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Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe
Volume 21 (2023) Issue 1

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against Ukraine in 2014-2022

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and geopolitical importance of Ukraine

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EDITED BY
Tomasz Stępniewski
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Instytut Europy Środkowej
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Tomasz Stępniewski*

The evolution of the European Union's eastern neighbourhood since the Russia-Ukraine war

Jak ewoluowało wschodnie sąsiedztwo Unii Europejskiej od czasu wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej

Abstract: This concise paper explores the intricate relationship between the dynamics of the European Union and Russia's interests in Europe, emphasizing the advantages perceived by Russia in a weakened EU. The paper is comprised of three sections: firstly, it examines the collapse of the Soviet Union and its impact on newly independent states, establishing the geopolitical landscape. The subsequent section traces Russia's foreign policy leading to the 2022 conflict with Ukraine, with a focus on Ukraine's pivotal role as a geopolitical flashpoint. The final section explores the dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine war, specifically addressing the European Union's role in security. The paper concludes by addressing the 2022 escalation, marked by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, highlighting the imperative of understanding Ukraine's status as a geopolitical flashpoint. Overall, the paper contributes to a nuanced comprehension of the evolving geopolitical landscape, its implications for regional stability, and international relations.

Keywords: Russia-Ukraine war, Ukraine's independence, Putin's Russia, Central and Eastern European security.

Streszczenie: W tym zwięzłym artykule analizujemy złożone relacje między dynamiką Unii Europejskiej a interesami Rosji w Europie, akcentując korzyści, jakie Rosja dostrzega w osłabionej UE. Artykuł składa się z trzech części: pierwsza dotyczy upadku Związku Radzieckiego i jego wpływu na nowo niepodległe państwa, kształtujący się krajobraz geopolityczny. W kolejnej części przedstawiamy politykę zagraniczną Rosji prowadzącą do konfliktu z Ukrainą w 2022 roku, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem kluczowej roli Ukrainy jako geopolitycznego punktu zapalnego. Ostatnia część analizuje dynamikę wojny ro-

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syjsko-ukraińskiej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem roli Unii Europejskiej w zakresie bezpieczeństwa. W artykule podjęto próbę zrozumienia ewoluującego krajobrazu geopolitycznego i jego konsekwencji dla stabilności regionalnej i stosunków międzynarodowych.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna Rosji z Ukrainą, niepodległość Ukrainy, Rosja Putina, bezpieczeństwo Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej

Introduction

The assertion that, from the standpoint of Russian interests in Europe, a weakened European Union (EU) is advantageous underscores a salient consideration. A consensus among EU member states in their approach to Russia results in impediments to the realization of Russian policy objectives. Conversely, divergent opinions and internal discord within the EU provide fertile ground for Russia to advance its political agenda. Notably, the EU, in stark contrast to Russia, is composed of 27 independent states. Frequently, the composite nature of such a conglomerate hinders the EU's efficacy as a cohesive actor on the international stage. Hence, the adage articulated by Judy Dempsey merits contemplation: "a strong Europe means having a coherent and united foreign, security and defence policy. Europe lacks these three essential elements that would make Europe think and act strategically. Without them, Europe is weak. Europe has such a weak foreign, security and defence policy because the member states cannot agree on what these policies should mean in practice. These disagreements and the consequent weaknesses play into the hands of Russia. It has long been adept at playing off the member states against each other and exploiting the divisions¹".

The primary objective of this concise paper is to examine the collapse of the Soviet Union and its ramifications for newly independent states, which is explored in greater detail in the initial section. Subsequently, the analysis shifts focus towards elucidating Russia's foreign policy leading up to the full-scale conflict with Ukraine commencing in 2022. The final section of the paper delves into the dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine war, with particular attention to the role played by the European Union in the realm of security.

1 J. Dempsey, *Does Russia divide Europe?*, "New Eastern Europe" 2015, no. 5, p. 23.

1. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and implications for newly independent states

Following the disintegration of the USSR, its constituent union republics underwent a profound transformation, emerging as independent states. The fifteen newly established countries faced formidable challenges related to socio-political and economic restructuring, along with the intricate process of geopolitical self-identification. Russia, being the largest among them, initially aligned itself with Western powers but subsequently embarked on a trajectory of contestation against the global hegemony of the United States. This shift was propelled by Russia's rejection of the post-Soviet region as an exclusive sphere of influence, leading to the cultivation of closer ties with sceptical actors such as China, India, and Iran.

Concurrently, Russia accepted the departure of the Baltic states – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – towards Western integration. However, it vehemently opposed similar aspirations by Ukraine, Belarus, and Georgia. Ukrainian society, as noted earlier, demonstrated a resolute determination to distance itself from Russian-led initiatives for the reintegration of the post-Soviet space. This determination, evident during subsequent pro-Western revolutions, guided Ukraine towards gradual integration with Western institutions.

A watershed moment occurred in August 2008 when Russia militarily intervened in Georgia, unequivocally showcasing its capability to safeguard geopolitical interests. Subsequently, in February 2014, following the Western-backed Ukrainian Euromaidan revolution and the removal of Kremlin-supported authorities, Russia annexed Crimea. Russia also provided support to pro-Russian separatists in Donbas, escalating to a full-scale conventional armed aggression against Ukraine in February 2022. Ukrainians, aided by military and economic support from Western nations, displayed heroic and effective resistance against Russian forces, raising the prospect of reclaiming territories under Russian control.

However, the ultimate outcome of the conflict in Ukraine remains uncertain. Nonetheless, it is poised to exert a profound influence on the reconfiguration of the international system, even if it does not escalate into a broader conflict involving multiple countries. The United States reinforces its dominance in western Eurasia, while NATO expands its membership to include additional countries, such as Finland

and Sweden. Europe confronts the imperative to redefine its relationships with Russia and the USA, necessitating a reassessment of security policies in both the military and energy sectors. Simultaneously, the significance and prestige of China, a contender for superpower status, continue to ascend, presenting a sustained global challenge to American supremacy. India, too, experiences dynamic growth, further contributing to the complexity of the evolving international system. The world appears to be entering a transitional era, oscillating between monocentrism, characterized by the hegemony of a singular power centre, and polycentrism, where multiple powers dominate, albeit not necessarily on equal footing.

2. Ukraine's geopolitical position

The geopolitical landscape of the 21st century is characterized by the intricacies and profound consequences stemming from Ukraine's pivotal role as a geopolitical flashpoint, as noted by Zbigniew Brzezinski². Its historical significance as a linchpin of the Soviet Union, serving as a formidable adversary to the United States during the Cold War, places Ukraine at the epicentre of global power dynamics. Ranked second only to Russia among the fifteen Soviet republics, Ukraine played a critical role in the union's agricultural production, defence industries, and military capabilities, including the Black Sea Fleet and a segment of the nuclear arsenal. The seismic decision to sever ties with the Soviet Union in 1991 constituted a decisive blow to the ailing superpower, marking an irrevocable schism.

Over the three subsequent decades of independence, Ukraine embarked on a trajectory seeking sovereignty, aiming to chart its own course while concurrently pursuing alignment with Western institutions such as the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). However, this odyssey has been fraught with challenges as Kyiv grappled with the intricacies of managing foreign relations and mitigating profound internal divisions. The dichotomy between a predominantly nationalist, Ukrainian-speaking population

2 See Z. Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American primacy and its geostrategic imperatives*, Basic Books, New York 2016.

in the western regions advocating for increased integration with Europe, and a predominantly Russian-speaking community in the east favouring closer ties with Russia, underscores the internal tensions shaping Ukraine's trajectory.

The year 2014 emerged as a pivotal juncture, thrusting Ukraine into the international limelight as Russia annexed Crimea and became involved in arming and supporting separatists in the Donbas region. The annexation of Crimea marked the first occurrence since World War II wherein a European state annexed the territory of another, precipitating a seismic shift in geopolitical dynamics. The ensuing hostilities in the Donbas, spanning from 2014 to 2021, resulted in over fourteen thousand casualties, signifying the bloodiest conflict in Europe since the Balkan Wars of the 1990s. This protracted conflict elucidated a discernible shift in the global security landscape, transitioning from a unipolar epoch dominated by U.S. influence to a period characterized by renewed competition among great powers.

The stakes ascended dramatically in February 2022, as Russia initiated a full-scale invasion of Ukraine with the explicit aim of toppling the Western-aligned government led by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This marked escalation underscores the imperative of comprehending Ukraine's status as a geopolitical flashpoint, encapsulating not only historical legacies but also contemporary manifestations of heightened global power competition and their profound implications for regional stability and international relations.

3. Russia's foreign policy prior to full-scale war with Ukraine since 2022

Andrei Tsygankov posits that the global landscape within which Russia sought to safeguard its interests has undergone a significant transformation. The Western world's efficacy in formulating and shaping the international order encountered challenges on two fronts. Firstly, the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008 disrupted the hegemony previously enjoyed by the United States and Europe in employing military force as a tool in global political affairs. Secondly, the global financial crisis brought to light a substantial vulnerability within the Western

economic framework³. If, according to Tsygankov, we are truly dealing with a relative decline of the West's significance in international politics, and a change of leaders (superpowers) in global politics, defined as "the rise of the rest", the situation exerts a significant impact upon Russia's foreign policies⁴. The relationship between the current Ukrainian crisis and the shift of power in international relations in recent years and the perception of these changes by Russia is highlighted by another researcher, Richard Sakwa. He observes that recently, Russia has evolved towards a neo-revisionist policy, which resulted in the confrontation in Ukraine⁵. According to the author, the change in Russia's policy was driven by at least four issues. First of all, it was the gradual deterioration of relations with the EU. Secondly, it was the successive breakdown of the pan-European security system, where Russia acted as an autonomous partner cooperating with the West. Thirdly, Russia and the remaining rising superpowers, e.g. China, contested America's claims of "uniqueness" and global leadership. Last but not least, the ideology of "democratism", which differs from the practice of democracy itself, constituted a catalyst for Russia's neo-revisionism. In other words, the researcher claims Russia believes that, for the West, the promotion of democracy constitutes an excuse for the realisation of its strategic objectives⁶.

According to Sakwa, neo-revisionism does not entail a wholesale dismantling of the existing international order; rather, it signifies a paradigm wherein all major powers are compelled to adhere to established international norms and acknowledge Russia as an equal participant within the system⁷. On the other hand, Lilia Shevtsova believes that Russia's anti-West policy is determined by several external factors: 1) the naivety of the West (a popular belief that support for Boris Yeltsin would contribute to Russia's democratisation); 2) coop-

3 A.P. Tsygankov, *Russia's foreign policy. Change and continuity in national identity*, 2nd ed., Lanham 2010, p. 201; see also S.M. Walt, *Liberal illusions caused the Ukraine crisis*, "Foreign Policy" 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/01/19/ukraine-russia-nato-crisis-liberal-illusions/> [10.10.2023]; J.J. Mearsheimer, *Why the West is principally responsible for the Ukrainian crisis*, "Economist" 2022, <https://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2022/03/11/john-mearsheimer-on-why-the-west-is-principally-responsible-for-the-ukrainian-crisis> [12.10.2023].

4 A.P. Tsygankov, op. cit., p. 201.

5 R. Sakwa, *Frontline Ukraine. Crisis in the borderlands*, London–New York 2015, p. 30.

6 *Ibid.*, pp. 31–34.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 34.

eration with Russia at the cost of forsaking western values (the fact that liberal democracies ceased to be a role-model for Russia has become the most negative phenomenon of the past 20 years); 3) Russia's failure to make use of the opportunities that emerged after the defeat in the Cold War, and to transform into a state under the rule of the law⁸. Adam D. Rotfeld describes Russia's new strategy in different terms. He observes that the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 and events sparked off by the incidents of February/March 2014 in Ukraine confirm the thesis that "Russia has not come to terms with the new political and legal reality resulting from the fall of USSR and emergence of 15 independent states in its place"⁹.

4. The roots of resentment: NATO expansion and Russian perception, and Putin's fears and strategic calculations

In the intricate tapestry of international relations, the 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia stands as a pivotal moment, necessitating a thorough examination of the underlying causes propelling such significant geopolitical shifts. Western analysts posit that the invasion can be interpreted as the culmination of a growing resentment harboured by the Kremlin toward NATO's post-Cold War expansion into what was once considered the Soviet sphere of influence.

Russian leaders, prominently President Vladimir Putin, articulate a narrative of broken promises and perceived violations dating back to the early 1990s¹⁰. According to this perspective, the United States and NATO allegedly failed to uphold commitments made during this transformative period, explicitly vowing not to extend the alliance into the former Soviet bloc. The Kremlin perceives NATO's enlargement during this tumultuous era as an affront, a humiliating imposition that unfolded while Russia could do little but observe.

8 L. Szewcowa, *Polem gry Kremla jest chaos*, trans. A. Ehrlich, "Gazeta Wyborcza/Magazyn Świąteczny", 27 June 2015, http://wyborcza.pl/magazyn/1,145325,18248326,Polem_gry_Kremla_jest_chaos.html#TRwkd [22.01.2023].

9 A.D. Rotfeld, *Porządek międzynarodowy. Parametry zmiany*, "Sprawy Międzynarodowe" 2014, vol. 67, no. 4, p. 35.

10 See K. Liik, *War of obsession: Why Putin is risking Russia's future*, "European Council on Foreign Relations" 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/war-of-obsession-why-putin-is-risking-russias-future/> [20.11.2023].

Moreover, some analysts highlight NATO's expansion as the primary motivator for Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. However, others posit that President Putin's apprehensions about the trajectory of Ukrainian development played a pivotal role. Historian Anne Applebaum, adds that Putin's motivations extend beyond territorial concerns. She suggests that Putin aims to destabilize Ukraine, fostering an environment of fear and uncertainty. Applebaum outlines the objective as undermining Ukrainian democracy, precipitating economic collapse, prompting the withdrawal of foreign investors, and instilling doubts about the viability of democracy in neighbouring countries.

To comprehensively understand the multifaceted motivations behind Russia's invasion, it is imperative to delve into the complexities of Putin's strategic calculations and the broader geopolitical landscape. Putin's actions are intertwined with his vision for a Russia-led sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, shedding light on the intricate interplay between historical grievances, territorial ambitions, and strategic calculations. This comprehensive perspective is crucial for unravelling the layers of complexity inherent in the events leading up to the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

5. The role of the European Union in the security sphere amidst the Russia-Ukraine war

We are presently observing the erosion of the security framework instituted during the era of bipolar global division, amidst an altered environmental and geopolitical landscape¹¹. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge that institutions inherently exhibit a degree of stativity, while the dynamics of emerging threats and challenges demand constant recognition. Consequently, institutions and organizations find themselves hampered in their ability to seamlessly adjust to the evolving international conditions within which they operate¹². The fall of

11 See I. Krastev, *How to avoid Europe's disintegration*, "New Eastern Europe" 2015, no. 5, p. 8; also F. Schimmelfennig, D. Leuffen, B. Rittberger, *The European Union as a system of differentiated integration: interdependence, politicization and differentiation*, "Journal of European Public Policy" 2015, vol. 22(6); D. Webber, *How likely is it that the European Union will disintegrate? A critical analysis of competing theoretical perspectives*, "European Journal of International Relations" 2014, vol. 20(2).

12 A.D. Rotfeld, *Porządek międzynarodowy...*, p. 47.

the bipolar security system resulted in the emergence of a new order. Some superpowers aim to reinforce their own rules of the game in such a situation. Attempts to subordinate Ukraine to the rules of the *russkiy mir*, i.e. “the Russian world”, may serve as an example of such a “new game without rules”¹³.

The Ukrainian conflict revealed that the post-Cold War international order has changed. As a consequence, an in-depth analysis of its nature is required. The Ukrainian crisis, also known as the Ukraine Crisis, constitutes something more than a mere conflict associated with Eastern Europe. It can be inferred that the international crisis is reflected in the rivalry between two external entities over Ukraine – the West (the USA and the EU) and Russia¹⁴. According to Andreas Umland, the Ukrainian crisis pertains to the devaluation of the so-called Budapest Memorandum of 1994 (Russia, the USA and the UK's security assurances for Ukraine in exchange for it joining the NPT). Consequently, it thwarts efforts contributing to the prevention of WMD proliferation; exerts a negative impact on Russia's economy as an important actor in international relations; postpones Russia's integration with Europe, which hinders the implementation of A Wider Europe idea; and inhibits the development of a free trade and security zone spanning from Lisbon to Vladivostok¹⁵.

Moreover, when analysing the Russian Federation's security policy over the past few years, the conclusion that Russia attempts to develop a security system based on military power at the expense of limiting its co-dependence upon international relations can be made. As a consequence, with regards to the Ukrainian crisis, institutions such as NATO, but also the EU, will be forced to change their approach and perception of the international security system. The events occurring in the Near East (especially the war in Syria) and terrorist attacks, which diminish a sense of security in western European countries,

13 Ibid., p. 46.

14 See R. Zięba, *Międzynarodowe implikacje kryzysu ukraińskiego*, “Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations” 2014, vol. 50, no 2, p. 15.

15 A. Umland, *The global impact of the “Ukraine Crisis”*, *Russia's decline and Euro-Asiatic security in the early 21st century*, “Krytyka Magazine”, June 2015, <http://krytyka.com/en/articles/global-impact-ukraine-crisis-russias-decline-and-euro-asiatic-security-early-21st-century#sthash.ufE1B3S9.dpuf> [10.01.2023].

are not without impact upon the change of western institutions' approach towards the security system.

Central European countries, particularly Poland, should prioritize fostering relations with neighbouring countries of the European Union and NATO, thereby mitigating divisions exemplified by the Bug River. It is crucial to recall the imperative of these new EU member states in stabilizing the situation on the eastern flank, averting poverty, and preventing civil unrest. Essentially, their responsibility lies in thwarting the emergence and progression of a "grey zone of security" in Eastern Europe. These nations, firmly integrated into the EU, should actively support Eastern Europe, contributing to the implementation of substantial systemic changes, facilitating economic transformation, and nurturing civil society development. The imperative to transform Eastern European countries, with a specific focus on Ukraine, is rooted in their own vested interests and is aligned with the broader interests of the EU¹⁶.

In lieu of conclusions

During the Russia-Ukraine war, the European Union adopted a comprehensive and multifaceted approach towards its Eastern Policy, which aimed to address the conflict and support Ukraine while managing its relations with Russia. The EU's response can be summarized as follows:

- **Sanctions on Russia:** The EU imposed economic sanctions on Russia in response to its annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its involvement in the war in eastern Ukraine. These sanctions targeted key sectors of the Russian economy, including finance, energy, and defence, and were periodically renewed and expanded upon in coordination with the United States and other Western allies.
- **Support for Ukraine:** The EU provided extensive financial and technical assistance to Ukraine to strengthen its democratic institutions, promote economic reforms, and support its territorial

16 T. Stępniewski, *Geopolityka regionu Morza Czarnego w pozimnowojennym świecie*, Lublin–Warsaw 2011, pp. 295-320.

integrity. This assistance included financial aid packages, trade facilitation measures, and support for reforms in areas such as governance, energy, and the rule of law.

- **Diplomatic efforts:** The EU actively engaged in diplomatic initiatives to help resolve the conflict and promote dialogue between Russia and Ukraine. It supported the Normandy Format talks, which involved Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France, and aimed to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. The EU also endorsed the Minsk Agreements, which outlined a roadmap for a ceasefire and a political settlement in eastern Ukraine.
- **Energy diversification:** The EU sought to reduce its dependence on Russian energy supplies and increase energy security in the region. It promoted energy diversification by supporting the development of alternative energy sources, improving energy efficiency, and enhancing interconnectivity among member states. The EU also emphasized the importance of adhering to the principles of the Energy Union, which aimed to create a single energy market within the EU.
- **Military cooperation and security assistance:** The EU provided support for Ukraine's defence capabilities and security sector reform. This included the provision of non-lethal military equipment, capacity-building programs, and training for the Ukrainian armed forces. The EU also emphasized the importance of cooperative security arrangements and promoted confidence-building measures in the region.

Overall, the EU's eastern policy during the Russia-Ukraine war aimed to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, promote stability in the region, and encourage a peaceful resolution to the conflict through diplomatic means. It combined economic, diplomatic, and security measures to address the complex challenges posed by the war and manage the EU's relations with both Ukraine and Russia.

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Humanitarian components of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine from 2014-2022****

Humanitarne elementy wojny hybrydowej Rosji z Ukrainą w latach 2014-2022

Abstract: The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian components of the latest Russian-Ukrainian war, which is qualified by its authors as a hybrid war. In principle, it is about the ideological basis, historical and religious mythology, and the information support of Russia's revanchist policy in Ukraine, which the current Russian regime uses in its armed aggression against Ukraine. The authors convincingly and argumentatively prove that non-military instruments in Russia's war against Ukraine are subordinated to a single goal – the restoration of the Russian empire and its international political influence. In order to achieve this goal, the Putin regime uses all the means available to it, including the spread of pseudo-historical myths and fakes that justify the expansionist policy of the Kremlin in Ukraine and in the countries of the post-Soviet space. Using a widely sourced base, the authors of the article refute the most common Russian pseudo-historical narratives.

Keywords: hybrid war, Ukraine, Russian aggression, Putin's regime, historical politics, ideology, language, culture, religion

Streszczenie: W artykule przeprowadzono kompleksową analizę humanitarnych aspektów najnowszej wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej, którą autorzy klasyfikują jako wojnę hybrydową. Decydują o tym przede wszystkim czynniki ideologiczne, mity historyczne i religijne, a także informacyjny wymiar polityki imperialnej Rosji w Ukrainie, które rosyjski reżim polityczny wykorzystuje podczas zbrojnej agresji przeciwko Ukrainie. Autorzy przekonująco argumentują, że niemilitarne środki w wojnie Rosji przeciwko Ukrainie są podporządkowane jednemu celowi – odbudowie imperium rosyjskiego i wpływów międzynarodowych. W tym

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celu reżim Putina wykorzystuje wszystkie możliwe sposoby i środki, włącznie z szerzeniem pseudohistorycznych mitów i fake newsów, próbując uzasadnić ekspansjonistyczną politykę Kremla w Ukrainie i w państwach obszaru poradzieckiego. Na podstawie obszernej bazy źródłowej autorzy prostują najbardziej rozpowszechnione mity rosyjskiej narracji historycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna hybrydowa, Ukraina, rosyjska agresja, reżim Putina, polityka historyczna, ideologia, język, kultura, religia

Introduction

Russia's aggression against Ukraine began in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the de facto occupation of parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. At that time, Russia disguised its aggressive actions under the guise of "little green men" or military formations without distinguishing marks (regular and irregular units). According to the so-called Gerasimov doctrine, Russia unofficially launched a hybrid war against Ukraine, the military component of which was only one of its elements.

According to classical concepts, war is a continuation of politics¹, which finds its confirmation in the actions of Russia in the post-Soviet space, when the Kremlin lacks political, economic, and cultural leverage. In the 1990s, it used a strategy of low-intensity conflicts in Transnistria (Moldova), Abkhazia, and South Ossetia (Georgia). At that time, Russia failed to implement a similar scenario in the Ukrainian Crimea, but it did not abandon its plans to subjugate Ukraine and annex the Crimean Peninsula. Having openly returned to the imperial traditions of the tsarist and Soviet era, Vladimir Putin's team prepared plans for political, economic, cultural, and military expansion in Ukraine. In particular, in addition to the concept of "near abroad", the concepts of "Eurasian space", "liberal empire", or "Russian world" appeared or were adopted. The asymmetry of the potential between the post-Soviet space countries and the imperial traditions of Russia caused the policy of imposing Russian "integration" projects on the former republics. Moscow used Ukraine's distancing from in-depth cooperation with Russia within the framework of the customs union and its desire to integrate with the EU and sign an association agreement as a pretext for unleashing a hybrid war against the Ukrainian state.

1 See C. von Clausewitz, *O wojnie*, Wydawnictwo Bellona, 2022.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine contributed to the popularization of the concept of hybrid warfare. According to the definition of F.G. Hofman, a hybrid war is a conflict in which at least one of the parties uses, in addition to regular troops, irregular troops and tactics, terrorism, and the actions of criminal structures. In addition to states, the participants in such a conflict may be non-state structures, and the confrontation takes place not only in the military but also in the economic and humanitarian spheres².

Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine combined military and non-military instruments consisting of several components. Firstly, Moscow supported and financed pro-Russian political parties, activists, and public organizations in Ukraine. Secondly, Russia influenced the information space of Ukraine with the help of pro-Russian media and free access for Ukrainians to Russian mass media. Thirdly, with the help of Russian mass culture and representatives of Russian show business in Ukraine. Fourthly, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate helped spread the cultural and civilizational influence of Russia³. As one of the main tools of the hybrid war, Russia chose propaganda and disinformation, with the help of which it spread its ideological, historical, political, and cultural narratives and myths.

For several reasons, Ukraine occupies a leading position in the politics of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet space, and in the Central-Eastern Europe region. First of all, it is one of the most developed republics of the former USSR, with which the Russian military industry was largely connected. Secondly, in the ideology of the Russian and Soviet empires, the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) component was considered the basis of Russian statehood and spirituality. Thirdly, in the imperial policy of the Kremlin, for geopolitical reasons, Ukraine was important in the context of the reintegration of the post-Soviet space and the promotion of influence in Central-Eastern Europe. With the coming to power of Vladimir Putin, Russian policy was formed under the influence of geopolitical and historical determinism.

2 F.G. Hofman, *Conflict in the 21st century: The rise of hybrid wars*, Arlington 2007, p. 29.

3 M. Marek, *Operacja Ukraina. Kampanie dezinformacyjne, narracje, sposoby działania rosyjskich ośrodków propagandowych przeciwko państwu ukraińskiemu w okresie 2013-2019*, Warsaw 2020, p. 17.

Geopolitical determinism in the politics of Russia is manifested to a greater extent in the political, military, and economic plane, whereas historical determinism can be observed in the politics of memory and in the ideology of the “Russian world” which has a linguistic, cultural, and religious component. With the help of information and cognitive operations against Ukraine, the Russian political and military leadership is trying to pursue a policy of subordination and de-sovereignization of the Ukrainian state and turn Ukrainians into an ethnographic mass.

Culture, history, and religion play an important role in international relations, especially in the context of the soft power of states⁴. Russia has been and remains a supporter of hard power, and Russian concepts of soft power sooner or later always boil down to the forceful imposition of its political or value model. Polish researcher Agata Wlodkowska believes that in the Russian concept of soft power, the leading place is occupied by the cultural and ideological component. With the establishment of the Department for Interregional and Cultural Relations with Abroad in the Putin administration in 2005, the process of countering colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space with the help of Russian culture and spirituality began. Gradually, Russia began to impose on Ukraine the model of “sovereign democracy” and the ideology of the “Russian world” in order to maintain influence and revive the empire. The main efforts were aimed at preventing the formation of stable and democratic nation-states in the post-Soviet space.

Russian researcher Olga Voronova believes that under the conditions of struggle in the international arena, the identity of nations and states is of great importance, especially on the basis of a separate historical and cultural code. Russian “soft power” policy cannot exist without combining the potential of cultural and historical (memory) politics. As part of such a policy, the Kremlin must counter the narrative of “Russia as an evil empire” and “Russia as an aggressive state”⁵. In this perspective, O. Voronova presents Russia as a victim

4 M. Znojek, *Kultura jako źródło soft power państwa*, “Studia i Prace WNEIZ US” 2018, no. 53/2, p. 101.

5 O. Воронцова, *Культура и историческая память как ресурс «мягкой силы» России на международной арене* [O. Voronova, *Kul'tura i istoricheskaya pamyat' kak resurs «tyagkoi sily» Rossii na mezhdunarodnoj arene*], <https://histrf.ru/read/articles/kultura-i-istorichieskaia-pamiat-kak-riesurs-miaghkoi-sily-rossii-na-miezhdunarodnoi-arienie> [10.02.2023].

that is forced to defend itself. However, this statement is an elementary change of concepts, in fact, the Russian Federation, especially in the post-Soviet space, continues the policy of historical, cultural, and religious imperialism.

This article will analyse the humanitarian components of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine in ideological, historical, cultural, and civilizational dimensions. The case study of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014-2022 clearly showed that, in addition to classical methods of warfare, Russia widely uses non-military components of struggle, including the humanitarian component. The purpose of the article is to prove the statement that in Russia's aggressive policy against Ukraine, the non-military component, in particular the humanitarian component, is no less important than the military component. During our analysis, both classical and modern theories of international relations, in particular constructivism, will be used⁶.

1. Ideological front

The ideological narrative in the formation of Russia's policy towards Ukraine can be reduced to several conceptual approaches. The first was related to the concept of the Eurasian empire, in which Ukraine, deprived of the Black Sea coast, was assigned to the Russian zone of influence. According to A. Dugin, Russia should not allow the formation of nation-states in the post-Soviet space⁷. The second approach is the concept of the "Russian world", a political and cultural-civilizational unity of the East Slavic peoples, in which the Russians occupy a dominant position. It is difficult to say which of these two concepts Putin preferred. Probably, his views on the "Ukrainian question" were formed to a large extent under the influence of General Anton Denikin, philosopher Ivan Ilyin, and writer Ivan Shmelev⁸ and were in the matrix of the imperial paradigm of the tsarist and Sovi-

6 Ю.Я. Тишкун, Д.А. Троцько, *Російсько-українська війна в призмі сучасних критичних теорій міжнародних відносин*, "Політичне життя" [Yu. Ya. Tyshkun, D. A. Trotsko, *Rosiisko-ukrainska viina v pryzhmi suchasnykh krytychnykh teoriy mizhnarodnykh vidnosyn*, "Politychne Zhyttia"] 2022, no. 2, pp. 48-53.

7 А. Дугин, *Основы геополитики* [A. Dugin, *Osnovy geopolitiki*], Moscow 2000.

8 М. Міщенко, *Улюблений філософ Путіна* [M. Mishchenko, *Uliublennyi filosof Putina*], <https://uain.press/articles/ulyublenij-filosof-putina-1409067> [11.02.2023].

et times. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (2022), articles with the opinions of I. Ilyin appeared in the Russian mass media, in particular in "Rossiyskaya Gazeta":

Ukraine is recognized as the most threatened part of Russia in the sense of secession and conquest. (...) Little Russia and Great Russia are united by faith, tribe, historical fate, geographical location, economy, culture and politics. Foreigners who are preparing the disintegration must remember that they are declaring by this the whole of Russia a centuries-old struggle. There will be no peace and economic prosperity in the East with such disintegration. Russia will turn into a source of civil and international wars for centuries. The disintegrating state will become the most hated of the enemies of national Russia.

All alliances and all means will be used in the fight against it. Russia will shift its centre to the Urals, gather all its huge forces, develop its technology, find powerful allies and fight until it completely and forever undermines the power of the disintegrating state⁹.

On the ideological level in Russia, Ukrainians are considered separatists of the "Russian world", and Ukraine is considered a "disintegrating state". In particular, the Kremlin ideologue Vladislav Surkov wrote in 2020 that "coercion by force to fraternal relations as the only method that has historically proven effective in the Ukrainian direction" should be applied to Ukraine¹⁰.

In this context, a significant part of the modern Russian political elite has formed a worldview of the final solution to the Ukrainian issue within the framework of big-state chauvinist concepts. Putin's political regime partly meets the criteria of a national dictatorship (as defined by Ilyin). From the point of view of the American historian Timothy Snyder, Russia is a fascist state in which the cult of the

9 В 1938 году философ, идеолог Белого движения Иван Ильин дал точный прогноз событий на Украине [V 1938 godu filosof, ideolog Belogo dvizheniya Ivan Il'in dal tochnyj prognoz sobytij na Ukraine], <https://rg.ru/2022/05/25/prorochestva-ilina.html> [12.02.2023].

10 Сурков: Украина для имперской и советской бюрократии всегда была делом хлопотным [Surkov: Ukraina dlya imperskoj i sovetskoj byurokratii vsegda byla delom hlopotnym], <https://tass.ru/politika/7838239> [12.02.2023].

leader, the cult of fallen heroes and the myth of the greatness of the imperial past are developed¹¹. A similar definition of Putin's political regime as fascist was given by the famous American political scientist Alexander J. Motyl¹², and the Dutch scientist Marcel H. Van Herpen calls Putinism crypto-fascism¹³. Putinism is not only the definition of the political regime in Russia but also the de facto state ideology. Sociologist and publicist Ihor Eidman believes that it is close to fascist and permeated with Great Russian chauvinism, clericalism (geopolitical orthodoxy), xenophobia, revisionism of the imperial idea, and the cult of a strong and aggressive state¹⁴. In this ideology, the Ukrainian issue is strictly subordinated to the doctrine of "Russian peace" and the policy of territorial expansion under the pretext of protecting Russian-speaking people and "collecting Russian lands".

Within the framework of the ideological narrative, Ukraine is presented as an integral part of the Russian geopolitical space in the image of the "Russian world" or the Eurasian empire. Given the fact that in Ukraine at one time the concepts of the union of East Slavic peoples were more popular, Russia imposed the ideology of the Russian, and de facto, the Russian world. In modern geopolitical conditions, this was accompanied by the imposition of an authoritarian form of government and the transformation of independent states of the post-Soviet space into an object of Russian geopolitics. The Russian model of "sovereign democracy" provided for the sovereignty of authoritarian Russia in relations with the democratic West, but for the countries of the post-Soviet space, sovereignty had to end where Russian geopolitical interests began. During the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity, Ukraine twice rejected the Russian political and ideological model and chose the European model of democratic development.

11 *Росія – це фашистська держава. Якщо Україна не переможе, нас очікують десятиліття темряви – Тимоті Снайдер* [Rosija – tse fashystska derzhava. Yakshcho Ukraina ne peremozhe, nas ochikuiut desiatylittia temriavy – Timoti Snajder], <https://texty.org.ua/fragments/106742/rosiya-ce-fashystska-derzhava-yaksho-ukrayina-ne-peremozhe-nas-ochikuye-desyatylittya-temryavy-timoti-snajder/> [8.02.2023].

12 A.J. Motyl, *Putin's Russia as a fascist political system*, "Communist and Post-Communist Studies" 2016, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 25-36.

13 M.H. van Herpen, *Putinizm: Powolny rozwój radykalnego reżimu prawicowego w Rosji*, Gdańsk 2014.

14 I. Eidman, *System Putina*, Warsaw 2022, p. 155.

2. Historical front

Historical narrative is one of the important factors that shape national interests and approaches in the foreign and security policy of states¹⁵. In Russia, most scientists and representatives of the political class remain in the paradigm of imperial traditions in historiography and politics of memory, continuing the civilizational paradigm of the dominant nation. Ukraine, especially after the Russian aggression of 2014, is trying to get rid of the influence of Russian historiography and form its own historiography and politics of memory in the European context. Analysing the non-military level of Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014-2022, we see that historical memory is one of the important elements of the conflict. Russia is trying to impose its nation-empire model on Ukraine, where Ukrainians are considered part of the all-Russian people and an integral part of the empire. On the other hand, in Ukraine, the historical paradigm has recently shifted towards the formation of a nation-state¹⁶.

Historical determinism in Russian politics is demonstrated in particular in the denial of the existence of the Ukrainian nation, which, according to Hegel's definition, Russian intellectuals and politicians continue to consider ahistorical, that is, incapable of state formation. In the Russian-Ukrainian conflict of national memory, several main themes of the confrontation can be singled out, the Russian interpretation of which can be defined as historical fakes or myths of Russian propaganda¹⁷.

The first major topic is an attempt to justify Russian primacy in the creation of the Ruthenian state and to present Russia as the sole successor of Kyivan Rus'. In order to justify Russian primacy in the creation of the Rus' state, Putin's Kremlin regime first resorted to emphasizing the leading role of Novgorod and Ladoga (as opposed to Kyiv) in the founding of Rus' and the ethnogenesis of Russians from the middle of the 9th century. However, it was not possible to prove

15 U. Krotz, *History and foreign policy in France and Germany*, Palgrave Macmillan, London 2015, pp. 24-40.

16 See O. Рафальський, *Цивілізаційна ідентичність українства: історія і сучасність* [O. Rafalskyi, *Tsyvilizatsiina identychnist ukrainstva: istoriia i suchasnist'*], Kyiv 2022.

17 *Альтернативна історія: як Росія прагне анексувати Київську Русь* [*Alternatyvna istoriia: yak Rosiia prahne aneksuvaty Kyivsku Rus'*], <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-antifake/3279397-alternativna-istoria-ak-rosia-prahne-aneksuvati-kiivsku-rus.html> [6.02.2023].

that the Rus' state was founded in Ladoga by the Varangian invader, King Rurik since the historians of the Soviet period substantiated the thesis about the deep roots of Kyivan Rus'¹⁸. On this basis, the Ukrainian historian Mykhailo Brychevsky came to the conclusion that "the history of Kyivan Rus' begins at the turn of the VI-VII centuries"¹⁹.

As for the original territory of Rus', at the turn of the VI and VII centuries, it was a small association covering part of the right-bank forest-steppe (the basins of the Ros and Tyasmyn rivers)²⁰. The core of the Rus' state became the Polyansk land – the territory of the former Anta union. Actually, Rus' also arose on the ruins of that union as its successor. Instead, the power of the last representative of the ruling dynasty of the Kyivan Kahan (king) Askold [ca. 860-882], spread, according to the "Tale of Bygone Years", to all Polyans, namely, to all six "tribes" of the southwestern group that made up Polyans (Ante) federation: Dulibs, Volhynians, Buzhans, White Croats, Ulyches, and Tivers²¹.

Therefore, under Kahan Askold and his predecessors, Kyivan Rus' included the lands of Polyans, Derevlyans, Drehovychi, and the southwestern part of the northern regions (with Chernihiv), that is, only those territories where the ancestors of the present Ukrainians lived from ancient time.

The second topic, which fuels not only Russian imperial sentiments but also acts as a basis for the spread of fake information about "Russia as the cradle of Orthodoxy" is the falsified history of the introduction of Christianity in Kyivan Rus'. It is known from historical sources that the most important consequence of the Kyiv Kahan Askold's campaign against Byzantium in 860 was the introduction of Christianity. This fact, as noted by M. Brychevsky, "is not very popular in modern historiography (which is used to attribute the Christianization of our

18 Б.А. Рыбаков, *Предпосылки образования древнерусского государства*, [in:] *Очерки истории СССР, III-IX вв.* [B.A. Rybakov, *Predposylki obrazovaniya drevnerusskogo gosudarstva*, [in:] *Ocherki istorii SSSR, III-IX vv.*], Moscow 1958; Б.А. Рыбаков, *Древняя Русь. Сказания. Былины. Летописи* [B.A. Rybakov, *Drevnyaya Rus'. Skazaniya. Byliny. Letopisi*], Moscow 1963.

19 М. Браичевський, *Аскольд – цар київський*, [in:] М. Браичевський, *Вибране* [M. Braichevskiy, *Askold – tsar kyivskiy*, [in:] M. Braichevskiy, *Vybrane*], vol. 2, Kyiv 2009, p. 341.

20 М. Браичевський, *Аскольд – цар київський* [M. Braichevskiy, *Askold – tsar kyivskiy*], p. 421.

21 *Повість врем'яних літ*, переклад В.В. Яременка [Povist vremianykh lit, translated by V.V. Iaremenko], Kyiv 1990, pp. 30-31.

country to 988), it is quite reliably recorded in both Byzantine and domestic sources”²².

Sources testify that Askold’s baptism of Rus’ had a national character and was by no means a private affair of the Kahan. Patriarch Photius of Constantinople was the author of an encyclical (circular message) written no later than 867. It was in this message that he spoke about the conversion of Rus’ to Orthodoxy: “And in them (that is, in Rus’ – Author) such a thirst for faith was ignited that they accepted [the] shepherd and perform Christian rituals with great care”²³. Another Byzantine source, the so-called Continuator of Porphyrogenet, writes: “Soon after that (the siege of Constantinople in 860 – Author) an embassy came from them (from Rus’ – Author) asking to make them spokesmen for divine baptism, which was done”²⁴.

Arab chronicler Ibn Khordadbeh, author of the Nikon Chronicle, Russian historian V. Tatishchev, Hustyn Chronicle, Synopsis, and others write about the total adoption of Orthodoxy by Askold’s Rus’. Even in the Church Statute of Volodymyr, there is a statement that Rus’ was baptized during the time of Patriarch Photius, i.e., in the 9th century²⁵. Thus, it was the official act of introducing Christianity in Rus’ as a state religion.

Despite the fact that none of the available sources mentions the date of the first Christianization of Rus’, M. Braichevsky believes that it happened in 860²⁶, arguing that it was the introduction of a special Ruthenian era in the Kyiv state in 860 by Kahan Askold (the honour of opening that era belongs to the Russian historian B. Rybakov²⁷) connected with the introduction of a new system of chronology, in which the counting of years began from 860, the year not only of the successful military campaign of Rus’ to Constantinople but also, and this is the most important thing, the year of the introduction of Christian-

22 Ibid., p. 73.

23 Ibid., p. 74.

24 Ibid.

25 *Памятники русского права*, Вып. 1 [*Pamyatniki russkogo prava*, Выр. 1], Moskow 1952, pp. 237, 244.

26 М. Браичевський, *Суспільно-політичні рухи в Київській Русі*, [in:] М. Браичевський, *Вибране* [M. Braichevskyi, *Suspilno-politychni rukhy v Kyivskii Rusi*, [in:] M. Braichevskyi, *Vybrane*], vol. 1, Kyiv 2009, p. 77.

27 Б.А. Рыбаков, *Древняя Русь. Сказания. Былины. Летопис* [B.A. Rybakov, *Drevnyaya Rus': Skazaniya. Byliny. Letopis*], pp. 163-165.

ity, which “the state ideology considered to be an accession to grace, a spiritual rebirth, for the beginning of a renewed, true existence”²⁸.

Official historiography mainly ignores the date of Askold's baptism of Rus', primarily because it will be necessary to throw out almost all works in which the Varangian invaders and usurpers from the dynasty of the Scandinavian King Rurik are the first statesmen in Rus', who allegedly laid the foundation of the current Russian state. After all, if we rely on the work of the Polish chronicler of the 15th century; according to Jan Długosz, who used now-lost Old Ruthenian sources, Askold and his brother (or co-ruler?) Dir were not only Ruthenian princes (i.e., Slavs) by origin but also direct descendants of Kyi, the legendary founder of the first ruling dynasty of the Kyivites in the Rus' state. Therefore, Askold and Dir are the legitimate successors of power in Kyiv, and not the “boyars of Rurik”, as stated in the third version of the “Tale of Bygone Years”, deliberately falsified in 1118-1119.

By accepting the option of the violent termination of the Kyiv dynasty and the establishment of a new, Norman Rurik dynasty, the foundation of the prevailing (and not only in Russia) version of Russian affiliation (or primacy) of the Ruthenian state, which is based on a false idea of the beginning of the history of Rus', from 862 in Novgorod and its continuation in 882 in Kyiv, is lost. Therefore, without a deliberately falsified (during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise in Kyiv – Author) in the middle of the 11th century period of the reign of the Kyiv dynasty in Russia, the Russian imperial myth about Kyiv as the first capital of the “Russian” state loses all meaning.

Having erased Askold from the history of Rus', despite his enormous historical achievements, his figure was overshadowed by the much less significant figures of the Rurik dynasty princes – Oleg, Igor, and Svyatoslav. Moreover, all the achievements of Askold, such as the baptism of Rus', foreign policy actions towards Byzantium, etc., were attributed to his distant successor – Volodymyr the Great, who only returned Christianity to the status of the official religion of Kyivan Rus' after 988.

In the end, all these Russian propaganda fakes about Russia's pretended succession from Kyivan Rus' are aimed at returning Ukraine to

28 М. Браичевський, *Суспільно-політичні рухи в Київській Русі* [M. Braichevskiy, *Suspilno-politychni rukhy v Kyivskii Rusi*], p. 78.

the “Russian world”. The Kremlin believes that Kyiv, which leaves the sphere of influence of Russian statehood, undermines the image of Russia as a country with a thousand-year history and the cradle of Orthodoxy.

The third thematic block touches on the version of Kyivan Rus’ as the “cradle of three brotherly nations” – Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian – that was widespread during the time of the totalitarian communist regime in the USSR. This is how the official Soviet ideology explained the appearance of East Slavic peoples and their languages. In defence of this concept, first of all, the affinity of the words “Rus” and “Russian” was cited, emphasizing the priority right of Russians to be called the successors of Kyivan Rus’. This outright manipulation is demystified by historical primary sources, which testify that the ethnic definition of the word “Ruthenian” or “Rusian” in the sense of “Ukrainian” has been continuously preserved for many centuries²⁹.

Also, in Putin’s Russia, the myth of the Stalin era about the “Ancient Russian state” and the “Ancient Russian nation” has been reanimated. According to the works of Soviet scientists, as a result of the rapprochement and union of many East Slavic tribes during the time of Kyivan Rus’, an ethnic and linguistic unity was formed – the ancient Russian nation, which had a common territory, language, and common cultural and psychological characteristics. In his speeches, Vladimir Putin very often appeals to the fact that Kyivan Rus’ or the Ancient Russian State and Russia are the same concept.

The famous Ukrainian historian Leonid Zalizniak claims that “Moscow’s rights to the historical and cultural heritage of Kyiv state are no greater and no less than the rights of Madrid, Lisbon, Paris, and Bucharest to the history and culture of Latin Rome. Just as the Romanic peoples inherited certain assets of Roman culture, so Belarusians and Russians absorbed certain elements of the culture of Kyiv state into their ethno-identifying complex. However, just as the previous were not direct creators of the Latin culture of Rome, so the last have an indirect relation to the creation of the culture of Kyivan Rus’³⁰.”

29 Г.П. Півторак, *Походження українців, росіян, білорусів та їхніх мов* [H.P. Pivtorak, *Pokhodzhennia ukrainsiv, rosiian, bilorusiv ta yikhnikh mov*], <http://litopys.org.ua/pivtorak/pivto9.htm> [15.02.2023].

30 Л. Залізник, *Від склавинів до української нації* [L. Zalizniak, *Vid sklavyiniv do ukrainskoi natsii*], https://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Zalizniak/Vid_sklavyiniv_do_ukrainskoi_natsii/ [13.02.2023].

The current Russian dictator also claims that “Ukrainians are Russians”. This thesis of Putin’s cannot withstand any criticism, because historians, including Russian ones, have proven that the Russian and Ukrainian nations were formed completely separately, with different indigenous populations and on different territories³¹.

In 2013, a study by Russian scientists showed that Russians from the northern part of Russia are “Finno-Ugric-Tatars” by origin and not “Eastern Slavs”; which are Ukrainians and Belarusians. Only representatives of several populations of the central part of European Russia have a certain similarity with populations from Central-Eastern Europe. Therefore, even genetically, Ukrainians and Russians are different ethnic groups³².

The fact that the historical policy of modern Russia is a continuation of the tradition of tsarist Russia is evidenced by Putin’s statements that Kyivan Rus’ is the core of the Russian Empire, emphasizing the allegedly identical cultural, historical and ethnic concepts of Russians and Ukrainians, referring to the fact that “they are single people”³³.

The above Russian pseudo-historical narratives show that the “Russian peace” rests on falsified history, manipulation, and disinformation attacks. The Kremlin’s desire to privatize the common historical past, writing, Slavs, Orthodoxy, and culture is only an attempt to maintain the illusion of non-existent greatness, which is completely destroyed by the exit of Ukraine from Russian influence. Therefore, Ukraine became a victim of Russian armed aggression in 2014 and a full-scale invasion in 2022, because without the history of Kyivan Rus appropriated by the Kremlin, and without the Russian claim to Ukrainian history, heroes, symbols, and senses, the success of the policy of restoring the status of a superpower is impossible, and Russia is simply the late successors of the Golden Horde.

31 *Путін назвав росіян і українців одним народом. Історики пояснюють, чи це так* [Putin nazvav rosiiian i ukrainsiv odnym narodom. Istoryky poiasniuiut, chy tse tak], <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51596469> [11.02.2023].

32 *A Genome-Wide Analysis of Populations from European Russia reveals a new pole of genetic diversity in Northern Europe*, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0058552> [29.01.2023].

33 *Путін назвав росіян і українців одним народом...* [Putin nazvav rosiiian i ukrainsiv odnym narodom...], <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-51596469> [11.02.2023].

The fourth major historical theme is related to Cossack traditions and relations between Hetman Ukraine and Tsarist Russia. In this context, Russia is trying to preserve the centuries-old narrative of the liberation of Ukrainians from Polish (Western) enslavement and the historical reunification of “fraternal nations”. The litmus test in this discourse is the figures of Ivan Mazepa, Peter I, and Catherine II. The figure of Ivan Mazepa found an appropriate place in Ukrainian history. However, many events in national history still need to be rethought and returned to the national memory of Ukrainians. In particular, the traditions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rus’ and the Commonwealth of Three Nations (Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth). For example, before the start of the full-scale invasion of Russia in Ochakiv, the main base of the Ukrainian Navy, there was a military-historical museum named after Suvorov, but no appropriate institution was created to shape the traditions of Ukrainian military sailors based on the Cossack heritage. Firstly, it was not Suvorov, but rather Prince Bohdan Glynskyi with the Cossacks who was the first to capture Ochakiv in 1493. Secondly, by returning the stolen history, Ukraine will struggle with the myth of Novorossia – a new land that was supposedly mastered by the Russian Empire.

The fifth topic is related to the period of the liberation struggle in 1917-1921 when the myth of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists was formed in Russian historiography, which was imposed on the historical consciousness of Ukrainians during the Soviet period, presenting the socialists Mykhailo Hrushevskyy, Symon Petliura, and the statesman Wacław Lipiński, among others, in a negative light. A significant part of the formerly Russian political elite, regardless of political views, did not recognize the independence of the Ukrainian nation and considered the so-called Ukrainian question to be purely internal – Russian. In this regard, Anton Denikin’s approach is followed by Vladimir Putin³⁴ and the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Kirill, when he talks about the internal conflict in Ukraine.

