectively. However, only in the case of Libya was an Italian operation established on the territory of the partner state, in cooperation with Libyan police. Libya was in fact willing to accept what other Arab countries refused, judging it as an act affecting its national sovereignty, namely the construction of camps and the implementation of policies involving the presence of Italian officials operating on foreign soil. The reasons that may explain Libya's willingness to cooperate so thoroughly with Italy can surely be found in the importance of the trade-off that the agreement provided for Libya, but probably what also counted was the fact that, unlike Tunisia and Egypt, migrants included in the containment policies were third country nationals, certainly not Libyans, while in case of agreements negotiated by Italy with Tunisia and Egypt, an important part of the migrants concerned were citizens of those countries, Tunisians and Egyptians. The fact that it was obviously a matter for third country nationals eased the Libyan authorities of any possible rebound in terms of internal political dissent. On the contrary, a public backlash to the massive immigration from sub-Saharan Africa grew in Libya in the 2000s, reproducing a series of stereotypes similar to those that characterise certain attitudes about migration in Europe, where racist ideas combine with nationalist identity memes: from stereotypes that migrants are dangerous criminals to those that see them as responsible for the spread of infectious diseases, to their hypothetical role played in the "Africanisation" of a country such as Libya, centred on its identity as an Arab, Islamic nation. In this context, it is understandable that the policies in question did not give rise to Libyan popular opposition because they did not concern Libyans, but foreigners, while found a certain favour in some segments of the public opinion often disoriented by, if not openly hostile to, such large numbers of migrants.

The containment policies described were not only aimed at controlling the flows in the Mediterranean Sea, but also had a series of direct and indirect effects on Libyan territory. One point was that, as a result of Italian pressures, Libya proceeded to review at least part of its open door policy towards sub-Saharan workers by introducing a tighter regulation of entry visas, with the exception of Maghrebis, obliging foreign workers to obtain compulsory insurance, and work and residence permits in Libya, as well as introducing into law the offense of illegal immigration, punishable by up to three years of imprisonment. We can conclude about Libya what has already been said about the introduction of the crime of illegal immigration in Tunisia and Morocco, that this offense responds primarily to requirements associated "with illegal immigration into Europe"[17] and produces a great tendency to criminalise migration. The combined effect of these measures was to transform over a short period of time a mass of foreign workers who had free access to the country into irregular migrants, with the result of increasing their vulnerability and likelihood of

[17] Perrin, Delphine: Immigration et création juridique au Maghreb. La fragmentation des mondes et des droits. In: Bensaad, Ali (ed.): *Le Maghreb à l'épreuve des migrations subsahariennes. Immigration sur émigration.* Karthala, Paris, 2009, p. 251.

being exploited, complying at the same time with Italy's demands for a stricter legislative discipline regarding international migration.[18]

The second point was that, since 2004, under the Italian–Libyan cooperation framework, the Italian Government made available the funds and technical means needed to build transit camps that were de facto internment centres, actual prisons where irregular immigrants were detained while waiting to be deported to their countries of origin or to third countries. The main camps for this purpose were built in Cufra and Sebha for a total of 18 or perhaps 19 structures.[19] The closing of the Mediterranean Sea to the transit of irregular migrants was only one part of the complex mechanism of containment of the flows agreed on by the Italian and Libyan authorities. Once brought back to Libya, with the help of Italian officials in Tripoli, the migrants were sent to the camps, along with other irregular migrants arrested and imprisoned before attempting to embark from Libya. For all of them, at least in theory, the so-called way to repatriation was opened up in their countries of origin. The appropriateness of the term "repatriation" may justly be called into question as it is often used in official documents, since it presupposes a voluntary decision on the part of the returnee, which appears at the very least hard to believe in a context of imprisonment, exploitation and violence. It would be more fitting to speak of deportation, in a situation of compulsion, than of voluntary decision. In any case, expulsion from Libya ended up taking on the features of a much more undefined event than what the international policies intended.

The so-called repatriations to countries of origin were often very difficult to carry out because of the lack of agreements between Libya and the governments of these countries, and ultimately because of the lack of mutual political interest. Qadhafi's Pan-African policy presupposed good relations with many of the governments of which the migrants were citizens. Recognising their demands for political asylum or expelling them from Libya threatened to compromise these relations because in the first case the legitimacy of the partner State's government would have been called into question, and in the second case such a strategic resource as the migrants' remittances to their States of origin would have been limited. There were also extreme cases where so-called repatriation was not possible because of the state of war and conflict of the country of origin, as in Somalia. In the absence of well-defined political agreements and political interests, many deportees simply ended up being taken over the Southern Libyan border into Niger, where the vast majority found themselves in another foreign country and subjected to new forms of exploitation and violence.

[18] Drozdz, Martine – Pliez, Olivier: Entre Libye et Soudan: la fermeture d'une piste transsaharienne. *Autrepart,* Vol. 36, No. 4, 2005, p. 69.

[19] Ceccorulli, Michela: The Mediterranean as a Buffer. Confining Irregular Migrant in North Africa. In: Ceccorulli, Michela – Labanca, Nicola (eds.): *The EU, Migration and the Politics of Administrative Detention.* Routledge, Abingdon, New York, 2014, p. 196.

Continuity in post-Qadhafi containment policies

The fall of the Qadhafi regime in 2011, and the beginning of the civil war that still divides the country today immediately caused the collapse of the control system of irregular flows that had been in force during the previous ten years of collaboration between Italy and Libya. The direct consequence was a large-scale migration crisis that, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, involved over 750,000 third country nationals only in the first few months of the war, from February to May 2011, in addition to more than 100,000 Libyans who sought refuge in Egypt and 150,000 in Tunisia.[20] Within a year, with the end of the NATO-led international military operations and the waning of the conflict in the country, Libya quickly returned to attracting sizeable flows from neighbouring countries, especially from Africa, South of the Sahara, since work in the country was not lacking and Libya continued to entice aspiring immigrants more with the idea of a country where it was relatively easy to realise their hopes of social mobility rather than a country at war where their lives could be endangered.

According to one of the most recent qualitative field surveys, carried out in 2015 by a Libyan government research centre, the National Economic and Social Development Board, most of the migrants interviewed, 40.3% said they wanted to stay in Libya to find work, which for 36% could be just unskilled day labour, despite the fact that since the summer of 2014 the country's conflict had rapidly increased; 37% of the sample said they were ready to go to Europe, while the remaining 22.7% had no precise plan.[21] Other investigations carried out earlier, prior to the resumption of the war, indicated that in 2014 only 15% of another sample of migrants declared that they wanted to leave for Europe, and even less according to data from another survey conducted between 2012 and 2013.[22] Overall, it can be said that the landings on Italian coasts have been growing rapidly in the last few years, from an average of 30 to 35 thousand people at the beginning of the decade to more than 180,000 people in 2016 and 86,000 in the first semester of 2017.[23] However, this is still a very small part of the entire flow present in Libya. Moreover, it is extremely indicative that, on the basis of European data, of the 929,000 migrants, all of whom entered Europe in 2015, only 16% (154,000) of them used Libya as the starting point for crossing the Mediterranean, registering a 9% reduction compared to the previous year, attributable to a better security situation in Egypt and to a greater difficulty of entering Libya.[24]

However, the Italian and European policy decisions of recent years have not been based on a careful, well thought out assessment of the figures, but rather on an often hasty,

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[20] Humanitarian Situation in Libya and the Neighboring Countries, [online], 10.05.2011. Source: UNHCR Update [11.09.2017.]

[21] Other data found that 23% of the sample were illiterate, 24.5% had a high school diploma and 4% a degree. In 30% of the cases, migrants already had relatives or close friends in Libya when they travelled to the country. Often those who leave their country have committed non-condonable or recompensable crimes and others have been convicted by a court. Al-Tarhouni (2016): *op. cit.*

[22] Respectively, Danish Refugee Council (DRC): "We risk our lives…" (2013), p. 19; Morone (2017): *op. cit.* 151.

[23] Statistiche del Ministero dell'Interno, [online], 13.07.2017. Source: Ministero dell'Interno [07.31.2017.]

[24] EUNAVFOR MED: Operation Sophia, six monthly report, June, 22nd to December, 31st 2015, from Rear Admiral, Italian Navy, Operation Sophia Commander Enrico Credendino to Chairman of the Political and Security Committee, Ambassador Walter Stevens, [online], 2016. Source: Wikileaks.org [31.07.2107.]

precipitous reaction to emergency situations. In this fashion, Italy undertook to renegotiate containment policies with the Libyan authorities. On January 21, 2012, the Minister of the Interior, Annamaria Cancellieri, on a visit to Tripoli, signed a Memorandum with the Libyan counterpart, expressing the intention to renew cooperation for training the Libyan Police and Coast Guard, building infrastructures aimed at containing migrants, coordinating programs for repatriating migrants to their countries of origin, and bolstering joint border control.[25] It was in fact a direct return to the past, even though Mario Monti's government was forced to officially announce on June 20, 2012 that it was giving up turning back migrants on the high seas as a means of flow control, following the sentence imposed on Italy by the European judges.[26] In spite of everything, a second Italian–Libyan agreement, signed on February 2, 2017, opened the way to new refoulement operations at sea, though this time executed autonomously by the Libyan Coast Guard thanks to Italy's training and materiel. Thus, Italy guarded itself against a new condemnation by the European judges by ceasing to participate actively in refoulements, but in substance it has not changed much. In addition, the agreement reaffirms the will to cooperate in managing "temporary hosting camps" in Libya, which must serve to repatriate migrants.[27]

Italy's attempt to reactivate the process of externalising the control of migrant flows has been an all-round strategy not only for controlling departures but also for resuming deportation operations to countries of origin or third countries. According to figures published by Amnesty International, between May 2012 and April 2013, at least 25,000 people were taken to the southern border of Libya near Gatron.[28] Also based on my own data recorded in 2014 in Khums, 110 kilometres on the East coast of Tripoli, at the end of 2012 Libyan authorities began working to resume control of migratory flows in the region, monitoring the camps and the various detention facilities. In addition, in 2013, under international pressure, the Department for Combating Illegal Migration (DCIM) was set up within the Libyan Interior Ministry, which was able in a short time to bring under the control of Tripoli, at least nominally, a number of camps and prisons for more or less informal migrants, in addition to coordinating migration control and deportation activities. In a context such as Libya's, where the State and its institutions have been and are still going through a period of particular weakness and fragility, the DCIM contradicts the stereotype of a failed state and highlights the enormous influence that foreign players, such as that exerted by Italy, the EU and other international agencies, can have on the Libyan situation. It is obvious that the picture described proposes a political trade-off very similar to the one Italy negotiated with Qadhafi: the willingness of Libya to participate in controlling migrant flows in exchange for international recognition, which for the new Libyan authorities promises to be still more important than it was for the Qadhafi regime.

Conflict, institutional fragility and political instability in Libya have, however, greatly reduced the effectiveness of joint containment policies with Italy. For this reason, the Italian

[25] The Hounding of Migrants Must Stop, [online], 2012, p. 36. Source: FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights) [28.07.2017.]

[26] Immigrazione: Libia; Terzi, respingimenti non in agenda governo, [online], 20.06.2012. Source: ANSAmed [23.07.2017.]

[27] Uselli, Sandra: Italy–Libya agreement, the Memorandum text, [online], 07.02.2017. Source: ASGI [05.09.2017.]

[28] Amnesty International: Scapegoats of Fear. Rights of Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants Abuses in Libya, [online], 2013, p. 6. Source: Amnesty.org [13.09.2017.]

authorities, in increasingly close coordination with those at the European level, have sought to control flows in the Mediterranean Sea or still better throughout the Sahel–Saharan region of Southern Libya, with the stated intention of blocking migrants before they arrive in Libya and from there to Italy and the rest of Europe. Through Operation Mare Nostrum, the Italian Navy patrolled the waters of the Central Mediterranean from October 2013 to December 2014, escorting migrants to Libyan territorial waters, an operation that marked a change in Italian policy from refoulement to rescue at sea. The change marked by Mare Nostrum was actually "more quantitative than qualitative",[29] in that the actions taken were "not much more humanitarian than the previous patrol activities carried out in the Sicilian Channel",[30] so much so that the objective still remains that of repatriating migrants after having rescued them at sea, except for those recognised as political asylum seekers or in need of humanitarian protection. From the fall of 2014, the Italian naval mission has been gradually replaced by a new naval operation called Triton, under the direction of the European Border Control Agency (FRONTEX).

Triton's operations have been considerably smaller than the Italian mission and were actually conducted out of Libyan territorial waters after a series of accusations were made against the command of Mare Nostrum because, by operating inshore in Libyan territorial waters, it would have the perverse effect of encouraging emigration. If it cannot be totally ruled out that such an effect at least in part took place, it is undeniable that the main factor of the rising flows from the Libyan coast is to be attributed to the exponential growth of the criminal activities of the migrant trafficking networks throughout the Mediterranean, and therefore a reduction of rescue operations at sea has resulted above all in an increase of deaths at sea, not in a reduction of departures. It was precisely to strike a blow against those networks, infrastructures and traffickers in human beings over the Mediterranean, that a second European naval mission called "European Union Naval Force Mediterranean" (EUNAVFOR Med) was launched in April 2015 due to a substantial contribution from Italy and other European navies. From a confidential 2015 report of the commander of what is now called Operation Sophia, the goal was to dismantle a business that earned annually between 250 and 300 million Euros. At the same time, the joint command of Operation Sophia was aspiring to intervene in Libyan territorial waters on invitation by the Libyan Government of National Accord, as well as to recover the control at sea by "strengthening the operational capabilities of the Libyan Navy and the Coast Guard", namely training Libyans in compliance with the February 2017 agreement.[31]

In the parabola of the various policies and operations undertaken to control migratory flows across the Mediterranean, it is evident that Italy has successfully sought a progressive involvement of the European Union, with the result of Europeanising its strategy of containing migratory flows, which, by penetrating throughout Europe, have sorely stressed the "Schengen area". The growing internal EU bickering between Member States sharing

[29] Cuttitta, Paolo: Mare Nostrum e la retorica umanitaria. *Rivista di Storia delle Idee,* No. 4, 2015, p. 133.

[30] Cuttitta, Paolo: From the Cap Anamur to Mare Nostrum: Humanitarianism and Migration Controls at the EU's Maritime Borders. In: Matera, Claudio – Taylor, Amanda (eds.): *The Common European Asylum System and Human Rights: Enhancing Protection in Times of Emergencies.* The Hague, CLEER Working Papers, No. 7, 2014, p. 36.

[31] EUNAVFOR MED: Operation Sophia… (2016).

the burden of hosting migrants has rapidly prompted the EU not only to increase its control of external borders, but also to make a greater commitment to a range of policies aimed at containing flows even before they reach the Union's borders. During Italy's six-month presidency of the EU, it promoted the Khartoum Summit in Sudan, from October 13 to 16, 2014, which launched the EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, then officially baptised on November 27 and 28 during the 4th Euro–African Ministerial Conference held in Rome. With what is known colloquially as the "Khartoum Process", Italy and the EU, as stated in the Final Declaration of the Conference, aimed at "improving national capabilities" of transit countries in "migration control" and ultimately to extend or strengthen the means of flow control already proven effective in the Mediterranean area, especially in countries considered to be of strategic importance, such as Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea.[32] Once again, migration became first and foremost an issue of security policies and produced a demand for control over irregular migration rather than focusing on policies of legal access to European territory, reforming for instance visa policy, facilitating remittances or opening humanitarian corridors. The Khartoum Process was indeed moving in the context of further externalising of migration flows to the South, replicating policies and strategies implemented in Libya. In addition to the police and readmission agreements, specific reference was made to the creation of "reception and government centres" that were to be opened on the basis of "an individual and voluntary request of a country in the region", with the aim of controlling flows and identifying migrants entitled to seek political asylum in Europe.[33]

In this context of extremely rapid expansion of containment policies from the Mediterranean region to entire regions of the African continent, what was traditionally defined as cooperation for development has been taking on an increasingly migratory connotation. In case of Libya, the trade-off for the control of flows has been and continues to be purely political, since Libya, as a relatively rich country with its own ambitious international cooperation program, clearly did not need European aid. On the contrary, in relations with its new African partners, in addition to international recognition, which is certainly a very important asset for countries that have for years been regarded as authoritarian regimes and condemned for this by the West, as in the case of Sudan and Eritrea, even development aid takes on an aspect of prime importance. In recent years, cooperation for development has become increasingly subordinated to conditions regarding migration, which have taken precedence over those related to respect for human rights. In the European summit held at Valletta on November 12, 2015, an Emergency Trust Fund was set up for Africa, which allocated an initial budget of 2.8 billion Euros in development cooperation projects directly or indirectly related to the issues of migration flows, policies of containment and those of "reintegrating" migrants who are repatriated from Europe or from other third countries. The Italian contribution to an all-round externalising in Africa has been reaffirmed by the so-called *Migration Compact. Contribution to an EU strategy*

[32] Rome Declaration: Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process, EU–Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative, [online], 28.11.2014. Source: Italia2014.eu [30.08.2017.]

[33] Ibid.

for external action on migration, made public on April 15, 2016,[34] which was followed by more substantial bilateral funding from the Italian Cooperation to countries such as Niger, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Eritrea. There is a glaring contradiction to granting strategic aid to governments such as those of Sudan or Eritrea, to give just two examples, which according to the parameters of conditioning cooperation to respect human rights had been excluded in the past, or greatly reduced from participation in development programs; today, in order to obtain the willingness of such countries to cooperate in the policy of containment, we stoop to compromising on respect for human rights at the very moment when we would like to affirm that the protection of migrants' rights is a priority. Thus policy risks becoming unsustainable if it asks governments recognised internationally as guilty of serious violations of human rights to protect the rights of migrants, to recognise their possible status of applicants for asylum or international protection, defining them illegitimately as "safe countries" not on the basis of an objective reality, but simply because of their willingness to cooperate in preventing the human mobility of their nationals or those of third countries.

Are containment policies really working?

To conclude this overview from the 1990s to the present, for almost thirty years countries of the geopolitical North of the world, such as Italy, have planned, contracted and implemented several containment measures and policies with many countries in the geopolitical South of the world, such as Libya. Libya has been a laboratory not only for experimenting with such measures and policies but also for exporting them to other African countries. If the goal of these containment policies was to prevent as many migrants as possible from entering Italy and the rest of Europe, then it is precisely the constantly increasing numbers of migrants that point to the limited effectiveness of such policies. If the objective was, more reasonably, to distinguish migrants eligible for humanitarian protection or political asylum from everyone else, allowing Europe-wide access to the former and strongly restricting it for everyone else, in this case too, the results risk being modest, since the concept of containment is being mixed up with that of "preventive protection". In this regard, it should be emphasised that by identifying countries that are considered safe, often without any objective reality, in the end we worry more about guaranteeing not so much the right to leave, but rather to remain and be protected on site, safeguarding the security of the potential refugees rather than their rights. The result may be very negative in terms of a new concept of *refoulement,* called *neo-refoulement* or *preventive refoulement,* which makes it possible to circumvent the prohibition of *refoulement* sanctioned by the 1951 Convention of Refugee Rights, by returning asylum seekers or other migrants to transit countries or to their regions of origin, before they reach the sovereign territory in which they could make their request.[35] The case of Libya is excellent proof of how migrants eligible to seek asylum or protection have for years been deprived of this possibility as a result

[34] Migration Compact. Contribution to an EU strategy for external action on migration, [online], 2016. Source: Governo.it [30.08.2017.]

[35] Hyndman, Jennifer – Mountz, Alison: Another Brick in the Wall? Neo-Refoulement and the Externalization of Asylum by Australia and Europe. *Government and Opposition,* Vol. 43, No. 2, 2008, p. 250.

of containment policies. What containment policies have undoubtedly given rise to, as effectively as contradictorily, has been the flow of irregular migrations.