The sixth thematic block is related to the Second World War, which continues to be called the Great Patriotic War in Russia. The memory

34 Путін і Денікін – одна дорога з України [Putin i Denikin – jedna doroha z Ukrainy], <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/1739408.html> [20.02.2023].

policy of the Russian Federation was focused on this direction in domestic and foreign policy. The internal component consisted in the formation of the modern historical memory of Russians based on the “cult of victory” of Moscow over the West due to the mobilization of society under the guidance of a leader (chief). Propaganda spread the image of Russia as a peace-loving state fighting global fascism and terrorism. Actions such as the “immortal regiment” and “pobedobesie” (victory mania) were generally intended to consolidate society around the president as the leader of the victorious nation and prepare the population for the policy of a militaristic state. The external component consisted, in particular, of imposing its model of historical memory on neighbouring nations³⁵. Ukraine, which since 2005 began to form its historical policy, including in the context of the Second World War (Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Stepan Bandera), different from the narratives of the Kremlin, was considered a traitor to the common East Slavic/Russian memory invented by Russian propaganda. The Russian Federation used this as an excuse to wage a hybrid war (2014) and a full-scale invasion (2022) of Ukraine. The official propaganda of the Russian Federation invented the problem of Ukrainian fascism/Nazism in power in order to justify military aggression against its citizens³⁶.

The seventh thematic block – crimes of the communist regime, related to the terror of the Soviet past. In this circle, the most important issue is the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine. The topic of the Holodomor occupies a special place in Ukrainian-Russian relations. The modern leadership of Russia, which has declared itself not only the legal successor but also the beneficiary of the USSR, motivated to recreate the status of a great power on the international arena, including appealing to the positive part of the legacy of the USSR, fails to notice the actions of Stalin that led to the genocide of the Ukrainian people as a result of famine in 1932-1933; the signs of a deliberately

35 Я. Потапенко, *Концепт «великої перемоги» як антиукраїнська ідеологема кремлівської пропаганди: спроба комплексного міждисциплінарного аналізу*, “Наукові записки з української історії” [Ya. Potapenko, *Kontsept «velykoi peremohy» yak antyukrainska ideolohema kremlivskoi propahandy: sproba kompleksnoho mizhdystyplinarnoho analizu*, “Naukovi Zapysky z Ukrainiskoi Istorii”] 2015, vol. 36, pp. 112-120.

36 G. Kasianov, „Ukrainian Nazis” as an invented enemy, https://russiapost.net/politics/ukrainian_nazis [14.02.2023].

planned crime. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine “On the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine” on 28 November 2006, and the recognition by the parliaments of almost 30 countries of the world of the Holodomor as an act of genocide of the Ukrainian people, marked the beginning of the policy of spreading the truth about one of the greatest tragedies in human history.

The main obstacle to the international recognition of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 as a genocide of the Ukrainian people is the position of Russia, which fundamentally refuses to recognize the Holodomor as genocide, citing the fact that not only the residents of Ukraine suffered as a result, but also other places (in particular, Russia (specifically the territories of the Kuban, Volga, and Urals) and Kazakhstan). Russia also fears that, as the legal successor of the USSR, claims may be made against it, and perhaps a demand for compensation. These fears are justified only if Russia actually considers itself not just a successor, but a beneficiary of the USSR: then it will not only have to use the achievements of the Soviet Union but also take responsibility for the crimes of the communist Kremlin, which Putin’s government does not want to do. Therefore, the topic of the crimes of the Stalinist regime in Russia is once again among the forbidden, and the historical policy of the Kremlin is aimed at erasing the historical memory of the population of the Russian Federation.

As for Ukraine, its political leaders began relatively late to pay attention to the formation of the statist narrative in the historical memory of Ukrainians (Kyiv State, Galicia-Volyn State, Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rus’, Hetman State, Ukrainian People’s Republic, and West Ukrainian People’s Republic). The decree of President Volodymyr Zelenskyi (2021) on the celebration of the day of Ukrainian statehood, together with the baptism of Kyivan Rus’, certifies that Ukraine will fight for its statehood traditions on the basis of historical memory.

3. Cultural and civilizational front

The cultural and civilizational narrative is connected with religious, cultural, and linguistic factors, which the Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church use in the hybrid war against Ukraine. The civilizational paradigm of the “Russian world”, which is based not only on great power but also on religious and cultural chauvinism, is de-

signed to preserve the dominance (supremacy) of Russia in the “near abroad” and its influence in the “far abroad”. The civilizational paradigm, the basis of which is the struggle of Western and Orthodox civilizations, gives the Russian Federation and the Russian Orthodox Church, within the framework of the concept of “Moscow – the Third Rome” and imperial policy, the opportunity to claim the role of a single leader and defender of Orthodox values and the Orthodox world. In order to interfere in the internal affairs of Orthodox states with the help of the Russian Orthodox Church, especially in Ukraine, which Russia considers an integral part of the spiritual and cultural space of the “Russian world”, a new direction has been formed – Russian geopolitical (political) Orthodoxy³⁷.

In the context of not only statistics but also geopolitics, it should be taken into account that according to Rosstat data for 2018, the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) had 18,550 religious organizations in Russia and taking into account parishes abroad – 38,649 churches in total. In particular, in Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate counts more than 11,000 parishes (Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) – (UOC-MP)). Statistics show that by losing the revenues from the UOC-MP, the Russian Orthodox Church will lose its status as the largest Orthodox Church in the world. After all, taking into account about 8,000 parishes of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU), the Kyiv church is quantitatively the largest Orthodox church in the world³⁸.

A significant part of the clergy and members of the UOC-MP do not feel a connection with the Ukrainian state, but instead identify themselves with the ideology of the “Russian world”, which denies the existence of Ukraine as a nation-state, and considers it as Little Russia within the “Russian Orthodox civilization”, where Moscow and Russia are of key importance.

Religious expert Dmytro Horevoy notes that during the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict, it is the UOC-MP, that: 1) called to betray

37 *Політичне православ'я* [Politychne pravoslav'ia], <https://risu.org.ua/ua/index/resources/directory/48781/> [11.02.2023].

38 В. Балук, М. Дорошко, *Релігійний чинник у гібридній війні Росії проти України, “Актуальні проблеми міжнародних відносин”* [W. Baluk, M. Doroshko, *Relihiinyi chynnyk u hibrydnyy viini Rosii proty Ukrainy, “Aktualni Problemy Mizhnarodnykh Vidnosyn”*] 2020, no. 51, p. 6.

Ukraine and take the side of Russia, 2) sanctified Russian weapons aimed at Ukraine, 3) cooperated with the Russian Armed Forces, 4) sanctified monuments to invaders, 5) blessed the leaders of terrorist organizations (“DPR”, “LPR”), 6) engaged in espionage for the benefit of Russia, 7) curses the Ukrainian government and disrupts mobilization into the army, 8) still refuses to honour the fallen heroes of Ukraine, 9) denies the existence of the Ukrainian people and 10) does not notice Russian aggression against Ukraine, presenting the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict as a civil war in Ukraine (fratricidal war)³⁹.

Russian strategic doctrine provides for the protection of the Russian and Russian-speaking populations of neighbouring countries. In practice, this means political and military interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the use of these categories of the population as a “fifth column”. With the help of mobilization and discrediting narratives, Russia not only destabilizes the political situation but also continues to influence the formation of the cultural space of the post-Soviet states⁴⁰. From the very beginning of relations between the two independent states, Russia tried to force Ukraine to give the Russian language the status of a second state language. In general, the conformity of Ukrainian legislation and political practice with international norms for the protection of national minorities did not prevent Russia from constantly challenging Ukraine in the opposite way. The protection of the Russian minority and the Russian-speaking population became a contrived pretext for Russia’s aggression in 2014⁴¹ and a full-scale invasion in 2022. The above-mentioned pretext for the so-called military operation appears in the speeches of Putin, Glazev, Surkov, and other politicians. In particular, in June 2014, the

39 *Релігієзнавець пояснив, чому УПЦ (МП) не можна залучати до примирення [Relihiieznavets poiasnyv, chomu UPTS (MP) ne mozhna zaluchaty do prymyrennia]*, <https://cerkvarium.org/publikatsii/monitorynh-zmi/religieznavets-poyasniv-chomu-upts-mp-ne-mozhna-zaluchati-do-primirennia> [12.02.2023].

40 Ю. Макарець, *Довколомовні гібридні наративи в російсько-українському протистоянні, “Літературознавство. Мовознавство. Фольклористика” [Yu. Makarets, Dovkolomovni hibraydni naratyvy v rosiisko-ukrainskomu protystoianni, “Literaturoznavstvo. Movoznavstvo. Folklorystyka”]* 2022, no. 1(31), pp. 21-25.

41 *Вопросы идентичности русскоязычных граждан Украины в контексте вооруженного конфликта на востоке страны [Voprosy identichnosti russkoyazychnyh grazhdan Ukrainy v kontekste vooruzhennogo konflikta na vostoке strany]*, <https://www.international-alert.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ukraine-Russophone-Identity-RU-2017.pdf> [15.02.2023].

President of Russia stated that “we will always defend ethnic Russians in Ukraine and that part of the Ukrainian people who feel their inextricable not only ethnic but also cultural, linguistic connection with Russia, feel themselves part of the broad Russian world. Of course, we will not only closely monitor, but and respond accordingly. I hope that the armed forces will not be required for this”⁴². The above once again confirms that Russia uses the issue of language and culture not only as a soft but also as a hard power in its policy against Ukraine. The events of 2014 related to the so-called “Russian Spring” proved that it was a well-planned special operation by Moscow, in which the Russian minority in Ukraine was used to organize a coup d'état and seize power in Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, and other regions of the country⁴³.

To spread its influence, Russia uses not only popular but also high culture. The authorities control the popularization of Russian culture abroad, especially in the post-Soviet space in the context of soft power policy, which uses several stereotypes: 1) Russia is a state of high culture, science, and art, 2) Russia and the Russian people are characterized by high cultural and religious tolerance⁴⁴. It is for the Russian church and culture that they were and to a large extent remain markers of Russia's imperial policy. Russia's war against Ukraine in 2014-2022 proved that the Kremlin is incapable of using culture as soft power⁴⁵. A number of figures of Russian culture (M. Mikhalkov, M. Piotrovsky, A. Netrebko, etc.) openly support Putin's fascist regime and the war against Ukraine, and culture is viewed as a weapon. In view of this, the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine called to abandon Russian culture⁴⁶. The world reacted differently to the call of the Ukrainian minister.

42 Путин обещает «защитить русских» на Украине всегда [Putin obeshchaet «zashchishchat' russkikh» na Ukraine vsegda], https://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2014/06/140624_putin_deauthorisation_ukraine_reax [25.12.2022].

43 Р. Малко, Чому замерзла «русская весна» [R. Malko, Chomu zamerzla «russkaia vesna»], <https://tyzhden.ua/chomu-zamerzla-russkaia-vesna/> [20.02.2023].

44 А. Казанцев, В. Меркушев, Россия и постсоветское пространство: перспективы использования «мягкой силы», “Полис” [A. Kazancev, V. Merkushev, Rossiya i postsovetskoe prostranstvo: perspektivy ispol'zovaniya «tyagkoj sily», “Polis”] 2008, no. 2.

45 N. Gergało-Dąbek, Soft power rosyjskiej kultury w kontekście wojny Federacji Rosyjskiej przeciwko Ukrainie, “Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 2022, no. 4, <https://ies.lublin.pl/rocznik/riesw/2022/4/7/> [13.02.2023].

46 Відкрите повторне звернення Міністра культури та інформаційної політики України Олександра Ткаченка щодо заклику відмови від російської культури та її виконавців [Vidkryte povtorne zvernennia Ministra kultury ta informatsiinoi polityky Ukrainy Oleksandra Tkachenka shcho-

On this occasion, the famous director Agnieszka Holland wrote that she supports the boycott of Russian culture but speaks out against the removal of works of Russian culture from the world heritage because it can lead to the growth of blind nationalism⁴⁷. The civilized world made the right decision – to boycott odious figures of Russian culture who support the criminal Putin regime, and also not to help Russian cultural diplomacy during the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Conclusions

Ideological and religious values, history and culture play a significant role in the formation and stability of a nation-state, which directly affects its security. The above-mentioned components are also used as soft power in international relations. Russia's aggressive and imperial policy toward Ukraine in 2014-2022 proved that Moscow uses them as a non-military component in a hybrid war. It has been proven that the humanitarian component in this war was no less important than the military component. The conducted analysis showed that countering the challenges and threats from Russia should have a comprehensive nature, both in the military and non-military spheres.

Studies have shown that the ideological component is connected with the formation of Putinism in Russia, as a political regime of rigid authoritarianism and state ideology, built on Great Russian chauvinism and imperial doctrine, playing a leading role in the Russian-Ukrainian war. The ideological factor, in particular the concept of the “Russian world”, was widely used by Russia to influence Ukrainian society and the political, business, and cultural elite. Ukraine began to actively counter these challenges and threats from Russia relatively late. Only after the full-scale invasion did the authorities in Ukraine implement a number of security measures related to the anti-state activities of political and religious figures.

Historical memory and cultural identity are of great importance in the process of building nation-states. Russia has tried in every pos-

do zaklyku vidmovy vid rosiiskoi kultury ta yii vykonavstv], <https://mkip.gov.ua/news/7877.html> [17.02.2023].

47 *Agnieszka Holland: jestem za bojkotem kultury rosyjskiej*, <https://www.wirtualnemedial.pl/artykul/agnieszka-holland-bojkot-kultury-rosyjskiej> [9.02.2023].

sible way to prevent the formation of a modern democratic state and political nation in Ukraine, depreciating the importance of Ukrainian history and culture. However, the war started by Russia led to different results than planned. The struggle of Ukrainians against the Russian aggressor showed the existence of a Ukrainian political nation that is trying to integrate the state of Ukraine into the European historical, civilizational, geopolitical, and security space.

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The clash of civilizations in Ukraine

Zderzenie cywilizacji na Ukrainie

Abstract: This article analyses the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in the light of Huntington's theory of the clash of civilisations. In his text, Huntington stated, "If civilization is what counts, however, the likelihood of violence between Ukrainians and Russians should be low". After the full-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine, it is clearly visible that Huntington was completely wrong. This does not, however, falsify Huntington's entire concept, which nevertheless requires modification in the form of a new delimitation and naming of civilisations – there is no "Slavic-Orthodox civilisation", but rather a "Eurasian civilisation". These corrections, based on Oskar Halecki's research, lead to the conclusion that Huntington's theory is applicable in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war, with Ukraine being a Huntingtonian "torn country" that has decided to finally leave the Eurasian civilisation, while Russia is trying to prevent it.

Keywords: Russian-Ukrainian war, civilisations, Russia, Ukraine, Ruthenia (Rus)

Streszczenie: Niniejszy artykuł analizuje wojnę pomiędzy Federacją Rosyjską a Ukrainą w świetle teorii zderzenia cywilizacji Huntingtona. W swoim tekście Huntington stwierdził: „Jeśli jednak liczy się cywilizacja, to prawdopodobieństwo przemocy między Ukraińcami a Rosjanami powinno być niskie”. Po pełnoskalowej agresji Rosji na Ukrainę widać wyraźnie, że Huntington w tej kwestii całkowicie się pomylił. Nie falsyfikuje to jednak całej koncepcji Huntingtona, która wymaga modyfikacji w postaci nowego wytyczenia granic i nazewnictwie cywilizacji – nie występuje „cywilizacja słowiańsko-prawosławna”, ale raczej „euroazjatycka”. Korekty te, oparte na badaniach Oskara Haleckiego, prowadzą do wniosku, że teoria Huntingtona znajduje zastosowanie w przypadku wojny Rosji i Ukrainy, zaś Ukraina jest Huntingtonowskim „krajem rozdartym”, który zdecydował się na ostateczne opuszczenie cywilizacji euroazjatyckiej, zaś Rosja stara się temu zapobiec.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna rosyjsko-ukraińska, cywilizacje, Rosja, Ukraina, Ruś

Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet totalitarian system in Europe from 1989-1991 marked the end of the world's bipolar system. The West won the

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global “cold war” confrontation, causing universal euphoria. In such an atmosphere, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 triggered an unprecedented global reaction – for the first time in the history of the United Nations (and the only time so far), all permanent members of the Security Council unanimously condemned the aggressor and voted in favour of military intervention against it, under the auspices of the UN.

Global changes provoked American analyst and scholar, Francis Fukuyama to formulate a theory about the ultimate victory of liberal democracy as a system of power and social organisation. Fukuyama stated:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government¹.

Those words were written in mid-1989 when the changes in the Eastern Bloc were just starting. Fukuyama’s text resounded widely all over the world and brought numerous polemics. His statement about “the end of history” was simplified and taken into popular vocabulary, becoming widely used to describe the atmosphere of post-Cold War euphoria.

Four years later, Samuel Huntington presented another theory about the then-current global system. He claimed that the world was entering a new phase of politics, which would be dominated by the clash of civilizations. According to his model, conflicts between civilizations would replace the wars of ideologies, which in turn had replaced wars of nations preceded by the wars of kings and princes².

When Huntington published his article, it was already after the first Gulf War and in the middle of the Yugoslav War. The Soviet Union had already dissolved, which could have been perceived not only as the ultimate victory of the West in the Cold War but also as proof of the ultimate victory of the liberal democracy – as Fukuyama claimed. The atmosphere was, therefore, still very optimistic, and the above-

1 F. Fukuyama, *The end of history?*, “The National Interest”, Summer 1989, p. 4.

2 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations?*, “Foreign Affairs”, Summer 1993, pp. 22-23.

mentioned wars were unable to undermine it. Huntington's text raised huge interest, numerous polemics, disputes, comments, and criticism, all of which led him to extend his article to the size of a book, where the analysis was deepened and some formulations were softened but the title was deprived of a question mark³.

The next quarter of a century brought a number of events that are useful to corroborate Huntington's theory. Genocide in Ruanda, Islamist terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, the interventions that followed in Iraq and Afghanistan, Russian invasions in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014), and the growing Sino-American conflict are only the major examples. Yet, the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation of Ukraine, which started on 24 February 2022, might be considered a turning point in global history. Not only did it result in military conflict on a massive scale as well as bringing mass crime back into Europe but it also openly involved a former superpower (that still remains a regional and nuclear power) using all its resources (apart from nuclear). Moreover, the invasion united the West in supporting Ukraine militarily on an unprecedented scale.

The aim of this article is to analyse the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in light of Huntington's theory. It will be confronted with other theories defining the borders of regions and civilisations, with particular attention given to Oskar Halecki's "limits and divisions" in Europe⁴. Does Huntington's theory prove its validity in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war? Where are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory in its application to the current situation?

1. Huntington's "the clash of civilizations"?

1. In his article published in "Foreign Affairs", Huntington presented a theory of the evolution of the nature of conflicts in the world⁵. According to the model, after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) conflicts

3 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of the world order*, New York 1996; in my paper, I refer to the Simon & Schuster edition: S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of the world order*, London 2002.

4 O. Halecki, *The limits and divisions of European history*, New York 1950.

5 In this text, I will refer to the article which presents major theses in a synthetic way, sufficient for that purpose. The book is referred to only if it differs significantly from the article.

were held between “princes-emperors, absolute monarchs, and constitutional monarchs”. Since the French Revolution, “the principal lines of conflict were between nations rather than princes” and after World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution “the conflict of nations yielded to the conflict of ideologies”. All three stages had the nature of “Western civil wars”; conflicts within Western civilization⁶.

After the Cold War, however, according to Huntington, all those types of conflicts ceased to be relevant and would be replaced by conflicts of civilizations. Civilization is understood as the “highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity”. Members of individual civilizations do not belong to any broader cultural entity⁷.

Huntington defines several reasons for the clash of civilizations:

- “Differences between civilizations are not only real; they are basic. (...) They are far more fundamental than differences among political ideologies and political regimes”.
- “The world is becoming a smaller place. The interaction between peoples of different civilizations is increasing”.
- “The processes of economic modernization and social change throughout the world are separating people from longstanding local identities. They also weaken the nation-state as a source of identity”.
- “The dual role of the West. On the one hand, the West is at peak power. At the same time, however, and perhaps as a result, a return to the roots phenomenon is occurring among non-Western civilizations”.
- “Cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones”.
- “Economic regionalism is increasing. (...) On the one hand, successful economic regionalism will reinforce civilization-consciousness. On the other hand, economic regionalism may succeed only when it is rooted in a common civilization”⁸.

6 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations?...*, pp. 22-23.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

The model presented by Huntington includes eight major civilizations: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and African⁹. In the extended version of the text, he writes about “seven or eight major civilisations”, however, on the map presented in the book he includes also a ninth – Buddhist¹⁰.

As for Europe, he states that “as the ideological division of Europe has disappeared, the cultural division of Europe, between Western Christianity on the one hand, and Orthodox Christianity and Islam on the other, has reemerged”¹¹. Then, he draws a wide line that divides Western Christianity from “the rest” in Europe. In some cases, the line goes across individual countries – as is the case for Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Montenegro¹². Huntington summarizes it aptly: “The Velvet Curtain of culture has replaced the Iron Curtain of ideology as the most significant dividing line in Europe”¹³. It is significant that, in the more detailed analysis, he defined the East-European civilization as “Orthodox” only, not “Slavic-Orthodox” as labelled before.

Even though the line was drawn between the West on the one side and Orthodoxy together with Islam on the other, Huntington described in detail only the conflict between Western Christianity and the Muslim world. Furthermore, Huntington even defines Russia as a “torn country” – “divided over whether their society belongs to one civilization or another”¹⁴. He claims that Russia is globally the most important torn country: “The question of whether Russia is part of the West or the leader of a distinct Slavic-Orthodox civilization has been a recurring one in Russian history. (...) President Yeltsin is adopting Western principles and goals and seeking to make Russia a ‘normal’

9 Ibid., p. 25.

10 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking...*, pp. 21, 26-27.

11 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations?...*, pp. 29-30.

12 As Huntington stated: “This line runs along what are now boundaries between Finland and Russia and between the Baltic states and Russia, cuts through Belarus and Ukraine separating the more Catholic western Ukraine from Orthodox eastern Ukraine, swings westward separating Transylvania from the rest of Romania, and then goes through Yugoslavia almost exactly along the line now separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest of Yugoslavia”. Ibid., p. 30.

13 Ibid., p. 31.

14 Ibid., p. 42.

country and a part of the West. Yet both the Russian elite and the Russian public are divided on this issue”¹⁵.

Huntington, however, doubted whether Russia was indeed deviating from the redefinition of its identity towards the Western civilization. He claimed that three requirements needed to be met to fulfil the process: “First, its political and economic elite has to be generally supportive of and enthusiastic about this move. Second, its public has to be willing to acquiesce in the redefinition. Third, the dominant groups in the recipient civilization have to be willing to embrace the convert. (...) It is not clear that any of them exist with respect to Russia’s joining the West”¹⁶. It is more than obvious that today, the answer is simple – they do not.

The most controversial statement by Huntington from today’s perspective is, however, an issue of potential Russian-Ukrainian conflict. In the article he clearly states “If civilization is what counts, however, the likelihood of violence between Ukrainians and Russians should be low. They are two Slavic, primarily Orthodox peoples who have had close relationships with each other for centuries”¹⁷. In the extended version of the text, published three years later, Huntington deepens his analysis of Russian-Ukrainian relations, presenting two more options:

a split of Ukraine along its fault line into two separate entities, the eastern of which would merge with Russia;

united, cleft, and independent Ukraine, closely cooperating with Russia¹⁸.

In neither case did Huntington predict the full-scale war between a united Ukraine and the Russian Federation which occurred on 24 February 2022. Does this provide the final proof of this fallacy in Huntington’s theory?

2. Where are the borders of civilizations?

Huntington’s theory of world civilizations is not particularly new or innovative. He himself cites numerous scholars who dealt

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁸ S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking...*, pp. 167-168.

previously with the nature of civilizations, and the list presented by Huntington could, of course, be extended. According to him, while they agree in general, they differ in the details; specifically, there is no unanimous consent on the existence of an Orthodox civilization, in particular, in the shape proposed by Huntington, where Greece, Romania, and Serbia are located together with Russia. In my opinion, it requires deeper reflection. Oskar Halecki's theory is of great value in this context, as he devotes a lot of his work and interest to the question of internal borders in Europe.

Halecki was working on questions of frontiers and divisions in Europe for almost his entire career. The most comprehensive and synthetic presentation of his model was published in 1950 in the book "The Limits and Divisions of European History"¹⁹. Taking into consideration numerous arguments, Halecki claims that there are four regions on the Old Continent, moreover, he strongly underlines that it does not cover Russia, which does not belong to the European civilization (later transformed into the Atlantic civilization, as he defined it in the mid-20th century). In another fundamental work, "The Borderlands of Western Civilization. A History of East Central Europe", Halecki clearly presented this vision; even in the title of the book²⁰.

According to Halecki's model, all four regions of Europe constitute one civilization, to which Russia does not belong. They are Western Europe, West Central Europe, East Central Europe, and Eastern Europe. His idea to distinguish two central parts of the continent – the western and the eastern, was both fresh and innovative.

A short presentation of Halecki's idea should begin with Western Europe, which:

Territorially it would be almost identical to the ancient, original part of Western Europe: the European section of the ancient, truly Roman, Empire plus the small area of the British Isles unconquered by the Romans and minus the small area of Germany really controlled by the Romans. Ethnically, it would be the domain of the Roman and Celtic nations, including only those Germanic elements which were completely absorbed and assimilated by the Latin world

19 O. Halecki, *The limits...*

20 O. Halecki, *The borderlands of Western civilization. A history of East Central Europe*, New York 1952.

and those which contributed to the formation of the Anglo-Saxon world, far away from their Central European homeland.

Included in that Western Europe proper must also be those small nations along the controversial, fluctuating, western border of Germany, which were constituted through the separation of their respective territories from the German Empire²¹.

Thus, Halecki includes Benelux, Switzerland, and Scandinavia (without Finland) in this Western Europe and is hesitant about Austria, which could be recognized as a part of purely Western Europe or West Central Europe. The latter is constituted by Germany, which, according to Halecki, was “within the European community, a world in itself”²².

Going further east, there is East Central Europe:

As to the other successor-states of the Habsburg monarchy, it is obvious that they all belong to the eastern, non-German part of Central Europe, in spite of the German influence which penetrated them under Habsburg rule. But they are not the only members of East-Central Europe. That name was and frequently is given, in contemporary political discussions, to the whole dozen countries, in addition to Austria, which, between the last two wars, existed as independent states between Scandinavia, Germany and Italy in the West and the Soviet Union in the East²³.

Halecki is fully aware of the internal differences of such a broadly drawn region, especially between the Balkans and the territories north of the Danube, however, he decided to recognize it as one region, including Finland and Greece.

The greatest problem is with Eastern Europe, particularly given that the book was published at the climax of a Stalinist era and under the full power of the Soviet Union. He stated, therefore:

21 O. Halecki, *The limits...*, pp. 130-131.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 132.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 135.

The Russian Revolution recognized both of these [Belarus and Ukraine – PU] as separate nations, but soon after their declarations of independence forced upon them Communist governments which made them join the Soviet Union as constituent republics together with the Russian Federated Soviet Republic. Practically dominated by the latter, they found themselves, together with it, outside Europe which, distinct from Soviet Eurasia, consists of three parts only: Western Europe in the proper sense, the German centre, and the countries between Germany and the Soviet Union. The present control of all these countries by Soviet Russia would eventually reduce Europe to two parts: the West and Germany. If, on the contrary, Ukraine and Byelorussia should be free from Soviet Russia, these two nations could be considered Eastern Europe proper, although their historical ties with East-Central Europe would favour their inclusion in that group²⁴.

Those predictions became particularly timely after the years 1989-1991, when both external (East Central Europe according to Halecki) and internal (the Soviet Union itself) Soviet empires collapsed. In the following years, countries belonging to East Central Europe joined the European Union and NATO (with the minor exception of some Balkan states), thus gaining good anchoring in the Western (or Atlantic) civilization. The Baltic states, as the only former Soviet republics, due to their exceptional nature (independence in the interwar period, deep historical roots in the West), were in that group.

With the formal dissolution of the USSR, former Soviet republics, namely Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova gained independence²⁵. The *sine qua non* condition for Halecki's Eastern Europe to emerge was thus fulfilled.

3. Why Russia is not Europe?

Halecki took the view that Russia is not a part of Europe. As he explicitly stated:

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 136-137.

²⁵ Of course, not only those republics but also all other Soviet republics became independent; however, from the point of view of this text, those are of vital significance (maybe with some focus on the Caucasus with Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia as well).

(...) it ought to be remembered that, like Turkey, new Muscovite Russia had started, not as an Eastern European, but as an extra-European state, outside the "Christian Republic" of a vanishing past. If Muscovite Russia became part of the modern state system, it was not so much because of a rather slow and superficial cultural Europeanization as because, in contradistinction to the declining Ottoman Empire, it became militarily so strong that all of Europe had now to reckon with it²⁶.

In his reasoning, Halecki deeply criticizes the theory (later repeated by Huntington) of the unity of the Orthodox world and its fundamental opposition to the Western world. He claims that between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, there are fewer differences than between Catholicism and Protestantism. What is more, according to Halecki "religious differences, important as they are, especially when they are differences between Christians and non-Christians, must not be considered the sole basis for tracing the historic divisions within the Christian community of Europe"²⁷. On the other hand, he does not intend to exclude the whole of Orthodoxy from the European civilization, underlining the differences within Orthodoxy, in particular between Greece (and broader, South-East Europe) and Russia.

Moreover, to support his theory, he refers to the Russian concepts presented by Slavophiles and Eurasians. Only one out of three Russian schools of thought, the Westerners, would place the whole of Russia as part of the historical European community. The Eurasians represent "exactly the opposite point of view" with a "strong belief in Russia, or the Soviet Union, or the federal Eurasian Empire of the future, as a world in itself, a sub-continent which belongs neither to Europe nor to Asia, although it might be considered a link between the two"²⁸.

The most complicated is the case of Slavophiles, who evolved "from a well-justified interest in, or even enthusiasm for, Russia's cultural background, to a political, aggressive nationalism on ethnic grounds". While "the former could find its place in a general European tradition, common in spite of its diversity, the latter opposed Russia to the

26 O. Halecki, *The limits...*, p. 171.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

“rotten” West in a feeling of superiority which excluded any real community with the rest of Europe”²⁹. Halecki’s recognition of the development from Slavophilia to aggressive Panslavism correctly describes the evolution of those two ideas³⁰.

Initially, Slavophilia was a broader concept and less oriented towards current politics, going back to the past and fostering a sense of Slavic unity. These concepts date back to the 17th century, while in the 18th century, they were primarily focused on the South Slavic peoples. At the beginning of the 19th century, strong Slavophile movements developed among the Czechs, who were experiencing a national rebirth, but gained popularity also among other Slavic peoples, even the Poles (especially before the November Uprising of 1830). Over time, however, Panslavism – a much more aggressive and expansive ideology, subordinated to the Russian imperialist *raison d’état* – took over as Russia’s first geopolitical doctrine, assuming domination of the area between the Adriatic, Baltic, and Black Seas³¹.

A coherent doctrine of Panslavism is laid out in Nikolai Danilevsky’s book “Russia and Europe”, published for the first time in 1869. Danilevsky claims that Europe is the enemy of Russia, which should liberate the Slavs from Turkish and Germanic enslavement and establish a Slavic Federation with its capital in Constantinople (under the name of Tsarograd). He carried out a division of the world into ten “historical-cultural types” (quasi-civilisations) constantly competing with each other³². The most important, according to him, is the struggle between the Roman-Germanic world and the Slavic world, representing the Greco-Byzantine heritage.

The concept is not so distant from Huntington’s division between Western and Slavic-Orthodox civilisations. Danilevsky presents the

29 Ibid., pp. 89-90.

30 More about Panslavism: P. Ukielski, *Europa Środkowa jako pole starcia Mitteleuropy i panslawizmu*, “Teologia Polityczna” 2021-2022, no. 13, pp. 151-164.

31 P. Eberhardt, *Rosyjski panslawizm jako koncepcja geopolityczna*, [in:] idem, *Słowiańska geopolityka. Twórcy rosyjskiej, ukraińskiej i czeskosłowackiej geopolityki oraz ich koncepcje ideologiczno-terytorialne*, Cracow 2017, pp. 164-166.

32 These are Chaldean, Hebrew, Arab, Indian, Persian, Greek, Roman or ancient Italian, Germanic, Hamitic or Egyptian, or Chinese. See Н. Данилевский, *Россия и Европа. Взгляд на культурные и политические отношения славянского мира к германо-романскому* [N. Danilevsky, *Russia and Europe. A look at the cultural and political relations of the Slavic world to the Germanic-Romanic world*], Fifth ed., St. Petersburg 1895, pp. 96-97.

doctrine which serves Russian imperialism, therefore, the Panslavic idea is not limited to Orthodoxy – it covers also the Catholic and Protestant nations of East Central Europe, some even not Slavic (like Hungarians). This also meant that this “unification of the Slavs” had to take place through conquest, not voluntarily, as the southern and western Slavs lived in a different, western world of values. A special role in the Manichean clash between good and evil defined in this way was played by the Poles, who were treated as “traitors to Slavism”³³.

4. Ruthenia and Russia

● Going back to the crucial question of a European border in the concept of Halecki, differences between Russia and Ruthenia (Rus) have to be underlined. The Polish scholar devoted a lot of effort to analysing this and presented fundamental ethnic and cultural divisions between those two territories.

Kyivan Rus is a much older state entity than Russia³⁴ (and its predecessor, namely the Grand Duchy of Moscow), and it entered its European stage of history in parallel with Poland – its baptism is dated 988, just 22 years after the baptism of Poland and 66 years before the Great Schism³⁵. Halecki pointed out that Slavic settlements moved from Kyiv to the Volga basin later on, where they mixed with nomadic Finnish tribes. Since the 12th century, the Grand Duchy of Vladimir (later transformed into the Grand Duchy of Moscow) which emerged there, started to challenge Kyiv. In 1169, Andrey Bogolyubsky invaded and destroyed Kyiv, which – according to Halecki’s interpretation – meant the final rupture between the old and the new Rus, between Moscow and Kyiv. He stressed that Bogolyubsky, as the first prince, did not seize Kyiv to reach political influence, but simply to rob it³⁶.

In the subsequent years, Kyivan Rus became fragmented, Kyiv was losing its position (with the growing influence of Halych), and

33 P. Eberhardt, op. cit., p. 163.

34 The name Russia officially appeared after crowning Ivan The Terrible the Tsar of Russia (1547), but even after the Tsardom of Russia had been established it was still often named “the Muscovy”.

35 The vital importance of the fact is that Kyivan Rus was baptised before the Great Schism and became a part of the Christian world, a part of the *Occidens*.

36 K. Błachowska, *Ruś a Moskwa w koncepcji Oskara Haleckiego*, [in:] M. Dąbrowska (ed.), *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vol. 3, Warsaw–Łódź 2014, pp. 115-116.

the whole region was invaded by the Mongols (1237-1242). All those factors enhanced the still-growing division between the old and the new Rus, which was finally sealed with the fall of the Halych-Volodymyr Duchy (1340). Lithuania seized power over the old Rus, while the Great Rus became subordinated to Moscow³⁷.

According to Halecki, the Mongol legacy becomes an extremely important element that differentiates Moscow from the old Rus, both ethnically and politically, which caused Moscow to succumb to Mongol socio-political patterns³⁸. The Polish scholar also claims that at the time of the invasion, Kyivan Rus had already been part of the European community for a quarter of a millennium, while “the new, colonial Russia of the Volga region” – had not been integrating at all at that time. Moreover, Mongol influence in Moscow was crucial for the next 250 years, whereas in the old Rus, it was rather insignificant from the very beginning and much shorter³⁹.

Halecki underlines the meaning of the incorporation of Ruthenian territories into the Polish-Lithuanian federation created in 1386 in Kreva, which:

(...) connected them more intimately than ever before with the historic European community. Since the Lithuanians also, finally converted in 1387, were now Catholics, the federation as a whole was under Catholic leadership, and new plans for reuniting the Ruthenians with Rome were considered before and after the Union of Florence. But even those of them who remained Greek Orthodox after the Union of Brest (1596) were undoubtedly included in the European community of the Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation periods, so that the eastern limits of that community certainly extended as far as the borders of the Jagiellonian Federation (so called from the name of its first ruler and his dynasty), organized as a Commonwealth in 1569⁴⁰.

Russian pressure towards the West, starting from the 17th century, resulted in the incorporation of European territories with Kyiv (1667),

37 Ibid., pp. 120-123.

38 K. Baczkowski, *Oskara Haleckiego jagiellońska wizja dziejów*, [in:] M. Dąbrowska (ed.), *Oskar Halecki i jego wizja Europy*, vol. 1, Warsaw–Łódź 2012, pp. 62-63.

39 O. Halecki, *The limits...*, p. 94.

40 Ibid., p. 95.

the Baltic provinces, and Finland as well as most of Poland in the 18th century. Halecki admits that “it is obvious that from the eighteenth-century European history cannot be written without including the whole foreign policy of Russia”, he claims, however, that the process of “Westernization” was rather superficial in purely Great Russian territories. In his opinion, the incorporated territories did not “Europeanize” the Russia proper, rather they were the subject of attempts at Russification⁴¹.

According to Halecki, the Soviet Union was not only non-European but even anti-European. He rejects the idea of the “Europeanization” of Russia with Marxist thinking which came from Germany. In his concept, the Soviet Union posed a threat of “Eurasiatination” to European nations – after World War I, only Belarusians and Ukrainians did not succeed in gaining independence, but after World War II, the border moved from the Petsamo-Cetatea Alba line to the famous, “Churchill’s” Szczecin-Trieste line⁴².

5. Ukraine – a torn country?

Returning to Huntington’s theory, amended with Halecki’s work, it becomes visible that a civilisational border based on religious grounds only is unreliable. It is evident that there is no “Slavic-Orthodox” civilisation, but rather a “Euroasiatic” one. Western civilisation had been shaped in the Middle Ages, with several state entities joining subsequently and constituting, according to Oskar Halecki, a distinctive region called East Central Europe⁴³.

Even though it does not falsify the main thesis of Huntington’s paper, it falsifies his conviction that Ukraine and Russia belong to the

41 Ibid., pp. 97-99.

42 Ibid., pp. 99-101.

43 Shaping of the region’s borders is well-described by the Hungarian historian, Jenő Szűcs, who defined two *limes* in Europe. The first “runs southwards across Europe from the lower course of the Elbe-Saale, along the Leitha and the western border of ancient Pannonia: the eastern border of the Carolingian Empire around AD 800”. The second “stretched from the region of the Lower Danube up to the eastern Carpathians and further north along the forests that separated the West Slavs from the East Slavs, reaching the Baltic regions in the 13th century”. The territories between those two borders never fully caught up to the West and constitute East Central Europe according to Szűcs. J. Szűcs, *The three historical regions of Europe*, *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 1983, vol. 29, p. 132.

same civilisation. In fact, going deeper into the analysis, Huntington himself hinted that the Ukrainian case is more complicated. It should be noted that on the map illustrating his article in "Foreign Affairs", the frontier splits Ukraine into two parts, with the western part on the Western civilisation's side⁴⁴.

The above-presented analysis leads to the conclusion that it was not Russia that was a torn country after 1991, but Ukraine. The state, as Huntington pointed out, was divided into a Russian-speaking, more pro-Moscow-oriented, east and a visibly more westernized west. Thus, it has been balancing between the West and the Russian Federation, however, slowly moving westwards. Two decisive milestones on that path can be noted – the Orange Revolution (2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013-2014), both of which were clear pro-Western declarations by Ukrainian society. But the process was continuous, ignited by the declaration of independence – the pro-Western shift can be seen both in political (pro-Western candidates were gaining ever-growing support in subsequent elections)⁴⁵ and social changes (a growing sector of services that shaped the young, dynamic, middle class)⁴⁶.

In parallel, after the collapse of its cold war empire, Russia started to consolidate. In the 1990s, the suppression of two Chechen wars prevented the dissolution of the Russian Federation itself⁴⁷. After Putin's seizure of power, Russia has been making an attempt to rebuild its influence on the territories of the former Soviet Union, which, as the Russian dictator believes, belong to the same civilisation and should be subordinated to Moscow⁴⁸.

44 S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?...*, p. 30.

45 See electoral results since 1991: *Elections in Ukraine*, <https://www.electoralgeography.com/new/en/category/countries/u/ukraine> [19.04.2023].

46 *Nadchodzi trzecia Ukraina. Z prof. Jarosławem Hrycakiem rozmawia Wojciech Wojtasiewicz*, <https://holistic.news/nadchodzi-trzecia-ukraina/> [19.04.2023].

47 According to Alexei Salmin's model, the Soviet empire consisted of five rings: 1. Soviet Russia, 2. Soviet republics, 3. Communist countries under direct Soviet domination, 4. Other communist states (like Cuba or Vietnam), 5. Communist parties in the West. See P. Kowal, *Five Rings of Empire, "New Eastern Europe"* 2017, no. 2, pp. 51-53. Until the end of 1991, four rings were lost, however, the bloody suppression of Chechnya was to prevent a collapse of the first ring of the empire – the Russian Federation itself.

48 V. Putin, *On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> [19.04.2023].

Two vectors of Ukrainian and Russian politics went on a clear collision course when Kyiv made its final pro-Western decision. The Kremlin wanted to prevent this by the annexation of Crimea and a limited-scale conflict in the Donbas in 2014. In 2022, the Russian Federation decided to begin a full-scale war in order to prevent Ukrainian aspirations to join the West. As of spring 2023, i.e., more than a year from its beginning, we know that the war is everything but a “less intense conflict”, and only such conflicts were possible within the same civilisation according to Huntington⁴⁹.

It is not the case as it is not merely a conflict within the “Slavic-Orthodox” civilisation but rather a conflict between the Western (or Euro-Atlantic) and Eurasiatic civilisations, where the status of a torn country is at stake. For centuries, Russia tried to incorporate Ruthenia (or Rus) into the Eurasiatic civilisation, however, it never fully succeeded. In 1991, Ukraine gained its independence and its politics in the subsequent decades slowly moved the country towards the West, so Russia decided to use all available means in order to avoid losing Ukraine from its civilisation. On the other hand, Western civilisation gives all the support (excluding strictly military) it can to Ukraine, to help it to return to the Euro-Atlantic civilisational circle.

Conclusions

For centuries, Ukraine was perceived by Russia as a part of its civilisation, and so it was perceived by Huntington when he constructed his model of civilisations that clash in the contemporary world. After 1991, the situation became more complicated, and Ukraine has been a rather “torn country” from the perspective of Huntington’s theory, or a “borderland” between two civilisations.

In 2004 and 2013-2014, with two revolutions, Ukrainians declared their clear will to become a fully-fledged part of the Western civilisation, which Russia recognized as a threat. At first, it decided to wage a limited war, however, on 24 February 2022, Putin decided to start a full-scale, open conflict, aiming to prevent Ukrainian aspirations and keep it within the Eurasiatic sphere of influence, as a part of that civi-

49 S.P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations?...*, p. 38.

lisation. The Western civilisation in turn decided to support Ukraine, and not allow Russia to solve the conflict between civilisations unilaterally by force. Both civilisations realise the meaning of the war, underlining that it exceeds the Russian-Ukrainian conflict's framework; "This is not about Ukraine at all, but the world order. The current crisis is a fateful, epoch-making moment in modern history. It reflects the battle over what the world order will look like" Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced one month after the invasion⁵⁰. On the other hand, a year after the Russian attack on Ukraine, US President Joe Biden said: "When Russia invaded, it wasn't just Ukraine being tested. The whole world faced a test for the ages"⁵¹. The Russian-Ukrainian war thus became a strictly Huntingtonian clash of civilisations.

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 - 51 *Remarks by President Biden ahead of the one-year anniversary of Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/02/21/remarks-by-president-biden-ahead-of-the-one-year-anniversary-of-russias-brutal-and-unprovoked-invasion-of-ukraine/> [19.04.2023].

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15. *Remarks by President Biden Ahead of the One-Year Anniversary of Russia's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/02/21/remarks-by-president-biden-ahead-of-the-one-year-anniversary-of-russias-brutal-and-unprovoked-invasion-of-ukraine/>.
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Zbigniew Brzezinski's perspective on the geostrategic and geopolitical importance of Ukraine

Geostrategiczne i geopolityczne znaczenie Ukrainy – perspektywa Zbigniewa Brzezińskiego

Abstract: The aim of this article was to portray the complexity of the crisis/war in Ukraine, an event that has shaken Europe more than any other since World War II. The complexity of the crisis could be located in the involvement of external powers (Russia, US, NATO, EU, Turkey, etc.). Zbigniew Brzezinski throws light on the geopolitical significance of Ukraine in the context of the tendency of great powers to secure dominance in Eurasia. Brzezinski assigned Ukraine as a “pivotal” figure on the “Eurasian chessboard” due to its vital geostrategic position, major resources, access to the Black Sea, and importance for Russian strategic interests. In terms of a realist perspective and geopolitical thoughts, Brzezinski's writings still represent a valuable asset in the analysis of the current crisis in Ukraine.

Keywords: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Ukraine, geopolitical pivot, great-powers rivalry, Russian imperialism, Finlandization, evolution of international order

Streszczenie: Celem eksplanacyjnym niniejszej analizy jest chęć ukazania konfliktu rosyjsko-ukraińskiego z punktu widzenia jego złożoności, wielowymiarowości i wieloaspektowości, przy uwzględnieniu percepcji i użyteczności sposobu postrzegania i interpretowania geopolitycznego i geostrategicznego znaczenia Ukrainy w stosunkach międzynarodowych przez Zbigniewa Brzezińskiego. Przyjęto założenie, że dla zrozumienia istoty procesów i zjawisk zachodzących w wymiarze globalnego ładu międzynarodowego konieczne jest uwzględnienie czynnika rywalizacji mocarstw – także na obszarze Ukrainy – oraz instrumentalizacji obecnego konfliktu Rosji i Ukrainy w strategiach poszczególnych państw i organizacji międzynarodowych. Z tej perspektywy badawczej i analitycznej, z punktu widzenia realistycznego sposobu postrzegania i wartościowania rzeczywistości międzynarodowej, przy równoczesnym uwzględnieniu warstwy myśli geopolitycznej, refleksje i rekomendacje Zbigniewa Brzezińskiego nieustannie stanowią wartościowy i użyteczny punkt odniesienia, obecny także w niniejszych deliberacjach.

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Słowa kluczowe: Zbigniew Brzeziński, Ukraina, sworzeń geopolityczny, rywalizacja mocarstw, imperializm Rosji, finlandyzacja, ewolucja ładu międzynarodowego

Introduction

Zbigniew Brzezinski was a great friend of Ukraine and supported Ukraine on many issues in the international arena. Ukraine was permanently the object of his very deep and serious attention. Brzezinski has always been clear and consistent in his assessments about Ukraine. For Brzezinski, Ukraine is desirable for Europe and would also help in the transformation of Russia. This is why he viewed a close association with Ukraine not as an anti-Russian policy but rather as a policy which helps the consolidation of democracy in Russia *in spe*. Ukraine was a cornerstone of the Soviet Union, the arch-rival of the United States during the Cold War¹. Behind only Russia, it was the second-most-populous and powerful of the fifteen Soviet republics, home to much of the union's agricultural production, defence industries, and military, including the Black Sea Fleet and some of the nuclear arsenal. Ukraine was so vital to the union that its decision to sever ties in 1991 proved to be a *coup de grace* for the ailing superpower. In its three decades of independence, Ukraine has sought to forge its own path as a sovereign state while looking to align more closely with Western institutions, including the EU and NATO. For these reasons (geostrategic and geopolitical) Ukraine also became a unique *case study* for Zbigniew Brzezinski.

1. Ukraine, a geopolitical pivot and the crucial state in the Eurasian and European Great Power Competition

Ukraine has long played an important, yet sometimes overlooked, role in the global political and security order. Today, the Ukrainian state is on the front line of a renewed geopolitical great-powers rivalry that many analysts say will dominate international relations in the decades

1 Z. Brzeziński, S. Huntington, *Political power: U.S.A./U.S.S.R.*, New York 1964; Z. Brzezinski, *Game plan: A geostrategic framework for the conduct of the U.S.-Soviet contest*, Boston 1986; Z. Brzezinski, *The grand failure: The birth and death of communism in the twentieth century*, New York 1989.

ahead, in Europe and Asia. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, independent since 1991, Ukraine is an “important space on the Eurasian chessboard”, the control of which is supposed to make domination over the world possible². In a post-Cold War world under the United States geostrategic domination, Brzezinski identifies Ukraine – in Eurasia, alongside Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan – as the state “deserving America’s strongest geopolitical support”³.

Ukraine, a new and important space on the Eurasian chessboard, is a geopolitical pivot because its very existence as an independent country helps to transform Russia. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. Russia without Ukraine can still strive for imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state, more likely to be drawn into debilitating conflicts with aroused Central Asians, who would then be resentful of the loss of their recent independence and would be supported by their fellow Islamic states to the south. China would also be likely to oppose any restoration of Russian domination over Central Asia, given its increasing interest in the newly independent states there. However, if Moscow regains control over Ukraine, with its 52 million people and major resources as well as its access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically again regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Ukraine’s loss of independence would have immediate consequences for Central Europe, transforming Poland into the geopolitical pivot on the eastern frontier of a united Europe⁴. (...) The states deserving America’s strongest geopolitical support are Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and (outside this region) Ukraine, all three being geopolitically pivotal. Indeed, Kiev’s role reinforces the argument that Ukraine is the critical state, insofar as Russia’s own future evolution is concerned. At the same time, Kazakstan – given its size, economic potential, and geographically important location – is also deserving of prudent international backing and especially of sustained economic assistance. In time, economic growth in Kazakstan might help to bridge the ethnic split that makes this Central Asian “shield” so vulnerable to Russian pressure⁵.