In this regard, there was an illuminating intervention by Mohamed Karwad, a Libyan official representing the Government of National Accord, during a forum on migrations hosted in April 2016 in Tunis by the Center Maghrébin d'Études sur la Libye (CMEL). Karwad confirmed the full resumption of deportation policies outside Libya starting in 2013, and the transition from ground to air operations for "the many crimes against migrants that took place on land".[36] According to the figures he reported, there have been at least 100,000 refouled migrants over the past 3 years to several African countries, including Eritrea, where irregular migration is equated with desertion and is punishable with incarceration and forced labour or even capital punishment. He concluded provocatively that "we ship these people to Niger, but after fifteen days they return with another 20 people because, having already made the trip once, they now know the tracks and become themselves passeurs for other migrants who have never been to Libya".[37] Thus it is not just a matter of questioning those often abused categories that distinguish too neatly between "criminal traffickers" and "exploited migrants", but mainly of admitting the contradictoriness of those policies by which these very categories are produced and packaged, and more generally, of reflecting critically on the abusiveness of containment policies and their consequences as exceptions to the Rule of Law.[38] If what moves a substantial number of international migrants, probably most of them, are legitimate aspirations of social mobility and not violations of human rights, then it must be concluded that the rhetoric of international humanitarian protection is in practice intended to hinder, and if possible to halt, a much more "normal" mobility associated with the aspirations of individuals to improve their social status through a migratory project founded on positive representations of the Western world, imagined and idealised through globalisation.

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[36] Karwad, Mohamed: *Itinéraires de l'immigration illégale vers la Libye.* Paper presented at the international workshop "Les dynamiques de l'immigration du Sahel vers la Libye et de la Libye vers l'Europe: itinéraires et devenir, Centre Maghrébin d'études sur la Libye (Cmel)", Tunis, April 26–27, 2016.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Augusti, Eliana – Morone, Antonio M. – Pifferi, Michele: *Il controllo dello straniero. I "campi" dall'Ottocento a oggi.* Viella, Rome, 2017.

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Luca Puddu

China's Development Assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Opportunities[1]

As the increase of bilateral trade between China and sub-Saharan Africa in the last ten years has been skyrocketing at the expense of Western countries, paralleled by the renewed projection of Chinese soft power in the continent by means of technical aid and economic agreements, the author will analyse the scope, the underlying factors, and the potential consequences of Chinese development assistance to countries in the region. In a comparative manner, the paper also briefly describes the main features that make Chinese foreign assistance different from its Western counterpart. The author argues that there is a contradiction between the economic agenda of Beijing aimed at reproducing centre–periphery contradictions on the world stage with China at the centre of the envisaged world system, and a political discourse still based on the principle of non-interference and opposition to neo-colonialism.

Keywords: *China, sub-Saharan Africa, development assistance, developing countries, economy*

Introduction

In the last decade, China's development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa has attracted vivid attention from mass media and the general public as well, with the result that opinions are often polarised between those who depict China as a model for a more just and equitable cooperation between developing countries and those who blame Beijing for being simply interested in grabbing the African continent's natural resources without any concern for environmental consequences and human rights.[2]

Critical voices have blamed the Chinese model as neo-colonial, arguing that it is instrumental in consolidating the dominant position of Chinese capital, opening up new markets for Asian goods and obtaining access to untapped natural resources to sustain industrial development at home. Moreover, critical scholars have argued that there seems to be a negative correlation between Chinese aid and development in sub-Saharan Africa, because Beijing authorises autocratic rulers responsible for gross human rights violations to expand their financial portfolio and resist pressure from traditional donors for democratic change and good governance.[3] In recent years, this critical perspective has been increasingly challenged by a new wave of scholarship that has focused on the positive

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[2] Frynas, J. George – Paulo, Manuel: A New Scramble for African Oil? Historical, Political and Business Perspectives. *African Affairs,* Vol. 106, No. 423, 2007, pp. 229–251.

[3] Kurlantzick, Josh: *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World.* Yale University Press, New Haven, 2007.

aspects of China's rise as a new global power. In particular, it has been argued that Chinese financial flows have positive effects on African sovereignty, because African rulers are now more able to stand as equal partners of the international community and may obtain funding for development projects that would not have otherwise been taken into consideration by international financial markets.[4]

In the next paragraphs, I will briefly describe the main features that make Chinese foreign assistance different from its Western counterpart. Then, I will analyse the scope, the underlying factors, and the potential consequences of Chinese development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa from the point of view of both the recipient countries and Western donors.

A rising hegemon in sub-Saharan Africa

Interest in the relationship between China and sub-Saharan Africa has been sparked by the skyrocketing increase of bilateral trade in the last ten years at the expense of Western countries, paralleled by the renewed projection of Chinese soft power in the continent by means of technical aid and economic agreements.[5] Beijing's foreign aid program to sub-Saharan Africa is of particular interest because of its potential consequences on the restructuring of North–South relations as we have known them so far, but is nonetheless surrounded by opacity for what concerns its effective scope, structure, and purpose. Volumes of financial assistance provided by Beijing to sub-Saharan Africa have increased steadily at a rate of around 24% annually since 2004: while China ranked 16th in the global ranking of Africa's international donors in 2006; it was estimated that in 2017 it became the fifth largest donor.[6] China's presence is evenly spread throughout the African continent, but several countries have gained privileged attention. The most notable ones among them are Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Nigeria, but official data often hide a more complex picture and cannot be taken for granted.[7]

When compared to the theory and practice of other Western aid programmes, the foreign aid policy of Beijing stands up for several differences that make it a sort of model of "South–South" cooperation. First of all, China – at least officially – insists on the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of its African partners, thereby rejecting the human rights narrative and the architecture of conditionality manufactured by Western countries in their relationship with sub-Saharan Africa since the early 1980s. Second, China tends to privilege donations and investments in economic sectors that have been abandoned by Western foreign aid in the last twenty years, such as construction and infra-

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4 Wang, Xiaobing – Ozanne, Adam: *Two Approaches to Aid in Africa*. Paper presented at the International Conference "Ten Years of War against Poverty", University of Manchester, September 2010.

5 China's Growing Role in UN Peacekeeping, [online] Asia Report No. 166, April 2009. Source: International Crisis Group [20.09.2017.]

6 Kitano, Nahoiro – Harada, Yukinori: Estimating China's Foreign Aid, 2001–2013. JICA-RE Working Paper, No. 78, June 2014.

7 Strange, Austin et al.: Tracking Under-Reported financial Flows: China Development Finance and the Aid–Conflict Nexus Revisited, [online], Discussion Paper Series 553, University of Heidelberg, January 2014. Source: Sagepub [28.08.2017.]; Strange, Austin et al.: China's Development Finance to Africa: a Media-Based Approach to Data Collection, [online], Working Paper No. 323, April 2013. Source: Center for Global Development [11.08.2017.]

structure. Chinese foreign assistance is often focused on large projects such as stadiums and government buildings, which are particularly welcomed by host governments in so far as they provide visibility and help to build consensus among the general public. Examples of projects of this kind can be found in different countries such as Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Uganda and Gabon, just to cite a few. Third, Chinese aid is often deemed to be more suitable to the administrative performance of African countries. In fact, Western aid is usually paralleled by the creation of specific country assistance strategies that reflect donors' goals in terms of improved governance and represent a burden for the counterpart's bureaucratic apparatus. Chinese aid, on the contrary, is more flexible, both because of its focus on turnkey infrastructural projects and because Chinese advisors attached to the project are far cheaper than Western economic counsellors. Another difference between Chinese and Western development assistance is visible in loan repayment procedures. Chinese loans are often backed by rights of exploitation over the host country's natural resources: a sort of a barter that authorises many African countries to broaden their external debt portfolio in spite of the already precarious state of their public budget and their high exposure to international creditors. Western donors, on the other hand, are more concerned with long-term debt sustainability and are, therefore, reluctant to release new loans to countries that are deemed to be close to default. Finally, Western and Chinese aid agencies employ different parameters to evaluate the sustainability of borrowing countries' public debt: World Bank and the International Monetary Fund employ general macro-economic data and statistics to evaluate the counterpart's solvability and capacity to support new loans, while Beijing looks at the capacity of a single project to repay itself. Such differences are critical, because it means that China occasionally may authorise large loans that otherwise would not have been granted by Western donors. A case in point is Djibouti, which received a large loan at non-concessional terms from China in 2013 amounting to 60% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for construction of the Djibouti–Addis Ababa railway and a water pipeline to Ethiopia. The IMF criticised this loan pointing out the excessive burden for the country's financial stability, but China deemed the railway project to be likely to promote an increase in trade revenues that would make it sustainable in the long term.[8]

Development aid or financial flows?

China's foreign aid programme to the Global South in general and sub-Saharan Africa in particular, is often described in emphatic terms as a proof of Beijing's new hegemonic status in the African continent.[9] The idea of China as a new donor superpower is nonetheless based on contradictory data that are more often, than not, exaggerated to sustain the validity of the underlying thesis. This methodological shortfall is due to several reasons. First, it is the outcome of the Chinese Government's reluctance to release accurate statistics on its international cooperation programs. Second, there is a problem in defining what

[8] International Monetary Fund: Djibouti, Staff Report for the 2014 Article IV Consultation – Debt Sustainability Analysis, [online], 15.01.2015. Source: IMF.org [13.08.2017.]

[9] The New Colonialists: a fourteen-page report on China's thirst for natural resources, [online], 13.03.2008. Source: The Economist [10.08.2017.]

should be accounted for when talking about "aid". Indeed, one of the main problems for scholars who study the peculiarities of Chinese development assistance consists of distinguishing between foreign aid proper and other financial transactions, such as bank loans or state guarantees against export credits.

According to the definition provided by the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) in 1972, aid consists of "flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 per cent (using a fixed 10 per cent rate of discount)".[10] Moreover, there are a few transactions that are excluded in principle from the aid category, such as military supplies and financial packages aimed at supporting, in full or in part, private direct investments and the export of goods from the donor country. The Chinese Government, however, has a much broader interpretation of what should be deemed to be included within the legal framework of international aid. For Beijing, foreign aid consists of donations; interest rate-free loans; and loans at subsidised interest rates, but with a critical difference if compared with the OECD definition. Indeed, foreign aid also includes loans against military supplies and economic measures aimed at supporting Chinese business groups overseas.[11] Apparently, OECD countries have a much stricter understanding of what aid should be and look at international assistance as a tool to promote international solidarity, without any advantage for the donor country. As Brautigham has noted, however, the solidaristic character of the OECD definition has been overruled by the sharp decrease of interest rates on official financial markets in the last decades. Indeed, in recent years market interest rates at the London stock exchange have floated between 1 and 4%, with the perverse effect that an ordinary loan at market interest rates provided by an OECD country might qualify as aid, although more favourable terms could be negotiated with private international banks.[12]

Another difference between the Chinese and the Western models of international cooperation lays in the organisational structure. Western countries usually tend to concentrate every prerogative related to the elaboration of foreign aid policy and its enforcement on specialised government agencies such as the United States International Aid Agency (USAID) or the British Overseas Development Ministry (ODM). In China, however, foreign aid is managed by a wide array of government agencies with different functional prerogatives, such as the Import–Export Bank and the Ministry of Commerce. The latter is specifically tasked with the management of donations and interest rate-free loans to other countries, while the China Exim Bank is trusted with the management of commercial loans at more or less favourable interest rates. The Ministry of Finance, in turn, is responsible for the authorisation and release of government subsidies to cut the ordinary interest rates attached to commercial loans from Exim Bank.[13]

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[10] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: DAC in Dates: The History of OECD's Development Assistance Committee, [online], 2006. Source: OECD [23.04.2018.]

[11] Brautigam, Deborah: Aid 'With Chinese Characteristics': Chinese Foreign Aid and Development Assistance Meet the DAC-OECD Aid Regime. *Journal of International Development,* Vol. 23, No. 5, 2011, pp. 752–764.

[12] Ibid. 755.

[13] Brautigam, Deborah: China's African Aid: Transatlantic Challenges, [online], 2008. Source: The German Marshall Fund of the United States [19.09.2017.]

Another difficult issue that arises when comparing foreign aid measures from China and from other Western countries is related to the complex nature of Chinese economic packages. Many economic agreements between China and the African countries are composed of different financial tools provided by different government agencies, and only some of them are concessional in character as required by the OECD definition of "aid". According to a survey made in 2006, only 3% of China Exim Bank's loans can be classified in this category, while the remaining 97% is mostly composed of export credits and loans at commercial interest rates, which are depicted by the OECD under the category of "other financial flows".[14] Nevertheless, according to the White Book of Foreign Aid published by Beijing in 2011, the picture was very different. Government sources estimated that the overall foreign aid budget overseas consisted of donations (41.4%), loans without any interest rate (29.9%) and loans at subsidised interest rates (28.7%).[15] Arguably, it is very difficult to trace back and verify such a volume of overlapping data and draw a clear-cut line between Chinese foreign aid and the ordinary financial activity of export agencies and commercial banks overseas. Not incidentally, research reports and articles that deal with quantitative data concerning China's foreign aid program often provide radically different conclusions: only in relation to the year 2007, the overall foreign aid estimates range between 582 million and 1.4 billion U.S. dollars.[16]

Driving factors of Chinese foreign assistance

In spite of its alleged solidaristic and universal character, development assistance is a typical instrument of a country's foreign policy and is distributed in pursuit of its "national interest". In this regard, China's South–South cooperation makes no exception. The historical goal of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since the early 1950s has consisted in isolating the Taiwanese competitor on the other bank of the sea: to this end, the CCP skilfully employed its nascent foreign aid program to independent African countries to gain their favour within the General Assembly of the United Nations and be recognised as the sole representative of China. Today, Beijing continues to march on the same path, balancing its foreign aid exposure to sub-Saharan Africa according to the principle of the carrot and the stick.[17] Today, only three African countries sill recognise and entertain diplomatic relations with Taipei.[18] One of them, Swaziland, is the only African country that does not benefit from any foreign assistance package from Beijing. On the other hand, this strategy has proved to be useful in 2008, when Malawi decided to cut every relation with Taiwan in return for the promise of a large foreign aid program, only a share of which has so far materialised. The cases of Malawi and other countries highlight how the strategy of the stick and

[14] Brautigam (2011): *op. cit.*

[15] China's Foreign Aid, [online], April 2011. Source: Information Office of the State Council, The People's Republic of China, Beijing [22.09.2017.]

[16] Lum, Thomas et al.: China's Foreign Aid Activities in Africa, Latin America, and South East Asia, [online], 25.02.2009. Source: Congressional Research Service Report for Congress [13.09.2017.]; Lancaster, Carol: The Chinese Aid System, [online], 27.06.2007. Source: Center for Global Development Essay [22.09.2017.]

[17] Lum et al. (2009): *op. cit. 9.*

[18] Rich, Steven Timothy – Banerjee, Vasabjit: Running out of time? The evolution of Taiwan's relations in Africa. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs,* Vol. 44, No. 1, 2015, pp. 141–161.

the carrot may be manipulated by African countries as well, since they can bargain formal declarations or diplomatic announcements without far reaching consequences in return for large inflows of hard currency at favourable terms. Ethiopia, for instance, successfully resorted to this strategy in 2005, when the federal parliament approved a resolution in favour of the anti-secessionist law promulgated by Beijing. In the span of a few years, Addis Ababa became one of the main beneficiaries of Chinese foreign aid in the continent.[19]

The second factor shaping patterns of Chinese international cooperation is of an economic nature and is materialised in opening new markets for Chinese goods overseas. Beijing's interest for commercial opportunities in Africa has increased rapidly in recent years in parallel with the fast growth of bilateral trade, which stepped up from 10 billion U.S. Dollars in 2000 to 107 billion in 2008 and 170 billion in 2017.[20] Africa has become a potential market for Chinese goods after a decade of double-digit growth in different parts of the continent, but it is also a strategic site for importing raw material and energy supply, since one quarter of the Chinese oil purchased from abroad is actually imported from Africa. Of particular interest are, in this regard, the renowned resource-for-infrastructure packages granted by Beijing to oil producing African countries. Under this specific arrangement, China provides the counterpart with donations and long-term loans in return for the assignment of oil exploitation rights to Chinese companies overseas, while profits from oil commercialisation are directly channelled through a government-controlled trust fund to make it sure that costs from debt repayment are met:[21] a solution welcomed by countries such as Ghana, Nigeria or Angola, which exploited their environmental resources to secure an infrastructural loan at more favourable terms than those offered by commercial banks.

Bilateral trade growth with Africa is currently one of the main priorities of the Chinese Government: to this end, in 2006 Beijing decreased import-export tariffs over a wide array of products imported from 25 African countries.[22] The Chinese private sector is probably the greatest beneficiary of international development assistance through the practice of tying foreign aid to the provision of Chinese services and goods from Chinese companies. To this end, the Chinese Government centralises all transaction procedures related to the purchase of goods covered by foreign aid packages to a third country. Support to overseas business firms is not a hidden goal, but it is an integral part of the rationale and narrative of Chinese international assistance. In fact, South–South cooperation is permeated with a win–win rhetoric that frames foreign aid as a tool to create a profitable relationship for all parties involved, and not only the beneficiary.[23]

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[19] Eisemann, Joshua: China's Post-Cold War Strategy in Africa: Examining Beijing's Methods and Objectives. In: Eisemann, Joshua – Heginbotham, Erik – Mitchell, Derek (eds.): *China and the Developing World: Beijing's Strategy for the Twenty-First Century.* East Gate, London, 2007, pp. 29–59.

[20] Holslag, Jonathan: China and the Coups: Coping with Political Instability in Africa. *African Affairs,* Vol. 110, No. 440, 2011, p. 378; Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Statistics on China–Africa bilateral trade in 2017, [online], 26.01.2018. Source: English.mofcom.gov.cn [20.04.2018.]

[21] Vines, Alex – Wong, Lilian – Weimer, Markus – Campos, Indira: Thirst for African Oil: Asian National Oil Companies in Nigeria and Angola, [online], 10.08.2009. Source: Chatham House [10.09.2017.]

[22] Sideri, Sandro: La Cina e gli Altri, Nuovi Equilibri della Geopolitica, [online], 2011. Source: Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale [10.09.2017.]

[23] Campos, Indira – Vines, Alex: Angola and China: a Pragmatic Partnership, [online], 06.03.2008. Source: CSIS [09.09.2017.]

It is difficult to state clearly whether Chinese involvement in sub-Saharan Africa is driven by political factors linked to the diplomatic dispute with Taiwan or by the desire to support Chinese economic growth and secure a stable supply of raw materials. The dominant narrative we may find in the Western media that usually depicts China as an emerging power determined to exploit its commercial surplus for gaining control of indebted countries' natural resources, thereby embracing the second thesis.[24] In support of this argument, it has been underlined that the Ministry of Commerce is the government entity tasked with the management of donations and interest-free loans, which form the bulk of foreign aid. The regulation arguably has far-reaching consequences for the bureaucratic rationale of development assistance, since public servants within the Ministry of Commerce are inevitably inclined to frame the national interest in terms of expansion of favourable trading relations. The intelligibility between development assistance and access to natural resources overseas is further confirmed by the fact that more than 70% of Chinese financial flows invested in infrastructure development overseas are concentrated in countries that are major oil exporters to China or where Chinese companies are engaged in soil exploration.[25] Finally, the same turnkey projects where Beijing is responsible for both the financing and the construction of single infrastructures structured in a way that Chinese concessionary companies may enter the national market from a dominant position and outbid potential rivals.[26]

These conclusions are not univocal, however. First of all, the statistics on the causal relationship between overall allocation of financial flows overseas and the availability of oil resources in the host country include foreign aid from the Ministry of Commerce and other financial flows from China Exim Bank as well, which means that the overall amount of Chinese international aid as such is overestimated.[27] Further research on the interconnection between foreign aid, bilateral trade and variations in oil production in recipient countries have showed how, once eliminated from the equation any line of credit that is not concessional in character, Chinese international cooperation is not exclusively driven by the purpose to take control of other countries' natural resources.[28] In other words, Chinese foreign aid policy is more concerned with traditional goals usually pursued by other Western aid agencies such as raising diplomatic consensus among recipient governments in the Global South.[29]

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[24] Neocolonialismo cinese in Africa, [online], 09.10.2013. Source: L'Indro [28.08.2017.]; The World in Their Hands, [online], 13.01.2012. Source: The Economist [22.09.2017.]

[25] Lum et al. (2009): *op. cit.* 10.