2 Z. Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard: American dominance and its geostrategic imperatives*, New York 1997, p. 48.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Zbigniew Brzezinski recognized Eurasia as the chief geopolitical prize for America, given that its global primacy is directly dependent on how long and how effectively its preponderance on the Eurasian continent is sustained. Therefore, Eurasia is placed at the centre of American geopolitical strategic interests, since Brzezinski believed that global affairs were always dominated by the relations within this particular region. Thus, he emphasized that the US's fundamental geopolitical interest is to prevent the emergence of any more influential or even dominant power in Eurasia. Brzezinski was particularly interested in the geopolitical significance of Ukraine that derives from its vital geostrategic point between Europe and Asia. He emphasized that Ukraine represents a substantial actor in ensuring the ascendancy within the Eurasian region. Furthermore, Brzezinski recognized the importance of Ukraine's role in the geopolitical game on the "Eurasian chessboard" since he argued that Russia without Ukraine ceases to be a "Eurasian empire" and would have become a predominantly Asian imperial state. In addition, Brzezinski stated that if Russia restores control over Ukraine, with its around 45 million people, major resources and access to the Black Sea, then Russia automatically regains the wherewithal to become a powerful imperial state, spanning Europe and Asia. Therefore, without Ukraine, Russia's strategic geopolitical objectives and a tendency for regional hegemony, based on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or the Eurasia platform, are not likely to be achieved. In terms of a geopolitical realm, Brzezinski, on the grounds of Mackinder's theory⁶, distinctly indicated the resounding importance of Ukraine for the clash of great powers interests in Eurasia, which was genuinely confirmed with their involvement and the intensity of the crisis. Hence, in order to understand the substance of this subject matter, it is important to determine and present the geopolitical incentives of external actors that had the most prominent impact on the Ukrainian crisis. On the other hand, particularly important in the analysis of the Ukrainian crisis are the impacts of external factors that are predominantly geopolitical in nature.

6 H.J. Mackinder, *The geographical pivot of history*, "The Geographical Journal" 1904, vol. 23, no. 4; *Democratic ideals and reality. A study in the politics of reconstruction*, National Defence University Press, 1996.

Thus, the Ukrainian strategic geographic position, energy resources, and significance as a transit country for energy, along with its importance for relations between Russia and the West, imply that the crisis contains a geopolitical logic that has to be thoroughly addressed⁷.

Ukraine is today's Eurasian and European geopolitical laboratory. Eastern Europe may well be considered the contemporary "pivot area". While Ukraine's independence affects the nature of Russia's state itself, it is for the US the critical state among key Eurasian and European geopolitical pivots⁸. Geopolitical pivots being defined as "states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players"⁹, such as Russia¹⁰.

Geopolitical pivots are the states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and from the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behaviour of geostrategic players. Most often, geopolitical pivots are determined by their geography, which in some cases gives them a special role either in defining access to important areas or in denying resources to a significant player. In some cases, a geopolitical pivot may act as a defensive shield for a vital state or even a region. Sometimes, the very existence of a geopolitical pivot can be said to have very significant political and cultural consequences for a more active neighbouring geostrategic player. The identification of the post-Cold War key Eurasian geopolitical pivots, and protecting them, is thus also a crucial aspect of America's global geostrategy¹¹.

Having "the capacity and the national will to exercise power or influence beyond [its] borders in order to alter – to a degree that affects America's interests – the existing geopolitical state of affairs", Rus-

7 S. Orlandic, *Geopolitical perspective of the Russian Federation and Brzezinski's readings of Ukrainian crisis*, "Journal of Liberty and International Affairs" 2018, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 12.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

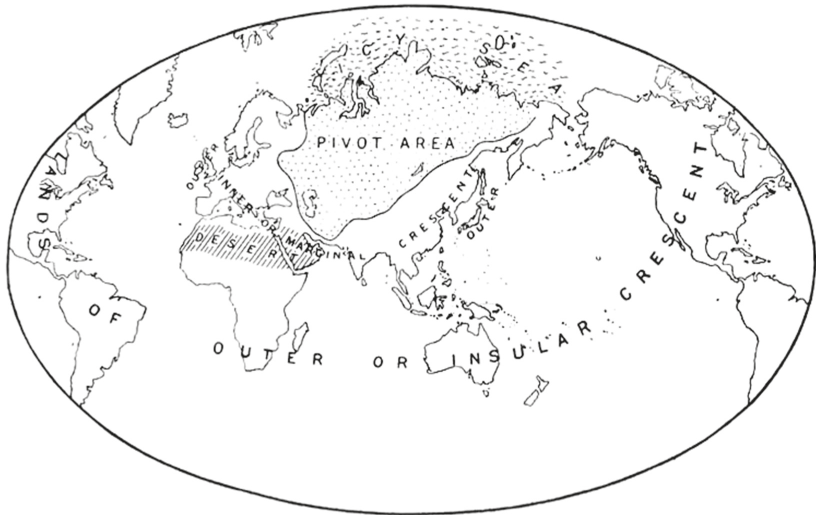
9 *Ibid.*

10 B. Didier, *The Ukraine crisis or the revival of the Grand Chessboard's geopolitics: Euro-Atlantic response to Russia's assault*, "Open Diplomacy" 2016, p. 2, <https://www.open-diplomacy.eu/blog/the-ukraine-crisis-or-the-revival-of-the-grand-chessboard-s-geopolitics> [24.07.2017].

11 Z. Brzezinski, *The Great Chessboard...*, p. 40.

sia looks for regional hegemony and the recognition of its power on the international stage, and its interests are susceptible to confrontation with those of the US. Thus, Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 could be explained by its will to regain its status as a Eurasian empire and thereby, the Ukraine conflict is mostly seen as a campaign for Eurasia¹².

Map 1. Historical geopolitics: the importance of Eurasia



Source: J. Anderson, *The contemporary geopolitics series: Eurasia, politics and governance Russia and Central Asia*, 24 February 2015; <https://www.glimpsefromtheglobe.com/topics/politics-and-governance/contemporary-geopolitics-series-eurasia/> [24.02.2015].

Western analysts see Russia's 2022 invasion as the culmination of the renewed geopolitical great-powers rivalry in Europe, and the Kremlin's growing resentment toward NATO's post-Cold War expansion into the former Soviet "sphere of influence". Russian leaders, including V. Putin, have alleged that the United States and NATO repeatedly violated pledges they made in the early 1990s to not expand the alliance into the former Soviet bloc. They view NATO's enlargement during this tumultuous period for Russia as a humiliating imposi-

¹² J. Masters, *Ukraine: Conflict at the crossroads of Europe and Russia*, Council on Foreign Relations, 14 February 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia> [14.02.2023].

tion about which they could do little but watch. While in the United States, political leaders talk about a Ukraine crisis, from the Russian standpoint this is a crisis in European security architecture. From the Russian perspective, the fundamental issue – they want to negotiate – is the revision of European security architecture as it now stands to something that is more favourable to Russian interests. Other experts have said that perhaps the most important motivating factor for Putin was his fear that Ukraine would continue to develop into a modern anti-Russian state, a Western-style democracy that would inevitably undermine his autocratic regime in Russia and dash his hopes of rebuilding a Russia-led sphere of influence in Eastern Europe¹³. In his speech made in Washington, DC at a dinner organized by the USACC (U.S.-Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce) on 15 February 2000 to honour President Heydar Aliyev's visit to the U.S. – Brzezinski pointed out:

The present Russian leadership is clearly attempting to re-establish a Russian sphere of influence throughout most of the space of the former Soviet Union. Note that I emphasize a "sphere of influence" – not re-establishment of the old Soviet Union – but a "sphere of influence". Unfortunately, this priority of establishing a "sphere of influence" interprets the presence and access between the outside world and that region as a threat to its own interests. These goals have been explicitly stated by a number of contemporary Russian leaders¹⁴.

According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Russian Federation has been described as a revanchist power, keen to regain its former power and prestige¹⁵. It was always V. Putin's goal to restore Russia to the status of a great power in Europe and northern Eurasia. To Russian President Vladimir Putin, the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century. The end goal was not to re-create the Soviet Union but to make Russia great again. By seizing Crimea in 2014, Russia solidified its control of a strategic foothold on

13 Ibid.

14 Z. Brzezinski, *Geopolitically speaking Russia's "sphere of influence" – Chechnya and beyond*, "Azerbaijan International" 2000, vol. 8, no. 1, p. 24, http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/81_folder/81_articles/81_brzezinski.html [23.09.2023].

15 Z. Brzezinski, *A geostrategy for Eurasia*, "Foreign Policy", September/October 1997, vol. 76, no. 5, p. 56.

Map 2. Russia's sphere of influence**Political discontent in Russia's former Soviet territory****Belarus**

Violent repression of those opposed to the Lukashenko regime has continued since the August 2020 presidential election.

Ukraine

For much of 2021, Russian forces have massed near Ukraine's border, creating tension between the two countries.

Kazakhstan

Protests break out in this resource-rich country of 19 million over its political system and dramatic energy price hikes.



THE WASHINGTON POST

Source: I. Khurshudyan, *Putin dreams of a Russian sphere of influence. Kazakhstan's protesters are the latest to push back*, "The Washington Post", 8 January 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/08/russia-putin-kazakhstan/> [8.01.2022].

the Black Sea. With a larger and more sophisticated military presence there, Russia can project power deeper into the Mediterranean, Middle East, and North Africa, where it has traditionally had limited influence. Throughout that year, Russia amassed tens of thousands of troops along the border with Ukraine and later into allied Belarus under the auspices of military exercises. In February 2022, Putin ordered a full-scale invasion, crossing a force of some two hundred thousand troops into Ukrainian territory from the south (Crimea), east (Russia), and north (Belarus), in an attempt to seize major cities, including the capital Kyiv, and depose the government. Putin said the broad goals were to de-Nazify and de-militarize Ukraine¹⁶.

16 J. Masters, op. cit.

2. Ukraine is a major obstacle to Russian imperialism and the key state in the future evolution of international order

Zbigniew Brzezinski, in "Foreign Affairs" in early 1994, described a healthy and stable Ukraine as a critical counterweight to Russia and the lynchpin of what he advocated should be the new U.S. grand strategy after the Cold War. It cannot be stressed strongly enough that without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire, he wrote¹⁷. In the months after Brzezinski's article was published, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia pledged via the Budapest Referendum to respect Ukraine's independence and sovereignty in return for it becoming a non-nuclear state. Twenty years later, as Russian forces seized Crimea, restoring and strengthening Ukraine's sovereignty re-emerged as a top U.S. and EU foreign policy priority. Following the 2022 invasion, U.S. and NATO allies dramatically increased defensive, economic, and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine as well as ramped up their sanctions on Russia. However, Western leaders have been careful to avoid actions they believe will draw their countries into the war or otherwise escalate it, which could, in the extreme, pose a nuclear threat¹⁸. It should be emphasized that the current conflict in Ukraine shouldn't come as a surprise. Former US National Security Advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, and Henry Kissinger, and even George Kennan, architect of Cold War *containment* strategy, warned that expanding NATO would result in a new Cold War, probably ending in a hot one. Underpinning Brzezinski, Scowcroft, Kissinger, and Kennan's analysis is the fact that Russia considers – particularly Eastern Europe – to be its sphere of influence, whether because many of the states in Eastern Europe were part of the Russian Empire, and then the Soviet Union, or were members of the Warsaw Pact. Russia also has a clear security interest in controlling or de-politicising a corridor that has, historically, been used to attack it¹⁹.

17 Z. Brzezinski, *The premature partnership*, "Foreign Affairs", March/April 1994, vol. 73, no. 2.

18 J. Masters, *op. cit.*

19 O. Villar, *Great power competition in Ukraine amidst the emerging US-China rivalry*, "E-International Relations", March 2022, p. 2, <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/03/09/great-power-competition-in-ukraine-amidst-the-emerging-us-china-rivalry/> [9.03.2022].

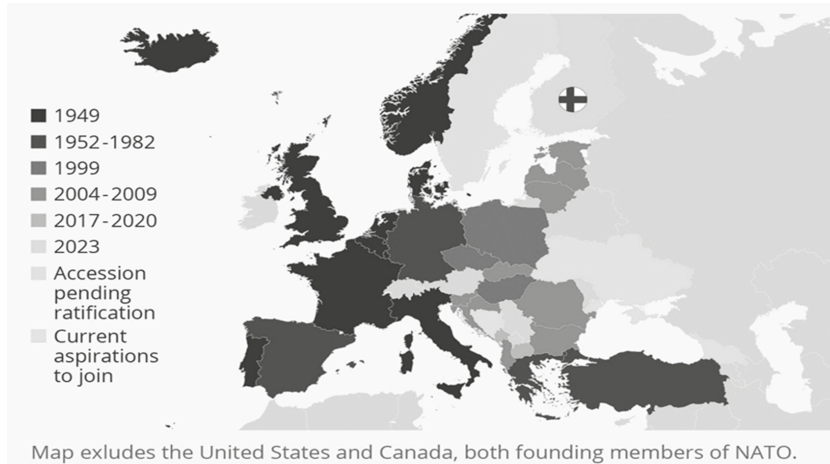
Z. Brzezinski was correct that Russia could still cause great problems for Ukraine, and evidently a “Finlandized Ukraine” seems to Brzezinski a reasonable price to pay to avoid potential chaos. What’s more, writing in the *Financial Times* (24 February 2014), Zbigniew Brzezinski explicitly endorsed the *Finlandization of Ukraine*²⁰, in his opinion piece – *Russia needs a “Finland option” for Ukraine* – as a prerequisite for Ukraine making a peaceful (or relatively peaceful) transition into the European fold:

The US could and should convey clearly to Mr Putin that it is prepared to use its influence to make certain a truly independent and territorially undivided Ukraine will pursue policies towards Russia similar to those so effectively practised by Finland: mutually respectful neighbours with wide-ranging economic relations with Russia and the EU; no participation in any military alliance viewed by Moscow as directed at itself but expanding its European connectivity. This Finlandization of Ukraine would be necessary because Russia can still plunge Ukraine into a destructive and internationally dangerous civil war. It can prompt and then support the secession of Crimea and some of the industrial eastern portions of the country²¹.

The war in Ukraine plays a transformative role in the evolution of the international order in the 21st century. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also sharpened the commitment of Western governments to a liberal vision of international order. Many states, particularly in the Global South, regard the rules-based order as an artificial Western construct, and the Ukraine war as a matter of geopolitics rather than norms and principles. Events in Ukraine have reinforced Washington’s

20 A week before Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger argued in the “*Washington Post*” that Ukraine emulate Finland so as not to antagonize Russia. “That nation leaves no doubt about its fierce independence and cooperates with the West in most fields but carefully avoids institutional hostility toward Russia”, Kissinger wrote. The most recent *eminence grise* to proffer “Finlandization” as a compromise solution to the Ukraine crisis has been “*Washington Post*” columnist David Ignatius. President Vladimir Putin, Ignatius wrote – “may be ready to accept a neutral country, between East and West, where Russia’s historical interests are recognized”. J. Kirchick, *Finlandization is not a solution for Ukraine*, “*The American Interest*”, 27 July 2014, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2014/07/27/finlandization-is-not-a-solution-for-ukraine/> [27.07.2014].

21 Z. Brzezinski, *Russia needs to be offered a “Finland option” for Ukraine*, “*Financial Times*”, 24 February 2014, <https://www.ft.com/content/e855408c-9bf6-11e3-afe3-00144feab7de> [24.02.2014].

Map 3. NATO's expanding membership

Source: K. Buchholz, *Turkey makes way for Sweden's NATO accession*, Statista, 12 July 2023, <https://www.statista.com/chart/26674/european-countries-by-year-of-joining-nato/> [12.07.2023].

views about two competing visions of global order – one democratic, the other autocratic. However, such binarism has little resonance beyond the West. For the Global South, the divide that matters is with the Global North. This is not only about relative influence and status in the international system but also diverging priorities. A rules-based international order is achievable, but not as commonly imagined in the West. The United States is still the pre-eminent power, but international power and authority have become much more diffuse. The template of unalloyed US global leadership and Western-dominated multilateral institutions has lost legitimacy and is no longer tenable. A rules-based international order is still feasible, but it will need to be much more representative and global²².

From this perspective, Zbigniew Brzezinski's thoughts on the evolution of the international order in the 21st century, appear very interesting:

The fact is that there has never been a truly “dominant” global power until the emergence of America on the world scene. Imperial Great Britain came close to becoming one, but World War I and lat-

²² B. Lo, *The Ukraine effect: Demise or rebirth of the global order?*, Lowy Institute, 11 May 2023, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/ukraine-effect-demise-or-rebirth-global-order> [11.05.2023].

er World War II not only bankrupted it but also prompted the emergence of rival regional powers. The decisive new global reality was the appearance on the world scene of America as simultaneously the richest and militarily the most powerful player. During the latter part of the 20th century, no other power even came close. That era is now ending. While no state is likely in the near future to match America's economic-financial superiority, new weapons systems could suddenly endow some countries with the means to commit suicide in a joint tit-for-tat embrace with the United States, or even to prevail. Without going into speculative detail, the sudden acquisition by some state of the capacity to render America militarily inferior would spell the end of America's global role. The result would most probably be global chaos. And that is why it behoves the United States to fashion a policy in which at least one of the two potentially threatening states becomes a partner in the quest for regional and then wider global stability, and thus in containing the least predictable but potentially the most likely rival to overreach. Currently, the more likely to overreach is Russia, but in the longer run it could be China²³. (...) Historically, America has shown that it rises to the occasion when challenged. But the world of the twenty-first century presents far different challenges than those in the past. The world is now almost everywhere politically awakened-with millions stirring restlessly in pursuit of a better future. It is also experiencing the dispersal of global power-with several new aspirants rapidly rising in the East. Consequently, today's world is much less susceptible to domination by a single power, even by one as militarily powerful and politically influential as the United States. But, since America is not yet Rome and China is not yet its Byzantium, a stable global order ultimately depends on America's ability to renew itself and to act wisely as the promoter and guarantor of a revitalized West and as the balancer and conciliator of a rising new East²⁴.

23 Z. Brzezinski, *Toward a Global Realignment. As its era of global dominance ends, the United States needs to take the lead in realigning the global power architecture*, "The American Interest", 17 April 2016, vol. 11, no. 6, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2016/04/17/toward-a-global-realignment/> [17.04.2016].

24 Z. Brzezinski, *Strategic vision. America and the crisis of global power*, New York 2012, pp. 259-260.

Map 4. Sphere of influence in a multipolar world

Source: N. Schaffer, *What is a sphere of influence and how to leverage one for business*, <https://nealschaffer.com/what-is-a-sphere-of-influence/> [27.10.2023].

Conclusions

Zbigniew Brzezinski is drawn to Ukraine not only by political sympathies but also by family ties. His father was buried in the Lviv region, and he himself became an honorary citizen of Lviv. Understanding the potentially important role Ukraine could play in Europe, he has been a leading advocate of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation. As an independent and sober analyst, he understood completely the ambivalence of Ukraine's place on the international scene, that while winning broad recognition after independence, it has still to find its place in the world, wavers between East and West, and finds its place with neither.

Zbigniew Brzezinski believed the US was tardy in recognizing Ukraine's geopolitical importance. At the same time, since the seventeenth century, Ukraine has had a tradition of political double-dealing, often with catastrophic consequences for the nation. As always, Brzezinski was blunt, pointing out that a problem exists of Ukraine's very self-determination as an independent state. Immediately espied are differences in principle between Brzezinski's views and those of the architects of Ukrainian foreign policy. While the latter announced a so-called multidirectional course in foreign policy, Brzezinski believed that Ukraine has only two real alternatives: integration into the CIS and with it a return to its traditional dependence on Russia or firmly setting out to become a Central European state and full-fledged mem-

ber of the world community. He found it obvious that this depends, above all, on the progress and content of economic reform and political democratization in Ukraine.

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Marian Kopczewski*

Armed conflicts and state security through the prism of the war in Ukraine

Konflikty zbrojne a bezpieczeństwo państwa przez pryzmat wojny na Ukrainie

Abstract: In recent years, we have seen a wide range of forms of armed conflict, varying in scale, intensity, complexity, and duration, blurring the lines between war and peace. These and other conditions were the reason for undertaking research aimed at identifying scenarios for the development of the international security situation and scenarios for the use of the Polish Armed Forces in relation to threats of a military nature in our country's neighbourhood, in the region, and across the world. With this in mind, while conducting research on the above-mentioned issues, the article focused attention on a research problem which took the form of a question: How does the development of military threats and potential armed conflicts, including the one in Ukraine, affect the shaping of state security? The hypothesis took the form of an assumption that military threats and, consequently, armed conflicts are one of the main determinants of shaping state security. In the face of the threat of an armed conflict, states take actions to ensure their security, in particular, political, organisational, and modernisation activities, and above all, to increase their defence potential in view of war.

The research was conducted in military universities, and the general population (N) included research and teaching staff. The research tool was a questionnaire posted on the MS Teams online platform, which is also used to educate students at military universities.

Keywords: security, research, conflicts, scenarios, forecasts

Streszczenie: W ostatnich latach mamy do czynienia z szerokim spektrum form konfliktów zbrojnych, różniących się m.in. skalą, intensywnością, złożonością i czasem trwania oraz zacieraniem się granic między wojną a pokojem. Te i inne uwarunkowania były powodem podjęcia badań, których celem było zidentyfikowanie scenariuszy rozwoju sytuacji bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego i scenariuszy użycia Sił Zbrojnych RP w odniesieniu do zagrożeń o charakterze militarnym w sąsiedztwie naszego kraju, w regionie oraz na świecie. Mając powyższe na uwadze, prowadząc badania nad wyżej wymienioną problematy-

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ką w artykule skupiono uwagę na problemie badawczym, który przyjął formę pytania: Jak rozwój zagrożeń militarnych oraz potencjalne konflikty zbrojne, w tym na Ukrainie, wpływają na kształtowanie bezpieczeństwa państwa? Hipoteza przyjęła natomiast formę założenia, że: zagrożenia o charakterze militarnym, a w konsekwencji konflikty zbrojne, stanowią jeden z głównych determinantów kształtowania bezpieczeństwa państwa. Państwa, które w obliczu zagrożenia wystąpienia konfliktu zbrojnego podejmują działania zmierzające do zapewnienia swojego bezpieczeństwa, są to zwłaszcza działania o charakterze politycznym, organizacyjnym, modernizacyjnym, a przede wszystkim zmierzające do zwiększenia swojego potencjału obronnego w obliczu wojny. Badania prowadzono w uczelniach wojskowych, a populacja generalna (N) objęła kadrę naukowo-dydaktyczną. Narzędzie badawcze stanowił kwestionariusz ankiety zamieszczony na platformie internetowej MS Teams, wykorzystywanej również w kształceniu studentów uczelni wojskowych.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo, badania, konflikty, scenariusze, prognozy

Introduction

There are around 200 countries in the world and several times that number of ethnic, national, and tribal groups. States and groups have their own interests and goals, which can be either common or divergent. If a group of entities has common interests and goals, they often cooperate. If there is a divergence of interests and goals, a conflict, war, or an international dispute may arise. According to those criteria¹:

- war means the breaking of peaceful relations between states and the transition to war relations. However, a state of war does not necessarily imply the automatic conduct of military actions.
- an armed conflict is a situation when armed force is used between the parties. This means that conflicts include all manifestations of armed struggle. The cause of conflicts is the divergence of interests and goals of given entities. However, not every divergence of interests leads to armed conflict. It occurs when the parties are unable to or unwilling to reconcile peacefully. One can find the sources of armed conflict in economic, political, or ideological factors.
- an international dispute, when the confrontation between the parties is carried out by methods other than armed struggle, e.g., using economic, diplomatic, or informational means.

¹ Developed based on: M. Kopczewski, *Konflikty zbrojne jako główny determinant bezpieczeństwa państwa. Element do uczelnianego projektu Model III Wojna Światowa Delta*, expert opinion, Wrocław 2021.

In 2014, the international community witnessed the development of a multifaceted armed conflict on the eastern borders of the European Union. The armed conflict between two countries in Europe ended the period of relative peace on the European continent. For the first time in a long while, Europe witnessed open interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, open aggression of one state against another, violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the changing of borders as a result of annexation and violation of international law. This was a clear undermining of the international order and the principles of international law (i.a., included in the Charter of the United Nations and in the CSCE/OSCE Final Act,) by the Russian Federation (RF).

Since the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the Kremlin's goal has been to prevent Ukraine from integrating with the West. The brutal war forced over a dozen million people to leave their homes and killed over 100,000 soldiers and civilians from Ukraine and over 120,000 from the RF. Despite many internal problems, Ukraine is gradually integrating with the European Union (DCFTA Agreement) and the North Atlantic Alliance². The Kremlin is putting pressure on Ukraine to force it to implement Russia's interpretation of the agreements and thus grant the so-called separatist republics broad political and economic autonomy. At the same time, Russia has consistently blamed Ukraine for the situation in the Donbas claiming, contrary to the obvious facts, that it is not involved in the conflict; heroic Ukraine has resisted Russian pressure so far. In any case, the war has lasted over a year, and there is every reason to believe that this temporary period will extend beyond the limits of another year. Therefore, it is natural to start thinking about future prospects now, and we are doing so not only in the form of forecasts and assumptions. It is quite logical that, in addition to exciting theoretical discussions, there is an entirely utilitarian side of the search for an answer to that question; the answer is the research carried out by the Polish Armed Forces, which is presented in this article.

2 D. Szkoluda, M. Strzoda, *Cooperation of the Territorial Defense Forces with a non-military system during armed conflict*, "Scientific Journal of the Military University of Land Forces" 2020, vol. 198, no. 4, p. 894.

The starting point of the conducted research was the assumption formulated in the “Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland” in 2017, according to which, regardless of the diverse visions of military development that may appear in a democratic state, the government of the Republic of Poland should be able to conduct a defence policy based on reliable data analysis³. To this end, actions have been and will be taken to build expert teams within the Ministry of National Defence as well as to integrate the knowledge of different public and non-public institutions.

As a consequence of the research, the adopted variant of threats and the development of the international security situation leads to the identification of possible scenarios for the use and operation of the armed forces and, consequently, the determination of the needs within their operational capabilities. In a further stage, this translates into a comprehensive identification of activities in the field of acquiring the desired capabilities in relation to their individual components, i.e., doctrines, the structure of the armed forces (individual military units), training, personnel, the competence of commanders, equipment and armaments, infrastructure, and interoperability.

In the course of the research, the team’s knowledge was developed and skills were gained in identifying scenarios that make it possible to describe⁴:

1. Possible events concerning the international security environment and the development of the armed forces, taking into account internal and external factors;
2. The state of the environment, the possible strength of the impact of particular environmental factors on the armed forces, and the probability of their occurrence;
3. The environment of a particular element (type) of the armed forces and the factors affecting it;
4. Scenarios of processes in the environment.

The results of the research were presented during scientific conferences attended by individual members of the research team.

3 The Ministry of National Defence, *Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw 2017, p. 67.

4 K. Wizimirska-Napora, *Modelowanie rozwiązań konfliktów międzynarodowych w świetle rozważań nad bezpieczeństwem*, Poznań 2021.

1. Characteristics of the respondents (the research sample)

In the research project, a quantitative research method was used in the form of a diagnostic survey method performed using the technique of auditorium survey research. The research tool was a survey sheet in electronic form posted on the MS Teams platform, and the respondents were officers.

The purpose of the survey research was to collect the opinion of a large group of representatives of Polish Army officers on the possible (probable) actions of the Russian Federation towards the former socialist bloc countries and the capabilities that the Polish Armed Forces should have to be able to face possible threats from the Russian Federation. The size of the research sample (120) was selected using a purposive method.

The survey consisted of closed questions (20 in total), including conjunctive (with the possibility of choosing several answers) and disjunctive ones (with the possibility of choosing one answer). In some questions, the respondents could choose the option “other” (indicating their own answers). There were five questions concerning personal information. To illustrate the results of the analysis of the answers to individual questions in a more effective way, various types of charts were used:

- quantitative distribution of the number/categories of individual responses;
- the percentage of the number/category of individual responses, including the number of respondents.

In each case, the number of respondents who answered a question (“N”) was given; in the presented material, due to the volume limitations of the article, the most important research results affecting the research problem are presented.

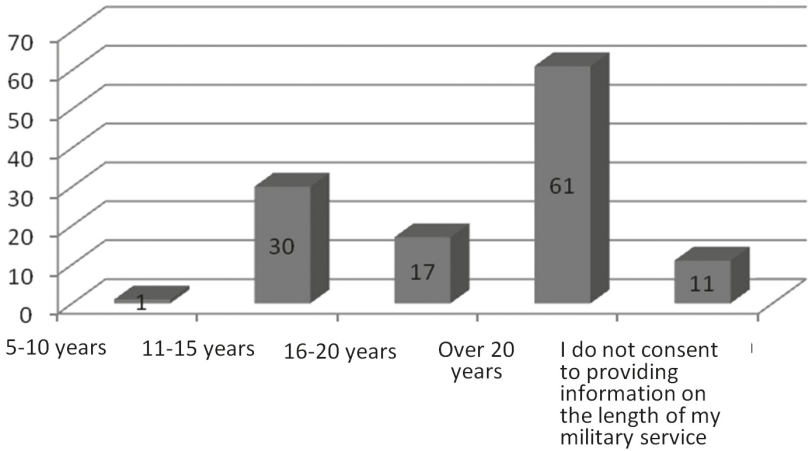
2. Analysis of survey responses

Analysis of responses to the questions concerning personal information

One of the analysed characteristics of the respondents was the length of military service. This question was answered by 91% of the respond-

ents. 11 officers did not agree to disclose the length of their military service. The results are presented in Figure 1.

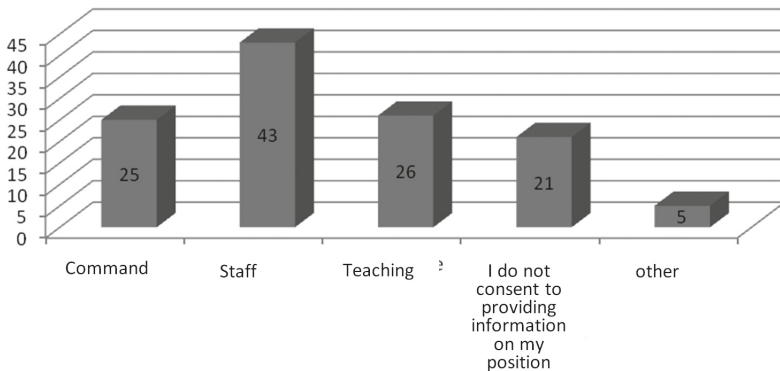
Figure 1. Characteristics of the study population in terms of the length of military service (N=109)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Another analysed characteristic of the respondents was their position. This question was answered by 82% of the respondents. 21 officers did not agree to provide information on their position. The results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Characteristics of the study population in terms of position (N=99)



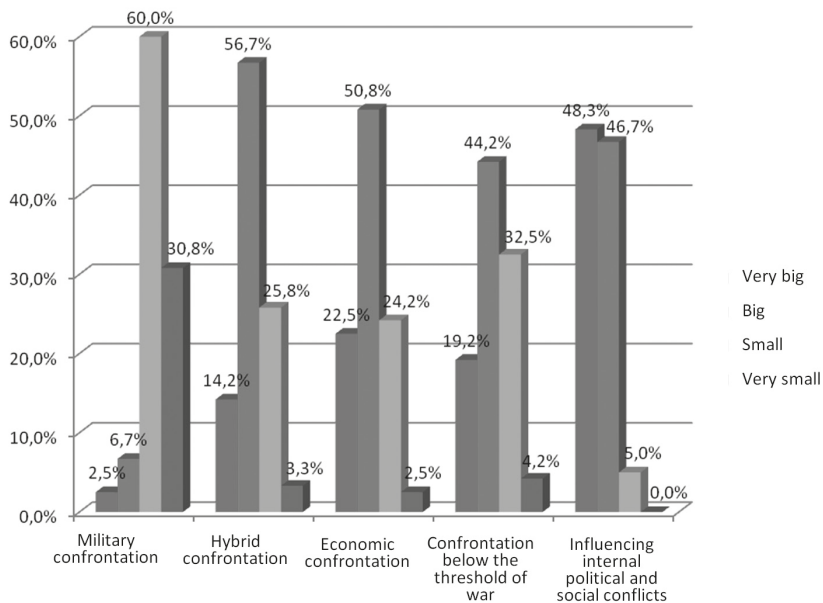
Source: Author's own elaboration.

The fourth analysed characteristic of the respondents was the type of represented Armed Forces. This question was answered by 87% of the respondents. 16 officers did not agree to specify what kind of Armed Forces they represented. The results are presented in Figure 4.

Analysis of the responses from the main part of the survey

One of the questions in the survey concerned the likelihood of the Russian Federation to seek a confrontation with the countries forming the eastern flank of NATO. The question was answered by all respondents, and the percentage results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Percentage scale of answers given to the question: "In your opinion, how likely is it for the Russian Federation to seek confrontation with the countries forming the eastern flank of NATO" (N=120)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Indicating the possible scenario of the Russian Federation's actions towards the countries forming the eastern flank of NATO, the respondents selected the following most likely scenarios:

1. Influencing internal political and social conflicts – 95% (48.3% very high probability and 46.7% high probability).
2. Economic confrontation – 73.3% (22.5% and 50.8% respectively);

3. Confrontation of a hybrid nature – 70.9% (14.2% and 56.7% respectively);
4. Confrontation different from war – 63.4% (19.2% and 44.2% respectively).

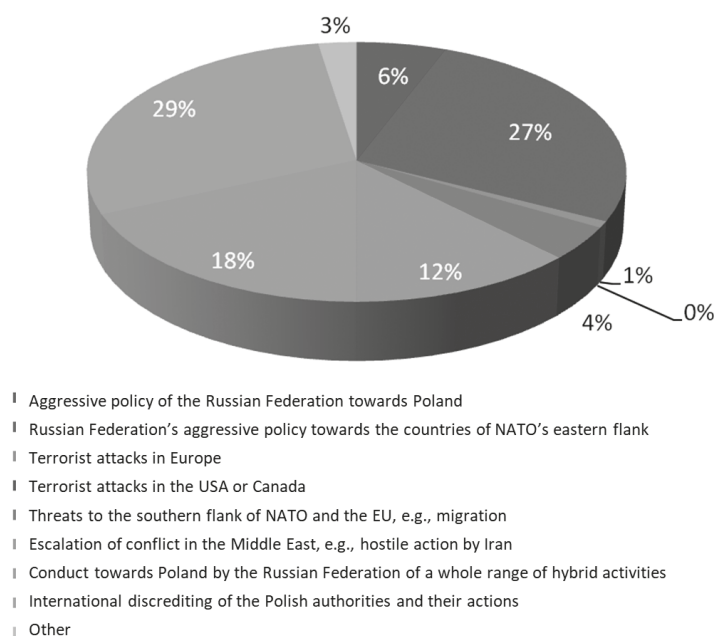
At the other extreme of probability, there is military confrontation, and only 9.2% of the respondents indicated that the probability was very high (2.5%) or high (6.7%).

In the next question of the survey, the respondents had to indicate the probability of the Russian Federation taking action against the countries that form the eastern flank of NATO. This question, as the previous ones, was answered by all respondents who indicated possible goals of the Russian Federation with regard to the countries of NATO's eastern flank:

1. Information chaos and disinformation – 96.6% (50.8% very high probability and 45.8% high probability);
2. Destabilisation of the political situation – 91.7% (30.0% and 61.7%, respectively);
3. Discrediting in the international arena – 82.5% (22.5% and 60.0% respectively);
4. Undermining the unity of NATO – 80.8% (23.3% and 57.5% respectively);
5. Influencing political decisions of a given country – 77.5% (19.2% and 58.3% respectively);
6. Destabilisation of the economic situation – 75.8% (20.0% and 55.8% respectively);
7. Restricting access to energy resources – 60.8% (20.8% and 40.0% respectively);
8. Creation of conflicts of an ethnic nature – 60.0% (10.8% and 49.2% respectively).

In the next question, the respondents were asked to indicate the most likely scenario of the development of the international security situation. The question was answered by 100% of the respondents, the results on a percentage scale are presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Percentage scale of responses to question 8: "What, in your opinion, is the most likely scenario of the development of the international security situation?" (N=120)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

Indicating the possible scenarios of the development of the international security situation, the respondents selected the following:

Discrediting the Polish authorities and their actions in the international arena – 29%;

Aggressive policy of the Russian Federation towards the countries that form NATO's eastern flank – 27%;

Hybrid actions against Poland – 18%;

Escalation of the conflict in the Middle East, e.g., hostile actions of Iran – 12%;

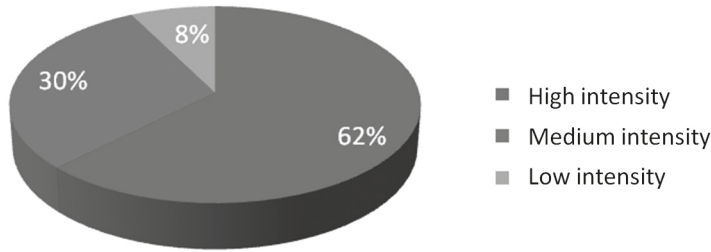
Aggressive policy of the RF towards Poland – 6%;

Other actions – 3%;

Terrorist attacks in Europe – 1%.

In the next question of the survey, the respondents were asked to express their opinion as to whether the Polish Armed Forces should be prepared to conduct high-, medium-, or low-intensity military operations. The question was answered by 100% of the respondents, and the percentage results are presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Percentage scale of responses to question 15: "In your opinion, should the Polish Armed Forces be prepared to conduct military operations?" (N=120)



Source: Author's own elaboration.

When indicating the intensity of operations that the Polish Armed Forces should be prepared to conduct, the respondents pointed to:

- High intensity – 62%;
- Medium intensity – 30%;
- Low intensity – 8%.

The results obtained in this respect contradict the determination of the potential nature of actions in cyberspace unless the intensity of actions is currently not associated only with the kinetic impact but also the intensity of the conducted actions – regardless of the battle space.

In the next question of the survey, the respondents were asked to indicate the actions that should be taken in response to the hostile activities of the Russian Federation. This question was answered by 100% of the respondents. When indicating actions that should be taken as a response to the hostile activities of the Russian Federation, the respondents selected the following:

- Modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces – 19%;
- Creation of cyber forces – 15%;
- Development of anti-access capabilities – 13%;
- Development of international cooperation – 10%;
- Strengthening the international cooperation – 9%;
- Increasing the size of the Polish Armed Forces – 9%;
- Increasing the number of allied troops on the territory of Poland – 8%;
- Establishment of a permanent base of allied troops on the territory of Poland – 6%;
- Development of Territorial Defence Forces – 5%;

- Involving paramilitary organisations in the state defence system – 5%.

The obtained results indicate that the modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces, including the creation of cyber forces, should be the fundamental challenge for Poland.

The results of the survey made it possible to develop a scenario of the emergence and development of conflicts in the zone of Russia and its former republics (Table 1).

Table 1. Scenario of the emergence and development of conflicts in the zone of Russia and its former republics⁵

Threats/combat capability	Probability	
	high	low
<i>Actions of the Russian Federation towards the countries of the former socialist bloc</i>		
Method of commencement of military operations	No declaration of war	After declaration of war
Type of actions	Non-military hybrid activities	Total war
Type of armed forces	Special forces	Armoured and mechanised forces
Ways of fighting	Cyberspace activities	Weapon of mass destruction
Nature of confrontation	Military confrontation	
	Influencing internal political and social conflicts	
Activities to...	Create information chaos and disinformation	Create conflicts of an ethnic nature
Scenario of development of the security situation	Discrediting the Polish authorities and their actions in the international arena	Terrorist attacks in Europe
Time horizon	Medium (6-10 years)	Shorter (up to 5 years)
<i>Actions of the Polish Armed Forces against possible activities of the Russian Federation</i>		
Environment of military operations	Cyberspace	Large urban agglomerations
Determinants of defence effectiveness	Involvement of Allied troops	Structure of troops allocated to a defence operation
Type of kinetic actions	Hybrid actions (combination of conventional and unconventional actions)	Conventional combat actions (e.g., defence, attack, relief...)
Should the Polish Armed Forces have specially prepared troops (components, army) to conduct unconventional operations?	Yes	

5 Considered: National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation of 2 July 2021.

Non-kinetic actions	Cyberspace activities	Hybrid actions of a non-military nature e.g., demonstrations. . .
Non-kinetic forces for a defensive operation should be allocated by	Civilian NGOs supported by military units	Civilian NGOs
Intensity of action	High	Low
Poland's response to the hostile activities of the Russian Federation	Technical modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces (creation of cyber forces)	Inclusion of paramilitary organisations into the state defence system and development of the Territorial Defence Forces

Concept of use (implementation) of the obtained research results

The conducted research has shown that forecasting the future is an important element in shaping the future of the Polish Armed Forces. The development of knowledge and skills in the field of analytical work and creativity of the personnel (soldiers and civilian experts) leads to the creation of personnel potential capable of identifying and developing the operational capability of the armed forces in the context of meeting the challenges of the changing international security environment and the contemporary and future battle space (actions in crisis situations)⁶.

In the case of military universities, such activities are of particular importance as they involve both the formation of future officers and the development of their competence (more broadly personnel) at the subsequent stages of their (professional) careers.

Therefore, the learning programmes in military education should include as much content as possible related to innovation and creative thinking, which will result in more effective performance of tasks by future officers.

With the above in mind, the curricula and courses should include issues related to the identification of threats and the development of the international security situation, the methodology for identifying possible scenarios of the use and operation of the armed forces (or their components) and determining the needs within their operational capabilities. As a consequence, officers should be able to define activities in the field of obtaining the desired operational capabilities (in particular, the ability of troops to command, identify, protect and defend, destroy and provide logistic support), in relation to their individual components, i.e.:

⁶ Based on: The Ministry of National Defence, Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland...

- doctrines (instructions, regulations);
- structure of the armed forces (individual military units);
- training;
- personnel (their competence: knowledge, skills, experience);
- competence of commanders;
- equipment and armaments;
- infrastructure;
- interoperability.

With regard to the organisational dimension, the research results should be used to create research laboratories and analytical centres where research on the armed forces and their environment would be conducted, which would lead to the determination of, i.a.:

- possible events affecting the international security environment and the development of the armed forces, taking into account internal and external factors;
- environmental conditions and their scale and scope of impact on the armed forces;
- risk management, by identifying negative environmental factors and estimating the likelihood of their occurrence;
- opportunity management – identifying positive factors enabling the achievement of the objectives of the action;
- environment of a specific element of the armed forces (type of armed forces, type of troops, military unit) and factors affecting it;
- process scenarios in the environment and within the armed forces (individual units).

The obtained research results and the possibilities of their application presented above should also be used during analytical works performed as part of strategic operational reviews and in the process of programming the development of the Polish Armed Forces. In both processes, scenario methods leading to the identification of relevant future events are by all means applicable. As a consequence, those activities should result in the development of documents of a strategic nature such as the strategy for the development of the state defence system (or the defence concept) and the development programme for the Polish Armed Forces.

The effect of the conducted research should also be the preparation of appropriate teaching materials in the form of a methodology

and a manual presenting the course, methods, and results of activities undertaken to:

- identify the present and possible future threats to state security;
- identify scenarios of the development of international security situations and military threats in the vicinity of Poland, in the region of Central Europe, and in the world;
- identify scenarios of the possible use of the Polish Armed Forces in the event of both military and non-military threats;
- indicate actions to be taken adequately to the identified scenarios to improve state security.

To sum up – the implementation of the results of the research should contribute to building the analytical and conceptual capacity of the Ministry of National Defence in terms of the competence of its personnel and the possibility of cooperation in the international arena. While observing the war in Ukraine, we very often look through the prism of emotions, but when we put them aside, a completely different picture emerges. When we analyse what is going on behind the scenes of the conflict considered by most politicians a war, and especially the relations between states in the context of the response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, especially in the European Union, a picture of Europe and the world takes shape. First of all, some countries are breaking away from what we would call a unified European policy, which is what we would expect from the EU after the war broke out. If we look back at the actions of state governments, we will see how closely some of them cooperated with the president of Russia. The most important challenge for the Republic of Poland is to analyse and draw conclusions from the conflict/war in Ukraine and to allocate funds for the development of defence Critical Infrastructure necessary to counteract threats from the Russian Federation, bearing in mind the statements of the Ministry of National Defence: "Security has no price" and "Without a strong, numerous, well-trained and equipped army, there is no strong Poland".

The Russian Federation illegally annexed Crimea and launched full-scale aggression against Ukraine in February 2022⁷. The Russian

7 D. Sevastopulo, *Russia has asked China for military help in Ukraine, US officials say*, "Financial Times", 14 March 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/30850470-8c8c-4b53-aa39-01497064a7b7> [20.01.2023].

invasion resulted in unity among Western countries, unprecedented in previous years. The analysis of the current activities as part of the conflict in Ukraine (2014-2023)⁸ makes it possible to notice that the records in the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation about the conflict stages can be confirmed⁹; those are as follows:

1. Political, informational, and psychological rivalry implemented practically for years, which intensified in 2014, through “softening” the opponent, weakening his morale, reducing the will to fight and resist, and making the opponent responsible for worsening the situation.

2. Non-military and unconventional actions through sabotage actions, disinformation, propaganda, information warfare¹⁰.

3. Military actions, conducted through asymmetric-hybrid means, conflict – unconventional actions.

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5. Sevastopulo D., *Russia has asked China for military help in Ukraine, US officials say*, “Financial Times”, 14 March 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/30850470-8c8c-4b53-aa39-01497064a7b7>.
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9. A. Legucka, R. Kupiecki, *Disinformation, narratives and memory politics in Russia and Belarus*, London 2022.
10. National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation of 2 July 2021.
11. See D. Borecka-Biernat, K. Wajszczyk, K. Wałęcka-Matyja, *Rozwiązywanie sytuacji konfliktowych*, Warsaw 2022.

Oleksii Polegkyi*

Russian disinformation and propaganda before and after the invasion of Ukraine

Rosyjska dezinformacja i propaganda przed i po inwazji na Ukrainę

Abstract: Disinformation and propaganda are key aspects of Russia's war strategy as it uses the information environment to justify its actions in international politics, both domestically and abroad, and to coerce audiences into unwittingly supporting its actions. Russia, leading up to and throughout the conflict with Ukraine, brought the full scope of its propaganda apparatus to bear, leveraging overt and covert capabilities on both media and disinformation tools to justify the invasion and [attempt to] destroy international support for Ukraine. What kind of instruments, methods, and narratives has Russia used before and after its invasion of Ukraine?

The spread of disinformation by the Russian Federation prior to and after the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 as well as the actions taken in response by Ukraine, allied governments, and civil and international organizations provide an important perspective as well as lessons on how to counteract disinformation and propagandistic narratives.

Keywords: Russia, Ukraine, disinformation, propaganda, war

Streszczenie: Dezinformacja i propaganda są kluczowymi aspektami strategii wojennej Rosji, ponieważ wykorzystuje ona środowisko informacyjne do uzasadniania swoich działań w polityce międzynarodowej, zarówno w kraju, jak i za granicą, oraz do zmuszania odbiorców do nieświadomego wspierania jej działań. Rosja, prowadząc do konfliktu z Ukrainą i przez cały ten czas, wykorzystwała cały swój aparat propagandowy, wykorzystując jawne i tajne możliwości zarówno mediów, jak i narzędzi dezinformacyjnych, aby usprawiedliwić inwazję i zniszczyć międzynarodowe poparcie dla Ukrainy. Jakich instrumentów, metod i narracji używała Rosja przed i po inwazji na Ukrainę?

Szerzenie dezinformacji przez Federację Rosyjską przed i po inwazji na Ukrainę w lutym 2022 r., a także działania podjęte w odpowiedzi przez Ukrainę, sojusznicze rządy, organizacje pozarządowe i międzynarodowe przedstawiają ważną perspektywę i lekcje, jak przeciwdziałać dezinformacji i narracjom propagandowym.

Słowa kluczowe: Rosja, Ukraina, dezinformacja, propaganda, wojna

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Introduction

Since 2014, promoting Kremlin narratives outside the country and shaping public opinion about Russia and its actions has become a priority for the Russian propaganda machine in connection with its information warfare. Russia's efforts towards disinformation as part of its communication strategy are considered a form of hybrid warfare that adopts multiple instruments and is used throughout multiple channels¹. "Supported by state-controlled media and a broader 'eco-system' of pro-Kremlin media, Russian authorities have made concerted efforts to denigrate Ukraine, portray it as a threat to global security, and attack the international community for supporting Ukrainian sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence within its internationally recognized borders"².

The power of disinformation is strictly linked to the social impact it is able to articulate. Modern Russian propaganda focuses on disinformation campaigns that aim to fragment society and relativize information rather than promote a specific ideology. The goal is to undermine the foundations of rational perception and destroy social trust in the targeted countries. The Kremlin often exploits existing socio-political tensions to its advantage rather than creating new problems³.

Studies of Russian state-backed media platforms have shown that over 80% of Sputnik's and RT's coverage of European countries focuses on issues related to "conflict within politics and society, the failures of public bodies, or alienation within the democratic system"⁴. The migration crisis and terrorist attacks in Europe have been used by the Kremlin to criticize the "West" and incite hostility within EU countries, reinforcing the dichotomy of a "strong Russia" against a "weak, decadent West". For example, in Germany, public concern and inter-

- 1 L. Bennett, S. Livingston, *The disinformation order: Disruptive communication and the decline of democratic institutions*, "European Journal of Communication" 2018, no. 33(2), pp. 122-139.
- 2 *Disinformation about the current Russia-Ukraine conflict – seven myths debunked*, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/disinformation-about-current-russia-ukraine-conflict-seven-myths-debunked-2022-01-24_en [20.03.2023].
- 3 P. Pomerantsev, M. Weiss, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*, Institute of Modern Russia, New York 2014.
- 4 G. Ramsay, S. Robertshaw, *Weaponizing News: RT, Sputnik and Targeted Disinformation*, London 2019.

est in hostile information operations was caused by the “Lisa case”⁵, in which Russia tried to increase anti-immigrant sentiments. Brexit also gave Russia a chance to take advantage of anti-European sentiments and strengthen its illiberal allies.

1. Russian instruments of influence

1. Russian military doctrine views information warfare as a constant “war in peace” and creating hybrid threats is a key strategy. An essential aspect of Russian information and psychological operations is reflexive control, which is similar to the Chinese concept of “stratagems” and the American concept of “perception management”.

Contemporary Russian propaganda uses techniques from the Cold War era, adapted to the new reality and exploiting the potential of technology and mass media in ways that would have been unthinkable in Soviet times⁶. Modern Russian disinformation strategy is very much about the cognitive dimension⁷. Russia has embraced the concept of perpetual competition in the information environment and has created an ecosystem of disinformation and propaganda based on the use of diverse and overlapping approaches.