[26] Davies, Martyn – Edinger, Hannah – Tay, Nastasya – Naidu, Sanusha: How China Delivers Development Assistance to Africa, [online], February 2008. Source: Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch [20.08.2017.]

[27] Brautigam, Deborah: China, Africa and the International Aid Architecture. *African Development Bank Working Paper Series,* No. 107, 2010, p. 21.

[28] Dreher, Axel – Fuchs, Andreas: Rogue Aid? The Determinants of China's Aid Allocation. *Courant Research Centre Discussion Paper,* No. 93, 2011.

[29] Dreher, Axel et al.: Apples and Dragon Fruits: The Determinants of Aid and Other Forms of State Financing from China to Africa. *Aid Data Working Paper,* No. 15, October 2015.

The impact of the Chinese development assistance on beneficiary countries

A feature of Chinese development assistance that has been often criticised by traditional donors is the lack of conditionality. According to critics, in fact, the absence of conditionality hinders efforts of transnational financial institutions and OECD countries against corruption and in support of transparency in the management of public budgets.[30] What traditional donors criticise the most is the practice of negotiating development packages directly with highest authorities in the host country, often bypassing checks-and-balance institutions and accountability mechanisms. The consequence, according to the opponents of this practice, is that such behaviour authorises host governments to use development aid for fostering patron-client relationships at the expense of good governance and institutional growth.

The argument of a correlation between Chinese aid and corruption is supported by a recent research on the geographical distribution of aid projects financed by China in the African continent. Accordingly, Chinese-financed development projects managed by the host government tend to be concentrated in those regions where standing African rulers were born or where they have a big popular support. The conclusion suggested by this research is that the relative freedom provided by the lack of conditionality is an incentive for African governments to promote development projects whose main goal is to raise a popular consensus among the government's supporters, and not to encourage economic growth as a whole.[31] In a similar fashion, other works have underlined how Chinese aid is often intertwined with the increase of political violence in the host country. The underlying thesis is the same: the lack of conditionality allows host governments to employ aid resources for enforcing population control and repressing dissent instead of strengthening the social pact with the citizenry as a whole.[32]

Critics of the Chinese model can be found also within the so-called civil society. A survey conducted in Uganda, for instance, suggests how Chinese aid projects are often perceived in a negative light by the population if compared with aid projects from other major powers such as the United States of America.[33] Grievances are usually concentrated on the poor quality of the supplied material, the lack of transparency in the assignment of local contracts, the fact that local manpower is often excluded in favour of Chinese manpower and that Chinese aid is usually followed by the entrance of Chinese firms which are far more competitive than African ones, with the side effect that large sectors of the

[30] Woods, Ngaire: Whose Aid? Whose Influence? China, Emerging Donors, and the Silent Revolution in Development Assistance. *International Affairs,* Vol. 84, No. 6, 2008, pp. 1205–1221.

[31] Dreher, Axel et al.: Aid on Demand: African Leaders and the Geography of China's Foreign Assistance. *Aid Data Working Paper,* No. 3, November 2014. Another work dealing with patterns of allocation of Western aid in Zambia since 1960 nonetheless argues for the opposite argument, since it shows how African rulers usually concentrate development aid in opposition strongholds in order to expand their constituency. See Masaki, Takaaki: The Political Economy of Aid Allocation in Africa: the Case of Zambia. *Aid Data Working Paper,* No. 5, January 2015.

[32] Kishi, Roudabeh – Raleigh, Clionadh: Chinese Aid and Africa's Pariah States, [online], 2015. Source: ACLED [08.09.2017.]

[33] Miller, Helen – Nelson, Daniel – Findley, Michael: *Which Devil in Development? A Randomized Study of Citizens Actions Supporting Foreign Aid in Uganda.* Working Paper, Princeton University, 2013.

local business community are displaced from the market. These kinds of grievances have been registered in different countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Zambia.[34]

In contrast with these arguments, however, it should be pointed out that a large share of existing research is often based on contradictory data, because of the reluctance of the Chinese Government in showing its official aid program. Moreover, negative aspects coexist with positive ones, first of all the fact that Chinese assistance broadened the availability of fresh capital at the disposal of African governments. Be it in the form of foreign aid proper or other financial flows at more or less commercial terms, Beijing's projection in sub-Saharan Africa has increased the bargaining leverage of African countries in negotiating the content of the aid relationship with traditional donors, sanctioning the fall of Western powers' *de facto* monopoly in the realm of development assistance after the end of the Cold War.

The case of Angola is paradigmatic of the positive relationship between the rise of China as a major world power and African sovereignty, but it is also illuminating the limitations of the rhetoric that depicts Beijing as an irresponsible member of the donors' community.[35] Between 2002 and 2004, the Angolan Government engaged in harsh negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reschedule its public external debt, which had skyrocketed in previous years because of the civil war. In return for support, the IMF requested Angola to promote a large-scale privatisation program involving some major state-owned public companies, along with the establishment of accountability mechanisms to make the public budget more transparent. Negotiations were abruptly interrupted in 2004, when the Angolan Government entered into a 2 billion dollars infrastructural loan with China Exim Bank for the re-construction of the country's railway line. The agreement provoked harsh reactions among Western media, because for the first time it revealed the limitations of IMF conditionality power in presence of an alternative source of finance. Moreover, the deal was one of the first and more significant examples of the resource-for-infrastructure package in so far as the Chinese Government secured the loan in return for long-term oil exploitation concessions to the public company China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation. The involvement of a state-owned oil company was taken by the media as an example of how Beijing was determined to use its foreign aid program to grab Africa's natural resources instead of promoting the well-being of the host country.[36]

The Angolan case study is interesting also because it shows the gap between the narrative and reality. First of all, concerns that aid was allegedly granted in return for oil were baseless: the loan was not part of Beijing's official foreign aid program, since it was released by China Exim Bank on commercial terms without any subsidy being granted by the Ministry of Finance. Second, China was not the first country to "break the ice" and entertain independent negotiations with the Angolan Government bypassing the IMF, since at that time Germany had already violated the Bretton Woods organisation's prescriptions and

[34] Vines et al. (2009): *op. cit.* 41; Quigley, Sam: Chinese Oil Acquisitions in Nigeria and Angola, [online], 01.06.2014. Source: American University at Cairo [12.06.2017.]

[35] Kjollesdal, Kristian A. – Welle-Strand, Anne: Foreign Aid Strategies: China Taking Over? *Asian Social Science,* Vol. 6, No. 10, 2010, p. 9.

[36] Vines et al. (2009): *op. cit.* 33–48.

stipulated an export credit package with Luanda without consultation with other members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Finally, the resource-for-infrastructure package was not an innovation introduced by Beijing, since Angola had already signed similar contracts with other Western private commercial banks that had secured their loan against oil sales. The only difference between the latter contracts and the Chinese one was that China Exim Bank's deal was more generous, since the Chinese bank was able to offer longer terms of repayment at lower interest rates.[37] In the end, the Chinese loan and the growth of oil prices on international markets allowed the Angolan Government to improve its bargaining position vis-a-vis the IMF and obtain a reschedule of its external debt with private commercial banks without abiding by the most pressing demands in terms of privatisation and budget accountability.[38]

The impact of the Chinese development assistance on Western aid architecture

The potential impact of Chinese development assistance on the scope and organisation of Western international aid is still a relatively neglected topic. At the moment, however, it is already possible to see a correlation between the innovations introduced by the Chinese South–South cooperation and the new approach advocated by several DAC countries on the development aid topic.

A first example in this direction is provided by the on-going debate on the legitimacy of tied aid, which is the practice of making the release of foreign aid packages contingent on the purchase of service and goods produced by firms associated to the donor's national economy. Tied aid was a common practice in the second half of the 20th century, but came under growing attack of several countries and international organisations, because it was deemed to give an improper advantage to the donor's economy and deprive foreign aid of its solidarity character. In 2001, the OECD adopted a recommendation that invited all member countries to untie foreign aid in order to improve its efficacy and provide a greater freedom to the final use of money to the beneficiary. Nevertheless, the advance of Chinese development assistance and the interconnection between Chinese aid and Chinese private investments has reversed this trend: today, more and more actors from the private sector and the business community are pressing for the re-establishment of tied aid as a tool to counterbalance the loss of market shares in sub-Saharan Africa.[39]

A second example of how Chinese intervention is shaping the behaviour of Western donors is offered by a recent research on the relationship between the World Bank and several African countries that are at the same time beneficiaries of Chinese assistance. In these cases, although the Bretton Woods organisation is usually the proponent of the principle that development aid should be subordinated to the recipient country's adoption

[37] Brautigam, Deborah: *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa.* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2009, pp. 273–277.

[38] Bracken, Andrew et al.: China's Quest for Energy Security: Redefining and Driving Foreign Aid. *The Michigan Journal of Public Affairs,* Vol. 10, 2013, pp. 4–29.

[39] Condon, Madison: China in Africa: What the Policy of Non-Intervention Adds to the Western Development Dilemma. *Praxis – The Fletcher Journal of Human Security,* Vol. 27, 2012, pp. 5–25.

of macro-economic and institutional reforms for improving good governance, it emerged that conditionality measures imposed by the World Bank have decreased on average by 15% for each percentage point positive variation in the volume of the Chinese financial assistance to that country. This negative correlation is largely the outcome of the World Bank's diminished leverage over its African partners, which can obtain access to development aid from other sources without being submitted to limitations of their internal sovereignty.[40]

Conclusions

The Chinese establishment has for long criticised Western interventions in sub-Saharan Africa, promoting the idea that foreign aid and private investments were two sides of the same coin in so far as they were aimed at reproducing neo-colonialism through the transformation of political subordination into a more subtle form of economic subordination. The win–win rhetoric that today permeates the principles of South–South cooperation, of which China is the most prominent actor worldwide, clashes nonetheless with a reality where China is at the height of a new world hierarchy where Africa is still at the bottom, providing Beijing and its industrial apparatus with cheap raw material and new market outlets.[41] The paradox is that the Chinese Communist Party is going to become a victim of the contradiction between an economic agenda aimed at reproducing centre–periphery contradictions on the world stage with China at the centre of the envisaged world system, and a political discourse still based on the principle of non-interference and opposition to neo-colonialism. Chinese hypocrisy is to a certain extent similar to that of Western donors, whose adherence to general principles such as the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights varies according to the weight of economic and political interests at stake in the recipient country.

The rise of Chinese financial assistance to sub-Saharan Africa is without doubt positive news for many African rulers who made the management of external rents and development aid the backbone of their political career. In fact, Chinese financial flows in the form of concessional aid or ordinary loans at more or less commercial terms are suitable to broaden the extraversion portfolio of African governments and authorise them to mobilise larger economic resources at lower political cost. For these reasons, a radical rethinking of the theory and practice of the Western aid architecture in Africa is currently under way among scholars and government circles as well, in order to make it more suitable to the needs and challenges of the new multipolar order we live in.

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[40] Hernandes, Diego: Are New Donors Challenging World Bank Conditionality? *Aid Data Working Paper,* No. 19, January 2016.

[41] Djiagne, Sijh: Undergraduate Comment: Development or Dependence? The China Factor in Senegal. *Northwestern Interdisciplinary Law Review,* Vol. 3, No. 1, 2010, pp. 211–224; Smith, Karen Elizabeth: *The Use of Political Conditionalities in the EU's relations with Third Countries: How Effective?* Paper for the ECSA International Conference, Seattle, 1997; Hagmann, Tobias – Reyntjens, Filip: Introduction: Aid and Authoritarianism in sub-Saharan Africa after 1990. In: Hagmann, Tobias – Reyntjens, Filip (eds.): *Aid and Authoritarianism in Africa: Development without Democracy.* ZED Books, London, 2016, pp. 1–20.

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Tamás Csiki Varga

Explaining Hungarian Defence Spending Trends, 2004–2019

Defence has become a central issue of strategic discourse among NATO's Central European member states after 2014, following the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Reinforcing capabilities and readiness within the framework of collective defence requires much from these countries in terms of strategic thinking, capability planning, defence procurement and modernisation – and as a central element to realising their aims, in terms of funds for defence. U.S. President Donald Trump's sustained criticism calling for 'more fair' burden sharing among member states, resulting in the adoption of the Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond1 (Defence Pledge), further incentivised member states' willingness to dynamise their efforts. Since then, many European countries – some significantly – have increased their defence budgets and other forms of contribution. This paper offers an overview and analysis of Hungarian defence spending trends since the country's accession to the European Union in 2004,2 as this can highlight what has been achieved in this specific 'enabling' field in the past couple of years to counterbalance the trend of underfinancing prevalent for a decade. The author argues that the increased attention and resources dedicated to defence and the significant modernisation drive are part of an overarching normalisation process taking place in Hungary. Four indicative scenarios are developed in the paper based on the GDP growth trends and planned continuous increase of the defence budget, showing that independent of the (forecasted) GDP growth rate, the 2% target in terms of GDP would only be met in case of a more intensive, 0.2% annual increase scenario.

Keywords: *Hungary, NATO, European Union, defence spending, strategy, Zrínyi 2026*

Introduction

The current paper is the first part of a series that will synthesise and assess the strategic processes of the Hungarian defence policy. Subsequent papers will map up the evolving strategic landscape in terms of threat perception, strategic alternatives and the current initiatives of the Hungarian defence policy, as well as the overarching defence modernisation program, 'Zrínyi 2026'. The aim of these papers is to gain a better understanding of the

[1] The Wales Declaration on the Transatlantic Bond, [online], 05.09.2014. Source: Nato.int [10.02.2019.]

[2] This milestone offers a practical starting point for the analysis, as Hungarian security policy experts themselves argue that after accomplishing the accession to the Euro-Atlantic defence (NATO–1999) and European political–economic integrations (EU–2004), the political and military elite of the country felt 'satisfied' with the safe and stable conditions and diverted their attention – and resources – to other policy fields. This resulted in a restrained willingness to spend on defence. See for example Tálas Péter: Negyedszázad magyar haderőreform-kísérleteinek vizsgálódási kereteiről. In: Tálas Péter – Csiki Tamás (eds.): *Magyar biztonságpolitika, 1989–2014 – Tanulmányok.* NKE NI SVKK, Budapest, 2014, pp. 18–19.

drivers of the Hungarian defence policy, including those opportunities and challenges that the Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) may face during the next years.

One of the central arguments of these papers is that the increased attention and resources dedicated to defence and the significant modernisation drive are part of an ongoing overarching normalisation process. This normalisation process in many respects aims to change outdated strategies and doctrines, replace worn-out equipment, re-develop branches that had been given up and reverse those trends, including political neglect, societal resignation, residual financing and technological abandonment that had been weakening the HDF. At the same time, the Hungarian Defence Forces must meet the challenges of a rapidly changing security environment, sometimes in unanticipated ways, therefore, as a secondary drive, such qualitative development must take place in terms of manpower, equipment, institutions and doctrines that would serve well both for providing national and collective defence, as well as executing crisis management tasks.

Getting our primary resources

As both the Ministry of Defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces exercise a very restrictive stance on releasing hard data related to the funding, manning or strength of the HDF going beyond the necessary minimum requirements to ensure budgetary transparency, it is a rather challenging task to acquire reliable open-source data on issues such as defence spending. According to the Homeland Defence Act (Par. 38, Sec. 7.), last modified in 2018, "data related to the institutional structure, functioning, military equipment, munitions and materiel of the Hungarian Defence Forces are non-public for 30 years due to their sensible nature in terms of homeland defence and national security. The release of such data is to be authorized by the Minister of Defence upon the recommendation of the Commander of the Hungarian Defence Forces upon deliberation of homeland defence and national security interests".[3] This provision has become even stricter over the years, since in its original version in 2011, the Chief of Defence was still authorised to release such data (for meeting inquiries on behalf of the media or the public in a timely manner).

Still, all data and information included in this paper are publicly available, based on the budgetary laws that the Hungarian Parliament must adopt and make publicly available. Annual budgets for the next fiscal year (FY)[4] are usually approved by early summer (June, July) each year, before MPs leave for their summer administrative break, while Final Accounting Acts that provide controlling for the respective FYs' budgets are approved towards the end of the subsequent year (November, December). Thus, for example the Annual Budget for FY 2017 was adopted on 24 June 2016,[5] while the Final Accounting Act for the FY 2017 budget was approved on 27 November 2018.[6] This analysis builds its con-

[3] 2011. évi CXIII. törvény a honvédelemről és a Magyar Honvédségről, valamint a különleges jogrendben bevezethető intézkedésekről, [online], 27.07.2011. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

[4] Fiscal years coincide with calendar years in Hungary.

[5] 2016. évi XC. törvény Magyarország 2017. évi központi költségvetéséről, [online], 24.06.2016. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

[6] 2018. évi LXXXIV. törvény a Magyarország 2017. évi központi költségvetéséről szóló 2016. évi XC. törvény végrehajtásáról, [online], 27.11.2018. Source: Magyarkozlony.hu [10.02.2019.]

clusions on the data derived from these legal sources and the open-source data provided by NATO regarding Hungary (and all other member states).

Given the unquestioned role and importance of visibility, transparency and accountability towards democratic institutions and the people – at the same time acknowledging and respecting the sensitive nature of many information and hard data that relate to the defence forces and accepting a somewhat restrictive stance and careful deliberation based upon national security interests –, a more transparent information policy on the above mentioned issues might be considered, since it was the case prior to 2011, and because such practice is followed by many allied nations. The benefits of such practice – beyond sustaining scholarly and analytical endeavours – would be manifold. For example, these would manifest in intensifying public discourse about defence (not only the costs but also the benefits of defence), thus legitimising pubic spending in this field, also justifying the development programs that are being undertaken. Besides, fact-based information sharing could increase public awareness and knowledge about defence and strengthen societal support for the HDF. Moreover, allies would also gain a clearer picture of what the Hungarian Government and the HDF are planning, thus creating a room for a better understanding of the potential fields of cooperation bilaterally and regionally as well.

Defence spending trends, 2004–2019

Once enjoying the benefits of NATO (1999) and EU membership (2004) and a less volatile period of international security from a (Central) European perspective, subsequent Hungarian governments began to pay less attention to defence and adopted a restrained approach towards funds. As a first step, in 2004, compared to the provisionally approved budget of 347 billion Hungarian Forints (HUF),[7] more than 10% less, close to 312 billion HUF was provided for the MoD.[8] With the increased burden of international engagement on the Balkans and in Afghanistan, defence expenditures were moving in the following years in a +/–10% threshold on average, and six years later, in 2010, were still standing around the same level (317.8 billion HUF) as in 2005 (Figure 1).

The effects of the financial and economic crisis that emerged in 2008 had been realised with a shocking 16% drop of funds in 2010, and the slightly decreasing trend in nominal terms lasted until 2014. Ten years after the Hungarian EU accession, nominal defence funds were 17.6% lower than in 2004 – not mentioning the real value loss attributed to (defence) inflation. Not surprisingly, this decade gave way to hardly any modernisation within the HDF, with significant capability losses, particularly after 2009.

[7] All data represent (then) current values throughout the analysis.

[8] 2005. CXVIII. törvény a Magyar Köztársaság 2004. évi költségvetéséről és az államháztartás hároméves kereteiről szóló 2003. évi CXVI. törvény végrehajtásáról, [online], 11.11.2005. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

Starting in 2012, normalisation and then the gradual shift to an increasing path took place in three steps:

- Government Decree No. 1046/2012[9] was adopted to stop the decline at least by keeping the nominal value of the defence budget of 2012 for the years 2013–2015, and then increasing the budget by 0.1% of the GDP annually until 2012, thus reaching 1.39% of the GDP in sum by 2022. Still, FY 2013–2014 saw further nominal decrease – though with a slowing tendency, hitting the bottom in 2014 with 256.75 billion HUF. By that time, the nominal defence budget was almost 54.5 billion HUF (17.5%) lower than in 2004.
- Nominal increase began in 2015 with a 14.74% leap. To further reinforce this process, Government Decree No. 1273/2016[10] provided for a sustained annual 0.1% increase in terms of GDP for the years 2017–2026, aiming to reach 1.79% of GDP by the end of the decade-long development period.
- To meet sustained political expectations and the outlined resource-demand of national capability development within the 'Zrínyi 2026' – National Defence and Armed Forces Development Program, Government Decree No. 1283/2017[11] went further: accordingly, with higher-ratio annual increases, the Hungarian defence budget was set to reach 2% of the GDP by 2024, and from 2025 onwards the achieved level should be sustained.

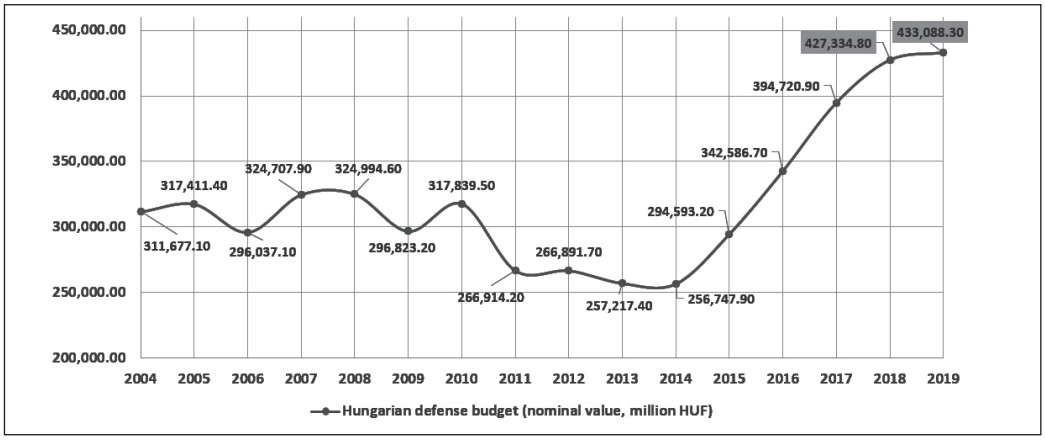

Figure 1: The nominal value of the Hungarian defence budget, 2004–2019

Source: The respective annual state budgets' Final Accounting Acts for FY 2004–2017; for FY 2018–2019 (highlighted) data from the approved State Budget are indicated as no Final Accounting Act has been adopted yet.

[9] 1046/2012. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról, [online], 29.02.2012, p. 5340. Source: Kozlonyok.hu [10.02.2019.]

[10] 1273/2016. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról, [online], 07.06.2016. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

[11] 1283/2017. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról szóló 1273/2016. Kormányhatározat módosításáról, [online], 02.06.2017. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

2016 (16.29%) and 2017 (15.22%) saw further significant annual increase respectively, and the adopted budgets for 2018 and 2019 also continue this trend of year-on-year growth, though at a decreasing rate. In nominal terms, the Hungarian defence budget increased by 70% since its lowest level in 2014.

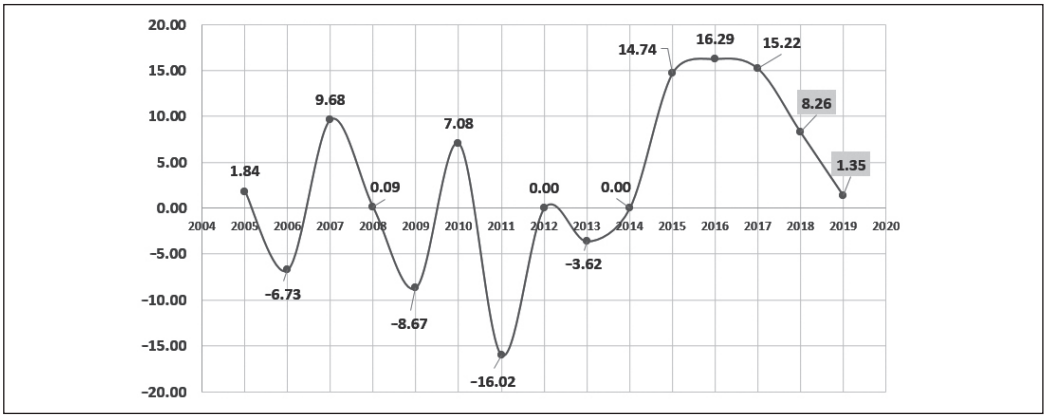

Figure 2: The annual change of the Hungarian defence expenditure compared to the previous year respectively

Source: The respective annual state budgets' Final Accounting Acts. For the years 2018–2019 (highlighted) data for the provisionally approved budget are indicated as no Final Accounting Act has been adopted yet.

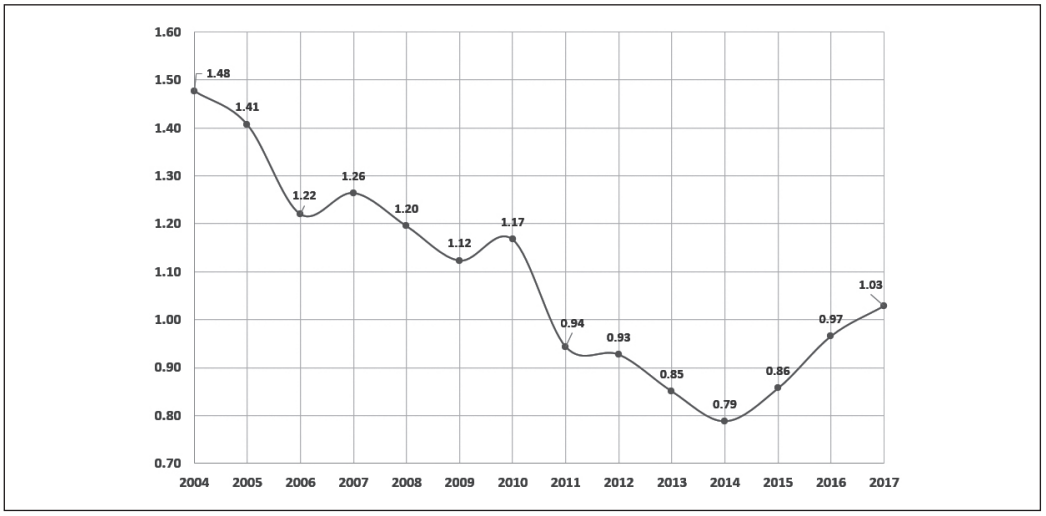

Figure 3: The Hungarian defence budget in terms of GDP, 2004–2017

Source: Calculated by the author based on defence expenditures data (the respective annual state budgets' Final Accounting Acts) and the GDP data published by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.[12]

[12] A bruttó hazai termék (GDP) értéke és volumenindexei (2000–), [online], 10.10.2018. Source: Ksh.hu [10.02.2019.] GDP data for 2017 are the estimates of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

Defence spending in terms of the GDP (Figure 3) had also been decreasing in the period 2004–2014 with brief pauses in 2007 and 2010, then hitting rock bottom in 2014 with only 0.79%. Since then, a gradual increase has begun – which runs parallel with the general GDP growth (Figure 4), thus yielding in the sizeable nominal expansion of the Hungarian defence budget shown in Figure 1.

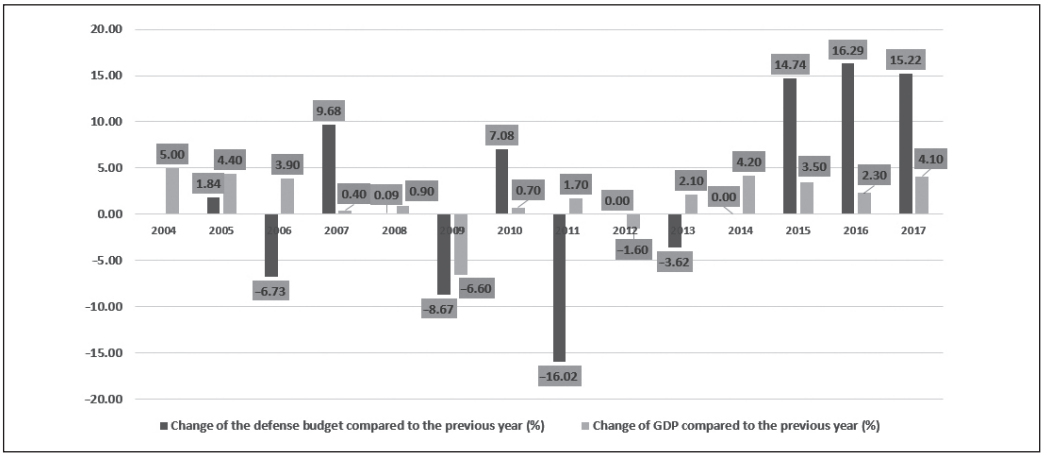

Figure 4: The parallel annual variance of GDP and defence expenditure in Hungary, 2004–2017

Source: Data are derived from previous calculations in this study.

Defence spending forecast: indicative scenarios

Regarding the prospects of meeting the 2% target by 2024, we can formulate approximate estimates based on various scenarios. Four indicative scenarios are outlined below, based on two variables: 1. the prognosis of GDP growth following the average annual growth of a) the examined 14 years (for FY 2004–2017, 1.8% annually) and b) for the past 5 years (for FY 2013–2017, 3.24% annually);[13] 2. the annual growth scenarios of the defence budget in terms of GDP, by i) 0.1% or ii) 0.2%.[14]

[13] Calculations in these indicative scenarios (carried out by the author) are based on the GDP dataset of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. The statistical average of GDP growth had been calculated for FY 2004–2017 and FY 2013–2017 respectively, for the timespan of which we have available data. GDP data for 2017 are the estimates of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Data forecasts within the scenarios take FY 2017 as the base year for GDP as this is the last year for which we have official data, while FY 2019 is taken as the base year of the defence budget forecast, as currently the last official data is available for this year.
The two timespans had been chosen to indicate the full examined period (2004–2017) that included a deep recession period as well, and a positive scenario, the post-crisis growth period (2013–2017).

[14] The two scenarios regarding the volume of defence budget growth had been chosen as 0.1% as the base scenario (the commitment undertaken by the government already in 2012) and 0.2% as a scenario showing higher commitment (and the necessity to provide extra funds).

Table 1: The low GDP growth and low defence budget increase scenario

Scenario I	2024	2025	2026
Total GDP (million HUF) by +1.8% average annual growth until 2026	43,456,799.19	44,239,021.58	45,035,323.97
2% of GDP spent on defence would be (million HUF)	869,135.98	884,780.43	900,706.48
Nominal value of the defence budget (million HUF) by +0.1% annual growth in terms of GDP	642,823.05	687,062.07	732,097.39
Meets the 2% target?	1.48%	1.55%	1.63%

Source: Calculations done by the author based on official GDP data.

Table 2: The high GDP growth and low defence budget increase scenario

Scenario II	2024	2025	2026
Total GDP (million HUF) by +3.24% average annual growth until 2026	47,946,809.48	49,500,286.11	51,104,095.38
2% of GDP spent on defence would be (million HUF)	958,936.19	990,005.72	1,022,081.91
Nominal value of the defence budget (million HUF) by +0.1% annual growth in terms of GDP	658,239.99	707,740.28	758,844.38
Meets the 2% target?	1.37%	1.43%	1.49%

Source: Calculations done by the author based on official GDP data.

Table 3: The high GDP growth and high defence budget increase scenario

Scenario III	2024	2025	2026
Total GDP (million HUF) by +3.24% average annual growth until 2026	47,946,809.48	49,500,286.11	51,104,095.38
2% of GDP spent on defence would be (million HUF)	958,936.1896	990,005.72	1,022,081.91
Nominal value of the defence budget (million HUF) by +0.2% annual growth in terms of GDP	883,391.68	982,392.26	1,084,600.46
Meets the 2% target?	1.84%	1.98%	2.12%

Source: Calculations done by the author based on official GDP data.

Table 4: The low GDP growth and high defence budget increase scenario

Scenario IV	2024	2025	2026
Total GDP (million HUF) by +1.8% average annual growth until 2026	43,456,799.19	44,239,021.58	45,035,323.97
2% of GDP spent on defence would be (million HUF)	869,135.98	884,780.43	900,706.48
Nominal value of the defence budget (million HUF) by +0.2% annual growth in terms of GDP	852,557.80	941,035.84	1,031,106.48
Meets the 2% target?	1.96%	2.13%	2.30%

Source: Calculations done by the author based on official GDP data.

As we can see, the summarised assessment in Table 5, independent of the GDP growth rate, the 2% target in terms of GDP would not be met by 2024, neither by 2026, if the annual growth of the defence budget would be set for 0.1% only. While in case of a more intensive, 0.2% annual increase scenario the target could be met by 2025 in the low growth scenario and by 2026 in case of the high growth scenario regarding GDP.

Table 5: Four indicative scenarios combining low and high GDP growth cases with normal and increased defence budget growth rates, and their derived results with regards to reaching the 2% NATO spending target by 2024

	a) 1.8% GDP growth prognosis (average of FY 2004–2017)	b) 3.24% GDP growth prognosis (average of FY 2013–2017)
i) 0.1 % annual growth of the defence budget in terms of GDP	Scenario I falls short of the 2% defence spending target by 2024 and 2026 as well	Scenario II falls short of the 2% defence spending target by 2024 and 2026 as well
ii) 0.2 % annual growth of the defence budget in terms of GDP	Scenario III falls short of the 2% defence spending target by 2024 but reaches it in 2025	Scenario IV falls short of the 2% defence spending target by 2024 but reaches it in 2026

Source: Calculations done by the author based on official GDP data.

Even though these scenarios are built on a trend-based data forecast that is likely not to continue in a linear way (accelerated by better economic performance or decelerated by another period of recession, as well as changed by targeted political decisions regarding higher defence investments), it is useful to keep in mind that the original commitment to sustain an annual 0.1% increase might not be enough to meet the 2% target in terms of GDP. Considering the trend, however, the nominal increase would be substantial in any case: in Scenario I the change would be +69% (732,097.39 million HUF) compared to 2019 (433,088.30 million HUF), in Scenario II +75.2% (758,844.38 million HUF), in Scenario III +138.1% (1,031,106.48 million HUF) and in Scenario IV +150.43% (1,084,600.46 million HUF).

Furthermore, it is worth to note – as we can see in Figure 5 – that in the period 2004–2017 the realised defence budget has on average been 9.2% higher throughout the years than the final budget proposal acted in law. (This final proposal has also tended to be higher than the original proposal formulated at the beginning of the annual budget debate initiated by the government and the Parliament.)

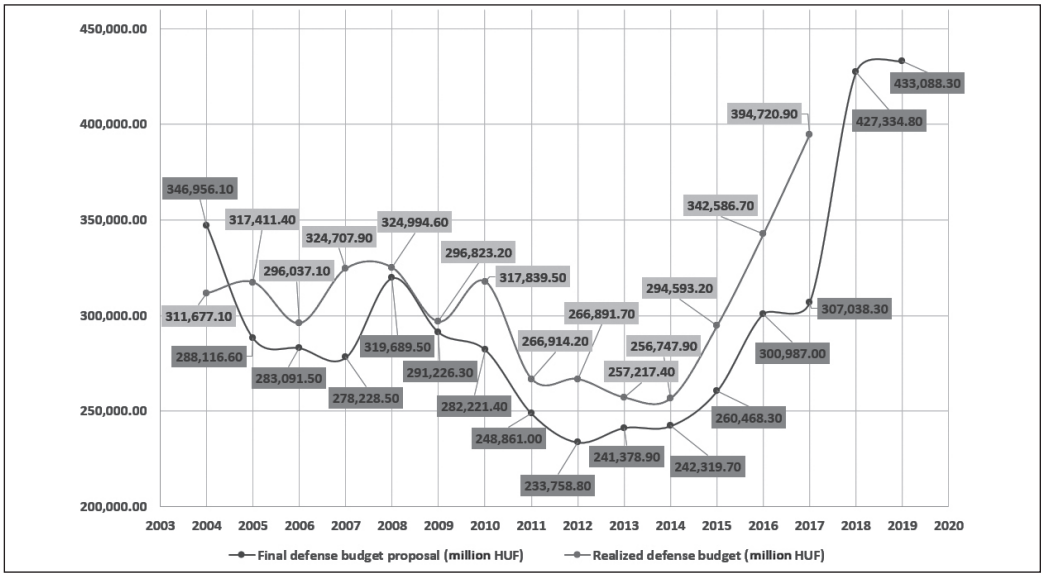

Figure 5: The nominal proposed (dark grey) and realised (light grey) Hungarian defence budget values, 2004–2019

Source: The respective annual state budgets' Final Accounting Acts. For the years 2018–2019, the provisionally approved budget is indicated only, as no Final Accounting Act has been adopted yet, therefore there are no available values for the realised budget.

Thus, we could expect that for FY 2018–2019 the actual funds available for defence would be higher than indicated in the figure. Indeed, for 2018, an extra 72,048.7 million HUF was granted for the Ministry of Defence.[15] Also, for 2019, 79,759.9 million HUF as extra funds had been provided since the central budget was approved, thus – as currently seen – altogether 512,846.2 million HUF (1.17% of the estimated GDP)[16] are available for the MoD.[17] Having this in mind, it is also possible that – within the limits of the indicative scenarios described above – three out of the four scenarios will result in reaching the 2% spending target in terms of GDP by 2024.

Conclusions

The increased attention and resources dedicated to defence and the significant modernisation drive are part of an overarching normalisation process taking place in Hungary, that in many respects aims to change outdated strategies and doctrines, replace worn-out equipment, re-develop branches that had been given up and reverse those trends, including

[15] Detailed explanation of the defence budget request 2018. XIII. Honvédelmi Minisztérium, [online], 08.06.2017. Source: Parlament.hu [10.02.2019.]

[16] Detailed explanation of the defence budget request 2019. XIII. Honvédelmi Minisztérium, [online], 20.06.2018. Source: Parlament.hu [10.02.2019.]

[17] These developments have not been noted in Figure 2 as might be subject to change. The final official balance of these years in terms of the provided and used funds will be available in the Final Accounting Acts by the end of 2019 and 2020 respectively.

political neglect, societal resignation, residual financing and technological abandonment, that had been weakening the Hungarian Defence Forces.

The studied trends reveal that in 2014, ten years after Hungary joined the European Union, nominal defence funds were 17.6% lower than in 2004 – not mentioning the real value loss attributed to (defence) inflation. Nominal increase began in 2015 with a 14.74% leap and the increasing trend has been preserved since. To meet sustained political expectations and the outlined resource-demand of national capability development within the 'Zrínyi 2026' – National Defence and Armed Forces Development Program, the Hungarian defence budget is set to reach 2% of the GDP by 2024, and from 2025 onwards the achieved level should be sustained. In nominal terms, by 2019 the Hungarian defence budget increased by 70% since its lowest level in 2014. The approved nominal budget of the HDF for 2019 was 433.1 billion HUF (1.35 billion EUR), supplemented by an additional 79.7 billion HUF (0.25 billion EUR) since then – altogether making up 512.8 billion HUF (1.6025 billion EUR), or 1.17% of the forecasted GDP.

The four indicative scenarios developed in the paper, based on the GDP growth trends and planned continuous increase of the defence budget, show that independent of the (forecasted) GDP growth rate, the 2% target in terms of GDP would only be met in case of a more intensive, 0.2% annual increase scenario: by 2025 in the low growth scenario and by 2026 in a high GDP growth scenario.

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Detailed explanation of the defence budget request 2018. XIII. Honvédelmi Minisztérium, [online], 08.06.2017. Source: Parlament.hu [10.02.2019.]

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1046/2012. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról, [online], 29.02.2012, p. 5340. Source: Kozlonyok.hu [10.02.2019.]

1273/2016. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról, [online], 07.06.2016. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

1283/2017. Kormányhatározat a honvédelmi kiadások és a hosszú távú tervezés feltételeinek megteremtését szolgáló költségvetési források biztosításáról szóló 1273/2016. Kormányhatározat módosításáról, [online], 02.06.2017. Source: Net.jogtar.hu [10.02.2019.]

Lukáš Dyčka

The Development of the Czech Defence Policy in 2017–2018[1]

The Czech Defence policy in 2017 and in the first half of 2018 was influenced mainly by the perceived Russian threat, terrorism and migration – nevertheless, Brexit and the new U.S. administration under President Donald Trump were also important external drivers. These factors resulted in various steps taken within the Czech defence sector, ranging from the adoption of refurbished national strategic documents, an increased defence budget, high (yet still problematic) support from the public and the rising numbers of Armed Forces personnel to problems with age structure both within the military and the civilian institutions of the defence sector. Finally, Czech foreign and security policy are likely to be heavily influenced by the result of the parliamentary elections in October 2017 and by the new government of Andrej Babiš during 2018. The author offers an analysis of the strategic drivers of the Czech defence policy to shed light on the synergies and discrepancies of strategic planning and the realisation of these plans.