There are several important elements in the strategy of the Russian Federation in conducting information warfare; firstly, it is holistic and integrates both digital-technological and cognitive-psychological attacks. While military and digital sabotage is aimed at disrupting and destroying the managerial capacity of the state, psychological sabotage is aimed at misleading the victim, discrediting the leadership, and disorienting and demoralizing the population and armed forces. Second, it is unified, synchronizing the information struggle with military and political actions, and involving state and non-state actors such

5 S. Meister, *The “Lisa case”: Germany as a target of Russian disinformation*, “NATO Review” 2016, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2016/07/25/the-lisa-case-germany-as-a-target-of-russian-disinformation/index.html> [20.03.2023].

6 Ch. Paul, M. Matthews, *The Russian “Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It*, Rand Corp., 2016, p. 1, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE198.html> [20.02.2023].

7 C. Wagnsson, M. Lundström, *Ringing true? The persuasiveness of Russian strategic narratives*, “Media, War & Conflict”, 11 June 2022, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/17506352221101273> [20.03.2023].

as military, quasi-military, and non-military. Third, the information campaign is a continuous strategic effort, conducted in both “peacetime” and wartime, domestically and internationally, through various media and social networks⁸.

Russian disinformation and propaganda have some other distinctive features. Russian propaganda is produced in incredibly large volumes and is broadcast and distributed via a huge number of channels. According to some researchers, it is rapid, continuous, repetitive, and it lacks commitment to consistency⁹. Russian disinformation action is also very responsive to social and political events. Due to their lack of commitment to objective reality, Russian propagandists do not need to wait to check or verify facts, they just disseminate an interpretation of emergent events that appears to best favour their themes and objectives.

2. Russian disinformation attempts after February 2022

When writing about Russian propaganda, it is important to note that it has two main objectives: external and internal; used domestically to maintain support for Putin’s regime, build acceptance for war, and prepare the population for Western sanctions. After February 2022, the main focus of Kremlin propaganda within Russia was to present the invasion as a war with NATO, to rally support around Putin against the “existential threat to the Fatherland”, and to dehumanize Ukrainians.

One of the specific concerns regarding Russian propaganda and disinformation in Ukraine is that it is not always possible to distinguish propaganda targeted towards Russians in Russia, Russian speakers in Ukraine, or Ukrainians due to the use of the Russian language in both countries. Before 2022, Russian media, including cable TV and social media, were still influential in Ukraine.

The external use is to follow the Russian propaganda playbook of the four D’s: *dismissing, distorting, distracting, dismaying* the real image

8 See more O. Polegkyi, *Tackling Kremlin disinformation in the EU*, [in:] *Information wars against Ukraine and other European countries: Lithuania's experience in tackling propaganda*, Center for Public Diplomacy, Kyiv 2020, pp. 27-55.

9 Ch. Paul, M. Matthews, op. cit.

of the war and atrocities committed by the Russian army in Ukraine for foreign audiences¹⁰. With the first technique, *dismiss*, agents of disinformation seek to refute objective information that is unfavourable to them by using spurious arguments. For example, Russia's claims that Ukraine has committed atrocities against its own people in the Donbas region have no basis in fact. With the second technique, *distort*, agents of disinformation attempt to portray the facts in a different light. An example is Russia's description of the war in Ukraine as a "special operation". With the third technique, *distract*, Russia is using false information to try to shift the focus away from information unfavourable to itself. For example, the Russian government is portraying Ukraine as the aggressor or as an unjust state and claims that Ukraine is controlled by a neo-Nazi regime. Russia also claims that the international community's response to Russia's attack on Ukraine is motivated by "Russophobia". This is intended to distract attention from Russia's blatant violation of international law. The fourth technique, *dismay*, is used to create a climate of fear in the targeted countries and restrict their ability to counteract. As part of this technique, the Russian government is threatening further escalation, including a possible nuclear attack etc.

In the weeks and months leading up to Russia invading Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Kremlin employed false and misleading narratives to justify military action against Ukraine, mask the Kremlin's operational planning, and deny any responsibility for the coming war¹¹. Collectively, these narratives served as *casus belli* to engage in a war of aggression against Ukraine.

In order to justify this aggression, President Putin relied on long-standing concepts that had been propagated by the Kremlin for years¹². These included claims that Ukraine was created by Lenin and that its

10 B. Nimmo, *Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It, Stop Fake*, 19 May 2015, <https://bit.ly/3Eraton> [3.04.2023].

11 A. Carvin (ed.), *Narrative Warfare. How the Kremlin and Russian news outlets justified a war of aggression against Ukraine*, Atlantic Council, 2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Narrative-Warfare-Final.pdf> [29.03.2023].

12 V. Putin, *On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians*, 12 July 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> [20.03.2023].

present leadership consists of corrupt officials and Nazi sympathisers who have pushed the country towards ruin¹³.

From the beginning of the invasion, the Kremlin emphasized demoralizing Ukrainians and destroying their will to fight. The tactics used included so-called deepfake videos, forged documents to embarrass Ukrainian officials, and fake news suggesting that Ukraine would be conquered soon¹⁴. Pro-Kremlin narratives also used fear and intimidation tactics against Ukrainians, attempting to make them believe that Russia was unbeatable, and Ukraine's neighbours were untrustworthy. Ukraine's alleged use of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, or a "dirty bomb"¹⁵, is often highlighted by Russia as a diversionary tactic meant to deflect attention from Russian actions. Pro-Kremlin media and Telegram channels also promoted a narrative claiming Ukraine resold weapons donated by Western countries for profit etc.

The Russian campaign has also directly targeted the role of the European Union and NATO, misportraying them as alleged aggressive threats against Russia's "legitimate security concerns"¹⁶. In attempting to justify the attack on Ukrainian sovereignty, Russian propaganda usually portrays Ukraine as an object rather than a subject of international law. Since 2014, the Kremlin has propagated the myth that the Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity was a "coup d'état" that was not supported by the residents of Crimea or eastern and southern Ukraine, leading to a divide in Ukrainian society. These narratives are disseminated through all available tools, including top officials, TV channels, social networks, trolls, and bots.

The Russian government runs coordinated information campaigns on its own social media accounts. For example¹⁷, 75 Russian govern-

13 Idem, *Presidential Address to Federal Assembly*, Moscow, 21 February 2023, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/70565> [20.03.2023].

14 A. Wahlstrom et al., *The IO Offensive: Information Operations Surrounding the Russian Invasion of Ukraine*, 2022, <https://www.mandiant.com/resources/information-operations-surrounding-ukraine> [3.04.2023].

15 G. Sklariewska, *Brudna bomba shcho tse take i navishcho rosiya vygadala tsey fey*, Detector Media, 2022, <https://ms.detector.media/propaganda-ta-vplivi/post/30519/2022-10-26-brudna-bomba-shcho-tse-take-i-navishcho-rosiya-vygadala-tsey-feyk/> [29.03.2023].

16 *Disinformation about...*

17 J. Thompson, T. Graham, *Russian Government Accounts Are Using a Twitter Loophole to Spread Disinformation*, "The Conversation" 2022, <http://theconversation.com/russian-government-accounts-are-using-a-twitter-loophole-to-spread-disinformation-178001> [29.03.2023].

ment Twitter accounts, with 7.3 million followers garnering 35.9 million retweets, 29.8 million likes, and 4 million replies, tweeted 1,157 times between 25 February and 3 March 2022. Roughly 75% of the tweets covered Ukraine and many furthered disinformation narratives questioning Ukraine's status as a sovereign state, drawing attention to alleged war crimes by other countries, and spreading conspiracy theories. Russian government accounts have also been linked to "typosquatting" (registering websites with deliberately misspelt names of similarly named websites) of popular media containing false information.

At the same time, the means for spreading propaganda have changed. In 2014, the main channel of disinformation was Russian television, today it is social networks and websites. Yevhen Fedchenko (founder of STOPFAKE) believes that Ukrainian authorities did the right thing when they closed access to Russian TV and some Russian social platforms in Ukraine. He said "If Ukraine had not done this, then we would have the same situation as in 2014. This would mean that we would have complete information dominance of the enemy on Ukrainian territory"¹⁸.

To support and spread disinformation, Russia also used international organizations extensively, including the UN. Russian diplomatic missions began circulating some particularly fantastical lies. For example, that the United States was using Ukrainian laboratories to develop biological weapons¹⁹. In March and June 2022, Russia called for a meeting of the U.N. Security Council with its false allegations about Ukrainian laboratories developing biological weapons with the USA.

Another focus of the Kremlin's disinformation activities against Ukraine was co-opting fact-checking tropes to spread disinformation and distort the truth about its invasion of Ukraine, undermining the trustworthiness of fact-checking as an institution. The DFRLab²⁰ has

18 L. Shutyak, *Bytva za hromads ku dumku: yak Ukrayina voyuye z Rosiyeyu na informatsijnomu fronti*, explainer.ua, 23 May 2023, <https://explainer.ua/bitva-za-gromadsku-dumku-yak-ukrayina-voyuye-z-rosiyeyu-na-informatsijnomu-fronti/> [12.04.2023].

19 J. Parachini, *Debunking Russian Lies About Biolabs at Upcoming U.N. Meetings*, Rand Corp., 12 September 2022, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2022/09/debunking-russian-lies-about-biolabs-at-upcoming-un.html> [29.04.2023].

20 I. Dickinson, *How Russia employs fake fact-checking in its disinformation arsenal*, DFRLab, 4 May 2022, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/how-russia-employs-fake-fact-checking-in-its-disinformation-arsenal-b1790d5f5442> [29.04.2023].

analysed this tactic as Russia has identified its effectiveness in suppressing information on topics ranging from anti-war protests to war crimes. This involves a combination of different types of fact-checks: (1) true or partially true fact-checks; (2) fake fact-checks of real news; and (3) debunks of “Ukrainian disinformation” that was never actually spread by Ukraine. Fake fact-checking organizations were created, framing themselves as apolitical or independent, and they began releasing “analytical” content that was mainly fake²¹.

Russian government-backed attackers ramped up cyber operations beginning in 2021 during the run-up to the invasion. In 2022, Russian government-backed attackers targeted users in Ukraine more than any other country, it increased by 250% compared to 2020 according to Google’s Threat Analysis Group report²². The targeting of users in NATO countries increased by over 300% in the same period.

3. Strategic and tactical narratives

Narrative is a major structural element of propaganda. A narrative can be understood as a story or as an interpretation of events that help form a desired perception or attitude toward an object. Moscow directs strategic and tactical narratives to different audiences, and four main audiences for Russian propaganda can be defined. First, it is the internal Russian audience. Second, there is the audience in Ukraine, where Russia is trying to undermine the will of Ukrainians to resist the Russian invasion. Third, it is the audience of the “collective West”, where Russia seeks to undermine support for Ukraine. And finally, this is the audience of countries which are trying to keep neutrality – the so-called “global South”.

It is worth distinguishing between strategic, tactical narratives and “stories” of Russian propaganda. Strategic narratives are the way in which countries construct and project their preferred image and vision

21 B. Strick, *Disinformation & Denial: Russia’s attempts to discredit open source evidence of Bucha*, The Centre for Information Resilience, April 2022, <https://www.info-res.org/post/disinformation-denial-russia-s-attempts-to-discredit-open-source-evidence-of-bucha> [21.04.2023].

22 S. Huntley, *Fog of war: how the Ukraine conflict transformed the cyber threat landscape*, Google’s Threat Analysis Group, 17 February 2023, <https://blog.google/threat-analysis-group/fog-of-war-how-the-ukraine-conflict-transformed-the-cyber-threat-landscape/> [29.03.2023].

of the world. “Strategic narratives are a means for political actors to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behaviour of domestic and international actors”²³. Strategic narratives reflect the long-term vision of the world order and international affairs shared by the Russian political elite. Very often, they reflect the Russian leadership’s deeply rooted views of Ukraine and the broader context of the aggression. Even if they are aimed at different audiences, strategic narratives show a certain internal logic and can be well structured and thought out. In the context of Russia’s strategic communication, the strategic narrative might refer to Russia’s ideas of a multipolar world order and its “privileged spheres of influence”, Russia’s status as a great country, and the exceptionalism of Russia as a separate civilization or the “Russian world” concept.

Tactical narratives act as supportive messages aimed at reinforcing the validity of strategic narratives. Unlike strategic narratives, tactical narratives are often illogical or contradictory, highly manipulative, and appeal to emotion.

Dissemination of strategic and tactical narratives is achieved by spreading “stories”; instruments and means to deliver narratives as if they are describing events and facts in a certain way.

Narratives are influential because they provide ordered and simplified frames of meaning that are easy to comprehend and remember, and also to associate with personal experiences²⁴. The narrative battle plays itself out transnationally in the form of framing contests around individual events. In this context, disinformation is an element of a broader strategy, varying referred to as nonlinear or hybrid warfare. It involves the use of propaganda, the operation of influence, and state media to transnationally propagate frames and counter-frames fitted into strategic narratives.

Even before the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022, Russian propaganda had already crafted a significant number of narratives that were subsequently used to justify the conflict.

23 A. Miskimmon, B. O’Loughlin, L. Roselle, *Strategic Narratives: Communication Power and the New World Order*, New York 2013, Kindle Edition, p. 18.

24 A. Ventsel et al., *Discourse of fear in strategic narratives: The case of Russia’s Zapad war games*, “Media, War & Conflict” 2019, pp. 1-19.

The Ukraine Crisis Media Center²⁵ identified 5 main narratives about Ukraine that have been promoted by the Russian media since 2014 and still remain relevant:

- “There is a civil war in Ukraine”;
- “There is powerful Russophobia in Ukraine”;
- “Fascism is thriving in Ukraine”;
- “Ukraine is a failed state”;
- “Ukraine is a puppet of the West”.

These narratives form a logical semantic matrix that mutually reinforces and interconnects the main ideas. For instance, the idea of “Ukraine as a failed state” discredits the Ukrainian state and gives the impression that Russian influence is necessary to settle the chaos on Ukrainian territory, which the local population is allegedly incapable of doing. Related narratives of Russophobia, fascism, and civil war play a similar role in justifying Russian aggression²⁶.

Russophobia is an artificial concept actively used by Russian officials and the media since 2014 to defend the annexation of Crimea and aggression against Ukraine. This rhetoric was important to Moscow because it helped portray the reason for the “civil war” in Ukraine as being the uprising of the Russian-speaking population in Crimea and the eastern regions and gave the Russian Federation a reason to intervene. “Protecting the Russian-speaking population in Donbas” has been the main justification for Russian aggression in 2022.

Closely related narratives of Russophobia, fascism, and civil war play a similar role. By their internal logic, the Revolution of Dignity, interpreted by Russian propaganda as a “coup d’état”, brought to power a radical nationalist government whose alleged Russophobic agenda is part of a broader “fascist” policy. Since 2014, the rhetoric about Ukraine’s internal conflict, which was supposed to take place between the fascist government and the rest of the population, has

25 O. Tsekhanovska, L. Tsybulska, *Evolution of Russian Narratives about Ukraine and Their Export to Ukrainian media-landscape*. Ukraine Crisis Media Center, May 2021, p. 8, https://www.estdev.ee/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2022/06/HWAG_report_Eng_online.pdf [12.03.2023].

26 Ibid.

continuously prevailed²⁷. For instance, this study²⁸ of Russian narratives promoted in Ukraine shows that the largest number of analysed posts on social media contained a narrative of criminal activities of far-right organizations in Ukraine, mainly discussing groups such as Azov, Right Sector, etc.

The often-used claim that Ukraine and Russia are “one nation” is one of the oldest and most deeply ingrained myths used against Ukraine. The notion of an “all-Russian nation” with no political borders is an ideological construct dating back to imperial times and has been used as an instrument to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty and national identity. The Russian government has cultivated this myth with renewed vigour in an attempt to rationalize and justify its military aggression against Ukraine²⁹.

Russian propaganda employs various justifications for the war, falling into four categories: historical, political, military, and economic arguments, according to a study by Detector Media³⁰. These narratives aim to legitimize Russia’s attempt to upend the world order and extend its influence in Ukraine. Historical arguments include claims that Russians and Ukrainians are one people, accusations of Ukrainian collaboration with Nazis in World War II, assertions that Crimea’s annexation was democratic, etc. Political arguments accuse the EU and NATO of undermining Russia, claim the 2014 Revolution of Dignity was a coup orchestrated by Ukrainian nationalists, and suggest that Ukraine’s government is controlled by fascists or Russophobes. Military arguments assert that Russia, as a nuclear power, won’t be challenged, accuse the Ukrainian military of targeting Russian speakers,

27 #PutinAtWar: How Russia Weaponized “Russophobia”, DFRLab, 2018, <https://medium.com/dfrlab/putinatwar-how-russia-weaponized-russophobia-40a3723d26d4> [20.04.2023].

28 A. Fivenson et al., *Shielding Democracy: Civil Society Adaptations to Kremlin Disinformation about Ukraine*, February 2023, https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/NED_Forum-Shielding-Democracy-Adam-Fivenson.pdf [12.04.2023].

29 D. Allan et al., *Myths and misconceptions in the debate on Russia. How they affect Western policy, and what can be done*. Chatham House report, 13 May 2021, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/2021-05-13-myths-misconceptions-debate-russia-nixey-et-al_o.pdf [10.03.2023].

30 *For the Glory of Grandfathers, Versus the Mosquitoes. How Russia Justified and Explained the Invasion of Ukraine During the Year of Full-Scale War*, Detector Media, 1 March 2023, <https://11nq.com/jkKc> [10.03.2023].

and claim that evidence of Russian war crimes is fabricated. Economic arguments contend that Europe as well as Ukraine depend on concessions from Russia and rely on Russian energy and resources. These narratives reflect Russia's ongoing efforts to justify its aggression in Ukraine while aiming to shape international perceptions.

In 2022, Russia propagated five primary strategic narratives to justify its actions in Ukraine³¹. These narratives were disseminated through Russian and Russian-speaking media channels, both within Ukraine and internationally. The narratives were: "Russia wants peace, and the West provokes it", "Russia is obliged to protect the inhabitants of Donbass", "Ukraine is the aggressor against Donbas", "The US and NATO create tension in the region", and "Ukraine is a puppet of the West".

The strategic narrative of "Ukrainian authority as Nazi, nationalistic, and criminal" was translated into tactical narratives such as "Ukrainian army committing crimes against civilians" etc. Examples of stories aligned with this narrative included claims that Ukrainian armed forces placed artillery systems in residential areas, or that the evacuation of residents in certain cities was prohibited.

The strategic narrative of "Ukraine is just a battlefield and puppet of the West" translated into tactical narratives like "Ukraine will be abandoned by the West" and "Ukraine will be divided by Western countries". Stories supporting this narrative included allegations of Poland and Hungary conspiring with Russia to seize parts of Ukraine, assertions that the EU and NATO countries refused to assist Ukraine or claims of European countries' citizens being outraged by the behaviour of Ukrainian refugees.

The strategic narrative of "Ukraine as a failed state" resulted in tactical narratives portraying the Ukrainian government as corrupt and against its people, and Ukraine as dysfunctional and unable to survive. Stories in line with this narrative included assertions that the Ukrainian army did not exist, or examples highlighting economic weaknesses.

The strategic narrative of "Ukraine is occupied by Nazis and radicals" transformed into tactical narratives depicting the Ukrainian army

31 Distinctions of strategic and tactical narratives were made based on disinformation chronicles (some of them weekly, some monthly) and analysis provided by those studies: <https://oporaua.org/en/category/viyina/antipropaganda>; <https://disinfo.detector.media/>; <https://uacrisis.org/en/hwag>; <https://texty.org.ua/tag/dezinformatsija/>; <https://voxukraine.org/category/voxcheck-uk>.

as predominantly composed of neo-Nazi and Ukrainian authorities supporting fascist ideologies. Stories promoting this narrative included allegations of crimes committed by Ukrainian volunteer battalions, claims of weapons of mass destruction being developed in Ukrainian bio laboratories, or accusations that nationalists sent teenagers to the frontlines in Mariupol and Chernihiv.

These narratives aimed to shape public opinion and legitimize Russia's actions in Ukraine, perpetuating a distorted view of the situation.

4. Free speech and information threats

Free speech is an extremely important element of the European architecture of democratic governance. However, in situations of external influence, free speech also becomes the “weak point” that the Kremlin uses for its influence.

RT (formerly Russia Today) is a good example of such use of mass media for the propaganda effort³². RT is a Russian media agency and political influence tool, designed to spread disinformation and undermine Western values around the world. The data points to a clear RT strategy to target non-Russian audiences with Kremlin messaging on Ukraine. This study³³ showed the majority of videos posted to RT's English-language YouTube channel were about Ukraine. Videos on Ukraine accounted for 27% of all RT videos. For RT Deutsch 43% of videos were focused on the conflict in Ukraine. About 40% of RT's French-language YouTube account's videos and views were also of videos on Ukraine.

RT clearly leads the way when it comes to media funding from the state budget in Russia. Over the past 12 years, the funds allocated to the agency almost tripled. More than 1.5 billion USD (115 billion RUB) was allocated from the state budget for mass media in 2021. According to the federal budget for 2022, RT received 25% of all funds

32 *Kremlin-Funded Media: RT and Sputnik's Role in Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem*, Global Engagement Center, Washington DC 2022, p. 4, https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Kremlin-Funded-Media_January_update-19.pdf [10.01.2023].

33 R. Orttung, E. Nelson, A. Livshen, *How Russia Today is using YouTube*, “Washington Post”, 23 March 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/03/23/how-russia-today-is-using-youtube/> [10.01.2023].

for mass media. Just before its invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin allocated a substantial budget, with government spending on “mass media” between February and March 2022 increasing by 433% to reach 17.4 billion Rubles³⁴.

In March 2022, the EU imposed sanctions against RT and Sputnik. However, the German language editions, RT DE and SNA, have continued working and spreading their content on several websites under different domains. Days after the EU banned RT for its role in spreading propaganda about the war in Ukraine, it was back in the game. New sites quickly appeared that were a replica of the now-sanctioned RT. More than a hundred other websites – some of which were promoted by RT’s official social media accounts – also popped up to share Spanish, French, and English-language content from RT, according to research from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue³⁵.

Summary: The effects of Russian propaganda

Overall, the Russian disinformation campaign is a complex and sophisticated operation that utilizes various tactics, including hacking, spreading of false information, and influencing public opinion. The potential impact of Russian propaganda can be seen across Europe. Many citizens in Western Europe still believe that the conflict is far away from them and that it will not directly affect them. Some Europeans believe that Russia should not be irritated and that certain concessions can be made for the sake of peace, which may push Ukraine to capitulate and avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. In addition to pro-Russian politicians, a large number of pro-Russian voices are critics of militarism and anti-American, rebroadcasting Russian propaganda or criticizing American imperialism. For example, a survey conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations in May

34 A. Michałowska-Kubś, *Coining lies. Kremlin spends 1.5 Billion per year to spread disinformation and propaganda*, Debunk.org, 8 August 2022, <https://www.debunk.org/coining-lies-state-budget-financing-of-russian-propaganda> [10.01.2023].

35 K. Balint et al., *RT Articles are Finding their Way to European Audiences – but how?*, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 20 July 2022, https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/rt-articles-are-finding-their-way-to-european-audiences-but-how/ [19.03.2023].

2022³⁶, showed that even if most Germans (66%) and Italians (56%) mainly blame Russia for the war, 27% of them think that Ukraine, the EU, or the United States is to blame for it.

Another study made in April 2022³⁷ showed that, while 78% of European citizens agreed that Russian authorities are responsible first and foremost for the war in Ukraine, 17% did not clearly hold Russia responsible. This number also varies widely across EU countries, with much higher numbers in Cyprus (51%), Bulgaria (46%), Greece (45%), Slovenia (39%), the Slovak Republic (36%), and Hungary (34%).

The spread of disinformation and propaganda by the Russian government and aligned actors as well as the actions taken in response by Ukraine and civil and international organizations, provide an important perspective and lessons on how to counteract false and misleading content. Ukrainian resilience to Russian propaganda and disinformation, developed since 2014, has helped the country avoid information chaos in 2022. Ukrainian communicators have excelled in using Hollywood-style videos, catchy memes, and messaging full of up-to-date colloquialisms and humour to counter Russian propaganda.

Preparation, prevention, and resilience are possible in the face of a digital onslaught by a formidable adversary. Russia's persistent engagement with Ukrainian networks over the years has allowed the Ukrainians to practice defending against them. While the Russian propaganda machine continues to operate, the Ukrainian response has shown that a proactive approach can be effective in countering it.

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Olga Barbarska*

Failure, crisis, or renewal? The Eastern policy of the European Union and the war in Ukraine

Kłęska, kryzys czy szansa na sukces? Polityka wschodnia Unii Europejskiej a wojna w Ukrainie

Abstract: This paper's objective is to study the impact of the war in Ukraine on the Eastern policy of the European Union. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to highlight this policy's position in the overall international activity of the EU, as well as its characteristic features, main goals, instruments, and two components: the strategic partnership with Russia and the Eastern Partnership (EaP). The substantive part of the paper contains an analysis which, taking into account the implications of the war in Ukraine, is intended to justify three research hypotheses. They concern: the complete failure of the strategic partnership with Russia, then the serious crisis of the EaP and, finally, the possibility of achieving success in the Eastern policy in the form of Ukraine's accession to the EU. As indicated in the conclusion, this would provide the European Union with a permanently strong position in Eastern Europe.

Keywords: European Union, EU Eastern policy, EU-Russia strategic partnership, EU Eastern Partnership

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest zbadanie wpływu, jaki wojna na Ukrainie wywiera na politykę wschodnią Unii Europejskiej. W tym celu konieczne jest najpierw wskazanie miejsca, jakie polityka ta zajmuje w całokształcie aktywności międzynarodowej UE, a także tego, jakie są jej cechy charakterystyczne, główne cele oraz części składowe, czyli partnerstwo strategiczne z Rosją i Partnerstwo Wschodnie (PW). Zasadnicza część artykułu zawiera analizę, która – uwzględniając implikacje wynikające z wojny na Ukrainie – ma za zadanie uzasadnić trzy hipotezy badawcze. Dotyczą one kolejno: całkowitego fiaska partnerstwa strategicznego z Rosją, następnie poważnego kryzysu PW i wreszcie możliwości osiągnięcia przez politykę wschodnią sukcesu w formie akcesji Ukrainy do UE. Jak wskazano w zakończeniu, zapewniłoby to Unii Europejskiej na stałe silną pozycję na wschodzie Europy.

Słowa kluczowe: Unia Europejska, polityka wschodnia UE, partnerstwo strategiczne UE-Rosja, Partnerstwo Wschodnie UE

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Introduction

There is no doubt that Russia's open military aggression against Ukraine that broke out in February 2022 has had an immense impact on various actors in international relations. One of the actors most concerned is the European Union. It is for obvious geopolitical reasons, i.e., not only Ukraine's immediate geographical proximity but also special relations connecting Ukraine and the EU. In trying to determine the impact of the war in Ukraine on these relations, we should start by selecting the right research approach.

First of all, we should take into account certain specific features of the European Union as a unique political entity. It is the only actor in international relations that is not a state, yet has extensive economic potential, which makes it one of the leading industrial and commercial powers on a global scale. What is even more significant is the fact that the EU has adopted a specific political philosophy. It combines elements of pragmatism (in the research approach emphasised by the school of political realism) and normativism, the role of which is particularly highlighted by the school of constructivism.

According to the normative approach, the systems of political and ideological values play a significant role in international relations. As Charles A. Kupchan put it, "international order is not just about the distribution of material power and the hierarchy and authority structure" but is also based "on norms and rules that guide state behaviour and govern their relations with other states"¹. Hence, the European Union not only pursues, like all other global actors, a pragmatic realisation of its various interests. It also strives to be an actor building its relations with the outside world on a specific catalogue of so-called "European values". They include democracy, human rights, the rule of law, etc., and in foreign relations – abstention from the use of force, the peaceful resolution of disputes, international cooperation, etc. This means that the EU is a *normative power*, which tries to influence the international environment with its own *soft power*, i.e., not using

1 Ch.A. Kupchan, *Reordering order: Global change and the need for a new normative consensus*, [in:] T. Flockart et al. (eds.), *Liberal order in a post-western world*, Washington 2014, p. 6.

force, but rather political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural instruments, or more broadly – its civilisational attractiveness².

Taking this into consideration, we can use a research approach based on the concept of normativism, which underlines those aspects of the EU's international activity that are based on "European values". To some extent, it is also necessary to take heed of the approach based on the concept of political realism since the EU is also concerned about the pragmatic implementation of its specific interests. We have also to bear in mind another specific feature of the European Union, namely, the fact that it is a hybrid structure that combines features of a supranational international organisation and a state. All this makes it extremely difficult to determine its legal and political status and also makes it challenging for the EU itself to function efficiently as an actor in international relations. This applies primarily to the sphere which, in relation to a sovereign state, is referred to as foreign policy.

Without getting into more detailed considerations, it is sufficient to note that despite critical voices denying the existence of such a policy in the case of the EU, it possesses a developed institutional and legal system regulating its contacts with the international environment. In many respects, this system is similar to the foreign policy of sovereign states, and its real existence is confirmed by both scientific research and political practice. As a result, we can talk about EU foreign policy, regardless of whether it is called external policy, foreign relations, external relations etc. This policy incorporates various components, including the part most important for this analysis, i.e., the EU's Eastern policy, which encompasses two main elements: the strategic partnership with Russia and the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

As regards the methodology applied in studying this issue, we can pose the following research question: do the consequences of the war in Ukraine lead to complete collapse, or to a more or less severe crisis, or, on the contrary, to giving new impetus to the EU's Eastern policy? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to put forward three research hypotheses.

2 See more J.S. Nye, *Soft power*, "Foreign Policy" 1990, no. 80; O. Barbarska, *Argument siły czy siła argumentów? Unia Europejska w stosunkach międzynarodowych jako 'soft power'*, "Rocznik Integracji Europejskiej" 2016, no. 10.

The first hypothesis assumes that one of the two components of the EU's Eastern policy, i.e., the strategic partnership with Russia, has failed completely. The second hypothesis considers that the second component of this policy, i.e., the Eastern Partnership, is undergoing a serious crisis. Finally, the last hypothesis claims that, paradoxically, the war in Ukraine may lead to a successful implementation of the main goals of the European Union policy towards Eastern Europe. This is due to the fact that this war laid the foundations for strengthening the EU's influence in the region due to the possibility for the most important partner country, i.e., Ukraine, to become a future EU Member State.

With regard to other methodological issues, it should be added that research methods such as the method of historical analysis and the systemic method (treating the EU as a specific political unit) have been applied. The classic method of analysing the literature on the subject was also used, including both analytical texts and official documents and statements.

1. What is the EU's Eastern policy?

● Generally speaking, the Eastern policy of the European Union can be defined as a joint formulation of specific frameworks, the establishment of institutions, and the undertaking of specific actions by both EU authorities and the Member States in terms of their relations with the Eastern European countries³.

The geographical range of that policy has been changing since initially it covered a wide group of Central and Eastern European countries. Following the EU accession of a significant part of these countries, the range has shrunk significantly, although it is difficult to precisely specify it. According to certain analyses, it covers areas such as the Balkans, and, according to other studies – it also includes Turkey, as well as the countries of the Caucasus region and Russia. From such a perspective, Eastern Europe is definitely more a geopolitical than a geographical concept.

3 O. Barburska, *Polityka wschodnia Unii Europejskiej jako część składowa polityki zagranicznej UE*, Warsaw 2018, pp. 165-173.

The historical scope of this policy has also changed. Setting aside the Cold War period, the beginning of the Autumn of Nations at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s must be recognized as the turning point marking the beginning of the EU's Eastern policy. At this time, the structures of Euro-Atlantic integration were faced with establishing relations with the newly emerging democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. The second major turning point was in the years 2004-2007, when a number of countries from that region joined the EU, with Croatia's accession in 2013 completing the process⁴. Since then, the Eastern policy has been focused on the remaining countries of Eastern Europe, becoming one of the two main components of a wider project that is the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy. (Its other main element is its Mediterranean policy).

As previously mentioned, the EU's Eastern policy encompasses two instruments: the strategic partnership with Russia and the Eastern Partnership. In accordance with the research approach adopted in this paper, it is necessary to explore the effects of the war in Ukraine on the functioning of each of these instruments.

2. The strategic partnership with Russia

The Russian Federation's military aggression launched in February 2022 against Ukraine destroyed – virtually in one day – the entire policy of the European Union towards its largest eastern neighbour. The Russian invasion showed the ineptitude of the policy pursued by the entire EU, as well as its individual Member States, in particular Germany and France. As a consequence, a number of comments emerged strongly criticising that policy. Hasty conclusions, however, should be avoided. It rather seems necessary to identify the assumptions and objectives of the EU's policy, as well as its implementation process.

First of all, it is important to take into account the historical context of that time. The collapse of the communist system in Europe brought a lot of hope to the Western world for the final victory of democracy in the entire former Soviet empire. Democracy prevailed not only in

⁴ See more A. Adamczyk, *Perspektywy rozszerzenia UE*, [in:] J. Niżnik (ed.), *Geopolityczne powiązania Europy, system polityczny Unii Europejskiej i możliwe kierunki jego ewolucji*, Warsaw 2016.

the Central European countries, but also in some post-Soviet republics, so the West hoped that the newly established Russian Federation would also take a more democratic and liberal course in its domestic and foreign policy.

It is, therefore, important to emphasise that the EU's policy objective towards Russia adopted in the early 1990s was reasonable and realistic. That objective was by no means to make Russia a formal ally of the West or to bring liberal democracy and a free market economy to that country. The goal was to establish such political and economic ties with Russia, enabling it to play the role of an important and reliable partner, while preserving its specific character. The only expectation was that Moscow would respect the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights in both its foreign and domestic policy. This was to lead to the establishment of mutually beneficial political, economic and even security-based cooperation. It required the conclusion of a number of international agreements, which in the late 1990s laid formal foundations for the so-called strategic partnership between the European Union and the Russian Federation. One can say that the expectations were very low, but yet so very high.

In light of Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine, it is easy to criticise the entire policy of the EU towards Moscow. But we should ask ourselves the most legitimate question: was there a reasonable alternative to such a policy 30 years ago? The entire Western world at that time was convinced of the "end of history" as announced by Fukuyama, which was to signify the uncontested victory of democratic and liberal capitalism. Building political and, in particular, economic cooperation with former communist enemies such as Russia and China seemed to be the only effective way to ensure global peace and prosperity. As can well be imagined, the adoption in the 1990s of a different confrontational policy towards Russia by the Western world would have only accelerated and effectively justified in terms of propaganda and ideology the current explosion of Russian imperialism and nationalism.

Taking these conditions into account does not mean absolving the European Union from its mistakes. Generally speaking, the objectives of the EU's policy were legitimate, but their implementation was erroneous. There is no doubt that the EU's decision-makers believed too strongly in the neoliberal message about the total primacy

of the economy and the infallibility of the “invisible hand of the free market”. (Imaginatively speaking, they probably believed too much in Michael Douglas’ famous line from the Wall Street movie that “greed is good”). The economic calculations overshadowed other aspects, bringing a number of negative issues. A prime example is the excessive dependence of almost all EU Member States on energy supplies from Russia. This meant that European economies were at the mercy of Moscow (especially Germany’s), which did not even hide the fact that it treated oil and gas supplies as an “energy weapon”.

It should be emphasised that unconditional reliance on trade with Russia resulted not only from selfish economic calculations but also from specific political blindness. It turned out that many European decision-makers attached excessive importance to relations with Moscow, which was symbolised by the infamous “Russia first” slogan. In reality, all we had to do was – figuratively speaking – keep our eyes and ears open. It is undeniably not a question of accusing the EU of not deferring to Russophobia. (Critical rhetoric towards Russia has always existed in the West – it is enough to recall US Senator John McCain’s words, who once mockingly described Russia as “a gas station pretending to be a state”). Generally speaking, the fundamental mistake of the EU was political and ideological reluctance to understand Russia’s real intentions.

The fundamental mistake here was that the ideological conditions – a factor of paramount importance in the case of Russia – were very much underestimated. As it turned out, the understanding of ideological values is fundamentally different in Western and Eastern Europe. While both parties were able to reach an agreement on economic issues, with the Russians showing far-reaching pragmatism, things look completely different in terms of ideology. In this area, there is practically no room for compromise from both parties. Such compromise would undermine their “ideological backbone” based on a set of various nationalist and imperialist concepts for Russians and on a catalogue of “European values” for Europeans⁵.

5 See more O. Barburska, *Russia’s Perceptions of the European Identity*, [in:] A. Skolimowska (ed.), *Perceptions of the European Union’s Identity in International Relations*, Routledge, 2019.

What is more, the European Union, in general, did not treat Russia any differently than other international partners. Russia, on the other hand, has developed a specific attitude towards the EU. The main reason for this is that the Russian identity is built as the antithesis of the paradigms developed by the West, and in particular by Europe. As Tomasz Stępniewski notes, this means a deep “ideological opposition” between the Western civilisation based on the Latin Christianity predominant in Europe and the Byzantine civilization represented by Orthodox Russia. The existence of such opposition has significant consequences as it is associated with “different images of the world, human life, and political ideas”⁶.

As a result, the Russians accuse “rotten” Europe of every possible manifestation of moral corruption and political decadence, which goes hand in hand with the absolute glorification of the ideological and political virtues of the Russian civilisation, whose messianic vocation is to save the entire world under the aegis of Moscow as the “third Rome”. Such concepts have a long-standing tradition firmly rooted in Russian history. It is sufficient to mention concepts such as the “Russian World”, the “Russian idea”, or Eurasianism that exist to this day. Such views are represented, among others, by Alexander Dugin and Elgiz Pozdnyakov – the latter claims that “only the complete dominance of the Eurasian continent by Russia guarantees the balance and stability of the world”⁷. Such views *de facto* constitute the conceptual basis for the whole Russian foreign policy under President Vladimir Putin. They shape also this policy towards the EU, as evidenced by Moscow’s accusations that the European Union arbitrarily imposes “European values” on the international community. As Tatiana Romanova put it, the very concept of the EU as *a normative power* is considered an attack on Russian identity and conflicts “with some of the Russian Federation’s fundamental foreign policy ideas”⁸.

6 T. Stępniewski, *Gra sił w kontestowanym sąsiedztwie Unii Europejskiej i Rosji*, “Studia Europejskie” 2017, no. 4, pp. 40-41.

7 In: K. Nieczyppor, *Aleksander Dugin – eurazjatycki głos w twoim domu*, 6 February 2017, <http://www.eastbook.eu> [4.06.2017].

8 T. Romanova, *Normative power Europe: Russian view*, [in:] *Normative power Europe in [a] changing world: a discussion*, The Hague, 2009, p. 53.

This means that we are dealing here with a spectacular axiological incompatibility of the philosophies governing the foreign policies of both parties. As Józef Fiszer summarised it, “it was inevitable, sooner or later, that these two contrasting views on the European order in the 21st century would clash”, and “European hopes that Russia could be a partner of the European Union (...) turned out to be in vain”⁹. The war in Ukraine has clearly proved it, therefore, the thesis that the EU-Russia strategic partnership has failed completely seems to be very much accurate.

3. The Eastern Partnership

Proceeding to an assessment of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the second main element of the EU’s Eastern policy, i.e., the Eastern Partnership, it should be noted that the range of various determinants is broader here than in the case of the strategic partnership with Russia. At this point, it is necessary to provide some historical context connected with the formation of the Eastern Partnership. It was officially established in 2009 on the initiative of Poland and Sweden. High expectations were connected with the EaP at that time, treating it as a potentially crucial instrument for expanding the influence of the EU in its immediate neighbourhood. The EaP incorporated six states: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. What characterised this group was its great diversity in many respects, while at the same time, they had in common the long history of dependence on the Russian and then the Soviet state, with all the negative consequences of the lack of democratic traditions¹⁰.

As regards the main objectives of the Eastern Partnership, they were more extensive and ambitious than in the case of the strategic partnership with Russia. (These objectives are in line with the assumptions adopted in this paper that it is necessary to consider both the ideological sphere of “European values” promoted by the European Union, as well as the pragmatic sphere of interests of the EU in that

9 J. Fiszer, *Zadania i cele polityki zagranicznej Władimira Putina*, “Myśl Ekonomiczna i Polityczna” 2016, no. 1, pp. 188-189.

10 See more O. Barburska, *Blaski i cienie Partnerstwa Wschodniego Unii Europejskiej*, “Studia Europejskie” 2015, no. 4.

region). The first key objective was to establish a group of political allies of the European Union adopting European standards, which would secure its “eastern flank” in a reliable and stable manner. The second main objective was the emergence of an economic system in Eastern Europe based on free market principles, which would be compatible with the Single Market to the greatest extent possible.

Over several years of its functioning, two informal groups emerged within the EaP. The first can colloquially be called “top states”, including Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. These countries were most engaged in the process of bringing their political, legal, economic, and social systems closer to EU standards. This has been demonstrated by various concrete actions such as their conclusion of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, then Association Agreements, and finally agreements granting Ukraine and Moldova the formal status of EU candidate countries. Nevertheless, their road to Europe has been fraught with a number of serious difficulties, and, setting aside the analysis of Ukraine for now, it is obvious that there are still influential anti-European and pro-Russian forces in the other two EaP “top states”.

In Moldova, these forces are fervently trying to weaken or even overthrow the current government that supports EU integration. To achieve this, they use the tension caused by the existence of the separatist and pro-Russian “Republic of Transnistria” in the country, wherein Moscow keeps a contingent of its troops. Despite this, the Moldovan authorities are trying to maintain a policy of rapprochement with the EU, at the same time condemning Russia’s aggression and supporting Western sanctions against this country. The situation is far more complicated in Georgia since the current government has been accused of having pro-Russian sympathies. It is evidenced by the fact that, although officially Tbilisi condemned Russia’s aggression, it opposed the imposition of sanctions on Moscow and there is ample evidence that it has helped the Russians in circumventing those sanctions. Nevertheless, the opposition and a significant part of Georgian society clearly support the pro-European direction. However, in the case of Georgia, the status of an EaP “top state” has become somewhat doubtful, as it was not recognised as an EU candidate country along with Ukraine and Moldova.

The second informal group within the EaP encompasses Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan. The first country is the most obvious case.

Authoritarian Belarus had never really been an active member of the EaP and suspended itself from its membership in 2021. What is more, the Belarusian dictator, Alexander Lukashenko, is currently Russia's most loyal ally, supporting it in its aggression against Ukraine. In the case of the other two countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, one can say that the strengthening of their ties with the EU is moving rather slowly. A factor of significant importance complicating their geopolitical situation is the Nagorno-Karabakh war that these two countries have been fighting for many years. (The most recent act of this war was the occupation of this region by Azerbaijani troops in September 2023). Participation in the EaP has in no way contributed to the mitigation of this conflict. As a result, Azerbaijan is getting closer politically and militarily to Turkey; Armenia, on the other hand, is wavering between maintaining closer ties with either Russia or the EU. At the same time, both countries adopted a highly reserved attitude towards the war in Ukraine – they did not directly support Russian aggression but also did not join the anti-Russian sanctions.

Taking all this into account, it could be said that the main objectives of the Eastern Partnership have not really been achieved in relation to most EaP countries. After 2009, the European Union strengthened mutual ties with those countries, but with regard to the process of aligning their political, legal, economic, and social systems with EU standards, a lot remains to be done – and unfortunately, there is very little evidence that the situation might improve any time soon. Hence, the thesis that the Eastern Partnership is undergoing a serious crisis seems to be accurate.

The reason is the impact of a number of different factors. One of the most important is, of course, the immense pressure exerted by Russia, which in some cases can prove very effective. There are, however, more factors that contribute to this situation which are visible within both the EU, as well as the countries of the EaP. It is sufficient to mention the excessive bureaucracy of the EU's various cooperation channels or, in particular, the insignificant efficiency of building economic ties with the EaP countries. As for the partner countries, the key obstacle seems to be their insufficient will to follow the road to Europe. In general, the EaP countries appear to be too passive and their expectations are much higher as compared to the effort they put in. Figuratively speaking, it takes two to tango.

The validity of this observation can be justified by the case of Ukraine, the largest and most important country of the Eastern Partnership. The evolution of its relations with the EU shows that it is possible to build strong mutual ties, which may lead to a qualitative breakthrough in the EU's Eastern policy. It is a great tragedy that the decisive factor conducive to this breakthrough was Russia's brutal and bloody aggression.

4. The singular case of Ukraine

● Since its independence in 1991, Ukraine has shown, although with varying degrees of intensity, a clear pro-European orientation. This was manifested firstly by the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004, followed by the Maidan Revolution initiated at the end of 2013. During this period, however, the pro-European aspirations of Ukrainians encountered serious obstacles of an internal and international nature. Internal factors included, among others, the unstable political situation, the lack of a fully democratic political system, the omnipresent corruption, and the extremely difficult economic situation.

In addition, various international factors had to be considered. The most important of which was undoubtedly the aggressive policy of Russia as discussed above. One of its concrete expressions was Moscow's assistance provided to the rebels seeking to separate the eastern regions from Ukraine (which led to the outbreak of civil war in Donbas), as well as the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. The EU's attitude was also quite ambivalent. This was especially true with regard to the positions of Germany and France, which showed rather pro-Russian than pro-Ukrainian sympathies. The same applied to several other countries such as Italy, Austria, and especially Hungary (Russia's *de facto* ally).

When, in February 2022, Russia brutally attacked the entire territory of Ukraine, the Ukrainian army and society, quite unexpectedly, successfully and heroically resisted. The outbreak of the war also fundamentally changed the position of the European Union. It showed extraordinary determination and unity in condemning Russian aggression. Along with other Western countries, the EU imposed extensive sanctions on Russia, particularly on energy supplies, the gradual reduction of which deprived Moscow of a powerful instrument of pressure

on Europe. Ukraine was provided with great political and diplomatic support, as well as immense financial, economic, and even military assistance. As the war progressed and intensified, the scope of the assistance increased.

All this demonstrated significant changes not only in the EU's Eastern policy but in the entire foreign policy of the European Union. For the first time in its history, it has undertaken such a large-scale and coordinated action of direct military assistance to a third country. This broke a specific taboo urging the EU to remain solely a so-called *civilian power*, and at the same time, has given it new opportunities to be an important actor in international relations. In addition, it must be strongly emphasised that the determination shown by the EU has given full credibility to "European values". It turned out that they are not ideological slogans, but can in fact inspire and guide the most practical actions.

Obtaining direct foreign help in the course of a defensive war is clearly of paramount importance for Ukraine, but what is even more significant in the long term is a historic opportunity to become a Member State of the EU. Only a few days after the outbreak of war, Kiev submitted an official application for candidate status, and three months later (an absolute record!), this application was approved. Although some Member States showed hesitation or had doubts about the idea of Ukraine's possible accession, for the first time this idea was on the agenda as a feasible scenario.

It should, however, be emphasised that it is a very long way from political and material support to *de facto* membership. As French President Emmanuel Macron put it, thanks to its fight and courage, Ukraine "is already a member of the heart of the European Union". At the same time, however, he noted that it could take years or even decades for it to become a real Member State¹¹. Macron, like many other European politicians, fears the negative consequences of lowering the criteria for obtaining EU membership. There is also the fear of involving the EU in a permanent state of tension or even open conflict

11 In: M. Kucharczyk, *Macron chce nowej Europejskiej Wspólnoty Politycznej*, Euractiv.pl, 10 May 2022, <https://www.euractiv.pl/section/polityka-wewnetrzna-ue/news/macrin-unia-europejska-francja-rosja-ukraina-akcesja-przyszlosc-ue/> [10.05.2022].

with an aggressive Russia. Concerns have also been raised about the need to incur enormous expenditure, firstly on assistance, and subsequently on rebuilding and restructuring the Ukrainian economy in line with EU standards. There are already signs that political elites and societies of certain Member States are starting to feel the strain, and in some countries, such as Poland, there are also concerns about the economic consequences of Ukraine's possible membership, especially in the context of competition from its agriculture.

Therefore, key questions arise as to what the real chances are of Ukraine becoming a Member State of the EU? It should be taken into account that, besides the fears, there are a multitude of positive aspects of Ukraine's possible accession. Above all, this would show that the project of European integration is very much alive and open to neighbouring regions. It would also encourage the other countries in Europe's immediate neighbourhood to increase their efforts to "Europeanise" their policies, treated as a way to achieve the best standards of democracy, as well as social and economic development¹².

What is more, Ukraine's accession would greatly enhance the overall potential of the European Union. This applies in particular to the demographic potential (more than 40 million Ukrainians would largely compensate for the loss of EU population caused by Brexit) and to the economic potential. We must bear in mind that this country, even though currently partially destroyed, still has powerful industries at its disposal. In addition, there are Europe's largest reserves of various natural resources including gas and rare earth metals indispensable in modern electronics. Ukraine also has a vast area of the world's best arable land and is already one of the largest global exporters of agricultural products. Finally, millions of Ukrainians motivated to work would constitute an injection of "fresh blood" for EU societies. All in all, when perceiving the issue from the viewpoint of the requirements of *Realpolitik*, it is clear that admitting a country with such powerful assets as a European Union member would be immensely beneficial in various respects. Many European politicians and commentators are aware of this, and some of them even go so far as to say that for

12 See more O. Barburska, *Europeizacja jako instrument polityki zagranicznej Unii Europejskiej w zakresie promocji demokracji*, "Studia Europejskie" 2020, no. 1.

the EU, from a long-term strategic point of view, “Ukraine is more important than Greece”¹³.

Conclusions

Whether Ukraine will ever become a Member State of the European Union remains an open question today. In order for this to happen, Ukraine has to fulfil a number of conditions, and the same applies to the EU. One of these conditions is the further strengthening of European integration processes, in which the lessons arising from the war in Ukraine may be very helpful. This conflict has revealed to the EU the absolute necessity of a new, more comprehensive look at the issues of broadly understood security. Europeans, in theory, were aware that it covered various aspects, but it was only practice that painfully showed them that in the political and especially in the military dimension they were not safe, and in the economic sphere they were far too dependent on the import of strategic materials from Russia. All this should prompt the European Union to reasonably consider the issue of its possible enlargement. The fears will obviously not disappear overnight, but there should be a reflection that enlargement does not equal only problems. Europe should fully realise that valiant Ukrainians, displaying blue flags since the Orange Revolution, feel more European than many current EU citizens.

In summary, it can be said that Ukraine’s accession would be a great success and a culmination of several decades of the EU’s Eastern policy. It would be also the great achievement of the whole European Union, acting both as a *normative power* promoting “European values”, and as an international actor securing its interests in accordance with the principles of *Realpolitik*. At the same time, the failure of Ukraine’s endeavours to join the club of European democratic states would be a great debacle in the EU’s Eastern policy. As has been argued in this paper, this policy is undergoing serious problems, as evidenced by the complete failure of the strategic partnership with Russia and a serious crisis in the functioning of the Eastern Partnership. What should be

13 A. Åslund, *Ukraine is more important than Greece*, Atlantic Council, 6 June 2015, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticcouncil/ukraine-is-more-important-than-greece> [8.06.2015].

emphasised, is that the war in Ukraine proved to be not only the direct source of all those troubles but rather a catalyst for phenomena and tendencies that had already been more or less clearly outlined for the last three decades.

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Michał Paszkowski*

The importance of Ukraine in the process of ensuring the energy security of Central European countries in the political thought of Polish political parties during the Russian-Ukrainian war. Selected issues

Znaczenie Ukrainy w procesie zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa energetycznego państw Europy Środkowej w myśli politycznej polskich partii politycznych w okresie wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej. Wybrane zagadnienia

Abstract: Ukraine has played an extremely important role in ensuring the energy security of Central European countries over the years, mainly due to its position as a transit state. Past energy crises (2006, 2009) have affected the perception of the country in Europe and led to Russian-German energy projects that reduce the level of regional security (e.g., Nord Stream 1, Nord Stream 2). In Poland, various political parties (Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Left Party, Polish People's Party) have referred differently to regional co-operation and the function Ukraine might offer in this type of process. In this context, the aim of the article was to analyse the political thought of selected Polish parliamentary parties regarding the importance of Ukraine in ensuring the energy security of Central European countries during Russia's armed attack on Ukraine in 2022. The starting point of the analyses was the general thesis that political parties in Poland treated Ukraine as a key state in efforts to limit the negatively perceived energy policy of the Russian Federation in the region.

Keywords: Central Europe, political thought, political parties, Ukraine

Streszczenie: Ukraina przez lata odgrywała niezwykle ważną rolę w zapewnieniu bezpieczeństwa energetycznego państw Europy Środkowej, z uwagi na pełnienie funkcji państwa tranzytowego. Mające miejsce w przeszłości kryzysy energetyczne (2006, 2009) wpłynęły na postrzeganie tego państwa w Europie

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oraz doprowadziły do realizacji rosyjsko-niemieckich projektów energetycznych ograniczających poziom bezpieczeństwa regionalnego (m.in. Nord Stream 1, Nord Stream 2). W Polsce poszczególne partie polityczne (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Platforma Obywatelska, Lewica, Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) w odmienny sposób odnosiły się do regionalnej kooperacji oraz funkcji, jaką mogła w tym procesie odegrać Ukraina. W tym kontekście celem artykułu była analiza myśli politycznej wybranych polskich ugrupowań parlamentarnych w zakresie znaczenia Ukrainy dla zapewnienia bezpieczeństwa energetycznego państw Europy Środkowej w okresie zbrojnej napaści Rosji na Ukrainę w 2022 r. Punktem wyjścia analizy była generalna teza, że partie polityczne w Polsce traktowały Ukrainę w kategoriach państwa odgrywającego kluczowe miejsce w staraniach ograniczających negatywnie postrzeganą politykę energetyczną Federacji Rosyjskiej w regionie.

Słowa kluczowe: Europa Środkowa, myśl polityczna, partie polityczne, Ukraina

Introduction

For years, the energy security of Central European countries was determined by the importing of crude oil and natural gas from the Russian Federation through the territory of Ukraine. This country was one of the major players on the energy map of Europe, and the events shaped there affected its ability to overcome potential energy threats. In the past, energy crises (in 2006 and 2009) have played an important role in the public debate on the importance of Ukraine for the security of Central European countries as well as Europe as a whole. The situation in that country and energy disputes with the Russian Federation have influenced public opinion in the context of the construction of the Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2 pipelines.

In Poland, Ukraine was viewed in different ways, although the approach of individual political parties to potential cooperation was based on the country's unique location and importance for relations and the balance of power in Central Europe. Serving as a transit state and a buffer against the Russian Federation, geographically Ukraine was an important element of the political debate. Among politicians of different political parties, however, there was a different vision of Ukraine as a country that could strengthen energy security in Central Europe. The importance of Ukraine for regional cooperation increased with Russia's armed assault on Ukraine in 2022.

The article aimed to analyse the political thought¹ of selected Polish parliamentary parties regarding the importance of Ukraine in ensuring the energy security of Central European countries during the period of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022². Specifically, the positions of Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Left Party, and the Polish People's Party were examined. In this context, it was crucial to answer three research questions: 1) how did the politicians of the aforementioned parties evaluate the role of Ukraine in serving as a transit state for the supply of energy resources to Central European countries; 2) what arguments were raised by political actors in the context of the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline; 3) in what categories did the politicians of the analysed political formations treat Ukraine for ensuring regional security during the war. The considerations in the article reveal the main arguments formulated by politicians of these political parties on the importance of Ukraine in the process of building and strengthening energy security in Central Europe.

1 Nord Stream 2 pipeline: preparations for war

One of the key elements of the Russian Federation's active efforts to make Ukraine politically and energetically dependent was the construction of the Nord Stream 1, Nord Stream 2, and Turk Stream/Balkan Stream pipelines. The emergence of such infrastructure limited Ukraine's role in Europe and thus its ability to ensure the energy security of other countries in the Central European region. In the opinion of politicians of the various political parties, the suspension of the construction of Nord Stream 2, in particular, on the one hand, was an expression of solidarity with Ukraine in favour of strengthening the security of the country, and on the other hand, an important

1 Political thought should be understood as any form of reflection on political reality, regardless of the degree of development, internal consistency, and systematization as well as theoreticalization and concretization. J. Jachymek, W. Paruch, *Wstęp*, [in:] eidem (eds.), *Więcej niż niepodległość. Polska myśl polityczna 1918-1939*, Lublin 2001, p. 11.

2 The analysis of political projects to ensure the energy security of the country is an issue under study of the political thought of political parties. M. Paszkowski, *Specyfika badań politologicznych nad myślą polityczną w zakresie bezpieczeństwa energetycznego państwa*, "Humanities and Social Sciences" 2015, no. 2(22), pp. 99-109, DOI: 10.7862/rz.2015.hss.22.

aspect of limiting the possibility of energy influence by the Russian Federation on Central Europe countries.

For Law and Justice, the issue of stopping the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline was fundamental to the energy security of Central European countries. Representatives of this party negatively assessed the impact of the Russian-German project on the regional situation. In this context, several arguments were raised that determined the position towards the initiative, and thus the direction of support for Ukraine. First – it was assessed that the construction of the natural gas pipeline would negatively affect the gas market of Central European countries, due to the possibility of political and economic pressure from the Russian Federation³. Thus, it was feared that the Russian Federation would further the energy dependence of other countries in Central Europe. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline was treated as an instrument of political pressure as this type of pipeline would reduce the transit of natural gas through the territory of Ukraine while changing the routes of transport of the same volume of natural gas to European countries. As Jan Warzecha, a Law and Justice MP, stressed, “the existing system of natural gas pipelines running through Ukraine will become redundant soon after Nord Stream 2 is completed and put into operation”⁴. Thus, it was believed that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline “will increase domination and pressure on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, off-balance the natural gas market throughout Europe”⁵. Secondly – the pipeline did not lead to the diversification of natural gas supply sources to Central European countries, but only the direction of natural gas imports. It was stressed that the Russian-German pipeline served to increase dependence on one already dominant supplier. In the opinion of the Law and Justice Party, the already existing pipelines (operating on Ukrainian territory) allowed free ac-

3 M. Małecki, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 46 pos., 13 January 2022, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=46&dzien=2&wyp=12&symbol=PYT_WYP [28.04.2023].

4 J. Warzecha, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 35 pos., 22 July 2021, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=35&dzien=2&wyp=265&view=S> [20.04.2023].

5 M. Małecki, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 63 pos., 6 October 2022, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=63&dzien=2&wyp=49&view=S> [29.04.2023].

cess to natural gas produced in the Russian Federation⁶. Thirdly – it was claimed that the pipeline would reduce the role and importance of Ukraine for the transportation of natural gas to Central Europe and thus lead to a lowering of the country's rank in the region. It was argued that by building the pipeline, there would still be an opportunity to ensure the supply of this commodity to Central European countries and bypass Ukraine. Such an assessment prompted some politicians – back in 2021 – to formulate views that "the implementation of the Nord Stream 2 project (...) opens the way for Russia's aggression against Ukraine"⁷. Thus, it was correctly assessed what role the natural gas pipeline played in the military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine⁸.

Politicians of the Civic Platform were of a similar opinion in the context of the harmfulness of the Nord Stream 2 project to the energy security of Central European countries, including Ukraine. According to this political party, the pipeline could pose a real threat to the security of the countries in the region. However, the politicians of this political formation primarily raised one fundamental argument against the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline; they believed that it would be a tool of political pressure, and therefore "will serve to further expand the pressure of the Russian Federation on the EU and NATO countries"⁹. Thus, they perceived that the construction of the pipeline could be a tool that would limit the ability of Central European countries to pursue an active policy of diversifying the sources and directions of natural gas supplies. To a limited extent, they raised the argument of reducing the importance of Ukraine for energy markets in the region, although they were more concerned about the

6 J. Kowalski, *Poselski projekt uchwały w sprawie wezwania rządu Republiki Federalnej Niemiec do natychmiastowego zaprzestania budowy gazociągu Nord Stream 2*, druk 620, <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druk9ka.nsf/0/60E34DA42BDF040FC12585E500534BF6/%24File/620.pdf> [22.04.2023].

7 J. Kowalski, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 31 pos., 15 June 2021, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=31&dzien=1&wyp=34&view=S> [15.04.2023].

8 A. Łukaszevska-Trzeciakowska, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 63 pos., 6 October 2022, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=63&dzien=2&wyp=44&view=S> [29.04.2023].

9 P. Kowal, *Poselski projekt uchwały w sprawie wezwania rządów państw Unii Europejskiej, w tym szczególnie rządu Republiki Federalnej Niemiec do podjęcia pilnych działań na rzecz przerwania budowy Gazociągu Nord Stream II*, druk 1213, <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/Druk9ka.nsf/0/5069DCB8D5ADAC3FC12586E2004E4629/%24File/1213.pdf> [12.04.2023].

possibility of political pressure on the government in Kyiv from the Russian Federation. Nonetheless, they did not believe that the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline could, contrary to Law and Justice politicians, provide an ascendant to war on the European continent¹⁰.

Other opposition parties in parliament also stressed the lack of legitimacy of the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. In the opinion of the Polish People's Party, the pipeline harmed the interests of Central European countries and posed a real threat to the security of Ukraine. At the same time, it was believed that it was an instrument that limited the ability of Central European countries to reduce their dependence on natural gas supplies from the Russian Federation, and at the same time was a manifestation of a lack of energy solidarity among EU countries. In this context, it was believed that the pipeline made Germany dependent on the supply of energy resources, and thus it was claimed that through the project there was the possibility of influencing political decisions in the EU by the Russian Federation¹¹. In the opinion of the PSL, the gas pipeline posed a real threat to Ukraine, as it was a source of financing for Russian armaments and, in a way, "authorized" the Russian Federation to pursue its aggressive policies. On the other hand, for the Left party, the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline was an important element of political pressure on European Union states. In these realities, it was argued that the pipeline posed a threat to energy security and was a manifestation of the aggressive policy of the Russian Federation. In this context, Maciej Konieczny, MP for the Left, claimed that Russian actions undermined security in Europe, including in the energy dimension, and that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline itself was a manifestation of "Russian imperialism"¹². At the same time, politicians were aware of the important role Germany played in the process. Thus, it was argued that the project was a manifestation of

10 S. Nitras, *Pełny zapis przebiegu posiedzenia Komisji Spraw Zagranicznych*, 5 kadencja, nr 51, 11 June 2021, p. 13, <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/zapisy9.nsf/o/FEC8DB1A0F1BC83BC12586F8005098E8/%24Ffile/0135609.pdf> [18.04.2023].

11 W.T. Bartoszewski, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 31 pos., 15 June 2021, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=31&dzien=1&wyp=37&view=S> [22.04.2023].

12 M. Konieczny, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 31 pos., 15 June 2021, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=31&dzien=1&wyp=36&view=S> [22.04.2023].

a lack of solidarity in the EU, and at the same time towards Ukraine¹³. As emphasized, the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, in the opinion of politicians of the Left, “shatters European unity in the face of the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation” and constitutes a violation of the “principles of European solidarity”¹⁴. In doing so, they stressed that “the goal of the Russian Federation’s superpower policy is to fully subjugate Ukraine, to make Ukraine a vassal state to the Kremlin”¹⁵.

To sum up, it should be stated that in the opinion of all parliamentary parties, the Russian Federation pursued an active imperial energy policy towards Central European countries. An important tool in this process was the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project, which reduced the importance of Ukraine as a transit state. In the opinion of the various parties, only putting a halt to this project could have had any impact on limiting the Russian Federation’s aspirations to subjugate Ukraine and influence Central European countries in terms of energy. Thus, Ukraine was a key enabling state for strengthening regional energy security.

2. Reactions to Russia’s full-scale military aggression against Ukraine

Undoubtedly, the war in Ukraine represents the end of the regional security system based on energy resources imported from the Russian Federation. For years, the supply of crude oil and natural gas determined the level of energy dependence of Central European countries on the authorities in Moscow, and active measures taken to diversify the sources and directions of imports of these commodities were insufficient. In fact, only Poland and the Baltic states, aware of the threats, took measures to expand primarily the import infrastructure. At the time of the armed assault of the Russian Federation on Ukraine, the countries of the region were forced by the need to replace Russian commodities with those from other countries. The war led to a change

13 M. Konieczny, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 47 pos., 26 January 2022, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=47&dzien=1&wyp=158&view=5> [28.04.2023].

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

in the perception of the aggressor and the need for even more intensified efforts to ensure regional security.

Ukraine, for Law and Justice politicians, was a key partner, and maintaining the country's energy independence was an important element of the foreign policy they pursued. The party's politicians saw Ukraine as an important link in strengthening the security of Central European countries, which was reflected in their negative stance toward the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. When the war began, Law and Justice politicians stressed the need to both continue efforts to diversify the sources and directions of energy supplies and reduce the importance of the Russian Federation in the region but also believed that active steps should be taken to improve the energy situation in Central Europe. Thus, it was recognized that a key aspect would be the development of a national infrastructure that would serve not only Poland's energy needs but also those of other Central European countries, including Ukraine.

According to Law and Justice, the most important aspect related to ensuring energy security in the region should be the construction of a natural gas transportation and trade centre (hub). The idea of such a solution has been presented by the Law and Justice government for many years, and in such a concept, Poland was to enable Central European countries to import natural gas through regasification terminals on the Baltic Sea (Swinoujście, Gdansk). The Russian-Ukrainian war has only strengthened the Law and Justice Party's belief in the need to build an energy hub in Poland. As Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland's prime minister, stressed, "Poland will be a donor of energy security, which will also strengthen its political position in this part of Europe"¹⁶ in the case of key infrastructure investments. The Law and Justice party was primarily betting on Poland's role in the region as a guarantor of natural gas security in Central Europe. The construction of the hub was fundamentally linked to the need to ensure the greatest possible liquidity of the market, which is why the implementation over the years of several energy projects, namely the LNG ter-

16 *Premier: Rozmowy z Kijowem dotyczą m.in. poszukiwania gazu na zachodzie Ukrainy; „Nasz plan to stać się hubem energetycznym Europy Środkowej”, wPolityce, 16 March 2023, <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/638375-premier-nasz-plan-to-stac-sie-hubem-energetycznym-regionu> [22.04.2023].*

minal in Swinoujscie, the Baltic Pipe pipeline, the Poland-Lithuania interconnectors (GIPL pipeline), and Poland-Slovakia, was extremely important. As part of the creation of the hub, the development of import infrastructure (an LNG terminal in Gdansk of the FSRU type) and transport infrastructure (such as the Poland-Czech Republic interconnector) was also considered. All such solutions were intended to strengthen the energy security of Central European countries and support Ukraine in securing natural gas supplies. Already in 2018, Andrzej Duda, President of Poland, stressed that “diversification in the broadest sense [through the construction and expansion of infrastructure] is also an opportunity for our neighbours such as Ukraine”¹⁷.

The construction of the hub also involved the need to ensure adequate supplies of natural gas to the gas system. In this context, for years, Poland’s cooperation with the US and with Qatar has been a key aspect of strengthening energy security in the region. Through appropriate contracts, it has thus been possible to reduce dependence on natural gas supplies from the Russian Federation and to act as an important guarantor of future supplies. The Russian-Ukrainian war caused Poland’s position in the region to change. The importance of cooperation with the U.S. was particularly emphasized, and in the opinion of the Law and Justice Party (PiS), it is natural gas supplies from this direction that should guarantee the energy security of Central European countries. Thus, PiS’s reaction to the outbreak of war in the east was not only to condemn the aggressor and reduce energy dependence on the Russian Federation but also to present solutions to strengthen the energy security of Central European countries and Ukraine. In this context, the most important element of the measures taken was the construction and expansion of infrastructure, and these activities stemmed from the conviction of the importance of Ukraine for the energy security of Central European countries.

The reaction of the other political parties was comparable so, above all, the need to support Ukraine in these difficult war conditions was emphasized. In the opinion of Civic Platform politicians, the security of Poland and other Central European countries should be directed

17 *Prezydent: Hub energetyczny w Polsce to szansa dla Ukrainy*, BiznesAlert, 15 November 2018, <https://biznesalert.pl/prezydent-polska-hub-energetyczny-gaz-baltic-pipe-ukraina/> [4.05.2023].

towards cooperation within international structures (European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization)¹⁸. At the same time, they stressed the need for Poland to perform the function of a partner state for the other EU countries, which is adequate to its position¹⁹. Thus, PO politicians believed that Poland's foreign policy goal should be the accession of Ukraine to the EU and NATO, which would strengthen security in Central Europe²⁰. Thus, it can be assumed that Ukraine could play an important role in ensuring the security, including energy security, of the Central European countries in the region. A similar point of view was presented by representatives of parties of Leftist origin. In the opinion of politicians of the Left, the Russian-Ukrainian war has mainly shown the dependence of Europe on the supply of energy resources from the Russian Federation. Therefore, it was believed that "the success of the Ukrainian reconstruction will depend on the stability (...) of the region for years to come"²¹. Under these conditions, the need for greater and stronger cooperation within the EU was emphasized. It was believed that a key aspect to strengthen the energy security of Central European countries and support Ukraine would be the construction of an energy community. In the technical aspect, the creation of the possibility of introducing a mechanism for the joint purchase of natural gas and crude oil was postulated²². On the other hand, in the opinion of the Polish People's Party (PSL), the Russian Federation's attack on Ukraine was one of the most important geopolitical challenges in recent years. Politicians of this party stressed above all the need for unity and solidarity towards the Ukrainian people while pointing out the legitimacy of limiting political disputes. As PSL MP

- 18 B. Budka, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 49 pos., 24 February 2022, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=49&dzien=2&wyp=35&view=5> [28.04.2023]. The Civic Platform linked Poland's security with that of the EU. J. Sanecka-Tyczyńska, *Racja stanu we współczesnej polskiej myśli politycznej (2001-2015)*, Lublin 2018, p. 443.
- 19 P. Kowal, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 74 pos., 13 April 2023, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=74&dzien=2&wyp=4&view=5> [28.04.2023].
- 20 G. Schetyna, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 74 pos., 13 April 2023, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=74&dzien=2&wyp=11&view=5> [28.04.2023].
- 21 M. Konieczny, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 74 pos., 13 April 2023, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=74&dzien=2&wyp=005> [28.04.2023].
- 22 B. Maciejewska, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Komisji do Spraw Energii, Klimatu i Aktywów Państwowych oraz Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej*, 5 kadencja, 26 April 2022, <https://orka.sejm.gov.pl/zapisy9.nsf/o/BE88C35FD02CD343C1258839004658FC/%24File/0249009.pdf> [20.04.2023].

Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz stressed, “unity in Poland, unity with the European Union, extinguishing disputes, unity in NATO, and unity with the United States is the only chance to stop Putin”²³.

To recapitulate, it should be said that the reaction of the various parliamentary parties to the armed assault of the Russian Federation on Ukraine was comparable. In the opinion of politicians from Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Left, and the Polish People’s Party, the 2022 war changed the optics of threats in Central Europe and made one of the key threats, in addition to the military dimensions of the conflict, those of an energy nature. In this changed environment, the need for unity and solidarity towards Ukraine and strengthening energy security was raised. The proposed solutions were diverse, as they included, on the one hand, the need to either build an energy hub in Poland and provide energy support to Ukraine or, on the other hand, to strengthen competencies and capabilities to counter threats at the EU level. The proposed solutions stemmed from a belief in the importance of Ukraine to the regional energy security system.

Conclusions

Over the years, Ukraine has played an extremely important role in energy relations between Europe, including Central European countries, and the Russian Federation. A key aspect of these mutual energy relations concerned the country’s geographic location and the infrastructure built back in the times of the USSR to transport energy resources, namely crude oil and natural gas (including storage for this commodity). Thus, Ukraine was perceived as an extremely important partner by the elites of Central European countries, as the transit position influenced the shape of mutual political and business relations. For the politicians of the various parties, Ukraine was an important partner, although the country was perceived differently due to changing geopolitical conditions.

23 W. Kosiniak-Kamysz, *Wypowiedź na posiedzeniu Sejmu*, 5 kadencja, 49 pos., 23 February 2022, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/Sejm9.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=49&dzien=1&wyp=7&view=S> [4.05.2023].

In the opinion of the Law and Justice Party, the Civic Platform, the Left Party, and the Polish People's Party, an important element uniting the interests of Poland, Ukraine, as well as the countries of Central Europe, was the project for the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. While representatives of these parties were against the implementation of the Russian-German gas pipeline, only the politicians of the Law and Justice party saw in it a threat of a fundamental nature to regional energy security. They were rightly concerned that the construction of the pipeline could lead to a complete bypass of Ukraine and the elimination of this country on the energy map of Europe. Even the possibility of a war was raised, which eventually did occur in February 2022. Such an event redefined Ukraine's position in the region, and at the same time led to the strengthening of regional energy cooperation. In this changed geopolitical environment, representatives of the various parliamentary parties pointed to the need to intensify regional cooperation. In the opinion of the Law and Justice party, this changed architecture was a factor supporting the creation of a natural gas transportation and trade centre (hub) in Poland.

In conclusion, it should be pointed out that the politicians of Law and Justice, Civic Platform, the Left Party, and the Polish People's Party treated Ukraine as a valuable partner on the energy map of Europe, and the cohesive factor of the country's position in mutual relations was, among other things, its transit position, a similar perception of regional threats (expansion of the Russian Federation) as well as its importance for the energy security of Central European countries. Under these conditions, the need to take active measures in the international field against the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline was raised. In the opinion of these political parties, the Russian-German gas pipeline posed a real threat to the energy security of Poland and Central European states. Thus, it was believed that common threats and challenges should be a factor that unites the interests of Poland, Ukraine, and the countries of this region.

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Polish-American cooperation to support Ukraine after Russian aggression in 2022

Współpraca polsko-amerykańska na rzecz wsparcia Ukrainy po rosyjskiej agresji w 2022 roku

Abstract: The article analyses and evaluates Polish-American cooperation in support of Ukraine after Russia's full-scale aggression in 2022. It answers the question regarding the importance of Polish-American cooperation in supporting the Ukrainian state and society. It assumes that Polish-American cooperation plays a key role in the areas of military and non-military assistance for Ukraine and Ukrainians. Both countries are among the main donors of military equipment to Ukraine, which is delivered via the territory of Poland. In addition, they put great pressure on European countries to increase military support to Ukraine. Polish-American cooperation in non-military areas is also of great importance. Poland's aid for Ukrainian refugees is crucial, and the US is involved in its delivery and financing. The US, in turn, is of paramount importance in imposing sanctions on Russia to force it to stop its aggression and in providing economic assistance to Ukraine. Poland participates in the sanctions system and strives to make them as severe as possible. Another area of Polish-American cooperation is LNG trade, which allows Poland, and potentially also other CEE countries, including Ukraine, to secure natural gas supplies after abandoning imports from Russia. During the research, interviews with American scientists and experts were conducted, and the method of analysing the content of text sources was used.

Keywords: Polish-American cooperation, war in Ukraine, military aid, refugees, energy security

Streszczenie: Artykuł analizuje i ocenia polsko-amerykańską współpracę na rzecz wsparcia Ukrainy po rosyjskiej pełnoskalowej agresji w 2022 r. Odpowiada na pytanie dotyczące znaczenia współpracy polsko-amerykańskiej we wsparciu państwa i społeczeństwa ukraińskiego. Zakłada, że współpraca polsko-amerykańska odgrywa kluczową rolę w obszarach pomocy wojskowej i niewojskowej Ukrainie. Państwa są jednymi z głównych donatorów sprzętu militarnego

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na Ukrainę, który dostarczany jest przez terytorium Polski. Ponadto wywierają one dużą presję na państwa europejskie, aby zwiększały pomoc wojskową dla Ukrainy. Istotne znaczenie ma również współpraca polsko-amerykańska w obszarach pozawojskowych. Pomoc Polski dla ukraińskich uchodźców jest kluczowa, a w jej dostarczanie i finansowanie angażuje się USA. USA z kolei ma największe znaczenie w nakładaniu sankcji na Rosję, aby zmusić ją do zaprzestania agresji oraz w pomocy gospodarczej dla Ukrainy. Polska uczestniczy w systemie sankcji, jak również zabiega, aby były one możliwie najdotkliwsze. Innym obszarem współpracy polsko-amerykańskiej jest handel LNG, który pozwala Polsce, a potencjalnie również innym państwom Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, w tym Ukrainie, zabezpieczyć dostawy gazu ziemnego po odejściu od importu z Rosji. Podczas badań przeprowadzono wywiady z amerykańskimi naukowcami i ekspertami oraz skorzystano z metody analizy źródeł tekstowych.

Słowa kluczowe: współpraca polsko-amerykańska, wojna w Ukrainie, pomoc wojskowa, uchodźcy, bezpieczeństwo energetyczne

Introduction

The United States is committed to keeping Europe “whole, free, and at peace”, and Russia’s aggression against Ukraine poses a grave threat to this vision¹. For Poland, Russia’s neo-imperial policy, manifested by military operations in Ukraine, is the most serious threat². In their messages, the heads of state of the United States and Poland strongly condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. President Joe Biden said that Russian aggression was “a brutal assault on the people of Ukraine without provocation, without justification, without necessity”³. President Andrzej Duda said that Ukrainians “not only defend their freedom but the freedom of us all. In this respect, they can count on full support from Poland”. In the same speech, he acknowledged the leadership role of the USA in the fight against the Russian threat: “Today, in a situation where security is under threat, we can see clearly how strong and important transatlantic ties are.

- 1 The White House, *National Security Strategy*, October 2022, p. 39, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf> [10.01.2023].
- 2 Prezydent RP, *Strategia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, Warsaw 2020, p. 6, <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wydarzenia/nowa-strategia-bezpieczenstwa-narodowego-rp-,1752> [10.01.2023].
- 3 The White House, *Remarks by President Biden on Russia’s unprovoked and unjustified attack on Ukraine*, 24 February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/02/24/remarks-by-president-biden-on-russias-unprovoked-and-unjustified-attack-on-ukraine/> [12.01.2023].

The United States is, and should remain, a leader in world security”⁴. Poland and the United States stood up for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Representatives at the highest levels of both countries have repeatedly assured that they will never recognize the demands made of Ukraine and their implementation through a brutal war. For the USA, Poland is “a crucial strategic ally in Central Europe”, with which it cooperates on various forums to maintain security and stability in the region⁵. During the war in Ukraine, Polish-American cooperation to help Ukraine became particularly important.

The aim of the article is to analyse and evaluate Polish-American cooperation to support Ukraine after the Russian military aggression in 2022. The main research problem is the question of the significance of Polish-American cooperation in supporting Ukraine and Ukrainians. The thesis assumes that this cooperation, in both the military and non-military areas, is crucial. Poland plays a key role in the delivery of American and Western arms to Ukraine as a transit country. Given the difference in potential, Poland’s military aid to Ukraine is much smaller than that of the US, but despite this, Poland is one of the main donors of military aid. In addition, Poland plays a key role in helping Ukrainian refugees, who have taken refuge in Poland in the largest number. The United States supports Poland’s efforts to help refugees to some extent, but the main burden of assistance has been taken by the Polish state and society. Poland does not play a key role in the system of Western sanctions imposed on Russia under the leadership of the US. However, Poland’s pressure on the European forum to deepen sanctions against Russia is significant. An important role is also played by Polish-American cooperation for energy security, which allowed for mitigating the effects of Russian pressure on raw materials. Polish-American cooperation to help Ukraine encountered some problems, which mainly resulted from the lack of proper communication. Poland’s stepping out of line without consulting the US could, however, have been a deliberate move by the Polish authorities, who wanted to start an international debate in favour of increasing sup-

4 Prezydent RP, *Message from the President of the Republic of Poland*, 24 February 2022, <https://www.president.pl/news/message-from-the-president-of-the-republic-of-poland,49387> [12.01.2023].

5 U.S. Department of State, *U.S. security cooperation with Poland*, 31 October 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-poland/> [12.01.2023].

port, mainly military, for Ukraine. As part of the research, interviews were conducted with scientists and experts from research centres in Washington D.C. and New York. The interviews were individual, non-standardized, and in-depth. The article also uses the method of analysing the content of text sources.

1. The policy of Poland and the USA to bring Ukraine closer to the West

Already in the 1990s, Poland and the United States cooperated to support the Ukrainian armed forces and familiarize them with Western standards. First of all, the US supported the formation of the Polish-Ukrainian Peace Force Battalion (POLUKRBAT), among others by supplying Humvee military vehicles and communication equipment⁶. In turn, in the second decade of the 21st century, the Americans supported the creation of a larger tactical unit – the Lithuanian-Polish-Ukrainian Brigade (LITPOLUKRBRIG). Poland and Ukraine cooperated closely in US-led military operations in Kosovo and Iraq. Poland and the United States jointly supported Ukraine's efforts to become a member of NATO, which was symbolically manifested by forcing the state's inclusion of the Membership Action Plan during the NATO summit in Bucharest in April 2008⁷. Although this did not happen due to the resistance of Western European countries, NATO promised Ukraine that it would become a full member of the organization in the future⁸.

Poland and the United States supported the processes of the democratization of Ukraine. Among other things, they gave political support to pro-democracy and pro-Western uprisings in Ukraine – the Orange Revolution at the turn of 2004 and 2005 and the Euro-maidan Revolution at the turn of 2013 and 2014. These countries also criticized Russia's energy blackmail against Ukraine, supporting its efforts to diversify supplies of energy resources. This was done, among others, by pushing the project to build the Odessa-Brody-Płock oil

6 S. Pifer, *Interview given to the author*, Washington DC, 29 April 2022.

7 T. Haesebrouck, S. Taghon, H. Van Coppenolle, *The war in Ukraine*, Ghent 2022, p. 6.

8 NATO, *Bucharest Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008*, 3 April 2008, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm [10.01.2023].

pipeline, or including Ukraine in regional energy and infrastructure projects, including those implemented as part of the Three Seas Initiative (TSI/3SI).

After the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the initiation of the war in the Donbass, Poland and the United States, together with other NATO allies, took action to support Ukraine's security sector. In 2015, the US and Poland along with the United Kingdom, Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, and non-NATO member Sweden established the Multinational Joint Commission (MJC), which aims to reform and train the Ukrainian army and police. In turn, at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in July 2016, the Allies adopted the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP). The goal of the CAP, in which the USA and Poland participate, is to support the transformation of Ukraine's security and defence sector through consulting and a range of capacity-building programs and initiatives⁹. In addition, Poland and the US opted for the supply of military equipment by NATO to Ukraine and gradually began to carry out these deliveries¹⁰. For example, from the end of 2017, the US began to deliver lethal weapons to Ukraine, including the FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missile systems.

After Joe Biden took over the presidency in the US, there were signs that problems in Poland with respecting the principles of liberal democracy and the rule of law could limit Polish-American cooperation in the CEE region. However, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine led to the intensification of this cooperation. The key role played by Poland in helping refugees from Ukraine and the transfer of American arms to the Ukrainian army meant that contentious issues moved into the background¹¹. As Kimberly Morgan notes, the strong US and Polish support for Ukraine plays an important role in the process of revitalizing NATO, which in recent years has seemed to be in disrepair. In the context of the war, there was a kind of renewal of allied commitments, which made NATO a vibrant organization once again¹².

9 NATO, *Warsaw Summit Communiqué. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016*, 9 July 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm [10.01.2023].

10 F. Bryjka, *The importance of western arms supplies for Ukraine*, "PISM Spotlight" 2022, vol. 34, p. 1.

11 M. Doyle, *Interview given to the author*, New York, 27 April 2022.

12 K. Morgan, *Interview given to the author*, Washington DC, 5 May 2022.

2. Cooperation in the field of military support for Ukraine after the outbreak of war in 2022

After the outbreak of war in 2022, Poland became the main centre for the transfer of arms and military equipment from the West, mainly the USA, to Ukraine. The United States has set up a temporary military base in Rzeszów in the Subcarpathian Voivodeship, near the Ukrainian border. The Rzeszów-Jasionka airfield has become the main point of entry for military supplies for Ukraine. From there, armaments and military equipment are sent by land to Ukraine, but the details of this logistics operation are shrouded in military secrecy. A repair centre has also been organized near Rzeszów, as some military vehicles and equipment require repairs before being sent to the front. As Stephen Biddle states, it is particularly important for the USA that Poland dared to meet the need and lent its territory to send military equipment to Ukraine. That is perceived by most Americans as a heroic acceptance of risk on behalf of the defence of nonaggression norms and democracy¹³.

After Russia launched its full-scale invasion, the amount of military support for Ukraine from both the United States and Poland skyrocketed. Between February and the end of 2022 alone, the USA allocated approximately USD 24.3 billion in security assistance for training and equipment. Equipment delivered included various missile systems, including the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS), National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS), anti-tank systems, unmanned aerial systems, armoured vehicles, light vehicles, vessels, artillery systems, howitzers and mortars, helicopters, grenade launchers, small arms, sets of body armour and helmets, protective and medical equipment, radars and other electronic devices of various types, and huge amounts of artillery rounds, ammunition, and explosives. The US authorities also gave permission for NATO Allies and partners to transfer US-made military equipment to Ukraine¹⁴. In turn, Poland donated, among others, Krab howitzers, T-72 and PT-91 tanks, Piorun anti-aircraft systems, BWP-1 infantry fighting vehicles, BM-21 Grad rocket launchers, RGP-40 grenade launchers, FlyEye

13 S. Biddle, *Interview given to the author*, New York, 5 May 2022.

14 U.S. Department of State, *U.S. security cooperation with Ukraine*, 18 January 2023, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/> [18.01.2023].

reconnaissance drones, Grot rifles, and large stocks of ammunition. For the first six months of the war, Poland was the second largest donor of military equipment to Ukraine after the USA and before Great Britain, allocating more than USD 1.6 billion for this purpose¹⁵. In the following months, this support slowed down due to the depletion of its own stocks and by the end of the year, it barely exceeded USD 1.8 billion¹⁶. American authorities greatly appreciate Poland's efforts in delivering military equipment to Ukraine as well as the effectiveness of the delivered weapons, especially modern Krab howitzers.

Immediately after the outbreak of war, President Volodymyr Zelensky called on NATO to establish a "no-fly zone" over Ukraine, which was supported by the Polish authorities. However, the United States rejected this possibility, fearing that it would lead to a direct military clash between NATO and Russia¹⁷. In early March 2022, the Polish government proposed to hand over 28 MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine free of charge. The delivery by Poland and other former Warsaw Pact states of Soviet-era aircraft such as the MiG-29 and Sukhoi SU-25 to Ukraine would be a serious reinforcement of the Ukrainian air force¹⁸. In return, Poland was to receive multi-role F-16 aircraft from the USA. However, Poland demanded that the transfer be made via the U.S. base in Ramstein, Germany. The public announcement of this demand put the American authorities in an uncomfortable position. John Kirby, the U.S. Defense Department spokesperson, rejected this possibility, questioning the rationality of this action and the associated risk for the US and NATO: "The prospect of fighter jets "at the disposal of the Government of the United States of America" departing from a U.S./ NATO base in Germany to fly into airspace that is contested with Russia over Ukraine raises serious concerns for the entire NATO alliance. It is simply not clear to us that there is a substantive rationale

15 M. Szopa, *Polish weapons defending Ukraine*, Defence.24, 24 May 2022, <https://defence24.com/industry/polish-weapons-defending-ukraine-analysis> [15.01.2023].

16 D. Brown, J. Horton, T. Ahmedzade, *Ukraine weapons: What tanks and other equipment are the world giving?*, BBC, 17 January 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62002218>.

17 J. Choonara, *The devastation of Ukraine: NATO, Russia and imperialism*, "International Socialism" 2022, vol. 2, no. 174, p. 21.

18 R.D. Hooker Jr., *Ukraine can win*, Atlantic Council, 20 July 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-can-win/> [15.01.2023].

for it”¹⁹. The Biden administration believed at the time that it would be too provocative towards Russia, causing an escalation of the conflict, and preferred not to “poke the Russian bear”²⁰. There were also arguments undermining the potential effectiveness of the MiG-29 in Ukraine and distrust of the Americans towards the information provided by Ukraine regarding their air resources²¹.

Poland has provided Ukraine with about 250 tanks from the T-72 family, including some modernized tanks of the PT-91 Twardy version. In return, Poland signed a contract with the US for the purchase of 116 used, older versions of M1 Abrams tanks. However, the versions of the tanks and the amount of the contract have not been made public. In mid-2022, information also appeared in the public space that Poland was to send 232 PT-91 tanks to Ukraine, i.e., all it had, and fill this gap with the purchase or receipt of another 300 used Abrams tanks from the US. So far, this has not happened, and only in January 2023 did Poland declare the transfer of another 30 PT-91 tanks to Ukraine. Before the war, Poland signed a contract for the purchase of 250 M1A2 Abrams in the new SEPv3 variant and in July 2022 it signed a contract for the purchase of 180 Korean K2 tanks as well as production in Poland of another 820 tanks in the K2PL version. Representatives of the American administration have repeatedly emphasized and appreciated the fact that Poland is the leader in the supply of armoured vehicles to Ukraine. At the beginning of 2023, the USA decided to deliver the M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine. Soon after, it was decided to send 31 M1 Abrams tanks to encourage Germany to send Leopard 2A tanks, which was strongly encouraged by Poland declaring to send 14 of its own Leopard tanks.

In early March, the US transferred two batteries of Patriot surface-to-air missile systems to Poland, which are to secure the supply of equipment to Ukraine via Poland. In mid-November 2022, a bal-

19 U.S. Department of Defense, *Statement by Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby on Security Assistance to Ukraine*, 8 March 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2960180/statement-by-pentagon-press-secretary-john-f-kirby-on-security-assistance-to-uk/> [12.01.2023].

20 A. Mackinnon, J. Detsch, *Ukraine wants NATO Jets. Biden says not yet*, “Foreign Policy”, 9 March 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/09/ukraine-nato-jets-russia-biden/> [15.01.2023].

21 J. Yaffa, *Inside the U.S. effort to arm Ukraine*, “The New Yorker”, 17 October 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/10/24/inside-the-us-effort-to-arm-ukraine> [15.01.2023].

listic missile launched by the Ukrainian army to shoot down a Russian missile fell in the village of Przewodów in the Lublin Voivodeship. After this, the Germans proposed to transfer three Patriot batteries to Poland. The Polish authorities took advantage of this situation to start an international debate on the need to transfer Patriot systems to Ukraine. In December 2022, the United States finally decided to transfer one Patriot battery to Ukraine, even though the Kremlin considered it a provocation. This was another step in helping Ukraine because the Patriot is the most advanced system handed over to Ukraine.

Military support for the Ukrainian army has been accompanied by the strengthening of the American military contingent in Poland. In the first months of 2022, an additional 4,700 American soldiers were sent to Poland, joining the approximately 5,000 soldiers previously stationed in the country. The stationing of American soldiers in Poland and other countries on NATO's eastern flank is intended to discourage Russia from transferring military operations in Ukraine to the territory of the Alliance countries. They are backed up by tanks, air defence, and intelligence and surveillance units. The forces are combat-ready, but mainly act as a trip wire, triggering reinforcements in the event of a Russian assault²². In addition, American soldiers stationed in Poland are involved in the training of Ukrainian soldiers, in which Poland plays a leading role. US soldiers teach Ukrainian soldiers how to use the delivered armaments and military equipment, which, according to the US administration, takes the form of "liaising with Ukrainian forces, not of training in the classic sense".

Because of the war in Ukraine, the issue of the permanent stationing of American troops in Poland has returned to the public space. At the NATO summit in Madrid in June 2022, President Biden announced that the permanent HQ of the US Army's V Corps would be established in Poland. Therefore, hopes have also increased in Poland for the permanent transfer of larger tactical units. According to James Goldgeier, after the brutal attack on Ukraine in 2022, the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 is dead, so the US may be more willing to move elements of the permanent infrastructure of NATO to

22 T. Big-Alabo, E.C. MacAlex-Achinulo, *Russia-Ukraine crisis and regional security*, "International Journal of Political Science" 2022, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 30-31.

Poland²³. However, President Vladimir Putin has a paranoid approach to US military cooperation with CEE countries, including Poland. He believes, for example, that U.S. ballistic missile defence platforms in Poland and Romania are intended for firing on Russia²⁴. As part of the disinformation campaign, Russia has been trying to undermine both the importance of Polish-American cooperation around Ukraine and the credibility of American security guarantees for Poland. The strengthening of Polish-American military cooperation is facilitated by Poland's purchases of military equipment and armaments from the USA. In the period leading up to and during the war, Poland signed further multi-billion dollar contracts with the US, including the purchase of Abrams tanks, Aegis systems, Patriot systems, F-35 aircraft, Apache attack helicopters, HIMARS, and Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles (AMRAAM)²⁵.

3. Cooperation and support for Ukraine in non-military areas

An important issue is helping refugees from Ukraine, most of whom went to Poland. By mid-January 2023, over 9 million people from Ukraine had entered Poland, and almost 6.9 million had returned to the country²⁶. According to the Polish Economic Institute, the estimated value of the total annual expenditure of public authorities to help Ukrainian refugees is PLN 15.9 billion. This assistance includes expenses for accommodation, food, access to benefits, social assistance and public services. On the other hand, the estimated value of Poles' private spending on helping refugees only during the first three months of the war amounted to about PLN 9-10 billion²⁷. According to Julie George, Poland has definitely become a leader in protecting Ukrain-

23 J. Goldgeier, *Interview given to the author*, Washington DC, 16 May 2022.

24 J. Yaffa, op. cit.

25 M. Rudy, *Ambasador USA o relacjach amerykańsko-polskich: to wyjątkowy i szczególny czas*, PAP, 5 June 2022, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1233782%2Cambasador-usa-o-relacjach-amerykansko-polskich-wyjatkowy-i-szczegolny-czas> [15.01.2023].

26 UNHCR, *Ukraine refugee situation*, 17 January 2023, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.29159420.1164648425.1654871881-2130049685.1651174834 [12.01.2023].

27 Ł. Baszczak et al., *Pomoc polskiego społeczeństwa dla uchodźców z Ukrainy*, Warsaw 2022, pp. 16, 19.

ian refugees and establishing centres for them. The Polish response was swift, immediate, and supportive²⁸. Sharon Wolchik believes that from the American perspective, Poland plays an extremely important role as a state providing help to refugees from Ukraine as well as being a transit point for aid to Ukraine, not only military but also humanitarian²⁹. By the end of 2022, the USA had already provided more than USD 1.9 billion in humanitarian assistance to people affected by the war in Ukraine, located both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. A significant part of this amount went to Poland. U.S.-funded humanitarian organizations cooperate with the Polish authorities to provide assistance to Ukrainians residing on its territory, including food, shelter, medical supplies, psychological assistance, legal assistance, etc.³⁰ Importantly, the US allocated USD 12.6 billion in direct budget support to the Government of Ukraine to help maintain critical government services, including for the public³¹. Without this huge support, the scale of emigration to Poland could be even greater. In addition, the United States has opened its borders to 100,000 Ukrainian citizens³². Polish-American institutions, foundations, and associations joined in helping Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees residing in Poland. This applies both to those in Poland such as the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland, the Polish-American Foundation for Aid to Ukraine, and in the USA, including the Polish-American Congress, the Polish-American Association, and the Kosciuszko Foundation. These entities have been implementing a number of aid and development programmes.

The United States, due to its economic potential and leadership role in the West, has become the main promoter of sanctions against Russia. In mid-April 2022, the U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken,

28 J. George, *Interview given to the author*, New York, 23 May 2022.

29 S.L. Wolchik, *Interview given to the author*, Washington DC, 18 May 2022.

30 The White House, *FACT SHEET: The Biden administration announces new humanitarian, development, and democracy assistance to Ukraine and the surrounding region*, 24 March 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/24/fact-sheet-the-biden-administration-announces-new-humanitarian-development-and-democracy-assistance-to-ukraine-and-the-surrounding-region/> [15.01.2023].

31 USAID, *USAID announces additional \$125 million in urgent energy support for Ukraine*, 18 January 2023, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/jan-18-2023-usaid-announces-additional-125-million-urgent-energy-support-ukraine> [15.01.2023].

32 The White House, *FACT SHEET...*

outlined the main purpose of the sanctions, saying “to ratchet up pressure on Putin’s crumbling economy together will help weaken the Russian Government’s position and further isolate them from the world until Russia ends its unprovoked and unjustified war on Ukraine”³³. The statement of US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin during his visit to Poland was maintained in a similar vein: “We want to see Russia weakened to the degree it can’t do the kinds of things that it has done in invading Ukraine”³⁴. The sanctions covered both representatives of the Russian regime, Russian oligarchs, as well as individual sectors of the Russian economy. It was particularly important to cut Russia off from the international financial system, modern technologies, and the possibility of selling energy resources to the West. As part of the individual packages of sanctions imposed on Russia by the European Union, Poland opted each time for the most far-reaching restrictions³⁵.

In the context of Polish-American cooperation, the diversification of natural gas supplies is also important. Poland was able to significantly reduce the pressure from Russia in the form of cutting off gas supplies from Gazprom on 27 April 2022, made possible thanks to energy investments implemented over previous years, including the LNG terminal in Świnoujście and the Baltic Pipe natural gas pipeline³⁶. These investments were carried out with the strong support of the US government and the common resistance against the Russian-German Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline³⁷. In mid-May 2022, Polish Oil Mining and Gas Extraction (PGNiG) signed a contract for the import of 3 million metric tons of LNG per year from the United States, which is to satisfy

33 K. Atwood, J. Hansler, *Austin says the US wants to see Russia’s military capabilities weakened*, CNN, 25 April 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/04/25/politics/blinken-austin-kyiv-ukraine-zelensky-meeting/index.html> [15.01.2023].

34 M. Ryan, A. Timsit, *U.S. wants Russian military ‘weakened’ from Ukraine invasion, Austin says*, “The Washington Post”, 25 April 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/25/russia-weakened-lloyd-austin-ukraine-visit/> [15.01.2023].

35 I. Trusewicz, *Nowe sankcje UE wobec Rosji. Polska i Litwa chcą więcej*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 17 January 2023, <https://www.rp.pl/gospodarka/art37795751-nowe-sankcje-ue-wobec-rosji-polska-i-litwa-chca-wiecej> [15.01.2023].

36 B. Schmitt, *European Energy Security Post-Russia*, CEPA, 7 June 2022, <https://cepa.org/european-energy-security-post-russia/> [15.01.2023].

37 *Joint Declaration between the United States Department of Energy and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Poland concerning Enhanced Cooperation on Energy Security*, GOV.PL, 8 November 2018, <https://www.gov.pl/web/aktywa-panstwowe/wzmocnienie-polsko-amerykanskiej-wspolpracy-w-zakresie-bezpieczenstwa-energetycznego> [12.01.2023].

20% of Poland's annual demand for natural gas. Ukraine also needs to replace natural gas from Russia with supplies from other directions. Poland may be an increasingly important transit country for LNG to Ukraine, as Ukraine does not have its own installation that could receive LNG from tankers³⁸. The cooperation between PGNiG and Energy Resources of Ukraine (ERU) has so far enabled two deliveries of American LNG, which, after unloading at the terminal in Świnoujście and re-gasification, was sent to Ukraine via the interconnector.

Conclusions

Polish-American cooperation is crucial in the context of both military and non-military support for Ukraine. The United States is incomparably the largest donor of arms and military equipment to Ukraine, which is supplied through Poland. In the first months of the conflict, Poland was the second-largest donor of armaments. It replenishes its depleted stocks by purchasing American armaments systems, both of the older generation and the most modern ones. The United States and Poland are strongly pushing European countries to increase military aid to Ukraine. Poland started an international debate on the delivery of aircraft, modern tanks, and Patriot systems to Ukraine by NATO, and the creation of a "no-fly zone", which sometimes put the American administration in an uncomfortable position. The goal, however, was to increase military aid to Ukraine, and Poland's attitude contributed to this. Besides, almost 5,000 American soldiers were sent to Poland to increase the security of NATO's eastern flank, but also to secure supplies of military equipment to Ukraine and support the training of Ukrainian soldiers in the use of this equipment.