Keywords: *The Czech Republic, NATO, European Union, defence policy, strategy, armed forces*

External threats and challenges and defence policy reactions

In October 2017, parliamentary elections were held in the Czech Republic and during the last months of the year, there was a heated campaign before the presidential elections held in January 2018. Both elections are likely to have important security and foreign policy implications in the future as well. However, besides that, the ongoing trends from previous years still dominated 2017. These can be classified in two subgroups.

The first group consists of threats dominated by an assertive Russia, migration from North Africa and the Middle East, and finally terrorism and cyber-related threats with other implications, such as hybrid, asymmetric and information warfare. The second group influencing Czech foreign and security policy consists of challenges such as Brexit (and its security effects) and the accession of the new U.S. President Donald Trump with his push for 2% of GDP to be spent on defence.

All these threats and negative trends may be seen as fundamental drivers of the Czech foreign, security and defence policy. While various strategic documents of the Czech Republic clearly underline threats from the first group, for example most recently

[1] This work was commissioned by the National University of Public Service under the priority project PADOP-2.1.2-CCHOP-15-2016-00001 entitled "Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance" in the "Strategic Analyses for Supporting Governmental Decision-making in the Field of Foreign and Security Policy" research project run by the Institute for Strategic and Defence Studies.

the updated version of the Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic[2] (2017) or previously the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic[3] (2015), the second group of challenges may be identified in the particular steps undertaken by the Czech political elite and institutions, such as the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Threats as drivers of defence policy

Regarding the first group of perceived threats, Russia seemed to be the most important driver of the Czech foreign and security policy in 2017. The 2017 Defence Strategy assesses Russia as a very strong threat and states that since 2014 Russian activities on the eastern flank of NATO have been troubling political elites, as well as the population of member and some non-member states. The Czech Republic mostly accents the fact that in Eastern Europe the Russian Federation blatantly pursues its increasing power ambitions, also through the use of military force. In doing so, the Russian Federation violates generally accepted norms of international law, including the territorial integrity of its neighbouring states.[4] It has executed hybrid operations against NATO nations and EU member states, including targeted disinformation activities and cyberattacks, which are highly visible in times of elections. The latest example of this behaviour was the attempted assassination of the Russian ex-double agent Sergei Skripal in the United Kingdom in March 2018, using a chemical substance under the nickname "Novichok". However, Russia denied responsibility and accused the Czech Republic of producing Novichok, allegedly because the Armed Forces of the Czech Republic are specialised in the defence against weapons of mass destruction.[5]

As for migration, its influence on the Czech Republic was rather limited in absolute numbers of migrants in 2017. For example, during the first six months of 2017 there have been only 2,244 cases of illegal entry and stay on the territory of the Czech Republic,[6] mostly from Ukraine, Vietnam and Russia. Meanwhile the Czech police stated that they had detained only 172 migrants throughout 2017 who sought to illegally transit the Czech Republic, mostly coming from Austria and heading onwards to neighbouring Germany. These people were coming mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.[7] Furthermore, as of November 2017, there have only been 116 asylum seekers in the Czech Republic altogether. Nevertheless, the topic itself remained very influential, especially before parliamentary and presidential elections. During the parliamentary elections, strong politicisation of this topic helped the anti-immigration and allegedly populist Freedom and Direct Democracy

[2] The Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, [online], 2017, Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic. Source: Army.cz [01.02.2018.]

[3] Security Strategy of the Czech Republic, [online], 2015, Government of the Czech Republic. Source: Vlada.cz [13.02.2018.]

[4] The Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic… (2017).

[5] Czechs tested Novichok-like substance for chemical warfare protection: government, [online], 04.05.2018. Source: Reuters [13.02.2018.]

[6] Nelegální migrace za období od 1.1.2017 do 30.6.2017 [Illegal migration from 01.01.2017 to 30.06.2017], [online], 03.08.2017. Source: Policie.cz [19.03.2018.]

[7] Migration drops near zero in Czech Republic but sways election campaign, [online], 23.01.2018. Source: Reuters.com [19.02.2018.]

party *(Svoboda a přímá demokracie)* led by Tomio Okamura to gain 10.64% of the votes which translated to 22 seats out of 200 in the Czech Chamber of Deputies.[8] Aside from that, the topic of migration was, in one form or another, present in programs of several other political parties and may have influenced their outcome in elections. Migration is nevertheless rarely accented alone and is – also in Defence Strategy 2017 – rather closely connected with the threat of terrorism.

The last item of the group of threats – terrorism – is more broadly described in Defence Strategy 2017 as coming from an arc of instability to the south and southeast of Europe. It is rapidly spreading throughout regions from North Africa to Afghanistan, even though in 2017 it was severely weakened with the almost complete annihilation of the so-called "Islamic State" (ISIS). This instability nevertheless stems, in large part, from the fragile states that have allowed non-state actors such as ISIS and other extremist groups to create a zone of instability which extends to the European borders and threatens Europe with the growth of radicalisation, extremism, terrorism, and also an alarming increase of illegal migration into the EU.[9] In 2017–2018 (or any previous year for that matter) there has been no terrorist attack in the Czech Republic of similar nature to those that happened in France, in the United Kingdom, etc. However, attacks in other countries, particularly their new form of vehicle ramming attacks received substantial domestic media coverage in the Czech Republic. That was especially true for the London Bridge attack in June 2017 or a similar attack in Barcelona in August. In response, discussions and commentaries about the need to secure public spaces in the Czech Republic received considerable attention.[10]

Challenges and their influence on the Czech defence policy

Out of the second group of trends influencing the Czech foreign and security policy, Brexit represents a significant issue to be dealt with. Already in 2016, one of the immediate responses of the Czech Republic to the UK announcing its intent to leave the European Union was the call from some members of the political elite for the creation of an EU army which was echoed even by Western media.[11] This call was particularly strong from President Miloš Zeman and (then) Prime Minister Sobotka, who repeatedly stated in 2016 and 2017 that "only EU-wide armed forces will allow us to defend our interests on our own."[12] According to the original idea voiced by the Czech Prime Minister during the summer of 2016, the European army was supposed to be used mainly for the defence of the EU borders against migrants and as a sign of European military emancipation (with regards to the U.S.). While not generally accepted, the idea of the common EU army

[8] See the website of the Svoboda a přímá demokracie party [Freedom and Direct Democracy], [online], 2017. Source: Spd.cz [18.02.2018.]

[9] The Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic… (2017).

[10] Cíle teroristů v Česku? Máme je u nosu a sami je islamistům nabízíme, varují bezpečnostní experti [Targets for terrorist attack in CZ? Right under our noses, claim security experts], [online], 24.08.2017. Source: Zpravy.aktualne.cz [18.02.2018.]

[11] Czechs and Hungarians call for EU army amid security worries, [online], 26.08.2016. Source: BBC.com [18.02.2018.]

[12] Ghez, Jeremy et al.: Defence and security after Brexit: A snapshot of international perspectives on the implications of the UK's decision to leave the EU. RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, [online], 2017. Source: Rand.org [18.02.2018.]

spurred considerable debate.[13] The Minister of Defence, however, quickly rejected it[14] with the main argument being that even the embryonic phase of building an EU army – the EU battlegroups – is hardly considered a successful project, thus, any further integration would be premature, and would only weaken NATO. More recently, *common EU security forces* replaced the name *common EU army* in political discourse.

It was generally recognised among the ruling Czech political elite in 2017 that Brexit is creating space for strengthening military cooperation among EU member states. Member states thus need to enhance defence cooperation. Because of structural changes in both the strategic environment (demand) and the economics of defence (supply), when it comes to technology procurement and weapons manufacturing, there is a strong case for European countries to move beyond their traditional approach to defence co-operation and it is a window of opportunity for the Czech Republic as well.[15] A framework for this enhanced cooperation may be provided by the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) published in June 2016,[16] which creates room for other follow-up initiatives. Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), the European Defence Fund (EDF), Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), as well as the prospect of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) all emerge at a time when EU member states are seeking to build on the momentum of European defence in response to Brexit mostly through the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence.[17] The common feature of all these initiatives within the EUGS framework causes stress on the gradual synchronisation of national defence planning cycles and capability development practices.[18]

The second challenge that strongly influenced the Czech foreign, security and defence policy in 2017 was the accession of the new U.S. President, Donald Trump. While the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU may be in some regards strengthened by Brexit, NATO has been much more influenced by Trump's presidency. The security guarantee provided by NATO and the U.S. was still seen as the cornerstone of security policy for the Czech Republic in 2017. Already in 2016, NATO together with a strong U.S. involvement re-established the deterrence of Russia as one of the main priorities of the alliance and approved the deployment of four multinational battalions in Poland and the Baltic states under the Enhanced Forward Presence format. In 2017, the Czech Republic announced that it will participate in this format from 2018.

What is more pressing for Prague, though, is the U.S. desire under Donald Trump to end the perceived free-riding on U.S. security guarantees and to push European NATO

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[13] Hamáček, Jan: Proč potřebujeme evropskou armádu [Why do we need an EU Army?], [online], 2016. Source: Cssd.cz [29.03.2018.]

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[15] Gilli, Andrea – Gilli, Mauro: European Defence Cooperation in the Second Machine Age, [online], 2017. Source: Iss.europa.eu [29.03.2018.]

[16] Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stringer Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, [online], June 2016. Source: Eeas.europa.eu [13.02.2018.]

[17] Implementation Plan on Security and Defence, [online], 2016. Source: Eeas.europa.eu [13.02.2018.]

[18] Fiott, Daniel: The CARD on the EU defence table, [online], April 2017, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). Source: Europa.eu [13.02.2018.]

members to dramatically increase their military spending[19] to at least 2% of GDP while simultaneously allocating 20% of the defence spending for procurement of new materiel. However, it is worth mentioning that this is not a fundamental change in the U.S. approach. In response to the rising concerns about Russia, following her actions against Ukraine, the Obama Administration had taken a similar view on the matter, while many EU countries have been increasing their defence expenditures since 2014. Nevertheless, what was new in 2017 was the initial confrontational tone of the Trump Administration.[20]

Institutional adaptation – New documents and approaches

As for the Ministry of Defence, main publicly available outcomes of its adaptation to external impulses in 2017 and 2018 may be found in the Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, approved by the government in March 2017. Partially relevant to this issue is the Armaments and Defence Industry Development and Support Strategy of the Czech Republic until 2025, approved by the government on 19 December 2016. In the first half of 2018, policy negotiations also commenced on the renewal of *The Long-Term Perspective for Defence,* because the original text is from 2015, thus it requires significant changes. So far, at the date of writing this analysis, only preparatory work has been carried out focusing mainly on the identification of trends and best practices from comparable foreign documents.[21]

The Defence Strategy of 2017 specifically addresses that while the likelihood of a direct military attack against the territory of the Czech Republic is still very low, it cannot be ruled out that the security and/or territorial integrity of some NATO allies or fellow EU member states may be threatened in such a way that it would require the engagement of the Czech Armed Forces in collective operations to ensure the defence of allies.[22] This applies mainly to the threat of Russia. Thus, in practical terms, NATO commitments also influenced the amendment to the Defence Strategy. From now on and depending on the nature of the crisis, the Czech Republic will be able to deploy a land brigade task force without rotation for a six-month period even for international crisis management operations. If such a task force is not deployed, the Defence Strategy 2017 allows for simultaneous deployment of a sustainable battalion and a company-size land task force, or an air force component, with rotation. That represents a significant increase in the level of political–military ambitions.

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[19] US–EU relations: ambivalent at best, antagonistic at worst, [online], 28.02.2017. Source: Country.eiu.com [13.02.2018.]

[20] Joch, Roman: Trumpova nevyzpytatelná zahraniční politika [Trump's unpredictable foreign policy], [online], 12.05.2017. Source: Natoaktual.cz [13.02.2018.]

[21] The following countries and strategic documents were assessed: Belgium *(The strategic vision for Defence 2016–2030);* Denmark *(Agreement for Danish Defence 2018–2023);* France *(White Paper on Defence and National Security);* Canada *(Canada's Defence Policy);* the Netherlands *(Netherlands Defence Doctrine);* Germany *(2016 White Paper: Strategic Review and Way Ahead on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr);* Austria *(Militärstrategisches Konzept 2017);* Poland *(The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland);* Slovakia *(White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic, 2016);* United Kingdom *(National Security Strategy, Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015);* U.S. *(National Defence Strategy 2018).*

[22] Procházka, Josef – Chalupová, Ivana: The Czech Republic Defence Strategies: A Comparative Analysis and Qualitative Assessment. In: *International Scientific Conference "Strategies XXI" – The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment 2017*. Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies, "Carol I" National Defence University, Bucharest, Romania, 2017, pp. 242–252.

So far, the previous Defence Strategy from 2012 stipulated that a brigade-size task force may be deployed only in case of NATO's collective defence operations. For international crisis management operations, the Czech Republic was able to assign the forces and assets only up to the size of a battalion task force rotated after a six-month period.

Besides that, the Defence strategy 2017 includes several other important measures, such as the establishment of new units and the rise in the number of soldiers by unprecedented five thousand new troops. So far, the original plans endorsed in the Czech Armed Forces Development Concept 2025 expected reaching only 24,162 soldiers. This promising increase may, however, be a source of problems in the future, since the median age of new recruits is already reaching 27 years and with adding another five thousand troops this trend may even be intensified. Even more pressing was the median age of the soldiers in 2017, which reached 36.6 years. If this number is compared with the median age of soldiers in 2007, then it can be concluded that it has increased by 4.2 years. On average, members of the Armed Forces are getting older by a margin of 0.4 years per annum.[23] It may be argued that while increasing the absolute number of soldiers is a positive step envisaged by the Defence Strategy, the prospects of reaching this goal are bleak and implications for the age structure of the Armed Forces are increasingly negative. An even worse trend may be seen among civilian personnel, where the median age reaches almost 51 years – with considerable and obvious effects on the MoD functions.

In conclusion, the 2017 Defence Strategy is mostly threat-based, thus generally a reactive strategy. It provides the Czech Republic with a basic strategic vision in combination with a set of strategic level objectives ("back to the roots": restoring balanced forces and relying on Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, providing resilience within the Czech society, increasing the security of supply). There is also a clear ambition to mitigate the under-financing of the defence sector inherited from the past.

Foreign aspects of the Czech Republic's defence policy

The Czech Republic and NATO

The position of the Czech Republic since 2017 concerning NATO was heavily influenced by the changing U.S. policy owing to the new administration of President Donald Trump. During his presidential campaign he accused NATO members of spending insufficient funds on defence. He repeated his criticism later, including on NATO's special meeting (also called mini-summit) in Brussels in May 2017. Trump's criticism from the beginning of his tenure, that "certain member countries owed 'massive amounts of money' to American taxpayers" and that NATO members must finally contribute their fair share was, however, partially mitigated by his reassurance to allies of the continued U.S. commitment to the alliance. In the end, the shock caused by the strong message delivered by the U.S. President worked and at the mini-summit in Brussels in May 2017, NATO's heads of state and government took decisions to improve burden sharing in the alliance. That was also

[23] Bednář, Zdeněk: Information support of the human resources management of the Czech Ministry of Defence. 2017. Manuscript submitted to *Vojenské rozhledy* magazine in January 2018.

true for the Czech Republic, as Prague announced to pledge efforts to reach the 2% target for military spending along with presenting concrete plans to American allies of how to reach this goal. So far there has only been commitment on behalf of the Czech government from 2014 to increase defence spending progressively to reach 1.4% of the GDP in 2020.[24] Furthermore, after the visit of the Czech Minister of Defence, Stropnický to the U.S. and meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis in early May 2017, the Czech Republic announced that reaching 2% of the GDP is likely in 2024.[25] This step is widely seen as a co-operative reacting behaviour to the substantial pressure from the U.S. President. However, similar – that time unfulfilled – promises of substantial increases had repeatedly been made in the past.

In June 2017 then Deputy Minister of Defence, Daniel Koštoval offered an alternative explanation for pledging to reach 2% of the GDP by voicing the fear of the U.S. political elite and stated that it was getting increasingly difficult to persuade the U.S. population to approve increased defence spending in the U.S., while European allies are not doing enough in that area. This version of explanation sees U.S. pressure for reaching 2% as motivated not by the perceived threat of Russia or any other challenge for that matter, but rather by purely U.S. concerns.

Nevertheless, in 2017 the Czech defence budget reached only 1.04% of the GDP, amounting to CZK 52.5 billion. Internally, 16% of the budget was allocated for procurement, 55% for personnel costs and 29% for operations and maintenance.

One of the scarcely mentioned problems, associated with the 2% concept is the inability to utilise such a high level of spending effectively in the recent conditions of the defence sector in the Czech Republic. According to an internal MoD calculation, to spend the 2% effectively would require reaching altogether 40.000 (military and civilian) personnel within the defence sector. This number exceeds by far even the 5.000 troops increase promised in the 2017 Defence Strategy. In addition, the personnel costs are expected to be under constant pressure due to the increased recruitment, rising salaries and competition over personnel in the private sector.

The second area necessarily affected by the "2% rule" is the share of investments within the defence budget. According to NATO guidance, the funds spent on procurement are supposed to reach 20% of the entire defence budget. However, during a Ministry of Defence officials' meeting (headed by Deputy Minister of Defence Daniel Koštoval) with members of the U.S. administration in Washington in April 2017, a chart was presented promising the ambition to invest 30% of the Czech MoD's annual defence budget for the procurement of new equipment starting in 2020, while maintaining this level for another five years. If the life-cycle costs of newly procured equipment are taken into consideration, with 30% investments the operating costs will also increase dramatically, thus putting heavy strain on the future defence budget.

[24] Czech Coalition Agreement, [online], 03.09.2014. Source: Army.cz [13.02.2018.]

[25] Ministr Stropnický: Vrtulníky české armádě dodají USA nebo Itálie [Minister Stropnický: Helicopters will be purchased either from the USA or Italy], [online], 02.05.2017. Source: Lidovky.cz [13.02.2018.]

The EU dimension of the Czech defence policy

Out of numerous EU-related initiatives within the EUGS framework, perhaps the most publicly discussed one in the Czech Republic during 2017 was PESCO, which is provided for in Articles 42 and 46 of the Treaty on European Union and Protocol No. 10 to the Treaty, formally established in December 2017.[26] The Czech Republic itself joined PESCO in December 2017 and plans to participate in three out of the total seventeen collaborative projects (Military Mobility Project, building of the European Medical Command and finally participation in creating the European Union Training Mission Competence Centre).

For the Czech Republic PESCO is seen as an ambitious, binding and inclusive European legal framework for investments in the security and defence of the EU's territory and its citizens. PESCO provides a crucial political framework to improve military assets and defence capabilities, which will also benefit NATO. It will strengthen the European pillar within the alliance and respond to repeated demands for stronger transatlantic burden sharing. Thus, in the eyes of the Czech political elite, PESCO could be an important element of possible development towards the so much sought common defence. A long-term vision of PESCO is to arrive at a coherent full spectrum force package – in complementarity with NATO, which will continue to be the cornerstone of collective defence for its members. However, the most important outcome of PESCO, voiced loudly by the former Minister of Finance and since December 2017 also the new Prime Minister, Andrej Babiš, is its possibility to create a common defence market[27] seen as an opportunity for the Czech defence industry. But even this importance was probably realised too late – as the Armed Forces (and to a lesser degree also the MoD) were unofficially blamed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for putting too little emphasis on preparation works of PESCO, as well as for showing a lack of initiative in pushing through projects that may be relevant for the Czech Republic.

Defence cooperation and foreign operations in 2017–2018

The highest number of Czech soldiers abroad in 2017 operated again in NATO's Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. In 2017, the Czech Army had a mandate to send 270 soldiers there with another twenty soldiers solely for the protection of the Czech Embassy in Kabul. Apart from patrolling, the Czech contingent in the Resolute Support was also tasked with the protection of the allied forces and training of their Afghan counterparts.[28] As of May 2018, there were 245 soldiers in Afghanistan with further possible 140 reinforcements coming in the second half of 2018.

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[26] Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the Defence and Security Conference Prague: In defence of Europe, [online], 09.06.2017. Source: Europa.eu [13.02.2018.]

[27] Babiš v Bruselu stvrdí zapojení do armády EU, projekt PESCO vede k jednotnému trhu obrany [Babiš in Brussels confirms involvement in the EU army – PESCO is the road to the common defence market], [online], 14.12.2017. Source: Ceska-justice.cz [13.02.2018.]

[28] Gov't approves military's foreign priorities for 2017–2018, [online], 19.04.2016. Source: Praguemonitor.com [13.02.2018.]

The CZAF also continued their missions in Mali in 2017 by sending the second most numerous contingent in history: altogether sixty soldiers served there. The bulk of this force was part of the EU training mission EUTM Mali, while ten soldiers served in the staff positions of the United Nations-led mission MINUSMA. Finally, as of the second half of 2018, the number of soldiers should rise to 120 in EUTM Mali and to 30 in MINUSMA.

Most of the other operations abroad were considerably smaller with only one exception – MFO on Sinai – consisting of twenty-five troops with a CASA transport aircraft. Apart from these, the Czech Republic deployed smaller contingents in numerous operations led by the EU, but also the UN and OSCE, such as EU NAVFOR MED Sophia with five soldiers or the UN mission UNDOF on Golan Heights with three soldiers, etc.

The Czech Republic did not participate in the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence format in the Baltic states in 2017 but announced its involvement for the year 2018 with the prospect of the deployment of up to 290 troops in Lithuania and Latvia. A mechanised company with the bulk of the forces (up to 250 troops) will serve under German command in Lithuania and a forty-men-strong mortar platoon under Canadian command will be deployed in Latvia.[29]

As a part of the package deal of selling L-159 light combat aircrafts to Iraq, the Czech Republic already sent an advisory team to the Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq to help train the local air force in 2016. This represents probably the greatest Czech contribution to fighting the so-called "Islamic State". In 2017, this deployment continued with up to thirty-five soldiers (pilots, instructors and ground technicians). Additional capabilities included the Field Surgical Team which returned home on 17 June 2017 and a five to ten troops strong military police training team sent to Iraq on 4 November 2017. A decision to deploy the CBRN Military Training Team in 2018 was also taken.[30] Since this package of missions is fundamentally bilateral in nature, it represents one of the rare examples of purely proactive offensive actions of the Czech foreign and security policy in 2017.

In April 2018, the number of soldiers in foreign missions was increased by further 270, while the currently existing plans specified that for 2018 only 806 soldiers should be deployed.[31] This increase should cost around 2.5 billion CZK annually.

A notable project regarding interoperability with allies which was envisaged in 2017 is the planned affiliation of the Czech 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade with the German 10th Armoured Division and Rapid Response Forces Division. This integration (which also includes Romania's 81st Mechanised Brigade) has been agreed upon on 15 February 2017 under NATO's Framework Nation Concept. The affiliation of the 4th Rapid Deployment Brigade is to be organised at the tactical level of the German Division, which will allow the already planned exercises and trainings to be used as entry points for further practical co-operation. The affiliation will be mainly focused on common activities of staff elements and affiliated units, education and harmonisation of military requirements,

[29] Bulletin of the Czech Foreign Policy Data VII–IX, [online], 2017, p. 31. Source: Mzv.cz [13.02.2018.]

[30] Current Deployments – Iraq, [online], 2017. Source: Army.cz [08.04.2018.]

[31] Vláda schválila rozšíření zahraničních misí české armády [The government approved the expansion of the Czech Army's foreign missions], [online], 11.04.2018. Source: Cesky.radio.cz [08.04.2018.]

common training procurement and logistical support.[32] In practical terms, this affiliation was, however, strongly critically politicised by Czech opposition parties in the first half of 2017 and this critique also appeared in influential magazines such as Foreign Policy.[33] It was mostly based on the misunderstanding of the implications of affiliation. This step has been wrongly seen as putting the CZAF under the German command and integrating both armies. In reality, it will be focused on systematic common training with German soldiers at divisional level, at which the CZAF themselves cannot train on their own (due to the fact that the highest-level units are only brigades). Additionally, it will bring benefits of utmost importance for command and staff development, rather than for soldiers in basic assignments.

Political and military leadership

The year 2017 was outstanding in terms of dramatic changes of key actors influencing the foreign and security policy of the Czech Republic. This was due to the parliamentary elections in October 2017 which brought the old coalition – composed of ČSSD (the Czech Social Democratic Party), ANO (Action of Dissatisfied Citizens) and KDU-ČSL (Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party) – to an end. The Prime Minister of this old coalition was Bohuslav Sobotka (ČSSD), known as a supporter of greater EU integration with a possible creation of the EU army in the future. One of his strongly voiced arguments regarding security issues and namely migration was his opposition against EU quotas on migrants.[34]

Following the parliamentary elections in October 2017, Sobotka's government resigned and the former Minister of Finance, Andrej Babiš was appointed Prime Minister on 6 December 2017. He had mostly been known for omitting security topics from his agenda. However, protection against the threat of migration was one of his key pre-election themes.[35] Nevertheless, he seems to put a strong emphasis on foreign, security and defence policy from a purely economic point of view and does not have a clear stance and strong position on foreign policy.

Until 2017, another member of ČSSD, Lubomír Zaorálek held the post of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose stance on migration mimicked that of the Prime Minister. In March 2017, during an interview for the newspaper *Hospodářské Noviny,* speaking about migration, Zaorálek said: "When you have two million people coming from the east who take your jobs, social support and a number of other things, you can (try to) persuade your own people a thousand times to get used to it. They will not take it, because you simply went too far, and you did not tell them the truth."[36] After Zaorálek became the Social Democratic

[32] Letter of Intent between the Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic and the Federal Ministry of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany, [online], 2017. Source: Army.cz [23.02.2018.]

[33] Braw, Elisabeth: Germany Is Quietly Building a European Army under Its Command, [online], 22.05.2017. Source: Foreignpolicy.com [24.02.2018.]

[34] Ghez et al. (2017): *op. cit.*

[35] Andrej Babiš v regionu nastínil své hlavní volební téma: Bezpečnost. Vlastní imigrační politika. Ne diktát z Bruselu. A ten Putin… [Andrej Babiš hinted his main pre-election topic: Security, our own immigration controls. No to dictate from Brussels. And Putin…], [online], 28.07.2017. Source: Parlamentnilisty.cz [24.02.2018.]

[36] Czech foreign minister: free movement could break up the EU, [online], 20.03.2017. Source: Reuters.com [24.02.2018.]

candidate for Prime Minister in the second half of 2017 during the pre-election campaign, he warned that the West had about twenty years to reach a settlement with the Muslim world.[37] This position is partially related to one of the last announcements Zaorálek did as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2017. At the beginning of December 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump stated that the United States was preparing a plan of transferring its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In an immediate reaction to Trump, Zaorálek's office said the Czech Republic might be considering the transfer of its own embassy only after discussing the issue with its partners. Thus, Zaorálek's position was that the Czech Republic considers Jerusalem the future capital of Israel and the State of Palestine, as do the other EU members, but denied planning to move its embassy there.[38]

On the other hand, transferring the Czech embassy to Jerusalem was a long-term goal of President Miloš Zeman. For him the year 2017 was a year of campaigning for re-election – a task he successfully accomplished in January 2018. His foreign policy stance has long been accused of being too pro-Russian,[39] even though he himself was a strong supporter of U.S. President Trump. A well-known evergreen topic of the Czech foreign policy in 2017 with obvious security implications was the expected invitation of Miloš Zeman to the White House, which in the end did not take place. This has been a source of ridicule for Zeman's domestic political opponents and explained as a sign that the president may be a *persona non grata* in the U.S. However, Zeman held talks with Russian President Putin in Sochi in November 2017. During his visit there, articles praising the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968 appeared on the website of the Russian Army TV network *Zvezda* only to be immediately denounced and criticised by a large part of the domestic political elite, including Zeman himself.[40] Despite this criticism, Zeman managed to win the presidential election in January 2018, thus securing himself the second term in office.

Since 2014, Martin Stropnický held the post of the Minister of Defence. He remained in that post since the very end of Sobotka's government making him the longest serving minister of defence in the history of the Czech Republic. In the first government of Andrej Babiš in December 2017, Stropnický was designated to become the minister for foreign affairs, as well as the deputy prime minister, assuming both posts on 13 December 2017. In May 2018, his post was offered to ČSSD as part of the coalition deal; Stropnický will likely receive an ambassadorial post in Israel. The post of minister of foreign affairs in the second Babiš (coalition) government was supposed to be assigned to ČSSD and one of its leading members, Miroslav Poche. However, since he has also been known as an opponent of the current President Zeman, eventually he was not appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, but temporarily this post was assigned to the new Minister of the Interior and head of ČSSD, Jan Hamáček.

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[37] Growing awareness of colonial past fuels radicalisation, says Czech minister, [online], 15.06.2017. Source: Theguardian.com [24.02.2018.]

[38] Foreign Minister: Czechs not abandoning EU stance on Jerusalem, [online], 12.12.2017. Source: Praguemonitor.com [24.02.2018.]

[39] Janda, Jakub: How Czech President Miloš Zeman Became Putin's Man, [online], 26.01.2018. Source: Observer.com [24.02.2018.]

[40] ForMin: Czech delegation should speak of 1968 invasion in Russia, [online], 22.11.2017. Source: Praguemonitor.com [24.02.2018.]

The previous Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stropnický has been known as a harsh critic of Russian interference in domestic politics and of Russian politics on the eastern flank of NATO. He is also a strong supporter of the Transatlantic bond which he sees as a cornerstone of allied security guarantees to the Czech Republic. During his mandate as MoD, he had overseen the sharp increase of the defence budget from CZK 42 billion in 2014 to 52.5 billion in 2017. However, his critics point to the fact that despite such rapidly growing budget he was unable to finish the promised procurement cycle of any major military hardware such as new multipurpose helicopters, Mobile Air Defence Radars (MADR) or procuring new NATO-calibre hand guns.[41] As a minister of foreign affairs, he supported British, American and French air strikes in Syria in April 2018 in response to the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Army.

His position in the MoD was taken in the first Babiš Government in late 2017 and kept till June 2018 when Karla Šlechtová replaced him, who – despite being nominated by the ruling ANO party – was seen as a figurehead of President Miloš Zeman and was also allegedly disliked by Prime Minister Babiš. She has been known as a harsh critic of the ineffectiveness of the Armed Forces leadership, and also a critic of her predecessor's inability to finish the procurement programs. In May 2018 news surfaced about a possible coalition deal which would leave the post of MoD for the ČSSD (the Czech Social Democratic Party). However, when this coalition government was formed, the then Minister of the Interior Lubomír Metnar was assigned to lead the MoD in late June 2018.

The personal situation remained mostly stable on the side of the military. On 1 August 2017, Major General Aleš Opata returned to the Czech Republic from the position of the national military representative of the Czech Republic to the NATO SHAPE (Mons) and became the Deputy Chief of the General Staff – Chief of Staff. At that time, he had already been considered as a future chief of the General Staff, thus replacing general Josef Bečvář. This was confirmed in April 2018. That, however, meant the end of the professional career of Lieutenant General Miroslav Žižka, who held the post of the NATO and EU military representative of the Czech Republic until the end of July 2017 and after his return did not receive any assignment within the Armed Forces. This step was briefly criticised in the media with active co-operation from General Žižka himself.[42]

Society and the Armed Forces

Media and public discourse regarding foreign, security and defence policy in 2017 and 2018 has mostly just mimicked topics related to the threats and tendencies of the security environment described in the first chapter. However, besides that, a few other recurring themes became visible in the public discourse as well.

[41] Stratilík, Ondřej: Hamáček: Stropnický selhal, není schopný dotáhnout velké nákupy [Hamáček: Stropnický failed, he is unable to finish major acquisitions], [online], 10.02.2017. Source: Euro.cz [30.03.2018.]

[42] Gazdík, Jan: "Nemáme pro vás místo." Odcházím bez zášti, tvrdí elitní generál Žižka, vyhozený z generálního štábu ["We do not have place for you." I am leaving without hatred, says general Žizka who was fired from the General Staff], [online], 04.11.2017. Source: Zpravy.aktualne.cz [30.03.2018.]

In the case of the Czech Republic "strategic communication" as a rather newly coined term was *reactive* rather than *proactive* in 2017–2018. The result is an alarmingly low knowledge of ordinary citizens about the defence sector. Only 20% of the respondents in the public surveys were able to estimate the size of the CZAF or the defence budget correctly. The natural outcome is that just 43% of the respondents are willing to participate in the defence of the country in case of war.[43] The Ministry of Defence has currently continued its work on the Strategic Communications Concept in 2017. One of the key preconditions was that it should be aligned with other ministries as well, with the Ministry of the Interior in the lead.

Among others, defence-related issues which were politicised and featured in the media in 2017 was the ongoing discussion about the possibility to re-introduce conscription, supported by the fact that 42% of Czech citizens believe that abolishing conscription in the past was wrong. This topic was even partially reflected in the programmes of some of the political parties for the October 2017 parliamentary elections (KDU–ČSD, Mayors and Independents and a few other non-parliamentary parties). However, the weak election results of these parties may also reflect disinterest of the population to participate in defence. Thus, even though 86% of the respondents in public surveys claimed that they are interested in defence and 81% had high trust in the Armed Forces, merely 9% of citizens indicated willingness to participate in defence of the state as a part of the Armed Forces in case of need.[44]

However, since the armed forces were expanding rapidly in 2017, the need to bolster recruitment pushed the MoD to intensify its media campaign. One of the sings of this was a TV series produced in co-operation of the MoD and the Czech Television public broadcaster, vividly documenting lives of fresh conscripts in the Active Reserves (a reserve unit of the Armed Forces) called *Provedu! Přijímač.* The series aired in April–May 2017 with a favourable reception.[45] However, in 2018 the Armed Forces began to quickly disappear from public discourse owing probably to the decreasing threat perception as well as the unstable situation concerning the government led by Andrej Babiš, that had to face a no-confidence vote in January 2018. In the ensuing coalition negotiations between ANO and ČSSD, the position of the Minister of Defence was repeatedly offered to the ČSSD by Prime Minister Babiš – and later refused by this party in exchange for receiving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Conclusions and remaining challenges

The Czech foreign, security and defence policy in 2017–2018 was mostly reactive to external threats and challenges. It was reactive in terms of resistance against the Russian threat to NATO allies, as well as in intensifying efforts with regards to the Czech Republic's

[43] Procházka, Josef – Dyčka, Lukáš: Czech Defence Policy – Critical Assessment and Recommendations. *Vojenské rozhledy,* Vol. 26, No. 5, 2017, pp. 41–60.

[44] Dyčka, Lukáš: Czech Defence Policy Adaptation to Dynamics of the Security Environment. PhD Dissertation, Masaryk University, [online], 2017. Source: Is.muni.cz [30.03.2018.]

[45] „Provedu! Přijímač" – hodnocení [Bootcamp: Yes, Sir! – Evaluation], [online], 2017. Source: Cfsd.cz [30.03.2018.]

willingness to accept the push from the U.S. for increasing defence expenditures, where Prague made a clearly voiced promise to reach 2% of the GDP, despite the fact that currently this aim is more utopian than real. One of the rare cases of proactive actions was sending numerous specialists, pilots, military policemen etc. to Iraq to train the Iraqi Air Forces, using Czech manufactured L-159 light attack planes. This mission is not only based on a bilateral framework unlike the other operations abroad that are usually within the framework of NATO, EU, OSCE or UN, but can also serve as an example of successful military diplomacy and support of the Czech defence industry.

However, there are possible challenges that may hinder the successful development of the Armed Forces in the future. The first is the financing of defence. The inability to spend vastly increasing sums may cause the public to question the need to spend money on defence and thus hinder the realisation of the current ambitious foreign and security policy goals. A low level of investments severely hinders the modernisation of the Armed Forces that still rely heavily on obsolete Soviet platforms (BMP-2, Mi-24 helicopters etc.), making the Czech Republic not only ill-equipped for today's operational environment, but also dependent on Russia.[46] Finally, the rapidly ageing military, as well as the civilian personnel of the Armed Forces and the MoD will likely hinder the efficient functioning of the defence sector in the future.

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[46] Procházka–Dyčka (2017): *op. cit.*

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The Defence Strategy of the Czech Republic, [online], 2017, Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic. Source: Army.cz [01.02.2018.]
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László Szerencsés

Current Defence Policy and Modernisation Goals of the Croatian Armed Forces

The internal and external security environment of Croatia has changed gradually since the declaration of independence in 1991. In the beginning, as in a post-war country, hard security played a vital role in the security policy documents, as reflected in the National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002. With the accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2009 and to the European Union (EU) in 2013, multilateral cooperation and collective defence had been prioritised and the new NSS from 2017 was designed to mirror this approach. The changed security environment spurred a reformed approach to defence matters and resulted in increased participation in international peace operations under EU, NATO and UN auspices. Furthermore, as a NATO member, Croatia needs to be ready to answer challenges threatening the collective security of the organisation, such as cyber threats ranging from fake news and foreign electoral intervention to cyberattacks. The first part of this analysis shows what path Croatia has taken after the declaration of independence, which is followed by introducing the current goals of Croatian security policy. Finally, international peace operations, defence spending trends and the capability development priorities of the Croatian Armed Forces are discussed.

Keywords: *Croatia, NATO, defence strategy, armed forces, foreign policy, defence spending*

Croatia's foreign policy path taken after independence

Soon after gaining independence in 1991, Croatian foreign policy turned toward the EU, which was expressed in rhetoric and steps towards integration as well. The rhetoric focused on Europeanisation, and the term "Balkans" was used to differentiate Croatia from the other ex-Yugoslavian countries.[1] Thus, Croatian officials from the early 1990s referred to the country as Western European, Central European, European, Southeast European, Mediterranean or Danubian, but never as Balkan.[2] As a further step, Croatia turned to a self-designated role of being Europe's 'ambassador' in the region, and emphasised that their contribution to security in Southeast Europe will bring this region closer to peace.[3]

With the accession to NATO in 2009 and to the EU in 2013, Croatia achieved its most important foreign policy goals, and by now the country is in the process of defining its new directions to become a relevant actor in Europe in general, and in Southeast Europe in particular.[4] Since 2013 multilateral cooperation enjoys great significance, which is a new

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1 Razsa, Maple – Lindstrom, Nicole: Balkan Is Beautiful: Balkanism in the Political Discourse of Tudman's Croatia. *East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures,* Vol. 18, No. 4, 2004, pp. 628–650.

2 Vaulasvirta, Mitjo: Representations of the 'Balkans' in the Foreign Policy Discourses of Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Contemporary Southeastern Europe,* Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017, p. 32.

3 Vaulasvirta (2017): *op. cit.* 35.

4 Knezovic, Sandro – Klepo, Nani: *Croatian Foreign Policy in 3D.* Hans Seidel Stiftung, Zagreb, 2017, p. 5.

phenomenon compared to the period before. The NSS from 2002[5] clearly characterised the bilateral relations of Croatia with its neighbours, but the new strategy from 2017 focuses on multilateral arenas and it states that for Croatia NATO is a guarantee of peace and security, and besides being a member of the EU, bilateral relations with the United States will be the most important pillars of Croatian foreign policy.[6]

Croatia's objectives in the security realm

The main goal of the Armed Forces of Croatia is to defend the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Croatia. Although a military attack against Croatia is not likely, the Armed Forces are ready to deter, halt and repel armed aggression against the country, and they also contribute to the defence of allies in potential operations according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty on collective defence.[7]

The second goal of the Armed Forces is the contribution to international security. This mission is achieved by participating in peace support missions, which aim to prevent human casualties and to resolve crises and conflicts. The Armed Forces participate in these operations under the auspices of international organisations with capabilities that mostly suit the operational and political needs of the respective mission.[8] Besides providing troops and education, Croatia is active in defence diplomacy and arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in accordance with international treaties.[9]

To live up to these challenges, the NSS from 2017 sets clear goals considering the budget and the tasks of the defence sector. The NSS describes Croatia's military capabilities as a force capable of reacting to the changing circumstances of the international environment. The Armed Forces have been developing their capabilities to defend Croatia's territory on land, at sea, in the air and in cyberspace. According to the document, the unilateral use of the Armed Forces is possible (as self-help in defensive operations), but only until the activation of collective defence. Thus, Croatia will balance between national and allied obligations and will increase its defence budget to 2% of GDP, taking into consideration its economic possibilities and national priorities.[10]

As the NSS 2017 states, Croatia is willing to be active in humanitarian and developmental assistance besides peace missions.[11] In 2011, Croatia was removed from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) list of official development assistance (ODA) recipients, and the country set the goal of investing 0.33% of its GDP in development cooperation by 2015.[12] However, only $51 million was spent on ODA in 2015, amounting to 0.09% of its GNI; while in 2016 the sum was $41 million, which

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5 NSS: Strategy for the Republic of Croatia's National Security, [online], 2002, pp. 12–13. Source: The Croatian Parliament (Hrvatski Sabor) [25.09.2018.]