The help provided by Poland and Poles for Ukrainian refugees, in which the United States is involved, is also of great importance. The US also plays a key role in imposing sanctions on Russia, which are intended to prevent it from continuing its military operations in the long term. Of particular importance is Russia being cut off from modern technologies and international financial markets as well as stop-

38 G. Geletukha et al., *Analysis of actions for Ukraine to replace Russian natural gas*, "Ecological Engineering & Environmental Technology" 2022, vol. 23, no. 4, p. 5.

ping the purchase of Russian energy resources. The Polish economy is too small to play a crucial role in the sanctions system, but Poland's pressure on European partners to tighten these sanctions is significant. In addition, Polish-American energy cooperation may play an increasingly important role in the context of the war. The LNG terminal in Świnoujście along with interconnectors may enable the supply of LNG, including American LNG, to Ukraine and other countries in the region cut off from supplies from Russia.

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 30. UNHCR, *Ukraine refugee situation*, 17 January 2023, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine#_ga=2.29159420.1164648425.1654871881-2130049685.1651174834.
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33. U.S. Department of State, *U.S. security cooperation with Poland*, 31 October 2022, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-poland/>.
34. U.S. Department of State, *U.S. security cooperation with Ukraine*, 18 January 2023, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/>.
35. Wolchik S.L., *Interview given to the author*, Washington DC, 18 May 2022.
36. Yaffa J., *Inside the U.S. effort to arm Ukraine*, "The New Yorker", 17 October 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/10/24/inside-the-us-effort-to-arm-ukraine>.

Jakub Wódka*

Turkey's mediatory endeavours: Facilitating dialogue in the Russia-Ukraine conflict

Wysiłki mediacyjne Turcji: pośredniczenie w konflikcie Rosji z Ukrainą

Abstract: The article explores Turkey's ambitions to assume a proactive role as a mediator in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Positioned as a middle power striving to enhance its global standing, Turkey has dedicated itself to striking a delicate balance between Russia and Ukraine in its foreign policy. This is exemplified by Ankara's engagement in an ambiguous cooperative rivalry with Russia while strengthening its partnership with Ukraine, including military cooperation in the Black Sea Region. Given these circumstances, Turkey sees itself as naturally inclined to act as a facilitator in brokering a ceasefire and bringing about peace between the two conflicting parties. Some successes have already been achieved, with the grain initiative being a primary example thereof.

Keywords: Russia's invasion, Ukraine, Turkey, mediation, war

Streszczenie: W artykule omówione zostaną aspiracje Turcji do odgrywania aktywnej roli mediatora w wojnie rosyjsko-ukraińskiej. Jako średnia potęga dążąca do umacniania swoich globalnych wpływów, Turcja równoważy relacje z Rosją bliższymi stosunkami z Ukrainą. Przykładem tej strategii jest ambiwalentna polityka kooperatywnej rywalizacji z Rosją przy jednoczesnym umacnianiu stosunków, również w sferze militarnej, z Kijowem. Biorąc powyższe pod uwagę, Turcja postrzega siebie jako naturalnie predestynowaną do pośredniczenia między zwaśnionymi stronami w celu zaprowadzenia pokoju. Odniosła już na tym polu pewne sukcesy, czego przykładem jest inicjatywa zbożowa.

Introduction

Over the course of the last fifteen years, Turkey has strengthened its standing on the international stage. Evolving from a semi-peripheral

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nation whose foreign policy primarily aligned with the interests of the United States, it has emerged as a more self-governing participant in global affairs, endeavouring to forge an autonomous foreign policy that encompasses both regional and global leadership aspirations across various domains. Turkey has rapidly transitioned from a state that pursued a traditional secondary role in international relations, heavily influenced by its alliance with Europe and the United States, to a nation aspiring to wield regional or even global influence¹. It has been diversifying its bilateral relations and bolstering those which had not been previously prioritized or which had been merely a function of its relationship with its strategic partners.

Under the Justice and Development Party's government, which assumed power in 2002 and has ruled the country ever since, the practice of mediation and offering good offices has become a distinct feature of Turkish diplomacy, augmenting the country's standing and reputation on the global stage. Ankara has institutionalized its participation in the field of mediation through the submission of initiatives to the international community. Among others, Turkey together with Finland launched the "Mediation for Peace" initiative in the frame of the United Nations. The primary objective of this initiative is to promote the importance of mediation in preventing conflicts and resolving them as well as to secure more resources to support mediation efforts. Turkey also hosts "İstanbul Mediation Conferences"².

Turkey's aspirations to play an active mediating role in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine have brought to light its perceived policy of cautious neutrality. Since the onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Turkey has stood out as the most accommodating NATO country towards Moscow, having refrained from implementing sanctions or cancelling flights between the two nations. Ankara has been advocating for the Western powers not to abruptly sever communication channels with Russia, but rather to partake in a constructive

- 1 A. Zarakol, *Problem areas for the new Turkish foreign policy*, "Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity" 2012, vol. 40, no. 5, p. 740; T. Oğuzlu, *Turkish foreign policy in a changing world order*, "All Azimuth" 2018, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 127-139; J. Wódka, *Polityka zagraniczna średniej potęgi. Turcja jako stadium przypadku*, Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warsaw 2018.
- 2 *Peaceful resolution of conflicts and mediation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/resolution-of-conflicts-and-mediation.en.mfa> [17.04.2023].

dialogue with the country in order to pave the way for peaceful reconciliation. At the same time, Turkey has been committed to maintaining a delicate equilibrium between Ukraine and Russia. In a strategic move, Ankara expediently closed its waterways to military vessels in the nascent stages of the conflict, which acted as a deterrent to Moscow's efforts to augment its naval forces. It has also not refrained from delivering arms to Ukraine. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has unequivocally showcased a firm dedication to safeguarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. This balancing act and strategic vacillation between Russia and Ukraine preordains Turkey, as believed by the country's elite, to mediate between the warring factions and bring peace to the region.

Consequently, the paper is divided into three sections. The first discusses Turkey-Russia relations and their ambivalent nature, reflected in both the close cooperation and areas of divergence and competition, which can be encapsulated by the term "cooperative rivalry". The second part is devoted to examining Turkey-Ukraine relations prior to the outbreak of the war, followed by a depiction of mediation efforts undertaken by Ankara in the context of Russian atrocities in Ukraine.

1. "Cooperative rivalry": 1. The ambivalence of Turkey-Russian relations

In the debate on Turkey's foreign policy, its relations with Russia have been described as an example of "cooperative rivalry"³. Although the interests of the two players often contradict each other in many areas, Ankara and Moscow skilfully navigate these differences. As has been noted in the literature, they effectively compartmentalize their bilateral relations, aiming to isolate problematic and contentious issues

3 Cf. J. Nye, *The cooperative rivalry of US-China relations*, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-america-relationship-cooperative-rivalry-byjoseph-s-nye-2018-11>. Marc Pierini writes about "conflictual connivance". M. Pierini, *Russia's posture in the Mediterranean: Implications for NATO and Europe*, Carnegie Europe, June 2021, p. 4, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/2021-06-08_Pierini_RussiaMed_final.pdf [19.04.2023]. Partners who share ambivalent ties of both cooperation and rivalry are referred to as "frenemies". Cf. J.W. Taliaferro, *Defending frenemies: Alliances, politics, and nuclear nonproliferation in US foreign policy*, Oxford University Press, New York 2019; T.E. Ceylan, *Israel and Turkey: Once comrades now frenemies*, "Contemporary Review of the Middle East" 2021, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 338-355; L. Haferlach, F. Tekin, J. Wódka, *Friends. foes. frenemies? Unpacking the future of EU-Turkey relations*, "Futures" 2018, vol. 97, pp. 53-62.

from their overall relationship⁴. This approach is particularly evident in the separation of economic and political affairs.

Due to this approach, Turkey's shooting down of a Russian fighter jet over Syria in 2015 (an event called "a stab in the back" by Vladimir Putin⁵), amounting to a potential *casus belli*, sparked little more than a short crisis in bilateral relations which the two countries relatively quickly put behind them, normalizing relations and restoring pragmatic cooperation. The relationship between Turkey and Russia can hardly be called an alliance; it is rather an opportunistic partnership from which both sides are trying to "squeeze out" maximum profits.

On the one hand, there is close cooperation in selected areas, and especially in trade and the energy sector⁶. Russia is Turkey's second-largest trade partner, while Turkey's investment in Russia exceeds USD 10 billion. In 2020, the TurkStream pipeline started to deliver natural gas not only to Turkey but also to southern European countries. From the perspective of the Turkey-Russia-Ukraine triangle, the inauguration of this pipeline holds significance as it diminishes Russia's reliance on transit through Ukraine (similar to the case of Nord Stream). Moreover, the nuclear power plant in Akkuyu, inaugurated in April 2023, is operated by the Russians.

The most conspicuous event indicating closer Turkish-Russian ties was Turkey's decision to purchase an S-400 air defence system from Russia (under pressure from its NATO allies, Ankara had previously cancelled a tender won by a Chinese vendor). This has long-term implications going far beyond the mere acquisition itself as it translates into "greater opportunities for cooperation with Russia in almost any field"⁷. This strategic decision created "long-lasting mutual depend-

4 Cf. R.E. Hamilton, A. Mikulska, *Cooperation, competition, and compartmentalization: Russian-Turkish relations and their implications for the West*, Black Sea Strategy Papers, Foreign Policy Research Institute, April 2021, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/04/cooperation-competition-and-compartmentalization-russian-turkish-relations-and-their-implications-for-the-west/> [22.04.2023].

5 *Turkey downing of Russia jet "stab in the back" – Putin*, BBC, 24 November 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34913173> [22.04.2023].

6 Cf. Z. Öniş, Ş. Yılmaz, *Turkey and Russia in a shifting global order: cooperation, conflict, and asymmetric interdependence in a turbulent region*, "Third World Quarterly" 2016, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 71-95.

7 K. Strachota, A. Wilk, *S-400 dla Turcji. Eskalacja kryzysu w stosunkach turecko-amerykańskich*, "Komentarz OSW", 12 April 2019, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2019-06-12/s-400-dla-turcji-eskalacja-kryzysu-w-stosunkach-turecko> [23.04.2023].

encies” between Russia and Turkey⁸. Ankara’s move frustrated the U.S., which excluded Turkey from the F35 program and triggered the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). Although the sanctions imposed on Turkey are of limited scope, the mere invocation of CAATSA against an important NATO ally exposes widening rifts in Turkish-Western relations, indicating a process of *de-Atlantization* in Turkey’s foreign policy and a shift towards forging alliances with new partners. Moreover, Russian-Turkish cooperation in the realm of security is also expanding across various other domains⁹.

On the other hand, it should be noted that Ankara’s and Moscow’s interests diverge in hotspot regions such as Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the first two cases, Turkey and Russia are on opposite sides of the “barricade,” treating them as *de facto* proxy conflicts. While Russia is the main “sponsor” of Bashar al-Assad’s regime, Ankara’s strategic goal is to topple it. However, the two countries can sit down at the table despite these glaring discrepancies: the initiation of the Astana process with the participation of Iran and the 2019 Sochi agreement created a framework for a Turkish-Russian *modus vivendi* (but not without some tensions such as the fighting between Turkish and Syrian/Russian forces at the end of February 2020).

Also, in the energy sector, Turkey has diversified its sources of natural gas supplies with the TANAP and TAP pipelines passing through its territory; in addition, it has increased both LNG imports and domestic natural gas extraction. The share of Russian gas in Turkish imports has been on a decline (in 2019 it was 33%, down from more than 50% two years previously)¹⁰. Indeed, Turkey’s overarching goal to become an energy hub makes it necessary to break the Russian monopoly.

Another arena of rivalry in the shared neighbourhood of Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia, which is of existential importance to Ukrainian security, is the Black Sea. As noted by Duygu Bazoğlu Sezer, the emer-

8 Cf. G. Dalay, *After the S-400 purchase: Where are Turkish-Russian relations heading?*, Point of View, SWP, 3 September 2019, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/after-the-s-400-purchase-where-are-turkish-russian-relations-heading> [23.04.2023].

9 Cf. O. Dursun-Özkanca, *Turkey-West relations: The politics of intra-alliance opposition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2019, pp. 113-125.

10 M. Temizer, *Russian share of Turkish gas imports falls as LNG rises*, Anadolu Agency, 5 April 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/russian-share-of-turkish-gas-imports-falls-as-ling-rises/1866403> [24.04.2023].

gence of an independent Ukraine in 1991 upended the centuries-old regional order, which over the past 30 years has been shaped by “two sets of dyadic relationships: Ukrainian-Russian and Turkish-Russian”¹¹. Thus, it appears that the Ukrainian-Turkish partnership may also increasingly affect the balance of powers in the Black Sea basin.

Traditionally, both Turkey and Russia pursued a policy of “regional ownership” of the Black Sea. As noted by Mustafa Aydın, they created a Turkish-Russian “condominium,” preventing non-littoral actors from establishing a presence or conducting substantial activity in the region¹². This policy manifested itself in excluding NATO and Western countries from the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR) formed on the initiative of Turkey in 2002 and consisting of Ukrainian, Russian, Turkish, Bulgarian, Georgian, and Romanian navies. This was also the case with Black Sea Harmony, yet another project initiated by Ankara in 2004, perceived as an alternative to NATO’s Active Endeavor mission. This promoted a closer dialogue about Black Sea security between Turkey and Russia¹³. What is equally important is that by strictly adhering to the 1936 Montreux Convention on the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, Ankara strove not to antagonize Moscow. This approach was in turn criticized by the United States as the Convention imposed restrictions on foreign ships entering the Black Sea.

While up to 2014, Turkey had been the dominant naval power in the Black Sea basin (the ratio of Turkish to Russian warships was 44 to 26)¹⁴, the balance of power in the region radically changed as a result of the annexation of Crimea, which became a Russian “stronghold.” Pursuant to a new version of its naval doctrine adopted in 2015, Russia began to intensively militarize the peninsula. Between 2014 and 2017,

11 D. Bazoğlu Sezer, *Ukraine, Turkey, and the Black Sea Region*, “Harvard Ukrainian Studies” 1996, vol. 20, p. 79.

12 M. Aydın, *The long view on Turkish-Russian rivalry and cooperation*, GMF, “On Turkey”, April 2020, no. 5, <https://www.gmfus.org/publications/long-view-turkish-russian-rivalry-and-cooperation> [3.05.2023].

13 M. Çelikpala, E. Erşen, *Turkey’s Black Sea predicament: Challenging or accommodating Russia?*, “Perceptions. Journal of International Affairs” 2018, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 75.

14 P. Shlykov, *Russian-Turkish relations in the wider Black Sea region: Cooperation and competition*, “Perceptions Journal of International Affairs” 2018, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 98.

as many as 60,000 Russian troops were moved there¹⁵ to bolster the country's anti-access ability and prevent NATO activity in the region. In addition to deploying an S-400 anti-missile system in Crimea, Russia radically strengthened its Black Sea fleet, also as a result of taking over Ukrainian resources.

Shifts in the Black Sea basin have begun to raise Turkish concerns and prompted a gradual reversal of its "regional ownership" policy. In 2016, at the time of tensions caused by the downing of the Russian plane, the Turkish president called on his NATO allies to become more active in the region; noting that due to NATO's absence, the Black Sea had turned into "a Russian lake," he said "We should enhance our coordination and cooperation in the Black Sea. We hope for concrete results from the NATO summit in Warsaw . . . The Black Sea should be turned into a sea of stability"¹⁶. The joint manoeuvres of NATO and Ukrainian navies in 2021, the largest in the 25-year history of the *Sea Breeze* exercises, demonstrated the growing involvement of non-littoral actors in this basin.

2. Turkey-Ukraine rapprochement

Before 2014, the strategic Turkey-Ukraine partnership, which had been initiated in 2011 with the establishment of the High-Level Strategic Council, was more of "an attribute of diplomatic rhetoric" rather than "a meaningful format of bilateral relations"; among the Ukrainian decision-makers, references to the prospect of closer cooperation with Turkey were "sporadic" and "declarative" in nature¹⁷. As a result of the dramatic change in the regional order after 2014, bilateral relations between the countries gained new momentum, with Turkey becoming a key partner for Kyiv. The national security strategy approved by President Volodymyr Zelensky in September 2020 featured not only Turkey but also Azerbaijan among Ukraine's second-

15 K. Åtland, *Redrawing borders, reshaping orders: Russia's quest for dominance in the Black Sea region, "European Security"* 2021, vol. 30, no. 2, p. 317.

16 *Erdogan: NATO'nun yüzünden Karadeniz Rus gölü oldu*, soL, 11 May 2016, <https://haber.sol.org.tr/toplum/erdogan-natonun-yuzunden-karadeniz-rus-golu-oldu-155577> [4.05.2023].

17 M. Vorotnyk, *Foreign policy audit. Ukraine-Turkey*, Discussion Paper, Kyiv 2016, p. 4, http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Aud_Ukr_Turk_01_32_eng-2.pdf [1.05.2023].

tier strategic partners with which the country intended to cooperate in the area of regional security.

The strengthening of Turkey-Ukraine ties has been reflected in an intensive exchange of top-level visits. The schedule of meetings after 2014 indeed looks impressive¹⁸. This sent a clear signal that at a critical moment in Kyiv-Moscow relations, Turkey will not shy away from extending “soft support” to Russia’s adversary, even if only in a verbal, symbolic way. At the time, Gennady Petrov entitled his article in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* “Erdoğan turned to influencing Moscow via Kyiv: Turkey is playing the Ukrainian card in its grand game with Russia”¹⁹. At the end of 2020, bilateral consultations started to be held in a new format called the quadriga, involving meetings of the foreign affairs and defence ministers of the two countries as well as some lower-level meetings²⁰. Although Erdoğan declared that diplomatic interactions with Ukraine were “not in any way a move against third countries”²¹, the Turkish president’s verbal support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine offered during Zelensky’s visit in April 2021 (Ankara reiter-

- 18 In March 2015 and 2016, as part of official visits, Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Petro Poroshenko met in Ukraine and Turkey respectively. The following year, in October, the Turkish President paid a visit to Ukraine. Both leaders also met on the sidelines of important international events, with the Ukrainian President flying to Turkey for the inauguration of the TANAP pipeline in 2018. In the same year, he visited Istanbul and participated in the 7th session of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. In January 2019, another meeting between Erdoğan and Poroshenko took place, and after the elections in Ukraine, the new President made an official visit to Turkey in August. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Ukraine in February 2021 as part of the 8th session of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council. On the other hand, Volodymyr Zelensky visited Ankara in October, and later, in April 2021, he led the Ukrainian delegation at another session of the Council. For more information, please visit the official website of the President of the Republic of Turkey. <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/> [1.05.2023].
- 19 Г. Петров, *Эрдоган решил воздействовать на Москву через Киев. Турция разыгрывает украинскую карту в большой игре с Россией*, “Независимая газета”, [G. Petrov, *Erdogan reshil vozdeystvovat' na Moskvu cherez Kiev. Turtsiya razygryvaet ukrainskuyu kartu v bol'shoy igre s Rossiey*, “Nezavisimaya Gazeta”], 11 April 2021, https://www.ng.ru/world/2021-04-11/1_8125_turkey.html [3.05.2023].
- 20 *Ukraine and Turkey hold political and security consultations in the Quadriga format at the level of national coordinators*, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych Ukrainy, 24 March 2021, <https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/ukraine-and-turkey-held-political-and-security-consultations-quadriga-format-level-national-coordinators> [3.05.2023]; *Dışişleri Bakanı Çavuşoğlu: Kırım Platformuna desteğimizi bugün bir kere daha yineledik*, Anadolu Ajansı, 18 December 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/disisleri-bakani-cavusoglu-kirim-platformuna-destegimizi-bugun-bir-kere-daha-yineledik/2081611>.
- 21 *Turkey's Erdogan calls for end to “worrying” developments in eastern Ukraine, offers support*, Reuters, 10 April 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukrainian-turkish-presidents-hold-talks-amid-donbass-tensions-with-russia-2021-04-10/> [4.05.2023].

ated that it does not recognize the annexation of Crimea and endorses Ukraine's sovereignty, at the same time expressing support for Kyiv's Crimea Platform initiative)²² provoked strong reactions from Moscow. In an interview, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recommended "that our Turkish colleagues carefully analyse the situation and stop fuelling Kyiv's militaristic sentiment," stating that Turkish encouragement of Ukrainian aggressive actions with respect to Crimea amounted to the violation of Russian territorial integrity and calling on Ankara to change its stance²³. Indeed, Turkey broached a sensitive topic by expressing support for Ukraine's endeavours to join NATO and its application for the NATO Membership Action Plan, as stated in the joint communique issued after a meeting between the two presidents in April²⁴.

Turkey's diplomatic involvement in stabilizing eastern Ukraine is also reflected in the fact that the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, deployed in 2014, has been headed by Turkish diplomats. In July 2021, during the Fourth Ukraine Reform Conference entitled "Strong Ukraine in a Stronger European and Euro-Atlantic Family" held in Vilnius, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu announced that Turkey was willing to host its next edition²⁵.

The cooperation for regional security envisioned in the Ukrainian strategy has been reflected in the recent collaboration between the defence industries of the two countries. Under a 2018 agreement, Ukraine purchased from Turkey six TB2 Bayraktar drones, which were first deployed by the Ukrainian army in April 2021 for reconnaissance flights in Donbas. Before the outbreak of the war, Ukrainians had also

- 22 "Our primary goal is that the Black Sea continues to be a sea of peace and cooperation", Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, 10 April 2021, <https://www.tcgb.gov.tr/en/news/542/126545/-our-primary-goal-is-that-the-black-sea-continues-to-be-a-sea-of-peace-and-cooperation-> [4.05.2023]; *Türkiye'nin Kırım politikası ve "Kırım Platformu"*, Cumhuriyet, 7 June 2021, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiyenin-kirim-politikasi-ve-kirim-platformu-1842437> [4.05.2023].
- 23 *Russia warns Turkey over ties with Ukraine*, Reuters, 24 May 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/russia-warns-turkey-over-ties-with-ukraine-2021-05-24/> [5.05.2023].
- 24 *Türkiye ile Ukrayna arasında 20 maddelik ortak bildiri*, TRT HABER, 10 April 2021, <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/turkiye-ile-ukrayna-arasinda-20-maddelik-ortak-bildiri-571807.html> [5.05.2023].
- 25 *Bakan Çavuşoğlu: "Ukrayna ve NATO arasında devam edecek işbirliği, güçlü ve bağımsız bir Ukrayna için çok önemli"*, Haberler.com, 7 July 2021, <https://www.haberler.com/bakan-cavusoglu-ukrayna-ve-nato-arasinda-devam-14252270-haberi/> [5.05.2023].

been trying to convince their Turkish partners that Ukrainian know-how may help Turkey with “the weakest link” in the process, that is, the production of drone engines²⁶. In the middle of July 2021, it was revealed that Turkey purchased 14 engines for its ATAK-2 combat helicopters²⁷.

3. Turkey as a mediator in Russia-Ukraine war

Already before the outbreak of the war on the February 24th, when the tensions between Moscow and Kyiv were escalating, Turkey proffered its services of mediating between Russia and Ukraine. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan explicitly stated his willingness to engage in such efforts, stating on January 21 – a month prior to the initiation of all-out hostilities – that “we can mediate between the parties”²⁸.

During his official visit to Kyiv in February 2022, amidst escalating tensions between Ukraine and Russia, the Turkish president emphasised the need for restraint, reiterated Turkey’s support for Ukraine’s territorial integrity, and called for a de-escalation of hostilities. His dedication to finding a peaceful solution to the crisis was commended by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on February 7. Turkish media sources highlighted Erdoğan’s unwavering commitment to promoting regional peace, particularly as he strongly condemned Russia’s recognition of the independence of the “so-called Donetsk and Luhansk Republics” on February 22nd, deeming it an intolerable course of action.

- 26 *Ukraine eyes more joint defense projects with Turkey*, Anadolu Ajansı, 3 February 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/ukraine-eyes-more-joint-defense-projects-with-turkey/2132853> [6.05.2023]. Turkey faces a structural problem with its domestic production of engines for various types of weaponry, including tanks, combat aircraft, and helicopters. In this area, Turkey is heavily reliant on external supplies. Cf. B.E. Begdil, *Turkey’s ‘chronic engine problem’ is harming defense projects, warn officials*, DefenseNews, 26 April 2020, <https://www.defensenews.com/industry/techwatch/2020/06/26/turkeys-chronic-engine-problem-is-harming-defense-projects-warn-officials/> [5.05.2023].
- 27 A. Alemdar, *Ağır sınıf taarruz helikopteri ATAK-II’nin motorları Ukrayna’dan gelecek*, DefenceTurk.net, 14 March 2021, <https://www.defenceturk.net/agir-sinif-taarruz-helikopteri-atak-iinin-motorlari-ukraynadan-gelecek> [7.05.2023]
- 28 *Ukrayna-Rusya Savaşı’nın birinci yılında Türkiye’nin arabulucu rolü*, Anadolu Ajansı, 24 February 2023, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/analiz/gorus-ukrayna-rusya-savasinin-birinci-yilinda-turkiye-nin-arabulucu-rolu/2829905#> [7.05.2023].

On February 24th, Erdoğan unequivocally condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine, characterizing it as a serious impediment to regional peace, stability, and tranquillity. He reaffirmed Turkey's support for Ukraine's ongoing efforts to safeguard its territorial integrity, emphasizing the importance of upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations²⁹.

The Antalya Diplomacy Forum held in March 2022 marked a significant moment in the Ukraine-Russia conflict as it brought together high-level officials – Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba – for a discussion moderated by the Turkish foreign minister³⁰. This event was followed by another significant development on 29 March 2022, when peace negotiations between Russian and Ukrainian delegations were held in Istanbul. The progress made during these talks was described by Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu as the “most significant” since the conflict began³¹. On the same day, the 8th, the Istanbul Mediation Conference was held³².

Ceasefire negotiations involving Russia and Turkey as mediators reached an impasse due to the disclosure of war atrocities committed by Russian forces. Despite this setback, Turkey persevered in its role as a mediator and pursued dialogue with Russia on matters pertaining to the humanitarian evacuation from Mariupol and food security.

On 22 September 2022, an unforeseen agreement on a prisoner swap was reached between Ukraine and Russia, with Turkish mediation. The accord led to the release of more than 250 detainees, comprising 215 Ukrainians and 55 Russian and pro-Russian combatants. The international community lauded the agreement, which also fa-

29 *President Erdoğan: Russia's decision to recognise the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk Republics is unacceptable*, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 22 February 2022, <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/president-erdogan-russias-decision-to-recognise-the-so-called-donetsk-and-luhansk-republics-is-unacceptable> [5.05.2023].

30 *Türkiye-Rusya-Ukrayna üçlü dışişleri bakanları toplantısı*, T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-rusya-ukrayna-uclu-disisleri-bakanlari-toplantisi--10-mart-2022.en.mfa> [5.05.2023].

31 *Russia says it will reduce military activity near Ukraine capital*, Al-Jazeera, 29 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/29/no-handshake-as-ukraine-russia-envoys-meet-for-peace-talks> [8.05.2023].

32 *Ukrayna ve Rusya heyetleri İstanbul'da görüştü*, Seta Foundation, 1 April 2022, https://setad.org.ukrayna-ve-rusya-heyetleri-istanbulda-gorustu/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=ukrayna-ve-rusya-heyetleri-istanbulda-gorustu [8.05.2023].

cilitated the release of ten foreign nationals from the United States and the United Kingdom. During a January 2023 international conference in Ankara, attended by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Ukraine's human rights ombudsman, Dmytro Lubinets, met with his Russian counterpart Tatyana Moskalkova on the sidelines. Following their meeting, an announcement was made that the two sides had reached an agreement to exchange "more than 40 prisoners" each, though this was subsequently retracted.

The Turkish mediation played a pivotal role in brokering an agreement³³ between Turkey, the United Nations, Russia, and Ukraine in Istanbul, resulting in the reopening of a number of Ukrainian ports to release a stockpile of grain that had been stranded for several months due to the persistent conflict. Black Sea Grain Initiative has been vital in addressing an escalating global food crisis and averting a worldwide food shortage. An Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) comprising officials from the three concerned nations and the United Nations has been established to monitor the implementation of the Initiative and manage the transportation of goods from Ukraine's Black Sea ports³⁴.

The initial agreements regarding the export of food and fertilizers from Ukraine's Black Sea ports were set to last for 120 days. In October 2022, following the suspected air and sea attacks on Russian naval vessels in Sevastopol, Crimea, Russia suspended its participation in the agreement. Russia maintains that Ukrainian air and sea forces may have conducted the attacks, allegedly utilizing civilian ships to carry out the operation. It was only after Ukraine furnished written assurances, brokered by Turkish mediation, that Russia agreed to recommence its involvement in the Black Sea grain initiative – the agreement was extended for another 120 days. The successful resolution of the crisis was the result of diplomatic efforts spearheaded by the President, Defence Minister, and Foreign Minister of Turkey, who worked to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. Furthermore, on 18 March 2023, Russia announced a 60-day extension

33 https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/black_sea_grain_initiative_full_text.pdf [8.05.2023].

34 *Tahil sevkiyatı üssü İstanbul'da resmi olarak açıldı*, NTV, 27 July 2022, https://www.ntv.com.tr/du-nya/tahil-sevkiyatı-ussu-istanbulda-aciliyor,2Qx-5jC3woG_6L8lDZLOjg [8.05.2023].

of the grain deal, stating that this would be sufficient time to evaluate the success of the memorandum that was signed with the United Nations³⁵. According to the United Nations, under the terms of the agreement, Ukraine has been able to export a total of approximately 28.8 million tons of agricultural products, which includes 14.6 million tons of corn and 7.8 million tons of wheat.

In January 2023, during a phone call with Vladimir Putin, Turkish President Erdogan reiterated his willingness to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict through mediation. President Erdogan has made repeated efforts to convene a peace summit in Turkey, with the aim of bringing together Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

Conclusions

Turkey finds itself in a unique position, balancing its role as a formal ally of Western states while simultaneously striving for independence and greater regional and global influence. This dynamic is evident in Turkey's proactive engagement as a mediator, aiming to facilitate a sustainable cease-fire between Ukraine and Russia. By assuming the role of mediator and maintaining open communication channels with both conflicting parties, Turkey has injected hope into diplomatic efforts towards resolving the Ukraine crisis and achieving a lasting peace. This indicates Turkey's growing inclination to assert its independence and play a more autonomous role in shaping global affairs.

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³⁵ *Russia extends grain deal for 60 days, wants to see progress on concerns*, Reuters, 18 March 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/russia-extends-grain-deal-60-days-wants-see-progress-concerns-2023-03-18/> [9.05.2023].

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Robert Rajczyk*

Information policy tools as instruments of Ukraine's information security after Russia's full-scale invasion

Narzędzia polityki informacyjnej jako instrumenty bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego Ukrainy po rozpoczęciu pełnoskalowej inwazji rosyjskiej

Abstract: The paper presents the methods and means of conducting information policy by the Ukrainian authorities after the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion on 24 February 2022. The analysis is presented in institutional and functional terms using the method of functional analysis, which demonstrated that the information policy of Ukraine during the period of martial law is effective and provides the state (with) information security in terms of military aggression.

Keywords: information policy, war in Ukraine, information security

Streszczenie: Artykuł przedstawia metody i środki prowadzenia polityki informacyjnej przez władze ukraińskie po rozpoczęciu pełnoskalowej inwazji rosyjskiej 24 lutego 2022 r. W prezentacji uwzględniono ujęcia instytucjonalne oraz funkcjonalne. Zastosowano metodę analizy funkcjonalnej, która dowiodła, iż polityka informacyjna Ukrainy w okresie stanu wojennego jest efektywna i zapewnia bezpieczeństwo informacyjne państwa w warunkach agresji zbrojnej.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka informacyjna, wojna w Ukrainie, bezpieczeństwo informacyjne

Introduction

The outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, caused the introduction of martial law in Ukraine¹. This paper aims to present the techniques and methods of information

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1 Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy Pro vvedennya voyennoho stanu v Ukraini. Ukaz zatverdzheno Zakonom № 2102-IX vid 24.02.2022.

policy in terms of military aggression that threatens the infosphere². Eugenia Tychomyrowa defines the infosphere as all types of mass media on the state territory despite their typology as well as foreign mass media broadcasting³. According to this, in the infosphere information is created, broadcasted, and absorbed by the people fulfilling their information needs as well as those of society and the state. It also means to secure Ukrainian society from the aggressive influence of destructive propaganda produced by the Russian Federation (...)⁴. Tychomyrowa points out that in the infosphere, the image of Ukraine is being created as well.

Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska links the image's creation with the information policy that secures the transfer of information in the different societal structures⁵. Krzysztof Liderman and Andrzej Malik define information policy as fulfilling the information needs of society and gaining its acceptance for decisions and actions⁶. According to Sandra Braman, the "classical narrow definition of information policy involves such issues as access to government information, but the earliest use of the phrase "information policy" by governments actually referred to propaganda efforts during World War I"⁷. Braman also claims that information policy "comprised of laws, regulations, and doctrinal positions – and other decision making and practices with society-wide constitutive effects – involving information creation, processing, flows, access, and use"⁸. In the same way, information policy is defined by Paul T. Jaeger, Kim M. Thompson, and Charles R. McClure as "rules and guidelines such as laws and regulations, created by government

2 The research activities are co-financed by the funds granted under the Research Excellence Initiative of the University of Silesia in Katowice.

3 E. Tychomyrowa, *Przestrzeń informacyjna Ukrainy*, [in:] O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka (eds.), *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, vol. 2, Cracow 2019, p. 223.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

5 B. Dobek-Ostrowska, R. Wiszniowski, *Teoria komunikowania publicznego i politycznego. Wprowadzenie*, Wrocław 2007, pp. 48-49.

6 K. Liderman, A. Maik, *Polityka informacyjna a bezpieczeństwo informacyjne*, "Studia Bezpieczeństwa Narodowego" 2013, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 409, DOI: 10.37055/sbn/129814.

7 S. Braman, *Defining information policy*, "Journal of Information Policy" 2011, no. 1, p. 2.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

agencies and institutions to steer the creation, management, access, and use of information”⁹.

Meanwhile, according to the Law of Ukraine “On Information”, the main direction for the state information policy of Ukraine is ensuring everyone’s access to information; ensuring equal opportunities for creating, collecting, receiving, storing, using, distributing, guarding, and protecting information; the creation of conditions for the formation of an information society in Ukraine; ensuring the openness and transparency of the activities of subjects of power; the creation of information systems and information networks, development of electronic governance; constant updating, enrichment and storage of national information resources; ensuring the information security of Ukraine; promotion of international cooperation in the information sphere and Ukraine’s entry into the global information space¹⁰.

According to Halina Batorowska, information security means the desired level of provision of crucial resources and technologies protection as well as exercising the rights to use them despite domestic and international conditions¹¹. Józef Janczak and Andrzej Nowak claim that information security is a complex of actions providing the required security and free exercising of the infosphere’s functioning in the interest of society¹².

1. Legal basis of information policy

The protection of information security is considered one of the most important obligations of the State according to the 17th Article of the Constitution of Ukraine¹³. Implementing the aforementioned state information security is exercised through specialized institutions and projects. The legal basis for this consists in the Constitution of

9 P.T. Jaeger, K.M. Thompson, Ch.R. McClure, *Social measurement in information management*, [in:] K. Kempf-Leonard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of social measurement*, San Diego 2005, p. 277.

10 Zakon Ukrainy pro informatsiyu vid 02.10.1992 № 2657-XII (Redaktsiya stanom na 31.03.2023).

11 H. Batorowska, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne*, [in:] O. Wasiuta, R. Klepka (eds.), *Vademecum bezpieczeństwa informacyjnego*, vol. 1, Cracow 2019, pp. 90-91.

12 J. Janczak, A. Nowak, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne. Wybrane problemy*, Warsaw 2013.

13 Konstytucja Ukrainy, (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 1996 r., № 30, st.141 iz zminamy, vnesenymy zhidno iz zakonom № 2222-IV vid 01.02.2011, 2011, № 10, st.68; № 586-VII vid 19.09.2013, 2014, № 11, st.142; № 742-VII vid 21.02.2014, 2014, № 11, st.143; № 1401-VIII vid 02.06.2016 r. 28, st. 532.

Ukraine as well as in the Laws, Decrees, and Decisions of the government and of the president of Ukraine. Therefore, information security has become an important element of the activities of the Ukrainian authorities due to the informational dominance of the aggressor state in the information space of Ukraine, starting from Ukraine regaining its independence. The protection of the information space of the state gained particular importance after the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, which was supported by intoxication with Russian media messages addressed to local Russians, broadcast from both foreign and domestic Russian language content providers.

The Law of Ukraine On Martial Law, Law of Ukraine On Information, Law of Ukraine on Media¹⁴, and Law of Ukraine on the Fight Against Terrorism¹⁵ stand for the legal basis of state information and media policies¹⁶ as well as the Order of the Commander-in-Chief On the organization of interaction between the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other components of the defence forces, and representatives of the mass media during the legal regime of martial law¹⁷.

Meanwhile, Presidential Decrees and Decisions of Government concerning the implementation of strategic documents have been elaborated to establish a strategic dimension to Ukraine's infosphere protection. Grażyna Piechota points out that a holistic approach to the infosphere of Ukraine is being included in the "Concept for the

14 "Ensuring effective supervision (control) of compliance in the territory of Ukraine with the requirements and restrictions in the field of media provided for by this Law, with the aim of protecting the national media space of Ukraine and building an information environment capable of resisting current threats to information security" – see more: *Zakon Ukrainy Pro media iz zminamy, vneseny my zhidno iz Zakonom № 2710-IX vid 03.11.2022, № 3136-IX vid 30.05.2023.*

15 This law defines restrictions on the dissemination of information, prohibits the dissemination through the mass media or in any other way of information that aims to promote or justify terrorism, contains statements of persons who resist or call for resistance to the implementation of anti-terrorist operations – see more: *Zakon Ukrainy Pro borot'bu z teroryzmom (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 2003, № 25, st. 180).*

16 *Zakon Ukrainy Pro pravovyy rezhym voyennoho stanu (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 2015, № 28, st. 250); Zakon Ukrainy pro informatsiyu vid 02.10.1992 № 2657-XII (Redaktsiya stanom na 31.03.2023); Zakon Ukrainy Pro media Iz zminamy, vneseny my zhidno iz Zakonom № 2710-IX vid 03.11.2022, № 3136-IX vid 30.05.2023; Zakon Ukrainy Pro borot'bu z teroryzmom (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 2003, № 25, st. 180).*

17 *Nakaz Holovnokomanduvacha Zbroynykh Syl Ukrainy vid 03 bereznya 2022 roku №73 Pro orhanizatsiyu vzayemodiyi mizh Zbroynymy Sylamy Ukrainy, inshymy skladovymy syl oborony ta predstavnykamy zasobiv masovoyi informatsiyi na chas diyi pravovoho rezhymu voyennoho stanu.*

promotion of Ukraine in the world and its interests in the global information space” as well as the “Doctrine of Information Security and Information Security Strategy”¹⁸. As far as The Information Security Strategy is concerned, the novelty of the latter document relies on framing the legal and practical basis for the functioning of Ukraine’s infosphere in terms of martial law¹⁹.

As far as mass media are concerned, the martial law states that this is “the work of providers of electronic communication networks and/or services, printing enterprises, publishing houses, television and radio organizations, television and radio centres, and other enterprises, institutions, organizations, and institutions of culture and media as well as the use of local radio stations, television centres, and printing houses for military needs and carrying out explanatory work among the troops and the population; to prohibit the operation of receiving and transmitting radio stations for personal and collective use and the transmission of information through computer networks”²⁰.

2. The institutional dimension of information policy tools

The Ministry of Information Policy²¹ was established in 2014. Later, it merged into the Ministry of Culture and the joint Ministry of Culture and Information Policy was thereby established²². Grażyna Piechota and Robert Rajczyk point out that “[t]asks allocated to the Ministry of Information Policy have been placed within the scope of information policy treated from the wider definitional perspective”²³, e.g., dissemi-

18 G. Piechota, *Strategia zarządzania informacją jako instrument ochrony przestrzeni informacyjnej państwa (case study: Ukraina)*, “Zarządzanie Mediami” 2022, vol. 10, no. 2, p. 115, DOI: 10.4467/23540214ZM.22.008.17165.

19 Ibid.

20 Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy Pro vvedennya voyennoho stanu v Ukraini. Ukaz zatverdzheno Zakonom № 2102-IX vid 24.02.2022, article 8 (11).

21 Postanova Verkhovnoyi Rady Ukrainy Pro formuvannya skladu Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrainy (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 2014 r., № 52, st. 2062; Polozhennya pro Ministerstvo informatsiyanoi polityky Ukrainy, zatverdzhene postanovoyu Kabinetu Ministriv Ukrainy vid 14 sichnya 2015 rik № 2.

22 G. Piechota, R. Rajczyk, *Institutionalization of Ukraine's information policy as a function of strategic communication*, “Środkowoeuropejskie Studia Polityczne” 2018, no. 3, p. 74, DOI: 10.14746/ssp.2018.3.5.

23 Ibid.

nating information about Ukraine in the world. According to strategic documents such as the Information Security Strategy of Ukraine, mentioned above, the government is considered to be a coordinator for the information policy of the state authorities. The executive role relies on the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy. Piechota and Rajczyk assume that before 24 February 2022, the “category of social campaigns concerns the activities that are aimed at explaining social policy initiatives to the citizens of Ukraine (aid for internal resettlers, access to social aid) and the necessity for changes in the fees for municipal services. Although the decision regarding increased fees caused social protests, from the narrative side it has been presented as a fight for Ukraine’s energy independence. Information campaigns, on the other hand, are concentrated on implementing the integrative function and they concern, among other things, the promotion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, state holiday celebrations, interethnic integration, and popularizing the learning of foreign languages or promoting structural reforms such as the decentralization of the state”.

Some tasks in the field of information policy, defined as the information activities of state administration bodies, are also carried out by the Ukrainian Institute, established in 2017 within the structures of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ukrainian Institute conducts cultural diplomacy on behalf of Ukraine²⁴. Taking into account a broader definition of information policy, such activity is also carried out by the Centre for Strategic Communication at the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy and the Centre for Counter-Information Disinformation operating at the Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. Except for the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the other state bodies are included in the information security, providing, e.g., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the State Security Service as well as the Council of Security and Defence of Ukraine.

However, the most important element of the institutional dimension of Ukrainian information policy is the functioning of the “Mul-

24 Rozporyadzhennya Pro utvorennia derzhavnoyi ustanovy “Ukrayins'kyi instytut” vid 21 chervnya 2017 r. № 430-r.

timedia Broadcasting Platform of Ukraine” on the basis of the Law of Ukraine On the Multimedia Broadcasting Platform of Ukraine²⁵.

3. Operational dimension of information policy

The above-referenced law stands for establishing a state-owned enterprise, the “Multimedia Broadcasting Platform of Ukraine”, consisting of the television channel UATV. From October 2015 to March 2021, the UATV channel operated as a multilingual channel with five broadcasting languages. Then, it was launched as an international channel and began to enter foreign cable networks in Russia and in countries where there is a Russian-speaking audience from the former USSR. At the same time, on 1 March 2020, as part of the Multimedia Broadcasting Platform of Ukraine, the broadcasting of the TV channel “Дом”²⁶ was launched, planned as a tool to inform the inhabitants of the Russian-occupied parts of Donbas and the annexed Crimea. Russian-language programs were removed from the air. On 23 March 2023, the channel changed its name to “Дім” (the Ukrainian version of Дом)²⁷.

Since the outbreak of the full-scale Russian invasion, UATV underwent a rebranding and now broadcasts under the brand name “FreeДом”²⁸. Between 24 February and 11 September 2022, UATV and the Дом channel broadcast a 24-hour television news marathon “ЄДИНІ НОВИНИ” (Jedini Novini) with the hashtag #UAracom. The project was introduced based on the Decision of the Council of Security and Defence of Ukraine: “(...) in the terms of martial law, the implementation of a uniform information policy is a priority issue of national security, which is ensured by unifying all national television channels, the content of which consists mainly of information

25 Zakon Ukrainy Pro systemu inomovlennya Ukrainy, (Vidomosti Verkhovnoyi Rady), 2016, № 4, st. 37.

26 <https://www.nrada.gov.ua/trk-ukrayina-multymedijna-platforma-inomovlennya-ukrainy-pro-dovzhat-movyty-za-tymchasovymy-dozvolamy-u-pokrovsku-donetskoyi-oblasti/> [12.05.2023].

27 Besides, the television channel “DOM” was accomplished with a radio channel with the same brand, <https://www.kanaldim.tv> [12.05.2023].

28 <https://uatv.ua/> [12.05.2023].

and/or information and analytical programs”²⁹. The Decision of the Council of Security and Defence of Ukraine does not clarify whether all will be obliged to broadcast the 24-hour television news marathon “#UArazom” or only those whose content “consists of information and/or information and analysis broadcasts”. Although several large TV channels (“1+1”, “ICTV”, “Suspilne”, “Inter”, “Ukraine 24”) voluntarily decided to unite after the start of the information marathon war, they alternated broadcasting news programs among themselves, many all-Ukrainian TV channels continue to broadcast independently, in particular “Perszyj”, “Espresso” or “Channel 5”. The television channel of Verkhovna Rada, the unicameral parliament of Ukraine, also took part in the 24-hour television news marathon.

Although censorship is forbidden by law³⁰, martial law concerns some limitations to the mass media and freedom of speech. The right to information may be restricted by law in the interests of national security, territorial integrity, or public order to prevent civil unrest or criminal offences, protect the health of the population, the reputation or rights of other persons, prevent the disclosure of information received on a confidential basis, or support the authority and impartiality of justice³¹. During martial law, it is prohibited to distribute information related to the names of military units (units) and other military facilities in the areas of combat (special) missions, geographic coordinates of their locations; the number of personnel of military unit; the number of weapons and combat equipment, material, and technical means, their condition and storage locations; information about the operations (military operations) that are being conducted or are planned; information about military units, forms, methods, tactics of their actions, etc.³².

29 Rishennya Rady natsional'noyi bezpeky i oborony Ukrainy vid 18 bereznya 2022 roku Shchodo realizatsiyi yedynoyi informatsiyanoi polityky v umovakh voyennoho stanu.

30 Zakon Ukrainy Pro media iz zminamy, vnesenymy zhidno iz Zakonom № 2710-IX vid 03.11.2022, № 3136-IX vid 30.05.2023], article 4 (3).

31 Zakon Ukrainy pro informatsiyu vid 02.10.1992 № 2657-XII (Redaktsiya stanom na 31.03.2023)], article 6 (2).

32 Nakaz Holovnokomanduvacha Zbroynykh Syl Ukrainy vid 03 bereznya 2022 roku №73 Pro orhanizatsiyu vzayemodiyi mizh Zbroynymy Sylamy Ukrainy, inshymy skladovymy syl obo-rony ta predstavnykamy zasobiv masovoyi informatsiyi na chas diyi pravovoho rezhymu voyennoho stanu.

Furthermore, according to the Law of Ukraine on Media “[i]nformation may not be used for calling to overthrow the constitutional order, infringing the territorial integrity of Ukraine, propaganda of war, violence, cruelty, incitement to ethnic, racial, or religious hatred, performing terrorist attacks, or encroachment on human rights and freedoms”³³.

Similar regulations apply to the Law of Ukraine on Media; it is forbidden to disseminate pieces of information indicating armed aggression against Ukraine as an internal conflict or civil war if it causes incitement to hostility or hatred or calls for violent changes, overthrow of the constitutional system, or violation of territorial integrity; dissemination of unreliable materials regarding armed aggression and actions of the aggressor state (occupier state), its officials, persons, and organizations controlled by the aggressor state (occupier state), if the consequence is incitement to hostility or hatred or call for violent changes, overthrow of the constitutional order, or violation of the integrity territorial”³⁴.

Nevertheless, “[i]nformation obtained as a result of carrying out a ‘journalistic investigation’ related to issues of national security, the defence of Ukraine, or its territorial integrity and sovereignty, is subject to publication only on the condition that it is checked by the competent authorities and authorized in accordance with the requirements of compliance with the principles of media freedom, national interests, security, defence capability, territorial integrity, public order, prevention of mass disturbances, ensuring security, strengthening the authority of the authorities, implementing health care, in order to protect the reputation or rights of other persons or to prevent the disclosure of information obtained in confidence”³⁵.

Furthermore, the special regime of accreditation for journalists was introduced according to the Order of the Commander-in-Chief.

33 Zakon Ukrainy pro informatsiyu vid 02.10.1992 № 2657-XII (Redaktsiya stanom na 31.03.2023)], article 28 (1).

34 Zakon Ukrainy Pro media iz zminamy, vneseny my zhidno iz Zakonom № 2710-IX vid 03.11.2022, № 3136-IX vid 30.05.2023], article 110 (4), 7-8.

35 Ukaz Prezydenta Ukrainy №152/2022 Pro rishennya Rady natsional'noyi bezpeky i oborony Ukrainy vid 18 bereznya 2022 roku Shchodo realizatsiyi yedynoyi informatsiynoyi polityky v umovakh voyennoho stanu.

The operational dimension of the information policy of Ukraine includes another aspect that concerns revealing numerous pieces of information about Ukraine's donors. The website <https://stop-rf.nsd.gov.ua/> provides a complete report about the amount and type of anti-war coalition help given to Ukraine since the outbreak of Russia's full-scale invasion.

Conclusions

Liderman and Malik claim that every correlation between different pieces of information being broadcasted by mass media remains the crucial issue of effective information policy³⁶. Liderman points out that information security concerns the threat of losing information resources or low-quality information³⁷. Tomasz Aleksandrowicz considers the following to be the basic threats to information security: lack of access to information (information void); information overload (information noise); access to false information and disinformation; lack of protection of own information resources; no control over your own news channels³⁸.

The functioning of the 24-hour television news marathon was based on broadcasting a permanent information block with social announcements regarding the most sensitive and important problems that the inhabitants of Ukraine had to face in the first days of the Russian invasion. Information was provided, among others, about collections for financing military operations and about the conditions and possibilities of evacuating civilians as well as about the humanitarian aid they could count on when escaping from places affected by military operations. Broadcasting of a unified television program was carried out in a system of antenna strips hosted by each of the main channels participating in the 24-hour television news marathon. This technical solution eliminated the risk of losing the TV signal due to the Russian bombing.