6 NSS: The Republic of Croatia: National Security Strategy, [online], 2017, p. 17. Source: The Croatian Parliament (Hrvatski Sabor) [25.09.2018.]

7 Strateski Pregled Obrane 2013, [online], 2013. Source: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia [25.09.2018.]

8 Ibid. 16.

9 Ibid. 17.

10 NSS: The Republic of Croatia: National… (2017), 15–16.

11 Ibid. 24.

12 Bosanac, Gordan: Croatian Civil Capacities for Peace Operations. *Journal of Regional Security,* Vol. 9, No. 2, 2014, p. 117.

was equivalent to 0.07% of the GNI that year, as compared to the 0.7% U.N. target, mostly unmatched by developed countries.[13]

Croatia in international peace support operations

To give a framework to Croatia's participation in peace support operations, the government adopted the Strategy on Participation of Croatia in International Missions and Operations (SPCIMO) in 2014.[14] The contribution of Croatia to international missions is mostly provided by members of the Armed Forces and civilian experts. On the one hand, the aim of the deployment of military personnel is to protect civilians and to assure humanitarian aid efforts. On the other hand, civil missions are creating, strengthening and maintaining social functions, such as police, judicial system, border security, customs services or the prison system in mission theatres. The priority is given to those missions, which strengthen the alliance with the U.S. and other European countries.[15]

Between 1999 and 2014, Croatia participated in 19 UN peacekeeping missions with 1,300 military officers in total. Recently, the most significant contribution was provided to the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, but in March 2013 Croatia withdrew its troops because of the risky situation in the region.[16] Currently Croatia is involved in 3 UN-led missions with a total of 69 officers. Zagreb delegates 9 experts to the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), 7 experts to the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and 52 contingent troops along with 1 staff officer to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).[17]

Croatia's support to NATO began in 1995, when it participated in assisting IFOR and then SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since Croatia joined NATO in 2009, it participated in several missions, such as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and Operation Unified Protector in Libya.[18] Croatia in 2017 contributed 33 personnel to NATO's peacekeeping mission Kosovo Force (KFOR).[19] KFOR supports the development of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) through advice, training and capacity building and Croatian soldiers train themselves to participate in riot control and removing road blocks.[20] The Croatian troops among others provide three helicopter crews, an aeronautical-technical maintenance team and a national support element.[21] Since 2015, Zagreb participates with 95 personnel in the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan, as well. RSM trains and advises Afghan security forces in a vast variety of fields from budget-

[13] Development aid rises again in 2016, [online], 2017, p. 5. Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [25.09.2018.]

[14] Stragegija Sudjelovanje Republike Hrvatske u Međunarodnim Misijama i Operacijama, [online], 2014. Source: Croatian Government [25.09.2018.]

[15] Ibid. 4.

[16] Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Croatia, [online], 2014. Source: Providing for Peacekeeping [25.09.2018.]

[17] Troop and police contributors, [online], 2018. Source: United Nations [25.09.2018.]

[18] Rihtaric, Apolonija: Why Croatia urgently needs a new holistic National Security Strategy. *Fokus,* No. 5, 2016, p. 2.

[19] KFOR: Key Facts and Figures, [online], 2017. Source: NATO [25.09.2018.]

[20] U misiji KFOR – HRZ u punom pogonu, [online], 2017. Source: Obris [25.09.2018.]

[21] HRZ u multinacionalnoj vjezbi KFOR-a na Kosovu, [online], 2016. Source: Obris [25.09.2018.]

ing through force generation to intelligence activities.[22] In most of these missions they do not play a leading role, except for the RSM in Afghanistan, where under the framework of the U.S. – Adriatic Charter, A-5 – Croatia is the lead nation among its Southeast European partners. Following the initiative of Croatia,[23] Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro participate jointly under Croatian command in the RSM.[24]

Besides post-conflict stabilisation missions, Croatia participates in NATO's strengthened deterrence and defence posture with military presence in Poland and Lithuania. In Poland, Croatia falls under the command of the U.S., and in Lithuania under that of Germany. The first Croatian contingent sent to Poland included 90 members of the Artillery Regiment of the Armed Forces along with logistical support, staff personnel, associated weapons, equipment and vehicles.[25] The contingent deployed in Lithuania comprised of 181 soldiers and their equipment, including 13 armoured vehicles, one armoured ambulance vehicle, four trucks, one off-road truck and a field combat vehicle.[26]

The first EU CSDP mission that Croatia joined was the EU Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan in 2002, and later they also contributed to the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia) and the EU Coordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support (EU COPPS).[27] Expressing its commitment towards a shared Mediterranean identity, Croatia participates in the EU Naval Force ATALANTA (EU NAVFOR) mission in Somalia, and in the EU Naval Force Mediterranean Operation Sophia (EU NAVFOR MED).[28] Zagreb currently supports the Somalian EU NAVFOR Mission with 25 personnel of the Armed Forces,[29] and the EU NAVFOR MED with up to 3 personnel in the period of 2017–2018.[30] In the ATALANTA mission Croatian forces were responsible for the safety of the World Food Programme Vessel MSM Douro until 2017, but there is no clear available information about the exact duties of the current deployment.[31]

As it can be seen, Croatia is active in contributing to international peacekeeping operations, with a focus on NATO and the EU, while UN missions also play an important role. The impact of the comprehensive NSS is clear if we take a look at the decisions on deployments. The Mediterranean identity is reflected in Croatia's involvement in the EU NAVFOR and EU NAVFOR MED missions, and its engagement in Southeast Europe is well represented by the KFOR contribution. The participation of Croatian forces in the

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22 Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures, [online], 2017. Source: NATO RSM [25.09.2018.]

23 Sveobuhvatni Regionalni Sastanak Ministara Obrane, [online], 22.10.2015. Source: Hrvatski Vojnik [25.09.2018.]

24 President Grabar–Kitarovic Visits Croatian Soldiers in Afghanistan, [online], 20.05.2016. Source: Total Croatia News [25.09.2018.]

25 Croatian Soldiers Leave for NATO Mission in Poland, [online], 12.10.2017. Source: Total Croatia News [25.09.2018.]

26 Croatian Army Departs for NATO Mission in Lithuania, [online], 26.11.2017. Source: Total Croatia News [25.09.2018.]

27 Rihtaric (2016): *op. cit.* 2.

28 EUNAVFOR Med Factsheet, [online], 2018. Source: EUNAVFOR [25.09.2018.]

29 Video–Sabor Grmoja: 'Ovo vam je zadnji put, nećete me tako vrijeđati!', Jandroković: 'Vi meni prijetite, ne bojim vas se', [online], 23.11.2017. Source: Direktno.hr [25.09.2018.]; Sabor prihvatio Zakon o pravima hrvatskih branitelja: Njihova prava i povlastice koštat će 219.2 milijuna kuna, [online], 30.11.2017. Source: Net [25.09.2018.]

30 Government adopts draft decisions on participation of CAF in NATO/EU operations, [online], 2017. Source: Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia [25.09.2018.]

31 Croatian Maritime Protection Team Awarded EU Operation Atalanta Medal for Keeping WFP Vessel MSM Douro Safe from Pirates off Coast of Somalia, [online], 2017. Source: EU NAVFOR ATALANTA Somalia [25.09.2018.]

strengthened forward presence of NATO in Poland and Lithuania is an expression of commitment towards the collective structures, which are determining elements of the NSS adopted in 2017.

On the political spectrum, there are no significant disagreements among the parties about the role of Croatia in international operations. Likewise, in the military the recruitment occurs without problems and the wider population in general shows unconcern towards peacekeeping operations. Croatia usually does not play a leading role in missions, but its forces are rather integrated within already framed operations in the respective mission theatres. For these reasons, the agenda of political parties in not questioned in this regard, because there are no significant potential gains of bringing up the operations in the public debate.[32]

Croatian Armed Forces and its development

The level of defence spending in Croatia has been low since the 2000s and decreased again after the 2008 financial crisis. The operational spectrum of the Armed Forces is mainly defensive, with a special focus paid to the international obligations stemming from NATO's collective defence and peace support operations. Although the defence spending is low, there are some developments in defence capabilities, especially when it comes to the air force where the acquisition of equipment is underway. However, when it comes to the land forces and the navy, there are no significant investments in the foreseeable future.

Defence spending trends

The level of defence spending in Croatia has been relatively low compared to neighbours in the past decade. The peak period of Croatian defence expenditures was the middle of the 1990s, but the stable security environment let Croatia decrease spending on defence matters. Since then, no specific events but only NATO's requirements have spurred Croatia to strengthen military capabilities.[33] As a first step in this direction the *Croatian Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan 2015–2024* (LTDP 2015–2024) agreed not to reduce defence spending further, beyond its current level, which was 1.41% of GDP in 2014.[34]

Anticipating future spending, the plan drafted in 2014 aims to increase defence expenditures only with the recovery of the economy and GDP growth. If we look at the numbers provided by NATO, the Croatian defence expenditures have not begun increasing yet, and reached an all-time low level in 2016. The military spending in 2010 was 1.54% of GDP, and in 2011 it peaked at 1.6% of GDP; however, since 2012 the numbers are constantly decreasing, and the last published data was 1.24% of GDP in 2016.[35] This trend fits into the regional dynamics, as can be seen in Table 1, because neither Slovenia and Montenegro,

[32] Peacekeeping Contributor Profile… (2014).

[33] BMI: Croatia Defence and Security Report 2016. *BMI Industry Report and Forecasts Series,* January 2017, p. 10.

[34] The Croatian Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan 2015–2024, [online], 2014, p. 94. Source: *Official Gazette,* No. 151 [25.09.2018.]

[35] Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017), [online], 2017, p. 8. Source: NATO [25.09.2018.]

nor Albania and Hungary could reach a higher defence expenditure levels in relation to GDP since 2010.

Table 1: Defence expenditures as a share of GDP (%) based on 2010 exchange rates

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Albania	1.56	1.53	1.49	1.41	1.35	1.16	1.10
Croatia	1.24	1.60	1.53	1.47	1.41	1.37	1.24
Hungary	1.04	1.05	1.04	0.95	0.87	0.93	1.04
Montenegro	1.80	1.75	1.66	1.47	1.50	1.42	1.49
Slovenia	1.61	1.30	1.17	1.06	0.98	0.94	1.02

Source: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017), [online], 2017, p. 8. Source: NATO [25.09.2018.]

Operational spectrum

The Croatian Armed Forces must be ready to answer security threats and challenges targeting Croatia. This responsibility requires the Armed Forces to have capabilities for the following tasks:

- to defend Croatia and its allies according to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty
- to participate in crisis response operations abroad, which contribute to international security and stability
- and to assist civilian institutions and population to carry out humanitarian operations at home and abroad[36]

The Armed Forces between 2015 and 2024 will continue to focus on international cooperation, which is manifested in participation in NATO and EU missions. To intensify this contribution, Smart Defence and Pooling and Sharing initiatives are to be improved, and a special emphasis is given to developing search and rescue, medical transportation and border control capabilities.[37] The Croatian LTDP 2015–2024 contains exact data about the number of troops needed to fulfil the mentioned responsibilities. The Armed Forces develop an initial response force with up to 20,000 members, who will be assigned to the Reserve Armed Forces with weapons and equipment. The Armed Forces ensure the growth of the troop numbers to the level needed to deter possible armed aggression through reintroducing compulsory military service from 2019. Apart from them, 1,000 troops are to be trained to participate in operations abroad. With these numbers Croatia will contribute 1% of the NATO Immediate Response Forces.[38]

The Croatian Armed Forces have troops to operate on land, sea and in the air with mainly defensive capabilities. By the end of 2018, the land forces will be able to send a combat group-sized mechanised battalion to missions abroad. To reach this goal, 50% of the

[36] The Croatian Armed Forces… (2014), 13.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid. 16.

troops are trained to be capable of participating in peace support operations. The naval forces of Croatia focus on the Adriatic and the protection of the rights and interests of the country, while they continue to develop capabilities for NATO and EU operations as well. From 2018 on the air force will have eight medium transport helicopters available for peace support operations, and 40% of the air force will be trained for participating in missions.[39]

Capability development priorities

Since the accession to NATO in 2009, the Croatian Armed Forces have been on a modernisation path. However, the impacts of the financial crisis impeded Croatia to increase its defence budget and prevented the implementation of modernization programs. Hence, their equipment remained outdated and in need of replacement, especially those of the navy and the air force. Nevertheless, since 2014 the country has taken steps to equip its military with up-to-date weaponry, mainly relying on the U.S. as a key partner in providing training, equipment and funding.[40]

The LTDP 2015–2024 outlines the aims of capability development of the Croatian army. The long-term goals of the development are optimising the strength and structure of the forces, developing consistent cooperation within CSDP and UN missions, designing the Armed Forces based on competencies and social accountability, and most importantly, strengthening the capabilities to implement non-military tasks both at home and abroad. These include assistance to civil institutions and population, as well as search and rescue operations on land, at sea and in the air.[41]

Most of the goals set by the capability development strategy preceding 2015 were not achieved. To fulfil these goals, Zagreb needs to invest in its defence capabilities. To complement these deficiencies, one of the most important development priorities is the modernisation of the air force.[42] To proceed, the U.S. donated 16 Bell OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopters to Croatia in 2016, to which the government approved the purchase of AGM-114 Hellfire missiles in 2017. The delivery of the missiles is due in 2020, which will cost USD 3.2 million.[43] OH 58D Kiowa is a single-engine, single rotor helicopter used for observation, utility and fire support in operations.[44] There is another plan to receive a squadron of new transport helicopters by 2025, when the currently operating Mi-8 helicopters' service time expires. The equipment replacing the Mi-8s would be Sikorsky UH-60A *Black Hawk,* manufactured between 1977 and 1989 and upgraded since then. The upgraded model has larger rotor blades, digital avionics, glass cockpit and an advanced computer flying system.[45]

Apart from the helicopters, Croatia's fighter jets, currently MiG-21s, are in need of replacement; this was also part of the 2006–2015 strategy but was not realised. According

[39] Ibid. 17.
[40] BMI (2017), 20.
[41] The Croatian Armed Forces… (2014), 15.
[42] BMI (2017), 17.
[43] Croatia to arm OH-58D helicopters with Hellfire missiles, [online], 2017. Source: Jane's 360 [25.04.2018.]
[44] BMI (2017), 20.
[45] Croatia Buying US Black Hawk Helicopters, [online], 09.04.2018. Source: Total Croatia News [25.09.2018.]

to the current strategy, the MiG-21s remain in service until 2024,[46] while replacement begins in 2019.[47] On 27 March 2018, the Croatian Defence Council made the decision that 12 used F-16D 'Barak' fighter jets from Israel will be bought for USD 500 million. These will replace the MiG-21s, and they will be delivered to Croatia until 2020.[48] Although not all of the new equipment will be new, which is a target of public criticism, with the delivery of these, the reliance on Russian technology will be eliminated.

Regarding the land forces, the focus of the LTDP 2015–2024 is on improving quality and not quantity; therefore, the number of personnel is continuously decreasing. In 2008 the number was 22,000, in 2013 19,600[49] and in 2018 it was 18,525 active military personnel.[50] Nevertheless, reacting to threats on the ground in the region, such as the Russian military actions in Ukraine, the increased migration flows and the country's vulnerable geopolitical location, the land forces will undergo modernisation. Thus, the main Croatian Tank Company will be modernised to procure up-to-date technology and the combat vehicles in service will be upgraded with mobile anti-armour systems, communication systems and artillery. Air defence systems, as well as demining capabilities will be improved.[51]

As Croatia has a long coastline, the Croatian Navy has implemented projects related to developing its maritime capabilities. However, most of these developments were restricted to the coast guards' operational capacity and the navy's radar capabilities. One of the new elements will be the consolidation of maritime surveillance sensor data so that it is well integrated with NATO's own surveillance capabilities. Secondly, Croatia needs to procure more coastal patrol boats from abroad because it lacks the domestic manufacturing base. And thirdly, Croatia needs to develop its own naval training facilities and maintenance harbours.[52]

Conclusions

Since the declaration of independence, Croatian security and defence policy changed gradually. The focus on bilateral relations and threats has been replaced by multilateral cooperation and the development of response capabilities in case of the activation of collective defence. As a result, the Croatian Armed Forces actively participate in international peace operations, as well as in NATO's strengthened deterrence and defence posture in Poland and Lithuania.

The focus on multilateral cooperation and collective defence requires the Armed Forces to increase the defence budget to 2% of GDP and to modernise their capabilities. Thus, in line with the plans outlined, the air force goes through an intense modernisation of equipment, while the land forces and the navy are also planned to be modernised in line with the current tasks and challenges. Since the LTDP sets modernisation goals until 2024,

[46] The Croatian Armed Forces… (2014), 73.
[47] BMI (2017), 22.
[48] Croatia to buy used F-16D jets from Israel for $500 million, [online], 28.03.2018. Source: Defense News [25.09.2018.]
[49] BMI (2017), 21.
[50] Total Available Active Military Manpower by Country, [online], 2018. Source: Globalfirepower.com [25.09.2018.]
[51] BMI (2017), 21.
[52] BMI (2017), 22.

gradual changes are expected in this direction in the next years, while the continuous modernisation of the armed forces depends on realising the planned defence budget increase.

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Alex Etl

With the Image of Deterrence: Operation Atlantic Resolve

As deterrence is to become a new pillar of Operation Atlantic Resolve and European Reassurance Initiative from 2017, the paper offers an analysis of these U.S. security programs through the lens of deterrence theory. Through the empirical analysis of ERI and OAR, the author argues that these steps create only the false image of deterrence, while the very essence of the increased U.S. presence in Europe is still about assurance; nevertheless, this strategy would not be fully inefficient for two reasons. On the one hand, it helps to avoid the return of Cold War era uncertainty with its negative spirals and unintended consequences, while on the other hand it pushes European allies towards a more nuanced defence policy and does not disrupt the process of U.S. rebalancing either.

Keywords: *NATO, United States of America, deterrence, Central Europe, reassurance*

Introduction

As the Obama Administration announced, additionally to assurance measures, deterrence will become a new pillar of Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR) and European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) from 2017.[1] For this reason, the administration seeks to increase the budget of OAR and ERI significantly to 3.4 billion USD for FY 2017. This decision came into power after the RAND Corporation pointed out that according to the currently foreseeable scenarios in case of a hypothetical armed aggression, Russian forces could reach the outskirts of Tallinn and Riga within 60 hours, leaving NATO with a limited number of risky options, including an escalatory nuclear strike.[2] Thus, ERI and OAR aim to increase U.S. non-nuclear deterrence capabilities in Europe in order to avoid a limited Russian attack on the Eastern Flank of NATO.

In terms of structure, the first section of the study starts with a short overview of the concept of deterrence, while the second, drawing on the theoretical pillars, introduces the most important aspects of OAR and ERI. Through the introduction to deterrence theory and the subsequent empirical analysis of ERI and OAR, this study concludes that these steps create only the false image of deterrence, while the very essence of the increased U.S. presence in Europe is still about assurance. Nevertheless, and in contrast with the RAND study, we do not argue that this strategy of the Obama Administration would be fully inefficient. On the one hand, it helps to avoid the return of Cold War era uncertainty

[1] U.S. European Command: Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016, [online], 15.04.2016, p. 1. Source: Eucom.mil [28.06.2016.]