36 K. Liderman, A. Malik, *op. cit.*, p. 409.

37 K. Liderman, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne*, Warsaw 2012, p. 22.

38 T. Aleksandrowicz, *Bezpieczeństwo informacyjne państwa*, "Studia Politologiczne" 2018, no. 49, p. 46.

The 24-hour television news marathon has provided trustworthy information to the people of Ukraine and helped the journalists in their work. Journalists of TV channels involved in the implementation of the project benefited from the synergy effect because, after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, they had easier and faster access to politicians who provided commentary and information only to one of the TV channels, and not to several or a dozen, as before. The very functioning of the media due to the ongoing warfare, especially the printed media, was very difficult due to logistical problems³⁹. Hence, the incredible popularity of online content and social media as well as online journalism. It should be noted, however, that in relation to social media and content, the credibility of the sender and the message itself play an important role. In the case of the “Jedini Novini” project, the risk of disinformation was significantly reduced. According to a survey published by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, the television news marathon is considered to be one of the most reliable sources of information during the war, with almost 50% support⁴⁰.

On the day of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, both websites and profiles in social and content media, e.g., *ukraine.ua*, managed by the public administration in Ukraine, changed their information content and layout, provided pieces of information about Russian aggression in Ukraine to foreign audiences, and offered useful information for the refugees and citizens of Ukraine. Since then, information about tourist attractions and facilities for investors has been replaced by documentation of destruction and war crimes, which are intended to convince international audiences that the country has become a victim of Russian aggression.

The information policy of Ukraine as well as its tools during the period of martial law is effective and provides the state information security in terms of military aggression. Due to the proper information policy, a lack of access to information (information void), information overload (information noise), access to false information and disinformation, a lack of protection of own information resources,

39 M. Kowalczyk, *Front medialny*, “Press” 2023, no. 3-4, pp. 40-45.

40 <https://mkip.gov.ua/news/7611.html> [12.05.2023].

and a lack of control over own news channels, these information security phenomena potentially unfavourable for the State were avoided by the society of Ukraine.

Accordingly, the relationship between mass media and the state is a vivid indicator of the nature of social relations and the political situation in a society despite martial law or a period of war.

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The impact of political, military, and social factors on the repositioning of Belarus within the regional security architecture

Wpływ czynników politycznych, wojskowych i społecznych na repozycjonowanie Białorusi w architekturze bezpieczeństwa regionalnego

Abstract: The next phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine demonstrated that despite lacking a large military, territorial, population, or raw material potential, Belarus could play a significant role in the project to construct a new regional, continental, and even global security architecture. The purpose of this article is to discuss the problem of repositioning Belarus, which was affected not only by the multidimensional change in Belarusian-Ukrainian relations as a result of the war but also by long-term efforts to elevate Belarusian-EU relations. In this area, the fundamental research question is whether the war in Ukraine, the breach of the so-called Budapest Memorandum and the deepening of the multifaceted Russian-Belarusian integration within the Union State (including the militarisation of Belarus and the allocation of tactical nuclear weapons) will cause the projects for the redefinition of Belarus-EU relations (which are instrumental in reducing the intensity of political turbulence in the region) to disappear from the EU diplomatic agenda for a long time, with a direct negative impact on the future of European security. The article verifies the hypothesis that due to the specificity of the Belarusian authoritarian model, despite the systematically deepening Russian-Belarusian integration and the ever-expanding sanctions policy towards Belarus, (2) due to the shape of Belarusian-Ukrainian relations after 2014 and the periodically satisfactory Belarusian-EU relations, (1) there are still prospects for Belarus to pursue foreign policy diversification and repositioning of the European vector in it.

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Keywords: war between Russia and Ukraine, Belarus, the Union State, security of Central and Eastern Europe, Belarusian-Ukrainian relations, Belarusian-EU relations

Streszczenie: Kolejna faza rosyjskiej agresji na Ukrainę udowodniła, że pozbawiona dużego potencjału militarnego, terytorialnego, ludnościowego czy surowcowego Białoruś może okazać się istotnym państwem w projekcie budowy nowej architektury bezpieczeństwa regionalnego, kontynentalnego, a nawet globalnego. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie rozważań na temat problemu repozycjonowania Białorusi, na które wpłynęła jednak nie tylko wielowymiarowa zmiana relacji białorusko-ukraińskich, będąca konsekwencją wojny, ale również długoletnie próby wyprowadzenia relacji białorusko-unijnych na wyższy poziom. W tym obszarze zasadniczym pytaniem badawczym jest, czy wojna na Ukrainie, złamanie ustaleń tzw. memorandum budapeszteńskiego oraz pogłębienie wielopłaszczyznowej integracji rosyjsko-białoruskiej w ramach Państwa Związkowego (w tym militaryzacja Białorusi włącznie z alokacją taktycznej broni jądrowej) spowodują, że projekty redefinicji relacji białorusko-unijnych, mające zasadniczy wpływ na zmniejszenie intensywności politycznej turbulencji regionu, na długo znikną z dyplomatycznej agendy UE, co będzie miało bezpośredni, negatywny wpływ na przyszłość bezpieczeństwa europejskiego. W artykule zweryfikowano hipotezę, że ze względu na specyfikę białoruskiego modelu autorytaryzmu, mimo systematycznie pogłębiającej się integracji rosyjsko-białoruskiej oraz wciąż rozszerzanej polityki sankcyjnej wobec Białorusi, ze względu na kształt relacji białorusko-ukraińskich po 2014 r. oraz okresowo zadowalające relacje białorusko-unijne nadal istnieją perspektywy realizowania przez Białoruś dywersyfikacji polityki zagranicznej i repozycjonowania w niej wektora europejskiego.

Słowa kluczowe: wojna Rosji z Ukrainą, Białoruś, Państwo Związkowe, bezpieczeństwo Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej, relacje białorusko-ukraińskie, relacje białorusko-unijne

1. Outline of the problem

Although Belarus has been a key element of the Central and Eastern European security system since the collapse of the USSR, it has never been considered a major player in the region. Since the 1990s, neither the United States nor the major EU members have shown much interest in Belarus. They consented to the Belarusian state's designation as a sphere of Russian influence in order to preserve good relations with that country¹. This situation significantly determined the place and role of Belarus as a buffer state located between the key centres of influence in the region. It was further facilitated by Alyaksandr Lukashenka's long-term policy of balancing Russian and Western

1 E. Mironowicz, *Polityka zagraniczna Republiki Białoruś 1990-2020*, "Biuletyn Historii Pogranicza" 2021, no. 21, p. 18.

interests and attracting diversified sources of support for his power². For almost 30 years, the Lukashenka regime has been characterised by reactivity, which means the ability to flexibly adapt to dynamically changing conditions both in domestic and foreign policy. The use of such a legitimising strategy by the authorities explains a whole range of contradictions that defined the practice of Belarus' domestic and foreign policy for years: modernisation without democratisation, episodes of Belarusianization accompanied by a simultaneous fight against the national movement, close ties with the Russian Federation, and, at the same time, a declared pro-European attitude (in line with the implementation of the geopolitical concept in which Belarus is a country of equal distance, able to maintain good relations with the East and the West).

After 2020, the literature on Belarus in the field of regional security is dominated by two major thematic trends: the first includes analyses of various dimensions of the deepened integration of the Union State, with particular emphasis on military aspects³, and the second discusses the problem of multifaceted Belarusian-EU relations, in which, the issue of security is treated as secondary in comparison to political and economic ties⁴. However, regardless of its diversity, the literature clearly emphasises the extremely pragmatic nature of Belarus's activity in the international space, which should be understood as having a largely simulated multi-vector character. However, there is a lack of assessments linking the issue of the relevance of Belarus' foreign policy vector positioning to the new element shaping the regional security landscape, namely the onset of the next phase of Rus-

- 2 A. Kulaszewicz, *Between Russia and the West: Belarus as a challenge for European stability and security*, "Polish Political Science Yearbook" 2017, no. 46(1), pp. 91-101.
- 3 M. Banasik, *The military integration of Belarus into the Russian Federation*, "Safety & Defense" 2022, no. 8(1), pp. 8-14; P. Usov, *Evolution of the Belarus-Russia Union State: From integration to attempts of incorporation*, "Studia i Analizy Nauk o Polityce" 2020, no. 1, pp. 95-108; A. Wilk, *Russian Belarusian Army: Practical aspects of military integration of Belarus and Russia*, Centre for Eastern Studies, 2021, https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/Raport-OSW_Rosyjska-armia-bialoruska_net.pdf; P. Matsukevich, R. Astapenia, *The degradation of Belarusian foreign policy: A proposed course correction*, Briefing Paper, December 2022, pp. 9-11; I. Topolski, *Military presence of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Belarus*, "Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2022, vol. 20, issue 2, pp. 75-91.
- 4 A. Wierzbicki, *Belarus and the EU – No common way in sight*, [in:] W. Hilz, S. Minasyan, M. Raś (eds.), *Ambiguities of Europe's Eastern Neighbourhood*, Springer VS, Wiesbaden 2020, p. 78.

sian aggression against Ukraine, although the first studies addressing these issues are emerging⁵. Therefore, the main research problem formulated in this work is an attempt to determine what factors related to the existing relations with Russia, EU countries and Ukraine may determine the redefinition of Belarus' place in the newly created environment of international relations, with particular emphasis on the area of European security.

In 2022, the issue of potential vectors of Belarusian foreign policy returned to the international agenda due to two events: the Russian aggression that followed 24 February and the events that took place on 26 November, when the long-time head of Belarusian diplomacy, Uladzimir Makei, unexpectedly died. In this context, the main issue addressed in the text is an attempt to answer the research questions: whether, after the presidential election in 2020 and the support of Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022, Belarus definitively closed its way to political and economic cooperation with Europe? Does the death of Makiei – particularly in the context of Russian aggression against Ukraine – signify the symbolic and definitive end of an era in relations between Belarus and Europe? Were there any indications in the first months of the new Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Aleinik that the appointment of this diplomat was intended to weaken Russian influence in Lukashenka's environment and create new opportunities for constructing a space for dialogue with the West?

In the course of the research, a hypothesis was adopted that due to the specificity of the Belarusian model of authoritarianism, despite two significant crises (external – Russia's aggression against Ukraine; internal – protests after the presidential election in 2020), systematically deepening Russian-Belarusian integration, the death of Makiei, who is considered a pro-European politician, and the ever-expanding sanctions policy against Belarus, there are still prospects for Belarus to

5 P. Klysiński, P. Zochowski, *The reluctant co-aggressor. Minsk's complicity in the war against Ukraine*, OSW Commentary, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2023-02-10/reluctant-co-aggressor-minsk-complicity-war-against-ukraine> [10.02.2023]; K. Shmatsina, *The prospects for Belarus in 2023 in the light of Russia's war in Ukraine: The future is not set in stone*, "SCEEUS Guest Platform for Eastern Europe Policy" 2023, no. 35, <https://sceeus.se/en/publications/the-prospects-for-belarus-in-2023-in-the-light-of-russias-war-in-ukraine-the-future-is-not-set-in-stone/>; T. Stępniewski, *Russia-Ukraine war: Independence, identity, and security*, "Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2022, vol. 20, issue 2, pp. 7-16.

diversify its foreign policy. The trajectory of Russian-Belarusian, Belarusian-EU, and Belarusian-Ukrainian relations to date indicates that the European vector of the country's activities is not yet definitively closed, despite opinions that Belarus is erecting a new "Iron Curtain" between itself and the West, as tangibly demonstrated by the activity of the Belarusian State Border Committee, which is creating a network of stationary engineering facilities and barriers along one-third of the country's entire western border⁶. Since the current EU policy towards Belarus has been unstable and ineffective, and its two basic instruments, namely diplomacy and economic cooperation, have been applied selectively and inconsistently (see the increase in trade between Belarus and the EU during the periods of the increased repressiveness of the Lukashenka regime), it is difficult to foresee a possible improvement in relations between Belarus and the EU. In the case of relations between Belarus and Ukraine, ending the war will probably be crucial.

2. Russia – Belarus: symbiosis or parasitism?

As a geopolitical and military power, Russia was and remains the most active power in the region. Belarus plays a significant role in Russia's geostrategic approach to Central and Eastern Europe for a number of reasons. Firstly, Belarus lies between Russia and Europe, East and West, which enables the transit of energy resources and the control of the transport of goods. Secondly, geographically and historically, Belarus is an important element of the Baltic-Black Sea axis in the north-south direction. Thirdly, Belarus invariably serves as Russia's main and most stable ally in the Commonwealth of Independent States and is its key partner in the field of defence and security, creating the Union State of Russia and Belarus. Fourthly, being a buffer state located in an area of critical strategic importance, Belarus is treated by Russia as a kind of bridgehead for expanding political, economic and cultural influence in other countries in the region. It is, therefore a key element for protecting Russia's national interests. Highly relevant in this context is the so-called "Smolensk Gate", a key area located between the upper Dvina and the upper Dnieper, which is the easiest and shortest

⁶ Source: gpk.gov.by.

route from the west to Moscow and the central part of Russia. From this perspective, Belarus is more significant to Russia than Ukraine, which is why Belarus remains a source of contention between centres of influence. Keeping the existing Belarus in its sphere of influence was a priority for the Russian political leadership. This is evidenced by, for example, the document published in February 2023 entitled *Strategiczne cele Federacji Rosyjskiej na kierunku białoruskim* [*Strategic Goals of the Russian Federation in the Belarusian Direction*], which outlines the goals of the Russian strategy towards Belarus, containing political, economic, socio-cultural and security plans⁷. In fact, this is a plan for a gradual soft annexation of Belarus, which assumes the country's inclusion into the legal, economic and military structures of the Russian Federation by 2030.

Taking into account the above factors and circumstances, the Russian-Belarusian rapprochement was a completely natural process. Moreover, the course of bilateral integration began to take shape in the environment of the Belarusian authorities in the early 1990s, during the existence of a parliamentary republic in Belarus. The legal basis for further Russian-Belarusian integration was established with the rise to power of Lukashenka, who attempted to subordinate the concept of a union state to his own political ambitions. It should be noted that while the Treaty on the Union State of Belarus and Russia was signed in Moscow on 8 December 1999, by Presidents Lukashenka and Boris Yeltsin, the exchange of ratification and entry into force of the treaty had already taken place between Lukashenka and the acting President Vladimir Putin. It was during this period that fundamental differences emerged in the vision of the mechanisms and goals of integration. Although the Belarusian president repeatedly accused the Russian side of passivity and delaying integration, in August 2002, during a meeting with Lukashenka in Moscow, it was Putin who proposed accelerated integration with the subsequent incorporation of the Belarusian

7 A. Myroniuk, *Leaked document reveals alleged Kremlin plan to take over Belarus by 2030*, Kyiv Independent, <https://kyivindependent.com/leaked-document-reveals-alleged-kremlin-plan-to-take-over-belarus-by-2030/> [20.04.2023].

regions into Russia as federation subjects⁸. This approach by the Russian side provoked a sharp and negative reaction from Belarus.

The topic of the Union State was revisited in 2018, with the communication of the Russian ultimatum to the Belarusian side: either the implementation of the agreement on the Union State or no discount on oil⁹. Thus, the push for integration became a powerful instrument of pressure on Belarus and the restrained position of the Belarusian leadership was perceived by the Russian side as ignoring common interests. The apogee of the crisis was 2019, and it was no coincidence that researchers at that time¹⁰ describing the course of Russian-Belarusian relations used the terms: “crisis of trust”, “difficult ally”, “in the suffocating embrace of a brother”, “play of appearances” and “distanced co-aggressor”, etc.

After the presidential election in 2020 and in the face of a crisis regarding the legitimacy of Alyaksandr Lukashenka’s leadership, Belarus’s foreign policy was subordinated to one goal; Lukashenka’s retention of power and the continuation of the current power structure in Belarus. The price for Russia’s support of the Belarusian leader at the time was the intensification of the multifaceted integration of the Union State of Russia and Belarus. On 4 November 2021, Putin and Lukashenka signed a decree *On the main directions of the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on the Establishment of the State of the Union for 2021-2023*¹¹ and approved 28 union programmes, so-called “roadmaps”, the draughts of which have not been published. The

8 *Состоялась встреча Владимира Путина и Президента Белоруссии Александра Лукашенко* [Sostojalas vstrecha Vladimira Putina i Prezidenta Belorussii Aleksandra Lukashenka], <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/27286> [10.04.2023].

9 *Лукашенко обвинил РФ в использовании налогового маневра для давления на Белоруссию* [Lukashenko обвинil RF v ispolzovanii nalogovogo manevra dlja davlenija na Belorussiju], 24 January 2020, <https://www.interfax.ru/business/692552> [10.04.2023].

10 W. Konończuk, *Trudny sojusznik, Białoruś w polityce Rosji*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/prace-osw/2008-09-15/trudny-sojusznik-bialorus-w-polityce-rosji>; J.M. Nowakowski, J. Olędzka, M. Rust (eds.), *W dusznym uścisku brata. Relacje białorusko-rosyjskie*, Studium Europy Wschodniej UW & Grupa Analityczna “Białoruś w regionie”, https://studium.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Raport_Bialorus_2021_2PL.pdf.

11 *Декрет Высшего Государственного Совета Союзного государства 4 ноября 2021 г. № 6. Минск – Москва. Об Основных направлениях реализации положений Договора о создании Союзного государства на 2021-2023 годы* [Dekret Vysshogo Gosudarstvennogo Soveta Sojuznogo gosudarstva 4 nojabrja 2021 g. № 6. Minsk – Moskva. Ob Osnovnykh napravlenijakh realizacii polozhenij Dogovora o sozdanii Sojuznogo gosudarstva na 2021-2023 gody], <https://etalonline.by/document/?regnum=ad2100022> [20.04.2023].

approval of the Joint State Military Doctrine in November 2021 envisaged the implementation of a coordinated military policy, cooperation in the construction and development of armed forces, the enhancement of coordination and combat training, and the mutual use of military infrastructure facilities. In this way, the existing security guarantees of the Belarusian side for Ukraine were invalidated, and a legal basis was created to legalise the increase of the Russian military presence in Belarus.

Belarus' manifestly pro-Moscow foreign policy direction was sustained after 24 February 2022: from its territory, Russia launched its first attack on Ukraine, and Belarus itself became a logistical and medical base for the Russian army. Seemingly, therefore, the rapprochement between Minsk and Moscow should be considered definitive and without alternatives. On the one hand, Putin's visit to Minsk in December 2022 was a gesture towards the Lukashenka regime, which received guarantees from Russia to subsidise the Belarusian economy through preferential gas and oil prices. On the other hand, it testified to an increase in the Russian military presence in Belarus (transfer of missile complexes and anti-aircraft missile systems, etc.). It is significant that at this stage, both sides focused more on the military sphere while the issues of political integration receded into the background. Instead, despite the lack of concrete results, the declared objective of economic rapprochement was to create a unified economic system based on the principle of "two countries, one economy"¹². The implications of bilateral integration¹³, as announced by the leaders of both nations, meant a rise in Russian influence in Belarus and limitations

12 *„Две страны – одна экономика“*. Вице-премьер РФ о целях союзных программ Беларуси и России, 16 June 2022, <https://www.belta.by/economics/view/dve-strany-odna-ekonomika-vitse-premjer-rf-o-tseljah-sojuznyh-programm-belarusi-i-rossii-508357-2022/> [15.04.2023].

13 *„Впечатляет, конечно!“* Путин доволен результатами экономического сотрудничества с Беларусью [„Впечатляет, конечно!“ Путин доволен результатами экономического сотрудничества с Беларусью], 5 April 2023, https://www.belta.by/politics/view/putin-dovolen-rezultatami-ekonomicheskogo-sotrudnichestva-s-belarusiju-559573-2023/?utm_source=belta&utm_medium=news&utm_campaign=accent [15.04.2023]; *Общая безопасность, углубление кооперации и ядерный „радикализм“*. Подробности заявлений Лукашенко в Кремле [Общая безопасность, углубление кооперации и ядерный „радикализм“. Подробности заявлений Лукашенко в Кремле], 5 April 2023, <https://www.belta.by/president/view/obschaja-bezopasnost-uglublenie-kooperatsii-i-jadernyj-radikalizm-podrobnosti-zajavlenij-lukashenko-v-559827-2023/> [15.04.2023].

on Belarus' ability to pursue an independent policy. Therefore, the benefits were mutual: Lukashenka's policy corresponded to Russia's strategic interests, and Russia, in turn, became the only guarantor of the ruling regime's retention of power. In addition, Lukashenka's short-term objective was to maintain power, but the long-term perspective and the potential for a controlled transfer of power were of much greater significance. In this regard, the formation of a new political party, White Ruthenia, which has long been in Russia's best interests, can be considered significant. Although this party positioned itself as pro-government and sought to support Lukashenka's political course, the Belarusian leader distanced himself from this initiative, whereas the ruling United Russia party supported the formation of a mirror party in Belarus. In addition, both sides declared their willingness to further cross-party cooperation¹⁴.

While the policy of the Belarusian regime met Moscow's expectations to a greater or lesser degree, the Russian side's actions did not always coincide with Lukashenka's interests. Nevertheless, taking into account the nature and dynamics of the integration processes and the increasing political, economic and military dependence of Belarus on Russia, the rapprochement is inevitable, and after deepening economic and military integration, the time will undoubtedly come for intensified political integration, which may go even further towards the unification of the political space and the institutions present in it¹⁵. By contrast, it should be emphasised that the factors that gave new impetus to the integration process (which until now had been clearly slowed down by the Belarusian side) were the consequences of the political crisis in Belarus in 2020 and the series of Russian political and military setbacks in Ukraine. Given that the political turmoil in Belarus has not been resolved and Russia's war with Ukraine continues, one could argue that it is in these two issues that opportunities and potential options for changing the trend in Russian-Belarusian relations

14 *Партии „Белая Русь” и „Единая Россия” планируют в апреле подписать соглашение о взаимодействии* [Partii „Belaja Rus” i „Edinaja Rossija” planirujut v aprele podpisat soglashenie o vzaimodejstvii], 18 March 2023, <https://www.belta.by/politics/view/partii-belaja-rus-i-edinaja-rossija-planirujut-v-aprele-podpisat-soglashenie-o-vzaimodejstvii-556188-2023/> [20.04.2023].

15 A. Czwołek, *Bliscy sojusznicy? Perspektywy pogłębienia integracji rosyjsko-białoruskiej po 2018 roku*, „Nowa Polityka Wschodnia” 2022, no. 3(34), p. 57.

should be sought¹⁶. Nevertheless, it appears evident that Belarus's security policy is not conducted independently; instead, it is an integral component of Russia's security policy. Therefore, the loss of influence over Belarus, which would be highly problematic for the Russian Federation, would wreak absolute havoc in the spheres of military, cultural, and information security.

3. Liability of the European foreign policy vector of Belarus as an element of regional (in)security

Undoubtedly, due to its location, Belarus has a permanent place in the area of interest of EU countries and especially those bordering it, namely Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. Despite many potential economic and security benefits, relations with Belarus were not harmonious and would remain so after 2020 and 2022 for obvious reasons. On the one hand, since 1994, relations with Belarus have been burdened by Minsk's systematic project to deepen democratic regression, devalue human and civil rights, depoliticise parts of society and destroy manifestations of civil society activity. On the other hand, Minsk's relations with Brussels are constantly overshadowed by Moscow, which has consistently stood in the way of the normalisation of Belarus-EU relations, torpedoing them with diplomatic instruments (especially in the framework of so-called raw materials diplomacy) or unofficial pressure. Belarus, in turn, contrary to the wishes of some European elites, quite consistently pursued a policy of extreme pragmatism and only turned to Europe when the Russian Federation tried to complete the process of integration into the Union State or limited the scope of direct or indirect economic support for Belarus.

For decades, the basic instrument used by the West towards Belarus was the policy of conditionality, which was reflected in the key project of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In practical terms, this mainly meant expanding the catalogue of opportunities for economic cooperation, even though, in terms of declarations, it was also linked to progress in the sphere of democratisation (since 2011, the

16 J. Oleđzka, *The "Year of Truth" The impact of the 2020 elections on the integration project of the Russian Federation with Belarus*, "Romanian Political Science Review" 2022, vol. XXII, no. 1, pp. 33-50.

principle of “more for more” was introduced). As early as 1998, personal and economic sanctions were applied against Belarus to varying degrees and based on the situational context. Yet, this has translated neither into a pro-democratic correction of the policy course of the Belarusian state nor into consequences in the form of a complete and definitive collapse of economic cooperation with Minsk¹⁷. Belarus began to be perceived in the West as a peculiar – but given its limited population or territorial and raw material potential – a harmless hybrid of anachronistic political solutions and a modernising economy – a nation located geographically, politically, and metaphorically on Europe’s periphery.

In view of the above, it was quite predictable that the issues of the place and role of Belarus in the architecture of regional security remained secondary for years, though, of course, the topic of the need to improve relations between the EU and Belarus returned to European forums during periods of turbulence in the region¹⁸. For instance, following the Russian-Georgian war, the Eastern Partnership was established, which was supposed to be a breakthrough initiative for the entire post-Soviet area, and, thus also for the EU’s relations with Belarus. Interestingly, in defiance of Moscow, Belarus managed not to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which was seen as a pro-Western gesture by the Belarusian leader¹⁹. A year later, however, it became apparent that the Lukashenka regime prioritised actions to consolidate authoritarianism: non-transparent elections were held in Belarus, and post-election opposition demonstrations were pacified. In response to these events, the European Union imposed further personal (but not economic) sanctions on Belarus and limited its participation in the Eastern Partnership. At the same time, however, trade between Belarus and the EU was growing²⁰.

17 K.-O. Lang, M. Koopmann, *The EU and Belarus – a relationship with reservations in Belarus and the EU: From isolation towards cooperation*, [in:] H.-G. Wieck, S. Malerius (eds.), *Center for European Studies and the Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung*, Vilnius 2011, pp. 22-33.

18 T. Kubin, *W poszukiwaniu rezultatów... Polityka Unii Europejskiej wobec Białorusi*, “*Studia Politicae Universitatis Silesiensis*” 2013, no. 10, pp. 173-199.

19 Only on 28 September 2022, Lukashenka went to Abkhazia, where he met the head of the self-proclaimed republic, Aslan Bzhania.

20 Source: <https://belgium.mfa.gov.by/en/exportby/>.

The Belarusian issue returned to the European agenda after Euro-maidan and Russia's annexation of Crimea, when a wide-ranging discussion about Ukraine's European aspirations commenced. The subject of Central and Eastern European security also appeared at that time. A key element of this was to be the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit, at which Uladzimir Makei, Belarusian foreign minister since 2012, presented a clearly pro-European stance and an offer to improve EU-Belarusian relations. For years, Makei himself was traditionally regarded as one of the most pro-Western people in Lukashenka's entourage, with a biography that perfectly reflected the complicated situation of the post-Soviet elites. Early in the 1980s, he was promoted to the rank of colonel in the Soviet Union's Main Intelligence Directorate. Due to his education, he was also fluent in foreign languages, and after 1991 he studied abroad and graduated from the Diplomatic School of the Vienna Academy in Austria. However, the assessment of this politician's activity is as ambiguous as the conclusions drawn from the analysis of Belarus' foreign policy strategy in recent decades. On the one hand, the politician, as one of the few in Lukashenka's entourage, initiated a rapprochement with the West; on the other hand, the attempts at dialogue he promoted were largely only simulated and were primarily aimed at a highly pragmatic search for new sources of legitimisation of the Lukashenka regime²¹. Therefore, there are no unequivocal answers to the question of whether the plans declared by Makei to turn Belarus into "Eastern European Switzerland"²² had ever had a chance to go beyond the sphere of propaganda and become the leading strategy of Belarusian foreign policy. In this context, however, one cannot omit Makei's letter published on 14 April 2023, by the journalist of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Rikard Jóźwiak, in which the Minister outlined his contribution to the improvement of Belarusian-EU relations between 2016 and 2019, and appealed to the EU for improv-

21 See opinion of Artyom Shraibman from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: *Окно невозможностей. Что значит для Беларуси смерть ее главного дипломата* [Okno nevozmozhnostej. Chto znachit dlja Belarusi smert ee glavnogo diplomata], <https://carnegieendowment.org/politika/88495>.

22 Makei gave an interview to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* with the telling title "We do not want to repeat Ukraine's mistakes". In it, he stated that "caution is an inherent feature of the Belarusian mentality" and that Belarus is a factor stabilizing the region (see *Wir wollen die Fehler der Ukraine nicht wiederholen*, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/russland-weissrussland-eu-putin-1.4676828>).

ing ties with Belarus. According to some commentators, the reasons for the suicide death of the head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry can be sought in the failure of his project for the Europeanisation of Belarus. Yet there is no hard evidence for this claim.

After 2014, Belarus tried to distance itself from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and simultaneously strengthen its position towards Moscow. On the one hand, it announced its willingness to pursue a policy of neutrality, which explained its reluctance to make its territory available to Russian military bases. On the other hand, it declared its readiness to support peace negotiations (finally concluded with the Minsk agreements) that are so important for Eastern European security. As early as 2016, the EU lifted most sanctions against Belarus. Both diplomatic relations between Minsk and Brussels and multifaceted bilateral relations between the Belarusian side and EU member states intensified. The culmination of the stage of warming up the image of Lukashenka in the West was the visit of the President of Belarus to Austria in 2019 and the signing of agreements in 2020 on the simplification of visa procedures for Belarusians. However, the events following the 2020 presidential election dramatically changed the trajectory of this promising relationship, although, it should be emphasised that regardless of the dynamics of these relations, economic issues significantly dominated Belarus' ties with EU countries for almost three decades, overshadowing security issues²³. Since 24 February 2022, the Lukashenka regime has been trying to use the complicated regional security situation to create new prospects for trade and political cooperation. Once again, he has been behaving as pragmatically as he has flexibly. It is, therefore, possible that at some point, the West will face a dilemma about whether, despite close Russian-Belarusian cooperation, it should redefine its relations with the Lukashenka regime or create the foundations of a new architecture of international relations with representatives of the Belarusian political opposition in exile (the Transitional Cabinet and the Coordination Council). European countries neither in 2020 nor in 2022 took definitive steps to break

23 A. de Liedekerke, O. Husieva, K. Frankenthal, *Pitfalls and opportunities for an EU-strategy towards Belarus*, "ISPK Das Institut für Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Kiel", Policy Brief, January 2022, no. 11, pp. 1-9.

diplomatic relations with Minsk (neither Brussels nor Kyiv did so). There are still claims that the severance of channels of communication with Minsk and the escalation of the policy of sanctions against Belarus will lead to an even stronger rapprochement between Minsk and Moscow, as there is no alternative. The key question is what idea Europe has of Belarus after 2022 and whether it is capable of building an effective security policy under conditions of deepened Belarusian-Russian integration.

4. Dynamics of Belarusian-Ukrainian relations after 2014

The outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014 significantly changed the dynamics of the processes taking place in the region and increased its geopolitical importance. The sources of interest in Central and Eastern Europe for global actors are to be found in its location, the consequences of the end of the Cold War and the Russian Federation's unwillingness to shed its post-colonial syndrome²⁴. The destruction of the security architecture in Central and Eastern Europe caused by the annexation of Crimea by Russia created a vacuum in the place of the destroyed regional security system. Therefore, recognising the geopolitical importance of Belarus' position, acting Ukrainian President Oleksandr Turchynov made his first foreign visit to Alyaksandr Lukashenka in March 2014. As a result, he received security guarantees²⁵ from the President of Belarus, which protected Ukraine's northern borders under the conditions of the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian war in the Donbass. This solution, as well as the signing of the Minsk agreements (Minsk-2) in the capital of Belarus in February 2015, created the conditions for a temporary de-escalation of the conflict and opened up new opportunities for the Belarusian side to build cooperation with Ukraine. The neutral stance adopted by the Belarusian authorities during the first phase of the Russian-Ukrainian

24 A. Włodkowska, *Europa Środkowo-Wschodnia jako obszar rywalizacji i wpływu. Ciągłość i zmiana w perspektywie 30 lat*, "Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2022, no. 4(20), p. 14.

25 Лукашенко и Турчинов во время трехчасовых переговоров достигли понимания по всем проблемам [Lukashenko i Turchinov vo vremja trekhchasovykh peregovorov dostigli ponimaniya po vsem problemam], 29 March 2014, <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-i-turchinov-vo-vremja-trehchasovyh-peregovorov-dostigli-ponimaniya-po-vsem-problemam-40815-2014> [22.04.2023].

war contributed to the image of Belarus as a regional guarantor of security and stability. On the one hand, Belarus declared neutrality in the Russian-Ukrainian war; on the other hand, it was still bound by allied obligations towards Russia within the framework of the Union State and the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Analysing the nature of the position of the Belarusian authorities in this period, the Ukrainian political scientist Yevhen Mahda called Belarus a “hybrid ally of Ukraine”²⁶.

In these conditions, the key task of the Belarusian authorities was to find a balance between dependence on Russia and allied obligations and the threat posed to Belarus by Russia’s aggressive policy. Nonetheless, maintaining this status quo for a brief period stabilised the security situation in the region; therefore, from the perspective of regional security, the internal destabilisation of Belarus or its tendency to crystallise the target geopolitical choice would alter the power balance and increase Russian influence in the country.

Russia’s economic, political, and informational pressure on Belarus, as well as the concurrent intensification of military cooperation, occurred against the backdrop of the region’s progressive militarization and the escalation of interstate confrontational sentiments. Russia sought to advance its own interests in Belarus, which included expanding its military presence and consolidating its control and influence over the Belarusian government. According to Belarusian analyst Denis Ivashin, Russian aggression against Belarus should be seen in the same framework as the military aggression against Ukraine, as a united front²⁷. In addition, one of the many tools for strengthening the Russian military presence in Belarus was the regular joint Russian-Belarusian exercises: “West-2017”, “Union Shield-2019”, “Slavic Brotherhood-2020”, “West-2021”, and “Allied Decision-2022”.

The internal crisis that followed the presidential election in 2020 weakened Alyaksandr Lukashenka and the destabilisation of

26 Ю. Дракахруст, „Лукашенко – гібридний союзник України”. Що думають в Україні про вибори президента Білорусі? [Ju. Drakakhrust, “Lukashenko – gibriddnij sojuznik Ukraini”. SHHo dumajut v Ukraini pro vobori prezidenta Bilorusi?], 2 July 2020, <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/vybory-prezydenta-bilorusi-i-ukrajina/30700395.html> [22.04.2023].

27 Гібридна агресія РФ: Білорусь і Україна в принципі російського неоімперіалізму (OSINT-аналіз) [Gibriddna agresija RF: Bilorus i Ukraina v princilli rosijjskogo neoimperializmu (OSINT-analiz)], 21 February 2020, <https://informna.palm.org/ua/hibrydna-ahresija-rf-bilorus-i-ukraine/> [16.04.2023].

the political situation was beneficial for Russia, strengthening its influence and making it a kind of “guarantor of security” for the Belarusian authorities. As a result, the dependence of political power on Russia and external isolation gradually reduced the subjectivity of the Belarusian state.

The above factors led to the fact that the territory of Belarus began to be actively used by the Russian military for its own purposes. By increasing its *de facto* military and indirect political presence in Belarus, the Russian leadership has presented the West with a vision of a new balance of power and a future security model predicated on Russian dominance in Central and Eastern Europe. Considering the current situation in the region as a threat to its own security, on 17 December 2021, the Russian Foreign Ministry published a communiqué, “On Russian draft documents on legal security guarantees from the US and NATO”²⁸. Particularly important was Article 4 of the Agreement on Measures to Ensure the Security of the Russian Federation and the member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which stipulated that “the Russian Federation and all participants shall not deploy their armed forces and weapons on the territory of all other European states, except for forces stationed in this territory on May 27, 1997”²⁹. By proposing a new order, Russia aimed to strengthen its own influence, considering that the scenario on the table involved the loss of the regional states’ international actorhood and a return to the Cold War balance of power.

De jure, the security situation in the region has so far been regulated by the Minsk agreements signed in 2015. However, it should be noted that from the beginning of their conceptualisation, their implementation by the Russian side was not envisaged³⁰, which resulted

28 О российских проектах документов по обеспечению правовых гарантий безопасности со стороны США и НАТО [O rossijskikh proektakh dokumentov po obespečeniju pravovykh garantij bezopasnosti so storony SSHA i NATO], https://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1790809/ [18.04.2023].

29 Соглашение о мерах обеспечения безопасности Российской Федерации и государств-членов Организации Североатлантического договора [Soglashenie o merah obespečenija bezopasnosti Rossijskoj Federacii i gosudarstv-chlenov Organizacii Severoatlanticheskogo dogovora], <https://mid.ru/ru/detail-material-page/1790803/> [18.04.2023].

30 Сурков заявил, что при работе над „Минском-2” не рассчитывал на его выполнение [Surokov zajavil, chto pri rabote nad „Minskom-2” ne rasschityval na ego vypolnenie], 16 February 2023, <https://tass.ru/politika/17063673> [20.04.2023].

in a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Belarus became a bridgehead for the Russian invasion and supported the Russian army, hence was an accomplice to the aggression. In addition, the involvement of Belarus as a participant in the war on the side of Russia gave the conflict a more comprehensive regional dimension and caused the emergence of new challenges and threats to the security of neighbouring countries. In the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the seemingly basic issue in the context of Belarus is the likelihood of using the Belarusian army in a Russian invasion and the increased threat associated with the allocation of part of the Russian nuclear arsenal to Belarus. Meanwhile, the situation in Belarus should be analysed in a broader context: both its currently unclear status as a state economically and militarily subordinated to Russia and the rather complicated nature of relations between Minsk and Kyiv are debatable. Belarusian-Ukrainian relations were also complicated by the fact that the Belarusian government had lost its legitimacy, the state had lost its subjectivity, the opposition had lost the ability to influence internal political processes, and society was unprepared for new challenges and resistance to Russian expansion. This resulted in a complex and ambiguous policy by the Ukrainian authorities towards Belarus, which can be described as ambivalent. Taking into account the reluctance of Belarusian society and Lukashenka to participate directly in the war, the Ukrainian side tried to prevent the ruling regime from becoming even more involved in the war without undermining its internal position and maintaining diplomatic representation in Belarus at the level of an ambassador. At the same time, Kyiv tried to exert an information and propaganda influence on the Belarusian population (primarily those belonging to armed formations), conducting numerous campaigns aimed at discouraging Belarusians from participating in the war with Ukraine. The approach adopted by the Ukrainian side has made contact with the exiled Belarusian opposition even more difficult than they were in 2020. The situation so far is not one-dimensional. The Ukrainian authorities were satisfied with the stance of some Belarusian oppositionists on Belarusian-Russian relations and their narrative regarding the Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories. In turn, some leaders of the Belarusian opposition showed a very cautious approach to building dialogue with Ukraine, which did not go unnoticed by Kyiv. The Ukrainian authorities are currently fo-

cusing on a pragmatic assessment of the situation, trying to minimise the risk of the Belarusian army joining the war and maintaining contacts with a party capable of influencing processes inside Belarus. At the same time, they support the Kastuś Kalinoŭski Regiment, accept the political wing that is emerging within its structures and contribute to its transformation from a purely military formation into a future military-political structure.

However, Belarus' involvement in the Russian aggression has led to a reflection in Ukraine on the need to redefine more than just political or economic relations. The attitude of Ukrainian society towards Belarusians has clearly changed. In the collective consciousness of Ukrainians, Belarus was perceived positively, regardless of Belarus's close ties with Russia. According to polls conducted between October and November of 2019, the most popular foreign politician in Ukraine was the president of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, who was viewed favourably by as many as 66% of respondents³¹. In comparison, the results of a survey conducted between 22 February and 1 March 2023, by the Razumkov Centre indicate the opposite. According to these sources, 80.6% of Ukrainians believe Belarus to be a participant in the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. Only 7.5% of respondents were of the opposite opinion. On the whole, Ukrainian society is mostly negative towards Belarus (more than 80% of respondents), and only 12.4% of respondents expressed a positive attitude towards Belarus. In addition, two-thirds of respondents (total – 46.7%, but most probably – 22.5%) supported severing all ties between Ukraine and Belarus following the Ukrainian victory. Also, contrary to the data from 2019, over 90% of Ukrainians now had a negative attitude towards Alyaksandr Lukashenka³². Analysing the change in the mindset of Ukrainians towards Belarusians that has been taking place during the war, Serhiy Dembitsky, deputy director of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, noted that although the majority of Ukrainians have

31 *Динаміка ставлення українців до світових лідерів [Dinamika stavlennja ukraïnciv do svitovih lideriv]*, https://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/dinamika_otnosheniya_ukraïncev_k_mirovym_lideram.html [10.04.2023].

32 *Ставлення українців до Білорусі (лютий–березень 2023р.) [Stavlennja ukraïnciv do Bilorusi (ljutij–berezen 2023r.)]*, 9 March 2023, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/stavlennia-ukraïntsiv-do-bilorusi-liutyi-berezen-2023r> [10.04.2023].

a bad attitude towards Belarusians, a relatively large group still exist those who treat the citizens of the neighbouring country neutrally – 42% at the beginning of 2022, and 34% in August 2022³³. As the war progressed, the attitude of Ukrainians towards Belarusians changed to the disadvantage of Belarusians. However, it should be noted that until 24 February 2022, Ukrainians and Belarusians had quite stereotypical ideas about themselves. Over the years, people-to-people contacts were rather limited. Both nations viewed each other through the lens of Russian propaganda and Soviet stereotypes that persisted in post-Soviet societies for many years. Regardless of the reluctance of the public, the Ukrainian authorities will have to create some perspective for post-war relations with Belarus. This is an absolutely key issue for the security of the state and the stability of the entire region.

Conclusions

The political crisis in Belarus and its short- and long-term consequences, along with the next phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine, have brought major changes to the architecture of regional security.

Three eastern European nations – Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine, have experienced significant political, economic, and demographic declines for very different reasons. Clearly, the war in Ukraine has a decisive impact on the current security space, but special attention should be paid to the expanding role of Belarus in it, even though it is still unclear whether Belarus is a fully independent state. It is systematically losing more and more areas of its own sovereignty to Russia, and the development of the Russian military infrastructure on Belarusian territory is of key importance in this respect. As early as October 2021, a joint Russian-Belarusian training and combat centre for air forces and air defence troops became operational, with Russian aircraft³⁴ stationed there, ensuring the continued presence of Russian

33 Як і чому змінилося ставлення українців до білорусів під час війни [Jak i chomu zminilosja stavlennja ukrainciv do bilorusiv pid chas vijni], 24 February 2023, <https://i-soc.com.ua/ua/news/yak-i-chomu-zminilosya-stavlennya-ukrainciv-do-bilorusiv-pid-chas-vijni> [10.04.2023].

34 В Беларуси начал действовать совместный с Россией центр подготовки ВС и ПВО [V Belarusi nachal dejstvovat sovmestnyj s Rossiej centr podgotovki VS i PVO], 20 October 2021, <https://www.belta.by/society/view/v-belarusi-nachal-dejstvovat-sovmestnyj-s-rossiej-tsentr-podgotovki-vvs-i-pvo-465475-2021/> [20.04.2023].

combat units. By bolstering its military presence in Belarus, Russia gradually transformed its territory into a launching pad for further aggression against Ukraine, while also substantially influencing the Euro-Atlantic community's stance towards Belarus. The militarisation of Belarus may, therefore, in the long term, significantly weaken the possibilities of creating a platform for dialogue between this country and the European Union or the countries on NATO's eastern flank.

A factor with great potential to destabilise the region was and still is the migration/border crisis initiated by the Belarusian authorities and implemented politically and logistically with the support of Russia. It consolidated the new status of Belarus in the security space as a state that is a source of threats and instability for the whole of Europe. As a result, the image of Belarus as a peacemaker and guarantor of regional security and stability has finally changed due to its ostentatious submission to Russia.

The constitutional amendments adopted during the referendum on 27 February 2022, also contributed to Belarus' transformation into a potential source of regional instability. Although the amendment originally intended to cover systemic issues, some of them referred to matters related to state security. These were, in particular, changes to Article 18, which initially stated that "The Republic of Belarus aims to make its territory a nuclear-free zone and to make the state neutral" and was replaced by the words: "The Republic of Belarus excludes military aggression against other states from its territory"³⁵. This is a radical change in the Belarusian position. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the postulate of neutrality has been the fundamental principle guiding the Belarusian authorities during the establishment of independent statehood and Belarus' entry into the international arena. In this context, the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus³⁶, military cooperation, and the increasing number of planned

35 Конституция Республики Беларусь [Konstitucija Respubliki Belarus], <https://president.gov.by/ru/gosudarstvo/constitution> [20.04.2023].

36 Лукашенко: ядерное оружие будет размещено в Беларуси только в случае угроз со стороны Запада [Łukaszenko: jadernoje orużije budzet razmieščjeno v Bielarusi tolko v slučaje uhroz so storony Zapada], 11 February 2022, <https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-jadernoe-oruzhie-budet-razmescheno-v-belarusi-tolko-v-listening-ugroz-so-storony-zapada-485310-2022/> [20.04.2023].

Russian-Belarusian military exercises indicate that both unconventional and conventional threats to the region's countries are growing.

In conclusion, given the alliance commitments within the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) and the Union State of Russia and Belarus, it can be argued that, from a security standpoint, Belarus can be treated as part of Russia today. Belarusian territory has become a kind of training ground for the implementation of Russian military, economic and political goals. For this reason, it seems impossible to return to the findings of the so-called Budapest Memorandum. However, the studies conducted so far on the impact of the Belarusian model of authoritarianism on the foreign policy of Belarus indicate that despite the systematically deepening Russian-Belarusian integration and the ever-expanding sanctions policy towards Belarus, due to the shape of Belarusian-Ukrainian relations between 2014 and 2021 and the periodically satisfactory relations between Belarus and the EU (mainly in the economic sphere), there are still prospects for Belarus to diversify its foreign policy and reposition the European vector in it. The most important question, however, is whether Belarus itself will want to take advantage of these opportunities and remain interested in cooperation with the West. The situation is complicated not only by the deepening Belarusian-Russian integration but also by the fact that Belarus has begun to promote the model of a new polycentric international order, marginalising the role of Euro-Atlantic actors³⁷, and Lukashenka himself publicly stated that "the time has come for Asia"³⁸. This Asian turn in Belarusian policy is multifaceted, as it covers both economic issues (Belt and Road or Digital Silk Road, transcontinental networks of trade, infrastructural and logistics^{39,40}) but also security-related projects such as SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation),

37 *Lukashenko: Recent developments herald the emergence of a multipolar world*, 11 October 2022, <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-recent-developments-herald-emergence-of-multipolar-world-153764-2022/> [16.11.2022].

38 *Lukashenko calls to find a faster way out of the crisis*, 13 October 2022, <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-calls-to-find-faster-way-out-of-crisis-153820-2022/> [16.11.2022].

39 *Lukashenko: CIS states are able to reduce the impact of external shocks*, 14 October 2022, <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-cis-states-are-able-to-reduce-impact-of-external-shocks-153859-2022/> [16.11.2022].

40 *Lukashenko: Western sanctions have failed*, 30 September 2022, <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-western-sanctions-have-failed-153480-2022/> [16.11.2022].

CSTO⁴¹ and CICA (Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia)⁴². So far, the European Union has not offered such an attractive offer of multidimensional cooperation.

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41 In July 2022, Belarus submitted a formal application for membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and as early as September of the same year, at the Samarkand summit, Lukashenka was assured that the application would be granted.

42 *Lukashenko: West’s attempts to keep unipolar world order resulted in severe crisis*, 16 September 2022, <https://eng.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-wests-attempts-to-keep-unipolar-world-order-resulted-in-severe-crisis-153152-2022/> [16.11.2022].

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The security of the Republic of Poland and the war in Ukraine in contemporary leftist thinking in Poland**

Bezpieczeństwo Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej i wojna na Ukrainie w myśli politycznej współczesnej lewicy w Polsce

Abstract: The subject of the article is the security of the Republic of Poland and the war in Ukraine in contemporary Polish left-wing thought, represented primarily by the Democratic Left Alliance and the New Left. The security of citizens is the basic determinant of *raison d'état* and at the same time a key challenge for authorities. The study covered the 21st century because it brought a change in 1) the international system – the Russian Federation questioned the post-Cold War order, 2) lowering the level of security in Central and Eastern Europe, and 3) bringing new challenges for Poland after Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine. The cognitive purpose of the article is the assessment of the international environment and threats to Poland made by the Left, as well as the postulated model of security, political and military security, and – in the context of the war in Ukraine – the attitude to the actions of the Polish authorities after 24 February 2022. It should be emphasized that the social democratic movement is a political environment that hopes to take political power in Poland after the expected electoral success in the autumn of 2023. The position of the Left on key matters for state security is interesting not only for researchers but also has a utilitarian meaning.

Keywords: state security, security model, political and military alliances, army
Streszczenie: Przedmiotem artykułu było bezpieczeństwo Rzeczypospolitej i wojna na Ukrainie w myśli politycznej współczesnej lewicy w Polsce, reprezentowanej przede wszystkim przez Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej i Nową Lewicę. Bezpieczeństwo obywateli jest podstawowym wyznacznikiem racji stanu, a jednocześnie kluczowym wyzwaniem dla rządzących. Badaniem objęto wiek XXI, gdyż przyniósł: 1) zmianę systemu międzynarodowego – Federacja Rosyj-

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ska zakwestionowała ład w wersji postzimnowojennej, 2) obniżenie poziomu bezpieczeństwa w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej, 3) uwidocznienie nowych wyzwań dla Polski, przede wszystkim po rozpoczęciu pełnowymiarowej wojny przez Rosję przeciwko Ukrainie.

Celem poznawczym były dokonywane przez lewicę oceny środowiska międzynarodowego i zagrożeń Polski, postulowany model bezpieczeństwa, bezpieczeństwo polityczne i militarne, a w kontekście wojny na Ukrainie stosunek do działań władz RP po 24 lutego 2022 r. Należy podkreślić, że socjaldemokracja jest środowiskiem politycznym, które ma nadzieję na objęcie władzy politycznej w Polsce po spodziewanym sukcesie wyborczym jesienią 2023 r. Stanowisko lewicy w kluczowych dla bezpieczeństwa państwa sprawach jest nie tylko interesujące dla badaczy, ale też ma znaczenie utylitarne.