[2] Shlapak, David A. – Johnson, Michael W.: Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank, [online], 2016, p. 8. Source: Rand.org [06.01.2016.]

with its negative spirals and unintended consequences, while on the other hand it pushes European allies towards a more nuanced defence policy and does not disrupt the process of U.S. rebalancing either.

The concept of deterrence

To demonstrate why the Obama Administration could only create a false image of deterrence, it is important to introduce the main conceptual pillars of the theory. In one of his most influential works, Robert Jervis argued that in some cases "to avoid disastrous situation, the state must display the ability and willingness to wage war".[3] This is probably the most important element of the concept of deterrence. It emerges from uncertainty, since one actor can never be sure about the intentions of the other. As Herbert Butterfield points out, this element of uncertainty is what causes the *tragic predicament* in every human conflict – that even though both powers want to anxiously avoid war, their best intentions may fail as they cannot be sure about the goals of the other.[4] And this provides them only a limited number of options – most importantly to increase their security through different measures – including deterrence.

As Brown and Arnold summarise the essence of deterrence: if an actor (A) perceives a threat of an attack from B, than A tries to alter B's plan by promising certain retaliation which leads to such damage to B that it outweighs any potential gain from the original aggression.[5] For a successful deterrence B has to receive, understand and believe A's measures while B also has to calculate the costs of his aggression.[6] The main problem is that one can never be sure when deterrence works, only when it fails.[7]

For this reason, the concept of deterrence has to operate with a significant amount of uncertainty. Even if it is successful, the predicament again is that B cannot be sure whether these deterrence measures seek only to increase security or also to prepare for an attack.[8] Thus it is possible that B introduces counter measures, which pushes A to increase his/her deterrence activity again.[9] And even though both actors are perfectly peaceful, a negative spiral and an arms race emerge between them which make the stakes higher and higher.[10] These unintended consequences became more and more relevant with the appearance of nuclear weapons but the basic logic of deterrence has still remained the same. It builds on the perception of fear through the promise of retaliation in order to avoid war.

This is obviously a narrow and incomplete introduction of the concept of deterrence, but this study does not aim to present the whole deterrence literature. My goal is rather to build on this short conceptual introduction and highlight that the Obama Administration used the word deterrence not in line with its theoretical foundations. This is relevant, since

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3 Jervis, Robert: *Perception and Misperception in International Politics.* Princeton University, New York, 1976, p. 58.
4 Butterfield, Herbert: *The Tragic Element in Modern International Conflict.* University of Notre Dame, 1950, pp. 19–20.
5 Brown, Andrew – Arnold, Lorna: The Quirks of Nuclear Deterrence, [online], 2010, p. 298. Source: International Relations [28.06.2016.]
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Jervis (1976): *op. cit.* 79–81.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.

according to the administration's interpretation OAR, as well as ERI, will heavily build on deterrence measures from FY 2017.

The administration's decision can be seen as an answer for the analysis of the RAND Corporation which argued that the Russian forces could reach the outskirts of Tallinn and Riga within 60 hours in a limited attack, leaving NATO only with risky options, including an escalatory nuclear strike.[11] Thus the main goal of OAR and ERI is to introduce non-nuclear deterrence measures, and for this reason I will examine non-nuclear deterrence only. The second part of the study will be an empirical analysis of the OAR and ERI measures, which can help us understand why the current non-nuclear deterrence measures are only imagined and do not provide real deterrence against a limited Russian attack.

Operation Atlantic Resolve and the European Reassurance Initiative

President Barack Obama initiated Operation Atlantic Resolve in April 2014 and European Reassurance Initiative during the summer of 2014. Operation Atlantic Resolve aimed to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to collective security and the commitment to the security of every ally, to augment air, ground and naval presence in the European region as well as to increase NATO readiness through Article 5 related trainings in order to deter Russia from regional hegemony.[12] Additionally to OAR, European Reassurance Initiative was established separately as a 1-year-long emergency budget with 1 billion USD for FY 2015, to conduct multinational military exercises and trainings, to increase the responsiveness of U.S. NATO forces by pre-positioning of the equipment, to support non-NATO allies (especially Ukraine) as well as to increase the persistent U.S. presence in the continent.[13] In 2015, the program was renewed with 789 million USD for FY 2016 and ERI came under the heading of OAR for 2016.[14] Until this time, the main pillars of the operation did not change significantly, except that the support to Ukraine was no longer financed under the umbrella of OAR.[15] However, FY 2017 can bring a significant change in the visibility as well as the impact of OAR and ERI since the proposed budget seeks to increase its funding to approximately 3.4 billion USD.[16] According to the Obama Administration, this means that the operations will not only reassure European allies but also build on deterrence measures through the improvement of readiness and responsiveness.[17] Meanwhile, the main geographic focus of OAR will remain Russia and Eastern Europe.[18] Table 1 summarises the most important shifts in the budget allocations through the three years of OAR.

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[11] Shlapak–Johnson (2016): *op. cit.* 8.

[12] U.S. European Command: Operation Atlantic Resolve (2014), [online] 29.01.2015. Source: Defense.gov [06.08.2016.]

[13] Ibid.

[14] Cancian, Mark F. – Samp, Lisa Sawyer: The European Reassurance Initiative, [online], 09.02.2016. Source: Csis.org [06.08.2016.]

[15] U.S. European Command: Operation Atlantic Resolve (2015), [online], 31.12.2015, p. 1. Source: Defense.gov [06.08.2016.]

[16] U.S. European Command: Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016… 1.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

Table 1: European Reassurance Initiative – budget allocations

European Reassurance Initiative (ERI) *(Dollars in Millions)*			
Category	**FY 2015 Enacted**	**FY 2016 Enacted**	**FY 2017 Request**
Increased Presence	423.1	471.4	1,049.8
Additional Bilateral and Multilateral Exercises	40.6	108.4	163.1
Enhanced Prepositioning	136.1	57.8	1,903.9
Improved Infrastructure	196.5	89.1	217.4
Building Partnership Capacity	13.7	62.6	85.5
ERI Transfer Fund	175.0	–	–
Total:	985.0	789.3	3,419.7

Source: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller): Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative, [online], February 2016, pp. 16–17. Source: comptroller.defense.gov [28.06.2016.]

As Table 1 summarises, ERI has five main pillars. These are increased presence, bilateral and multilateral exercises, enhanced prepositioning, improved infrastructure and building partnership capacity. While all of the components got larger funding for the FY 2017 request, more than 85% of the total budget is dedicated to two of them (increased presence and enhanced prepositioning). This means that the proposed deterrence measure in the framework of OAR should mostly build on these two elements. In the following, an analysis of the most important aspects of each pillar will follow.

Increased presence

After the end of the Cold War, the different administrations permanently decreased the U.S. military presence in Europe. Today the U.S. European Command can operate with approximately 62,000 personnel.[19] This includes two brigade combat teams which are the Army's basic deployable manoeuvre units consisting of 4,000 to 5,000 troops.[20] One of them is the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team in Italy, while the other one is the 2nd Cavalry Regiment organised as a Stryker brigade combat team in Germany.

The ERI request for FY 2017 would increase their number with one more brigade combat team through continuous troop rotations of U.S. based armoured brigade combat teams.[21] This would mean 9 months rotations from the U.S. to Europe from February 2017.[22] In addition to this, the FY 2017 budget would also allocate a smaller portion of money to maintain the Navy and Marine presence in the Black sea region as well as to retain 20 F-15

[19] Senate Committee on Armed Services: Statement of General Philip Breedlove Commander U.S. Forces Europe, 01.03.2016, p. 3.
[20] Cancian–Samp (2016): *op. cit.*
[21] Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016… 1–2.
[22] Ibid.

aircraft in the 493rd Fighter Squadron at Royal Air Force Base Lakenheath and to provide rotary wing aviation capability for the USEUCOM missions.[23]

Bilateral and multilateral exercises

The most visible aspects of OAR and ERI are the conducted bilateral and multilateral exercises in the territory of European member states. In the past few years U.S. forces conducted approximately 150 exercises/trainings/workshops with their European allies and partners. Most of these events were conducted by land forces and the Air Force, however, the Navy and Marine Forces participated in many cases as well.

Table 2: Conducted exercises according to their geographic spectrum

2014	2015	2016 (before April 15)
1 x Norway	2 x Hungary	1 x Norway
8 x Romania	9 x Romania	1 x Romania
4 x Bulgaria	6 x Bulgaria	1 x Iceland
6 x Poland	4 x Poland	3 x Poland
6 x Germany	6 x Germany	1 x Germany
1 x Slovenia	1 x Croatia – Slovenia	1 x Germany – Poland
9 x Baltic region	6 x Baltic region	1 x Baltic region
1 x France	4 x Baltic region – Poland	1 x Lithuania – Poland
1 x United Kingdom	1 x United Kingdom	1 x Greece
1 x Czech Republic	1 x Svk – Cz – Hun	5 x Black Sea
1 x Iceland	1 x Rom – Hun – Est	
11 x Black Sea	9 x Black Sea	
2 x Baltic Sea	3 x Baltic Sea	
2 x Serbia	4 x Mediterranean Sea	
1 x Moldova	1 x "Western Europe"	
2 x Ukraine	2 x "Eastern Flank"	
1 x Georgia	1 x Netherlands – Bulgaria	
1 x Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 x Ger – Bul – Itl – Rom	
	1 x Ukraine	
	1 x Georgia	

Source: Operation Atlantic Resolve (2014); Operation Atlantic Resolve (2015); Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016.

As Table 2 summarises, the main geographic focus of the conducted exercises was Central and Eastern Europe. More specifically, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, Poland and the Baltic countries hosted most of these events. Table 2 also demonstrates that 2014 rather focused

[23] Including an Armed Reconnaissance Squadron (AH-64), a General Support Aviation Battalion (CH-47 and air MEDEVAC), an Assault Battalion (UH-60s), and an Aviation Support Battalion. Source: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller): Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative, [online], February 2016. Source: comptroller.defense.gov [28.06.2016.]

on static – one country – trainings, while the number of 'mobile' exercises with multiple places and host nations increased significantly for 2015. An interesting shift is that although the original plan of ERI clearly aimed to improve capacity building and interoperability in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine,[24] the 2015 and 2016 numbers show a decrease in this respect.[25] This suggests that the Obama Administration does not want to risk a closer cooperation with the non-NATO allies in the framework of OAR since it could be interpreted as a provocation from the Russian side.

Enhanced pre-positioning

One of the key elements with the largest amount of increased ERI funding (1,904 million USD) for FY 2017 is the enhanced preposition of the military equipment in Europe. For this reason, these Army pre-positioned stocks would be the main pillars of OAR's deterrence measures. According to the plans of the administration, by the end of 2017 there will be one pre-positioned set of combat-ready equipment, which can support another Armoured Brigade Combat Team besides the three other stationing in the European theatre.[26]

As the ATP 3-35.1 doctrine emphasises, the Army pre-positioned stocks (APS) are essential elements of U.S. force projection, since they are significant enablers of the Army's rapid response.[27] These pre-positioned elements are the third leg of the Strategic Mobility Triad besides airlift and sealift capabilities.[28] Their primary task is to provide "immediate delivery of large amounts of equipment to meet short-notice crises".[29] Thus APS can reduce the workload of airlift while it sustains the Soldier with all necessary equipment until the sea routes are established.[30] On the other hand, the APS can be used as a deterrent capability through the form of training exercises.[31] This is exactly, what we see in the framework of Operation Atlantic Resolve as well. However, this does not mean that APS cannot be used outside of its deployment region. As it happened during the preparation phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, the Army can reposition equipment from any APS through strategic airlift or sealift.[32] Thus they are not dedicated to specific units or theatres, but can be issued to units by the Secretary of Defense.[33] The most important economic aspect of the whole project is that this APS structure does not need the permanent stationing of the staff and soldiers which can significantly reduce the costs of the deployment.

The Army pre-positioned stocks can be divided according to their characteristics. In this respect, the ATP 3-35.1 doctrine differentiates between five types of APS:

– Unit Sets contain equipment configured into unit sets and includes the unit basic load;

[24] Operation Atlantic Resolve (2014)…
[25] Operation Atlantic Resolve (2015); Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016…
[26] Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016… 1–2.
[27] ATP 3-35.1 Army Pre-Positioned Operations, [online], October 2015, pp. 1–2. Source: Armypubs.army.mil [06.01.2016.]
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid. 1.
[30] Ibid. 1–3.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.

- Operational Project Stocks, which "are materiel above normal table of organization and equipment, table of distribution and allowances, and common table of allowance authorizations tailored to key strategic capabilities";
- Army War Reserve Sustainment Stocks can provide "minimum essential support to combat operations and post-mobilization training beyond the capabilities of peacetime stocks, industry, and host nation support […]. These stocks consist of major and secondary end items to sustain the operation by replacing combat losses and to replace supplies consumed in the operation";
- War Reserve Stocks for Allies which can be released to support allied forces. These stocks are also financed and owned by the United States;
- Activity Sets which are pre-positioned in order to support the deployment of the Army outside of the U.S. to conduct training and exercises.[34]

The announced APS in the framework of Operation Atlantic Resolve and European Reassurance Initiative will be a Unit Set equipment.[35] Most importantly, it will provide a Division Headquarters, one Armoured Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), a Fires Brigade, a Sustainment Brigade and associated enablers.[36] On the one hand the equipment will be sourced from existing depot stocks, while on the other hand ERI provides 1,096 million for additional procurements as well.[37]

Those pieces of equipment which will be sourced, are currently used by the rotationally deployed forces in Europe. This is the so-called European Activity Set or EAS. According to the plans, these "will remain in Europe, be repaired, upgraded, and converted into the core of the APS".[38] In its current form the U.S. Army European Activity Set is "a combined-arms, battalion-sized group of vehicles and equipment" which is maintained at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.[39] Its creation was approved by the Army Chief of Staff in July 2012 in order to mitigate the loss of the two deactivated Brigade Combat Teams in Europe.[40] The European Activity Set (EAS) cannot be used by allies or by any other country, it exclusively supports the U.S. Army.[41] According to the U.S. Army Fact Sheet, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment – a combined arms battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division – is the unit currently designated for the use of EAS.[42] However, this does not mean that the equipment or the vehicles cannot leave the Grafenwoehr Training Area. Some of the EAS sites are located on NATO's Eastern Flank, more specifically in Romania (Mihail Kogălniceanu Air Base), Bulgaria (Novo Selo Training Area) and

[34] Ibid.
[35] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller): Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative… 16–17.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Operation Atlantic Resolve – Fact Sheet 2016… 3.
[39] U.S. Army European Activity Set, [online], 2016. Source: Eur.army.mil [06.01.2016.]
[40] Daniel, Craig A. – Dothager, Robin T.: Resetting the theater to equip rotational forces in Europe, [online], 18.05.2016. Source: Army.mil [01.06.2016.]
[41] U.S. Army European Activity Set…
[42] Ibid.

Lithuania (Mumaičiai).[43] According to the official data, the EAS consists of 12,000 pieces of equipment including 250 tanks and 1,750 support vehicles.[44] Among these, there are M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tanks; M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles; A3 Bradley Support Team Vehicles; M109A6 Paladin Self-Propelled Howitzers; Mortar Carriers; Humvees and many other types.[45] If the EAS is used outside of the Training Area, the equipment and vehicles can be transported by truck, rail, barge, ferry and aircraft.[46] As RAND Corporation emphasises, there are 24 main battle tanks and 30 infantry fighting vehicles in the EAS.[47] With additional procurements, these will provide the key equipment of the announced Army pre-positioned stock which will be able to support an Armoured Brigade Combat Team by the end of FY 2017.[48]

Improved infrastructure and Partnership Capacity Building

These two aspects of OAR and ERI mainly aim to support the first three pillars, which were introduced above. These include the improvement and modernisation of infrastructure elements as well as the construction of new facilities. Table 3 introduces the main projects under these headings, which are linked mostly to the development of airbases in Central and Eastern European countries.

Table 3: Main infrastructure developments within ERI

Place	Project	Cost
Keflavik Airfield (Iceland)	Facilities Modification for P-8A	$ 21.4 million
Spangdahlem Airbase (Germany)	Infrastructure to support 5th generation fighter rotation ops	$ 19.8 million
Amari Airbase (Estonia)	Construct a bulk fuel storage capacity	$ 6.5 million
Graf Ignatievo Airbase (Bulgaria)	Construct funds Squadron Operations/Alert facility	$ 3.8 million
Graf Ignatievo Airbase (Bulgaria)	Extend a fighter ramp	$ 7.0 million
Câmpia Turzii Airbase (Romania)	Construct a Squadron Operations facility	$ 3.4 million
Câmpia Turzii Airbase (Romania)	Extend a parking apron	$ 6.0 million
Câmpia Turzii Airbase (Romania)	Construct a two-bay hangar	$ 6.1 million
Powidz Airbase (Poland)	Construct a Squadron Operations facility	$ 4.1 million
Łask Airbase (Poland)	Construct a Squadron Operations facility	$ 4.1 million

Source: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative, 19–23.

[43] European Activity Set – Fact Sheet, [online], 2016. Source: Eur.army.mil [28.06.2016.]

[44] Behlin, Michael: European Activity Set turn-in officially underway in Lithuania, [online], 14.12.2015. Source: Army.mil [06.01.2016.]

[45] U.S. Army European Activity Set Major Equipment, [online], Source: Eur.army.mil [06.01.2016.]

[46] Daniel–Dothager (2016): *op. cit.*

[47] Shlapak–Johnson (2016): *op. cit.* 8.

[48] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative… 16–17.

In addition to these, ERI also builds on the improvement of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities.[49] The other important aspect of partnership capacity building is the sustainment of the U.S.–Ukraine bi-lateral network (Maidan), to facilitate cyber security cooperation in the region.[50]

Conclusions: No deterrence but still the better option

As the conceptual introduction stated, the main point of deterrence is "that the state must display the ability and willingness to wage war"[51] in order to avoid disastrous situations in some cases. The empirical analysis of the Operation Atlantic Resolve and European Reassurance Initiative shows that this willingness to wage war with Russia is missing from the whole concept. The introduced measures are clearly not in line with the propositions of the RAND Corporation, which suggested to deploy at least seven, combat-ready brigades, including three heavy armoured brigades – adequately supported by airpower, land-based fires and other enablers on the ground, in order to balance the Russian deployments and mitigate the threat of a limited attack.[52] Thus, it seems unequivocal that ERI as well as OAR, in contrast with their official purpose, are not aimed to increase non-nuclear deterrence measures, because they are not able to do so in their current forms. Nevertheless, they are heavily building on the assurance of the European partners, but this is not equal to deterrence.

This is however not to say that this study agrees with the advices of the RAND Corporation to increase the U.S. presence in Europe. Even if RAND's conclusion were right, fulfilling their proposals would be not only extremely expensive[53] for Washington but they would also fundamentally disrupt the long-term strategy of rebalancing. Instead, Washington and Europe have to face the truth that similarly to the case of terrorism, 100% security does not exist. The international system always shows the risk of uncertainty. One can never be sure about the intentions of Vladimir Putin or his inner circle. Yes, there is a possibility that Russia will choose the option of a limited attack. Yes, OAR and ERI cannot promise adequate retaliation for a limited attack but without the permanent increase of U.S. forces in Europe this goal cannot be fulfilled. Even if Washington would decide to do so, there would sooner or later appear a new security risk which would leave Europe and the U.S. in a similarly difficult situation – and this is exactly how a negative spiral and an arms race could emerge.

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[49] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, European Reassurance Initiative… 16–17.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Jervis (1976): *op. cit.* 58.

[52] Shlapak–Johnson (2016): *op. cit.* 1.

[53] According to RAND the total cost of buying three brand-new ABCT would be 13 billion USD. Additionally, their annual operating and support cost would be at least 2.7 billion USD, which however, does not include infrastructural and other expenses. Source: Shlapak–Johnson (2016): *op. cit.* 11.

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