Słowa kluczowe: bezpieczeństwo państwa, model bezpieczeństwa, sojusze polityczne i militarne, armia

Introduction

The security of the state and its citizens is (commonly) the foundation of their *raison d'état*. It is also a key challenge for those in power. With regard to external security, this includes values that are essential to the citizens of the State, including sovereignty, territorial integrity, national identity, political independence, and diverse development that offers the opportunity for continuous improvement of quality of life for that society. In view of the war in Ukraine, territorial integrity and political independence are undoubtedly of key importance, as they are necessary to preserve the physical substance of citizens and a chance to fulfil the rest. In this context, the basic task of the state and the entire political class is to identify and eliminate threats to these primary values.

The subject of the research was one of the political entities in Poland, that is, the Left, most notably represented by the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and, since 2020, by the New Left (Nowa Lewica). The Left party governed Poland from 1993-1997 and 2001-2005. In the 9th Sejm, it is part of a coalition of left-wing deputies, which includes the New Left and Together (Razem). New Left politicians hope they will take power by autumn 2023, following elections that will likely favour opposition groups. It is, therefore, important to know where they stand on key national security issues, not only for research purposes but also for practical reasons.

The 21st century has brought changes in at least three areas: (1) the international system, as the Russian Federation has challenged the post-Cold War order; (2) the lowering of the level of security in Central and Eastern Europe, revealing the weakness of the will of West-

ern European politicians and the military will of the European Union, which could already be observed in 2008 after Russia attacked Georgia when the position taken at that time was “soft”; (3) the emergence of new challenges for Poland, especially after Russia launched a full-scale war against Ukraine.

The subject of the research and the cognitive objective is the Left’s assessment of the international environment and threats to Poland in the context of the war in Ukraine, its views on political and military security, and its attitude towards the actions of the Polish authorities following 24 February 2022.

It should be said that the Left was a political environment that had as its basis both liberal and realist theories of international security. The former were visible in the definition of state power, seen primarily in asymmetric interdependence, rather than military potential¹. It is typical of these views to perceive relations between states as a possibility for cooperation as well as to avoid referring to the category of enemies in the global context, to favour adversaries², or to prefer soft power measures in the implementation of foreign policy³. In contrast, elements of the realist theory could be found in the perception of NATO as a guarantor of Polish security and the United States of America (hereinafter referred to as the US) as a strategic ally with a real possibility of helping Poland.

In the first years of its existence, the policy towards the East was also influenced by the concepts of the past. In particular, the assumptions made in the Polish-émigré literary-political magazine “Kultura” were accepted by other political circles as well⁴. The coupling of the

1 J. Czaputowicz, *Kryteria bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego państwa – aspekty teoretyczne*, [in:] S. Dębski, B. Górka-Winter (eds.), *Kryteria bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego państwa*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 26-28; idem, *Bezpieczeństwo w teoriach stosunków międzynarodowych*, [in:] K. Żukrowska (ed.), *Bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe – przegląd aktualnego stanu*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 69-71, 82-83.

2 According to the SLD, security policy is the ability to recognise “who is a friend, who is an enemy, who we are with, who we are not with, and where the real potential threats are”. Briefing by the Government on the provisions of the Accession Treaty and the responsibilities arising therefrom, 11 April 2003, [https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenogramy4.nsf/o/C5D2E8C5E1F1627DC1258967004549E8/\\$file/045.pdf](https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/Stenogramy4.nsf/o/C5D2E8C5E1F1627DC1258967004549E8/$file/045.pdf) [22.03.2023].

3 J. Sanecka-Tyczyńska, *Racja stanu we współczesnej polskiej myśli politycznej 2001-2015*, Lublin 2018, pp. 305 et seq.

4 See the concepts put forward by the magazine in: P. Kowal, *Testament Prometeusza. Źródła polityki wschodniej III Rzeczypospolitej*, Warsaw 2018, passim.

Promethean and Giedroyc traditions with the liberal trends in the West at the time was reflected in the policy of the Polish state under the SLD and the presidency of Aleksander Kwaśniewski, in the form of Poland's involvement in the Orange Revolution in Ukraine but also in "exporting democracy" to Belarus and supporting democratic reforms in Georgia, which clearly condemned Poland to conflict with Russia and was in line with the interests of the US.

1 Polish security assessment

Following the lead of other political groups, the Left, too, has had to address the security of the state in the international environment. Analysis of the political thinking of social democratic parties operating in Poland regarding the assessment of threats and Poland's external environment showed that until 2022, the Left considered Poland a safe country, both because of the (asymmetric) nature of threats and its NATO membership. At the same time, it was noted that "the moment of transition from peace to war is blurred nowadays"⁵.

Left-wing politicians, unlike the post-Solidarity parties, failed to notice any threat from Russia for a long time. They believed that a partnership-based cooperation free of ideological and historical burdens was possible. While Russia's measures to restore its superpower status were seen as obvious, it was deemed impossible that it could rebuild the empire. The change in Russia's international role after the collapse of the USSR was supposed to be permanent⁶. The threat was also overlooked in the cooperation of Western European countries with Rus-

5 *Strategia bezpieczeństwa narodowego Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 2003 roku*, Warsaw 2003, pp. 4-5; T. Iwiński, The statement in the discussion on the draft act amending the act on the general obligation to defend the Republic of Poland, 28 August 2014, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=67&dzien=2&wyp=114&type=P&symbol=WYPOWI EDZ_POSLA&id=134; The statements during the discussion following the briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on Poland's foreign policy in 2014, 8 May 2014: L. Miller, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=67&dzien=2&wyp=90&type=P&symbol=WYPO WIEDZ_POSLA&id=246, and T. Iwiński, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=67&dzien=2&wyp=114&type=P&symbol=WYPOWIEDZ_POSLA&id=134 [11.05.2021].

6 W. Cimoszewicz, *Polska w zamięcie świata*, "Gazeta Wyborcza", 12-13 June 2004, no. 136, p. 10; see more in: M. Rydel, *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość oraz Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – dwie oceny międzynarodowej roli Rosji*, [in:] A.R. Bartnicki, E. Kuźelewska (eds.), *Wschód w globalnej i regionalnej polityce międzynarodowej*, Toruń 2009, pp. 123 et seq.

sia, even at the expense of Ukraine⁷. Russia's cooperation with other democratic states was assessed positively and regarded as beneficial for the security of the Republic of Poland. It was rather the isolation of Russia that could pose a threat. The SLD criticised the construction of the Northern Gas Pipeline for its bilateral nature and for bypassing Poland, yet when it became clear that the pipeline was going to be constructed anyway, it proposed that the Polish gas pipeline network be included in the European network and that it be connected to the Northern Gas Pipeline. At the time, no one thought about the far-reaching consequences of the EU's energy dependence on Russia. Raw materials and resources were not an object of SLD policy.

On the other hand, it was noted in numerous documents and statements by leaders of later years that Russia had violated international law by attacking Georgia in 2008. At the same time, however, the statement of the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, of 12 August in Tbilisi, in which he warned the assembled leaders of neighbouring countries against Russia, was regarded as an example of Anti-Russian sentiment and fear-mongering among Poles and the world as a whole⁸. Following the events of 10 April 2010, left-wing politicians believed that mutual relations should not be dominated by the issue of the Smolensk disaster and the return of the aeroplane wreckage. After Russia's annexation of the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts and Crimea (2014), the postulate of improving Polish-Russian relations based on economic interests and cultural exchanges was repeated⁹. The Left's assessment of the international environment was consistent. In this matter, the Left adapted to the trends in the world: on the one hand to the US policy towards Russia, which took the form of a reset under Barack Obama, and on the other hand to the EU, based on multi-dimensional cooperation, which was the primary interest of Germany.

In 2021, there was a noticeable change, which was reflected in the (Left's) programme documents. The New Left decided that Russia

7 *Kłótnia polska: rozmowa A. Michnika i P. Smoleńskiego z L. Millerem*, "Gazeta Wyborcza", 22-23 June 2002, no. 144, p. 10.

8 "Today Georgia, tomorrow Ukraine, the Baltic States the day after tomorrow, and then perhaps the time will come for my country, Poland". L. Kaczyński, The statement in Tbilisi, 12 August 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEhJ-5xIJtg>.

9 *Godne życie, sprawiedliwa i nowoczesna Polska. Deklaracja ideowo-programowa SLD*, Warsaw, 12 December 2015.

“does not adhere to the principle of sovereignty and territorial integrity and cannot be treated in the same way as any other partner in international relations”¹⁰. Although this new situation did not pose a direct threat to Poland, the direct military action Russia took against Ukraine on 24 February 2022 was assessed by the Left as a violation of the international order and a threat to peace¹¹. It treated Russia as an aggressor and declared that any talks would be futile because the agreement would not be honoured, and that hopes that Russia would change were illusory because this country would not shed its super-power ambitions¹².

In April 2023, the New Left clearly recognised that Russia’s imperialist policy was a threat to peace¹³. Its position on the desired security policy of the Polish state was determined by the slogan uttered by MP Marcin Kulasek on 24 February 2023 at the “Security and Cooperation” conference: “If you want peace, prepare for war” and that it was necessary to “prepare for the worst”¹⁴.

2. The international order as well as political and military alliances

Like other parties, the Left also saw the basis for Polish external security in the international security order, political and military alliances, as well as special alliances. For SLD, international cooperation and alliances were fundamental and instrumental for global security. What little was said before Russia seized Crimea showed that leftists,

10 *Przyszłość jest teraz. Priorytety programowe Nowej Lewicy. Materiał do dyskusji. Kongres Nowej Lewicy*, Warsaw, 9 October 2021, p. 38.

11 *Lewica: Polsce nie grozi atak Rosji, Polska jest bezpieczna. To jest sytuacja na dziś [Left: Poland is under no threat from Russia. Poland is safe. That is how things stand today]*, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1134925%2Clewica-polsce-nie-grozi-atak-rosji-polska-jest-bezpieczna-jest-sytuacja-na> [29.03.2022].

12 A.M. Żukowska, The statements in “Śniadanie u Rymanowskiego”, *Polsat News*, 3 April 2022 and 30 April 2023, <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2022-04-03/sniadanie-rymanowskiego-w-polsat-news-i-interii-ogladaj-od-0955>; https://www.polsatnews.pl/wideo-program/sniadanie-rymanowskiego-w-polsat-news-i-interii-30042023_6822731 [2.05.2023].

13 Cf. A. Dziemianowicz-Bąk, Statement in “Graffiti”, *Polsat News*, 12 April 2023, https://www.polsatnews.pl/wideo-program/graffiti-agnieszka-dziemianowicz-bak_6819381/ [2.05.2023].

14 *Bezpieczeństwo i współpraca*, 24 February 2023, <https://klub-lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/2457-kompleksowy-plan-wzmocnienia-bezpieczenstwa-polski-konwencja-bezpieczenstwo-i-wspolpraca> [13.04.2023].

seeing a crumbling old order¹⁵, were in favour of a multipolar (multilateral) order and were placing their hopes on a reformed United Nations. Although they considered the US as a strategic partner, the Left did not endorse the view of a unipolar world. The greatest threat to world peace for the SLD was the imbalance of power¹⁶. Because it implied collective responsibility for maintaining peace, a collective international order was seen as the best solution. Yet this crucial security issue received little attention.

Two instruments of the new order can be identified from the sources of SLD political thought: 1) international law, which is compatible with the legal systems of the nation-states, especially in the fields of trade, human rights, and the environment; 2) existing and newly created international institutions, which assume some of the rights of the nation-states¹⁷.

It should be noted that although the collective system reflected the nature of contemporary international relations, characterised by pluralism and polycentrism, and was, therefore, natural for the left-wing formation, it failed to address the pillars of the collective order and its possible consequences for Poland. The Left, however, ignored the historical lessons of the security systems that existed in the history of the modern world. The two variants of the collective security system that emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries, while designed to maintain peace, posed a threat primarily to small states and those in Central and Eastern Europe. Their creation resulted in the emergence of the Concert of Europe and particular areas of influence. Pursuing their interests, the founders of the system were keen on maintaining the existing status quo, i.e., de facto, peace. In two cases, however, this ultimately led to war¹⁸.

15 The Left used the term "order", not "system". The concept of an international system corresponded to the realist theory of international relations. One of its components is the system of security. See B. Buzan, R. Little, *Systemy międzynarodowe w historii świata*, Warsaw 2011, passim.

16 A.D. Rotfeld (Foreign Minister), Speech containing government information on Polish foreign policy in 2005, 21 January 2005, <http://orkaz.sejm.gov.pl/Debata4.nsf/main/53CA9313>.

17 *Lewica dla Polski. Materiał opracowany z okazji Kongresu Polskiej Lewicy przez Radę Polityczno-Programową Sojuszu Lewicy Demokratycznej z udziałem partii, organizacji i związków zawodowych, które zadeklarowały udział w Kongresie Lewicy Polskiej*, Wydawnictwo Printshop, [2013], pp. 80-81.

18 Cf. W. Paruch, K. Trembicka, *Typologia systemów bezpieczeństwa w XIX i XX wieku*, Lublin 1996, pp. 47-48; W. Paruch see *II Debata czasopisma "Myśl Polityczna. Political Thought" pt. Polityka wschodnia we współczesnej polskiej myśli politycznej*, "Myśl Polityczna" 2020, no. 4, p. 91.

A possible third historical option is that of a concert of forces, including entities capable of acting as creators such as the United States, European Union, Russia, China, and maybe Japan. It would thus be a kind of pentarchy¹⁹. If the collective system were to work, there would have to be a mechanism leading to the formation of the real equality of the superpowers as well as a platform for cooperation, i.e., an organization and structures enabling joint action to prevent and defuse conflicts, to stimulate transformation, to agree on common interests, and to satisfy particular interests.

The Left was more alliance-oriented. Poland was allied mainly with states interested in stability and peace in Central Europe²⁰. In its security policy, the Left relied on three assumptions: 1) the Polish presence in NATO and the alliance with the United States as the first and basic pillar of security, 2) the presence in the EU as the second pillar and the future common foreign and security policy, 3) the Polish army and the development of the Polish arms sector. This was complemented by a foreign policy that sought to promote good relations with neighbouring countries and the Euro-Atlantic ambitions of the former USSR, particularly Ukraine, as well as democracy in the east. The Left, which had long been in opposition, emphasised global economic and social security in its political manifestos²¹.

- 19 See P. Kennedy, *Mocarstwa świata. Narodziny – Rozkwit – Upadek. Przemiany gospodarcze i konflikty zbrojne w latach 1500-2000*, Warsaw 1994, p. 428. However, it is difficult to see how they can cooperate harmoniously with each other: 1) the EU is not a state-like body, there are differences of interests between its members and it is unknown what its further development will mean for individual partners; 2) most of them were taken over by the USA and Russia, which claimed to be the successor of the USSR and took over a part of its strategic commitments; 3) the inability to agree on a catalogue of values to be jointly realised by the concert of powers. Under the heading 'Fostering Partnerships', the 2009 SLD manifesto listed the USA, Russia, China, and India alongside the EU. Cf. *Po pierwsze człowiek. Nowy kierunek dla Europy*, Rada Krajowa SLD, 2009, pp. 57-58.
- 20 Government information on the participation of the Polish military contingent in the composition of the forces of the international coalition to enforce Iraq's compliance with the UN Security Council Resolution, 26 March 2003, pp. 11 et seq., [https://orkaz.sejm.gov.pl/Stenogramy4.nsf/0/4D773E0D96E93231C1258967004549E4/\\$file/044.pdf](https://orkaz.sejm.gov.pl/Stenogramy4.nsf/0/4D773E0D96E93231C1258967004549E4/$file/044.pdf) [23.05.2023].
- 21 L. Miller, The statement in the debate following the briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2015, 23 April 2015, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/sejm7.nsf/wypowiedz.xsp?posiedzenie=91&dzien=2&wyp=41&type=P&symbol=WYPOWIEDZ_POSLA&id=246 [12.05.2023].

For the Left, NATO was the only real defence system of the West²². Its power and efficacy were contingent on the participation of the USA. In the dispute that emerged at the beginning of the 21st century over how to make NATO work, the Left chose to expand its functions, i.e., to side with the so-called globalists, who wanted to increase the Pact's involvement in stabilising the international situation on a global scale and assume greater responsibility in this area. There was no question about the need to carry out the existing tasks of collective defence; however, it was recognised that, given the low probability of armed aggression against member states, the Alliance should focus on activities that would shape the international order and prevent new threats in geographically distant regions, not only in the vicinity of the treaty area²³. According to the SLD, preserving NATO's traditional functions would be the "beginning of the end" of the American presence in Europe, since it was believed that the US saw Europe only as a partner in combating global threats, and not as a potential victim of armed aggression requiring care and guarantees²⁴. Among the political parties in Poland, this position was isolated. Law and Justice (PiS), the Polish People's Party (PSL), Civic Platform (PO), and Self-Defence (Samobrona) were in favour of the Pact, which first and foremost fulfilled its basic function – to protect the territory and population of the signatory countries in their immediate neighbourhood, whereas global security and stability were of a lower priority²⁵. Moreover, the Left favoured NATO cooperation with Russia²⁶.

Cooperation within NATO was to be complemented by a strategic alliance between Poland and the USA²⁷. When in power, the SLD chose a foreign policy model based on the theory of bandwagoning, rightly recognising that only the United States of America, with its presence in Europe and its military potential, had the ability to really help in the

22 J. Oleksy, *Przemiany we współczesnym świecie wyzwaniem dla lewicy społecznej*, [in:] *Socjal-demokratyczna alternatywa: kapitalizm na zakręcie, lewica na prostej. Materiały do dyskusji*, Warsaw 2012, p. 11.

23 Cf. B. Górka-Winter, M. Madej, *Wstęp*, [in:] B. Górka-Winter (ed.), *Stanowiska państw członkowskich NATO w pracach nad nową koncepcją strategiczną*, Warsaw 2010, pp. 7-8.

24 A.D. Rotfeld, op. cit.

25 J. Sanecka-Tyczyńska, op. cit., p. 404.

26 W. Cimoszewicz, *Polska racja stanu a nowe środowisko międzynarodowe*, "Roczniki Polskiej Polityki Zagranicznej" 2003, pp. 28-29.

27 *Kto jest dziś prawdziwym sojusznikiem Polski?*, <https://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl> [10.07.2017].

event of a threat. The orientation towards the USA was constant. The Left pursued a pro-American policy, as shown by (1) the US military support in Iraq in 2003, without the consent of the United Nations, (2) the involvement in Ukraine in 2004. The involvement of all significant political circles in Poland in the Orange Revolution was, on the one hand, intended to support the USA and, on the other, to implement the project of spreading democracy in the East, based on the reception of the Parisian concept of “Kultura”, and (3) accepting the US policy towards Poland and Ukraine in 2022 and 2023 and fearing a change of government after the elections in autumn 2024, which could mean a correction of the policy towards Central and Eastern Europe.

While the strategic alliance with the United States was a constant for the Left, attitudes towards building military infrastructure and deploying Alliance troops in Poland were mixed. The leftist political thought on this issue evolved from opposing the installation of elements of the anti-missile shield in Poland and attempts, expressed by Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, to strengthen the state with NATO troops, to accepting the possible stationing of nuclear weapons on Polish soil.

The efforts of PiS and PO in the first and second decades of the 21st century received a negative assessment from the Left. They were critical of initiatives which went against allied will and provoked retaliatory measures from Russia (e.g., increasing the military presence in Kaliningrad or Belarus). It also saw no need to deploy NATO troops in Poland. There was no threat to Poland’s security. It did, however, see the need to review “contingency plans based on which it can be clearly stated who will come to our aid, when, and how” and to prepare for the need to establish bases, conduct joint exercises, training, etc²⁸.

It should be noted that in both situations the actions of the Left did not have any direct consequences: the Obama administration withdrew from the idea of building a missile defence shield in Poland and the Czech Republic, and in 2014, NATO did not agree to a deployment in Poland. However, the Left could have tried to boost its

28 Cf. S. Wziątek, The statement at the Parliamentary Defence Committee *SLD przeciw NATO w Polsce. Kowal: myślę, że Rosja zjadła Krym jak dziewicę i się uspokoi*, <https://www.rp.pl/polityka/art12549501-sld-przeciw-nato-w-polsce-kowal-mysla-ze-rosja-zjadla-krym-jak-dziewice-i-sie-uspokoi> [11.08.2022].

numbers, particularly as left-leaning and centrist Poles opposed the move²⁹. Nevertheless, there is one constant element in the position on deploying NATO troops in Poland or having one of the Allies assist – the need to coordinate actions and obtain the consent of all countries. The New Left accepted military aid from Germany in the form of a Patriot missile battery in November 2022³⁰. At the same time, it criticised the United Right's government for proposing to deploy it in Ukraine, because it went against the ally's intention³¹.

The war in Ukraine led to another development – the Left came to support possible attempts to place nuclear weapons in Poland to deter the West. The latter emerged following Putin's announcement of the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus³². The issue of weapons deployment in Poland has undergone a radical change. Whereas a few years earlier the Left had been opposed to it³³, by 2023 it had come to accept such a solution³⁴.

The second external security pillar was the EU. The Left was in favour of a common foreign, security, and defence policy. Expanding cooperation between European countries in these matters should ensure the European Union's civilian and military operational capacity and lead to the creation of a common army in the future. For the Left, the European project was complementary to NATO and the US alliance, because "there is no choice between the United States or Eu-

29 *Opinie Polaków o tarczy antyrakietowej*, BS/128/2009, p. 2, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2009/K_128_09.PDF.

30 Cf. W. Czarzasty, The statement in "Śniadanie u Rymanowskiego", Polsat News, 28 November 2022, https://www.polsatnews.pl/wideo-program/sniadanie-rymanowskiego-w-polsat-news-i-interii-28112022_6812230/.

31 The fact that Germany's action in the autumn of 2022 was more about improving its image than providing real help was not mentioned. The Germans decided to take the launcher back after only about a dozen weeks.

32 Cf. R. Biedroń, The statement in "Śniadanie u Rymanowskiego", Polsat News, 26 March 2023, https://www.polsatnews.pl/wideo-program/sniadanie-rymanowskiego-w-polsat-news-i-interii-26032023_6818688/.

33 *Kto chce broni atomowej w Polsce*, <https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art714951-kto-chce-broni-atomowej-w-polsce> [25.04.2023]; The US Ambassador in Poland, Georgette Mosbacher, hinted at the possibility of deploying nuclear weapons in Poland in her tweet on 15 May 2020: "If Germany wants to diminish nuclear capability and weaken NATO, perhaps Poland – which pays its fair share, understands the risks, and is on NATO's eastern flank – could house the capabilities here", <https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art8940621-mosbacher-moze-polska-moglaby-przyjac-potencjal-nuklearny>.

34 K. Gawkowski, *Nowe państwo*, Wydawnictwo BookPlan.pl, 2023.

rope for Poland”³⁵. Europe cooperating with the US within NATO was the “quintessence” of global security and strengthening ties with the United States stemmed directly from the Polish *raison d'état*³⁶.

Although the EU's security and defence policy was a project for the future, it should be noted that while the Left was in power, it followed the American policy, but after going into opposition it opted for deepening European integration and linking Poland's interests to those of Western European countries. This also meant a correction of the involvement of the Polish army in US projects and, until 2015, the postulate of cooperation with Russia.

The second pillar was, in fact, an illusion as the EU did not become a hard security factor: 1) it had no army, 2) member states had difficulties agreeing on a plan to reform the Common Security and Defence Policy, 3) the initial phase of the war against Ukraine exposed difficulties in deciding how to help the attacked state or collect and send a sufficient amount of necessary weapons. This area of EU cooperation is still in its infancy. Undoubtedly, for the Left, EU funds were important because they served the social and economic development of Poland and were treated as the Polish *raison d'état* (from the perspective of the National Reconstruction Plan and the next budget).

The sources of the New Left's political thought are, to a small extent, directly related to the important proposals of recent years in France and Germany with regard to European strategic autonomy. While the members of the New Left wanted to deepen integration, they were unequivocal about France's initiatives, considering “Emanuel Macron's love affair with Beijing to be harmful to Europe”³⁷. They also criticised the French concept of European military autonomy as an alternative to the US³⁸.

35 Government information on the participation of the Polish military contingent in the composition of the international coalition forces..., 26 March 2003...

36 W. Cimoszewicz, *Polska racja stanu...*, p. 25.

37 M. Konieczny, The statement in the debate on the Minister of Foreign Affairs information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2023, 13 April 2023, p. 173, http://orkaz.sejm.gov.pl/Stenolnter9.nsf/0/67D5771909333250C1258991000832A7/%24File/74_b_ksiazka.pdf.

38 Cf. J. Gotkowska, *Europejska autonomia strategiczna czy europejski filar w NATO? Niemcy wobec inicjatyw Macrona*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2020-02-21/europejska-autonomia-strategiczna-czy-europejski-filar-w-nato>; Cf. A. Dziemianowicz-Bąk, op. cit.

The Left proposed a partial course of action in this matter. It was not necessary to implement a “European strategic autonomy” immediately, but a regional military pact was needed to “leaven a common European defence force”. The “Safe Poland in a United Europe” conference of 23 April linked military security with the creation of missile defence units with Germany, so that “such European units could protect the territory of Germany, Poland, and other Central and Eastern European countries against aerial aggression”³⁹.

Without a doubt, the uncertainty of US policy after a possible change of administration influenced the Left’s attitude toward the postulates of creating a European army. That is why it was recognised that although the basis of Polish defence was and will remain NATO and the US military presence in Europe for the time being, that does not mean that Europe should not strengthen its own defence capabilities so that it can protect itself against another aggressive action by Russia, even “if the White House finds another Donald Trump”. It is worth mentioning here that there were no concrete accusations and that the real benefits for Poland during Trump’s presidency were not taken into account⁴⁰. The Left ignored the fact that in 2008 the Democratic Administration of Barrack Obama sent a signal to Moscow that it agreed with revising the order in Europe, while Joe Biden, at the beginning of his presidency, bet on Berlin, Paris, and London. He also viewed Central Europe and Russia from the perspective of Western countries. Trump, on the other hand, demanded that European countries increase their defence spending and accused their leaders of relying too much on NATO.

One innovation was to expand the alliance and work closely with the Nordic states (Finland and Sweden) and Central and Eastern Europe. These were the countries most at risk of hostile action by Russia. After the war, however, it was considered necessary to: 1) strengthen the sub-region within the framework of the European Union and NATO

39 *Bezpieczna Polska w zjednoczonej Europie*, Lewica, 23 April 2022, <https://lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/7574-bezpieczna-polska-w-zjednoczonej-europie-lewica-prezentuje-postulaty-wzmocniajace-bezpieczenstwo-polek-i-polakow> [23.05.2023].

40 Cf. *Donald Trump i polska polityka bezpieczeństwa*, <https://www.google.com/search?q=usa+w-obec+polski+w-okresie+prezydentury+trampa&oq=&aqs=chrome.o.69i59i450l8.34426999joi15&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> [25.05.2023].

in the Bucharest format (nine eastern flank countries) and 2) renew the EU's Eastern Partnership and make the EU's Eastern policy more fruitful⁴¹. This proposal has not been taken any further. An alliance with Hungary, which the Left considers pro-Russian, was ruled out.

They also rejected the United Right's concept of strengthening Poland's international position through regional agreements outside the EU. As far as the Left was concerned, none of the regional structures could act as a counterweight to the EU. This position also referred to the concept of the Three Seas Initiative, which was a 21st century idea. The Left did not support the Three-Sea Concept because it was seen as a rival to the EU. It raised the issue of lacking financial resources for the implementation of a large infrastructure project that would enable Poland to diversify its hydrocarbon supplies⁴². No reference was made to the political arguments supporting the implementation of the concept: the creation of a blockade for Russia's ability to act outside the EU or the real empowerment of the sub-region.

For the Left, relations with European countries, especially France and Germany within the Weimar Triangle, were the basis of Polish foreign policy. The Left was critical of the policies of the Right towards the EU and certain states, which they saw as incapable of maintaining the "fire of European solidarity" towards Ukraine. Since Poland also bought coal and oil under the United Right's rule, it was accused of lacking credibility⁴³.

3. War in Ukraine

The Left associated Poland's security with a political change in its neighbours to the East and with the independence and security of Ukraine⁴⁴. The fall of the Putin regime, boosting Polish influence in

41 *Bezpieczeństwo i współpraca...*

42 Golub-Dobrzyń. Pytania do posła Janusza Zemke o Polskę w Unii [Golub-Dobrzyń. Questions for MP Janusz Zemke about Poland in the EU], Lewica, 21 September 2017, <https://lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci-kujawsko-pomorskie/722-golub-dobrzyn-pytania-do-posla-j-zemke-o-polske-w-unii>; Liberadzki: *postępowa i wrażliwa socjalnie Europa*, 9 April 2019, <https://tczewski.lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/4237-liberadzki-postepowa-i-wrazliwa-socjalnie-europa> [2.03.2022].

43 Cf. The statements in the debate on the Minister of Foreign Affairs information on the tasks of Polish foreign policy in 2023, 13 April 2023: A. Szejna, p. 184, and M. Gdula, pp. 190-191, http://orkaz.sejm.gov.pl/StenolInter9.nsf/o/67D5771909333250C1258991000832A7/%24File/74_b_ksiazka.pdf.

44 M. Konieczny, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

the East and good relations with Ukraine were Poland's (new) *raison d'état*⁴⁵. Thanks to the Left, Poland has been treated as the chief proponent of the accession of Ukraine to the Euro-Atlantic structures. Hopes for democracy have long been pinned on Russia. Although the Left wanted good relations with Russia, and during the period of their government they expressed their will to do so, they misjudged Russia, just like the majority of the political forces in democratic countries. The Left was wrong to believe that Russia had come to terms with NATO's eastward enlargement, and it was also wrong to imagine it was ever possible to have good and equal relations with it and to separate the ideological and historical issues from the economic ones. Even when the Left was in power, it received many signals that this was not achievable. In addition, it carried out a lot of activities that ran counter to the political interests of Russia as defined by the centre of power with Vladimir Putin at the helm⁴⁶.

After Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, the Left was in favour of the Euro-Atlantic world adopting immediate and tough sanctions against the Russian state and its ruling elite: 1) freezing of Russian financial assets, trade in Russian bonds, exclusion of Russian banks from the European market; 2) seizure of assets of Russian oligarchs in Poland; 3) ban on vehicles with Russian (but also Belarusian) licence plates entering Poland; 4) freezing of Nord Stream 2. They believed that the EU should take steps towards long-term energy independence from Russia in order to "stop feeding the regime by paying for oil because it serves to strengthen Russia's resources" and to speed up energy transition; and 5) after the media showed the crimes against civilians in Bucha, they called for the punishment of the murderers. If Russia refuses to enter into dialogue with Ukraine and continues the war, the sanctions should be expanded, particularly since the EU has stocks and procedures to minimise the negative effects of cutting off Russian oil and gas. The Left was cautious about sanctions against Belarus, recognising that it was in Poland's interest not to be part of the war. The sanctions that were adopted were aimed at the Belaru-

45 K. Gawkowski, The statement in "Śniadanie u Rymanowskiego", Interia.pl, 7 May 2023, <https://www.interia.tv/wideo-gawkowski-niech-morawiecki-i-ziobro-ida-na-dobra-wode-my-im-,vld,3315058>.

46 Cf. K. Trembicka, *Lewica wobec polityki wschodniej*, "Przegląd Sejmowy" 2023, no. 1, pp. 95 et seq.

sian regime. The left proposed economic and personal sanctions, as it did against Russia and its political and economic elite⁴⁷.

At the same time, the Left proposed aid to Ukraine. The idea of debt relief for Ukraine, following the example of Germany's creditors after the war, and talks with the US authorities on this issue, was raised at the *Security and Cooperation* conference on 24 February. The Left supported the Government in providing military support to Ukraine and in accepting refugees⁴⁸.

The war in Ukraine inspired the Left to issue demands for the rearmament of the Polish army and the Polish defence industry as the internal pillar of security. There was a reasonable recognition of the need for Poland to have "its own comprehensive defence cooperation" alongside NATO and the EU, with the hope that, after a series of measures taken, "in a few years the Polish army would be one of the strongest and most modern in Europe"⁴⁹.

The project for improving Poland's security was presented in 2022-2023 and resembled old proposals although it introduced several new ones. They 1) accepted the Government's arms purchases, declaring their willingness to continue these contracts after they assume power in autumn 2023; 2) called for the development of current arms programmes and special support for projects involving Polish industry and research institutions⁵⁰; 3) proclaimed military cooperation with

47 *Postulaty zostały przedstawione. Lewica wzywa Prezydenta RP do zwołania RBN. Potrzeba zdecydowanych sankcji ekonomicznych wobec rosyjskiej elity* [The postulations have been presented. The Left calls on the President of the Republic of Poland to convene the RBN. Strong economic sanctions against the Russian elite are necessary], 22 February 2022, <https://klub-lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/2106-lewica-wzywa-prezydenta-rp-do-zwolania-rbn-potrzeba-zdecydowanych-sankcji-ekonomicznych-wobec-rosyjskiej-elity>; *Majątki rosyjskich oligarchów w Polsce. „Zamiast czekać 120 dni na zmianę konstytucji, uchwalmy jedną ustawę, w której będzie zapisane czyj majątek podlega konfiskacie* [Russian oligarchs' assets in Poland. "Instead of waiting 120 days for the constitution to be changed, let's pass a law specifying whose property is subject to confiscation"], 23 March 2022, <https://klub-lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/2140-majatki-rosyjskich-oligarchow-w-polsce-zamiast-czekac-120-dni-na-zmiane-konstytucji-uchwalmy-jedna-ustawe-w-ktorej-bedzie-zapise-czyj-majatek-podlega-konfiskacie> [24.03.2022]; W. Czarzasty, The statement in "Gość Wydarzeń", Polsat News, 4 April 2022, <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2022-04-04/czarzasty-jablonski-i-kolodziej-w-gosciu-wydarzen-ogladaj/?ref=wyszukiwarka> [4.04.2022]; M. Gdula, op. cit., pp. 190-191.

48 *Bezpieczeństwo i współpraca...*

49 A. Szejna, op. cit., p. 184.

50 In particular, it concerned the construction of AW-149 helicopters in Świdnik and Rosomaks in Siemianowice Śląskie, the completion of work on the battlefield management system, and the continuation of the Wisła, Narew, Pilica, Homar, Rak, and other programmes.

Ukraine and the creation of a Polish-Ukrainian arms consortium after the war is over; 4) announced the creation of the Cyber Security Agency, a kind of cyber shield to protect the banking system, databases, public administration, and the economy; and 5) called for the creation of a European counter-intelligence service to combat Russian agents in the EU⁵¹.

The concerns expressed were twofold; firstly, the wisdom of buying K9 howitzers in South Korea. Left-wing politicians prioritised the production of Krab howitzers in Huta Stalowa Wola, which were also considered one of the best in the world and successfully used in Ukraine. The Left did not want to cancel the agreement but believed that Krab was more important. The second concern was the lack of modern technology in Poland. It was believed that the purchase of arms should be combined with the import of technology for the domestic defence industry. The defence industry was rightly treated as a strategic branch of the economy. The transfer of technology was to be arranged after the change of government, while “for now”, it was necessary to absorb technologies from the Ukrainian defence industry. In general, they were very optimistic, despite the critical comments made in some instances. For example, the Polish army should gain the necessary know-how and intelligence from the government’s planned import of F-35 aircraft and French reconnaissance satellites⁵².

In addition to weapons, technology, and new services, it was necessary to draw on Ukrainian experience in the field of reserve forces. The military reserve was needed to secure areas not covered by military operations, to help with logistics, to support the civil population and, if necessary, to take part in combat. It was also deemed important to have good relations with society at large. The left was critical of the Polish Army restructuring process. In particular, it criticised the unnecessary and costly removal of experienced officers from the army, the exclusion of special military units from the structure of the army, and the subordination of these units to a politically empowered intelligence coordinator⁵³.

51 *Bezpieczna Polska w zjednoczonej Europie...*

52 *Bezpieczeństwo i współpraca...*

53 *Likwidacja WSI – krok w tył*, <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl> [13.04.2023].

A wall along the Belarusian border was one of Poland's most controversial measures, and it fell under harsh criticism from the Left, for whom humanitarian considerations are paramount. Left-wing politicians, faced with a threatened state border, turned their attention to the migrants transferred by the Belarusian services and accused the Polish authorities of violating international law, lacking sensitivity toward the fate of people and using the crisis to strengthen the political position of the governing party. The accusations contained a great deal of demagoguery and statements aimed at discrediting the state authorities. This was exemplified by Krzysztof Gawkowski, President of the Parliamentary Club of the Left, who likened the behaviour of the Polish authorities to that of Alexander Lukashenko. Although Gawkowski did not doubt that the border crossing was a provocation by Lukashenko's regime, he also blamed the Polish authorities for the crisis⁵⁴. The government was accused of a lack of transparency. He demanded that NGOs be given access to the areas where people were being transferred so that they could provide assistance to those in need, regardless of their status⁵⁵. The solution to the crisis was to receive the migrants and then, together with the EU countries, readmit them⁵⁶.

Conclusions

Four conclusions can be drawn from a reflection on the views of the contemporary left on state security and the war in Ukraine:

- 54 "Usnarz Górny did not appear out of nowhere. It was created by the PiS government in partnership with Lukashenko's regime. (...) There is no doubt that the dictator of Belarus is playing his game, and President Kaczyński is playing with him. And the whole situation is very convenient for both of them. If it were otherwise, if you really wanted to manage this crisis, you would not allow it to develop". Cf. K. Gawkowski, The statement in the Sejm on declaring a state of emergency, 6 September 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUHRAAvABdl> [23.03.2022].
- 55 Cf. Włodzimierz Czarzasty in "Graffiti" on Polsat News, 22 March 2023, <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2023-03-22/wlodzimierz-czarzasty-w-graffiti-transmisja-od-740/>.
- 56 Biedroń: Nie odpuszczajmy Białorusi [Biedroń: "We are not going to give up on Belarus"], Lewica, 21 October 2021, <https://klub-lewica.org.pl/aktualnosci/1891-rzad-morawieckiego-pozwala-bialoruskiemu-rezimowi-zarabiac-na-sprzedazy-cementu-w-polsce-apelujemy-o-nalozenie-embarga> [23.03.2022].

First, the left has analysed the international system and the environment of the Republic of Poland. The left's political thinking reflected changes in US policy towards Russia and the EU as well as divergences between US and EU policies. In the years when it was in power, the Left pursued a pro-American policy by participating in the Orange Revolution. In later years, however, it adapted to the tendencies of its European allies and preferred cooperation with Russia at the expense of Ukraine.

Secondly, the Left's political thinking has evolved, first and foremost, in its assessment of the threats to the Polish state from an unambiguous and fairly constant assessment of Poland as a safe state, to recognising that the war in Ukraine has lowered the level of security and that we should arm ourselves. There has also been a radical change in the Left's assessment of Russia and the EU's policy towards that country.

Thirdly, state security was associated with Poland's presence in NATO and alliance with the United States, Poland's permanent political, economic, social, and cultural "embedding" in Western Europe, and the building of a strong army supported by the Polish defence industry. NATO was the most important military alliance for the Left and other political forces in Poland. There was no alternative to Poland's presence in NATO and its alliance with the United States. The US alliance has been rightly considered the only true alliance. The acceptance of the EU as a federation with a common foreign and security policy meant a rejection of the French version of European military autonomy.

The Left supported the plan to expand the army, buy arms, implement signed contracts, and help Ukraine. It refused to accept the border wall and focused its attention on humanitarian issues.

Fourthly, what was new was the proposal of a rapprochement with the Nordic countries and of closer cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe within the EU.

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The Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy towards the Republic of North Macedonia

Europeizacja polityki zagranicznej Grecji wobec Republiki Północnej Macedonii

Abstract: The article's objective is to analyse the process of Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy towards North Macedonia. The author has attempted to present the main conceptual assumptions regarding this process, pointing to the multiplicity of definitions and research directions, and has subsequently highlighted the evolution of Greek foreign policy towards North Macedonia in the context of the Europeanisation of Greek diplomacy. In the conclusions, the author has emphasised that this particular Europeanisation is somewhat sinusoidal and is conditioned upon a number of factors, including the nature of relations between the Greek political elites and the society of that country. The article has also highlighted that Greece has gradually been shaping its image as a Europeanised country with a credible and predictable foreign policy.

Keywords: Greece, North Macedonia, FYROM, European Union, foreign policy, Europeanisation

Streszczenie: Głównym celem artykułu jest analiza procesu europeizacji greckiej polityki zagranicznej wobec Macedonii Północnej. Autor starał się przedstawić główne założenia konceptualne dotyczące procesu europeizacji polityki zagranicznej, wskazując na jej różnorodność definicyjną oraz kierunki rozwoju badań. Następnie została opisana ewolucja polityki zagranicznej Grecji wobec Macedonii Północnej w kontekście europeizacji greckiej dyplomacji. We wnioskach autor podkreślił, że europeizacja ta ma charakter sinusoidalny i jest uwarunkowana wieloma czynnikami, w tym m.in. charakterem relacji między greckimi elitami politycznymi a społeczeństwem tego kraju. Wskazano także, że Grecja stopniowo kształtuje swój wizerunek jako państwa zeuropeizowanego, w tym dysponującego wiarygodną i przewidywalną polityką zagraniczną.

Słowa kluczowe: Grecja, Macedonia Północna, FYROM, Unia Europejska, polityka zagraniczna, europeizacja

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Introduction

Europeanisation is unquestionably an important element of studying the European Union as well as being a concept explaining the influence of the EU on the development and implementation of the national policies of its Member States¹. The study of the relationship between Europeanisation and the foreign policy of a Member State, however, constitutes a challenge in terms of research since the realm of diplomacy of individual Member States remains a sovereign decision of each government and is subject to the right of veto in the EU decision-making process. This means that the institutions of the European Union cannot use legal coercion in this matter and no disciplinary measures can be enforced². As far as the EU's influence on the foreign policy of a Member State is concerned, principles resulting from universal European values can be applied, for example: solidarity and cooperation with regard to safeguarding common security, maintaining peace in its neighbourhood, refraining from the use of armed force, or respecting international law³. It should be recalled that one of the foundations of European integration, which began after the most tragic experiences of World War II for Europe, was the renouncement of the catastrophic policy of nationalism and totalitarianism and the desire to strengthen peace and achieve a sense of security⁴.

Greece, which was admitted to the European Communities in 1981, is a specific case illustrating the impact of Europeanisation on the development and implementation of a Member State's foreign policy. The country's decision to accede was mainly political and was a form of reward for Greece for overthrowing the military junta in 1974 and restoring democracy, but also an attempt to anchor it in the Western countries. The specificity of Greece as an EC member was the fact that it was a peripheral country that did not have common borders with

- 1 J. Kamińska, *Europeizacja polskiej polityki zagranicznej*, "Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs" 2008, no. 3, p. 23.
- 2 A. Cianciara, *Wzory europeizacji zewnętrznej: mechanizmy, uwarunkowania, rezultaty*, "Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs" 2013, no. 3, p. 14.
- 3 O. Barbuska, *Europeizacja jako instrument polityki zagranicznej Unii Europejskiej w zakresie promocji demokracji*, "Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs" 2020, no. 1, p. 10, DOI: 10.33067/SE.1.2020.1.
- 4 O. Barbuska, D. Milczarek, *Historia integracji europejskiej w zarysie*, Dinkograf, Warsaw 2013; D. Milczarek, O. Barbuska, *Past and Present of European Integration. Poland's Perspective*, ASPRA-JR, Warsaw 2015.

other members of the organisation. What is more, the country is located in an immensely unstable region between the Balkans and the Middle East. Greece's direct neighbours to the north were communist states, while to the east the country bordered Turkey, which the Greeks considered the greatest threat to their existence, despite both countries' membership in NATO. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that there was a sense of insecurity among Greek society. Greece's historical experience differs from other states in the European Communities and its political tradition is the result of nearly 400 years of Turkish occupation. In addition, it is culturally and religiously distinctive and was the first country of the Communities where Orthodox Christianity prevailed, and the church dominated social and political life⁵. Greece was also an economically underprivileged country, additionally burdened with enormous military expenditure for fear of Turkey. Greece's main asset, however, was its legacy of Antiquity and its role as the cradle of European democracy⁶.

The first decade of Greece's presence in the European Communities should rather be perceived as a process of the westernisation of the country⁷, which meant Greece's modernisation along with its anchoring in the family of Western European countries as well as the eradication of the pro-communist tendencies still existing in Greek society since the end of the bloody civil war. As late as the 1990s, pro-EU tendencies were established in Greek society, which began to see and appreciate the benefits of EU membership in various dimensions of life. Therefore, this period marks the beginning of Greece's extensive Europeanisation process⁸.

The 1990s was an extremely difficult period for shaping Greek foreign policy in the context of the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation, which led to the formation of new states. This was a great

5 O. Terzi, *Europeanisation of foreign policy and candidate countries: A comparative study of Greek and Turkish cases*, "Politique Européenne" 2005, vol. 17, no. 3, p. 120; S. Stavridis, *The Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy: A literature review*, LSE, 2003, p. 10, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/5692/1/Stavridis-10.pdf> [23.07.2023].

6 P. Kazakos, P. Ioakimidis (eds.), *Greece and EC membership evaluated*, Pinter, London 1994.

7 S. Stavridis, op. cit., p. 14.

8 O. Anastasakis, *The Europeanisation of the Balkans*, "The Brown Journal of World Affairs" 2005, vol. XII, issue 1, p. 78; Ch. Tsardanides, S. Stavridis, *The Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy: A critical appraisal*, "European Integration" 2005, vol. 27, no. 2, p. 219.

challenge for the government in Athens, which had to completely re-define its policy towards the Balkans. Greece was required to develop new bilateral relations and to seek support among the European Union Member States to pursue its own objectives and political interests. The development of post-1992 relations with a new state in the form of the Republic of Macedonia (currently the Republic of North Macedonia) was a further test for Greece in terms of the Europeanisation of its foreign policy.

1. Europeanisation in terms of foreign policy – a theoretical approach

Defining the concept of Europeanisation entails serious research quandaries. There are numerous definitions of this phenomenon, which became the subject of study in the 1990s, and its evolution has steadily progressed. In broad terms, Europeanisation can be understood as a gradual transfer of values and standards from the level of the European Union to the level of its Member States, which results in their implementation and subsequently translates into tangible results. Europeanisation may, therefore, have various aspects including legal, political, economic, and cultural, which were initially associated in scientific study mainly with the internal dimension of the European Union. R. Riedel thus defines Europeanisation as an “internal adaptation to the process of European integration”⁹.

According to C.M. Radaelli “Europeanisation consists of processes of the a) construction, b) diffusion, and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, “ways of doing things”, and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures, and public policies”¹⁰. This definition emphasises the influence of the European Union on a Member State (top-down European-

9 R. Riedel, *Europeizacja – koncepcje i agenda badawcza*, [in:] A. Paczeński, R. Riedel (eds.), *Europeizacja – mechanizmy, wymiary, efekty*, A. Marszałek, Oslo-Toruń-Wrocław 2010, pp. 22-26.

10 C.M. Radaelli, *Europeanisation: Solution or problem?*, “European Integration Online Papers” 2004, no. 8(10)/October, p. 6, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/5015009_Europeanisation_Solution_or_Problem [24.07.2023].

isation) and this perception of Europeanisation was dominant during its initial study. A different approach to Europeanisation is presented by J. Olsen, who emphasises that it is a process of European integration not only within its area and its members but also a phenomenon that goes beyond the borders of the EU, affecting its neighbours both close and distant¹¹.

Publications dedicated to Europeanisation also highlight several Europeanisation categories distinguished due to their mechanisms¹². One such category is so-called “bottom-up” Europeanisation, meaning that the integration impulse is transferred from regions or Member States to the level of European institutions¹³. Referring this category to foreign policy, it means a “projection of national interests to the European level and the foreign policy outputs of the EU to achieve national goals more effectively (so-called ‘uploading’)”¹⁴.

Another category is top-down Europeanisation, where we are dealing with the process in reverse. It refers to a top-down (so-called “downloading”) transfer of European values and standards from the level of EU institutions to the Member States and their implementation in national political systems¹⁵. This applies not only to legal regulations but also to adopting models and standards of political behaviour. In the foreign policy dimension, this is visible when Member States accept solutions and interests common to the entire EU when implementing their national foreign policies¹⁶.

Another category is ad extra Europeanisation, in which the influence of European integration is perceived not only internally but also in non-EU countries. This type of Europeanisation is related to the

11 J. Dyduch, *Europeizacja polskiej polityki zagranicznej w perspektywie realizmu strukturalnego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2016, pp. 50-51; J.P. Olsen, *The many faces of Europeanisation*, “JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies” 2002, no. 5.

12 K. Featherstone, C. Radaelli (eds.), *The politics of Europeanisation*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2003.

13 J. Ruzskowski, *Europeizacja. Analiza oddziaływania Unii Europejskiej*, Difin, Warsaw 2019, p. 137.

14 A. Chrysogelos, *Still Europeanised? Greek Foreign Policy During the Eurozone Crisis*, “GreeSE Papers” 2017, no. 118, p. 5, <https://www.lse.ac.uk/Hellenic-Observatory/Assets/Documents/Publications/GreeSE-Papers/GreeSE-No118.pdf> [27.07.2023].

15 T. Börzel, T. Risse, *When Europe hits home: Europeanisation and domestic change*, “European Integration Online Papers” 2000, vol. 4, no. 15, https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/1696/00_56.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y [26.07.2023].

16 A. Chrysogelos, op. cit., p. 5.

export of its political model and system of values outside the EU¹⁷. It undoubtedly contributes to strengthening the role and position of both the EU and its Member States in the international arena. (The principle of conditionality is of significant importance here, i.e., making the development of EU relations with a given country dependent on its compliance with certain principles of Europeanisation)¹⁸. One of the main effects of ad extra Europeanisation in terms of European security is the prevention of international conflicts, solving crises through the implementation of peacekeeping missions and the pacification of situations in destabilised regions¹⁹. Such Europeanisation helps to implement the liberal, pacifist foreign policy of the European Union²⁰.

It should be highlighted that there is also ad intra Europeanisation, not yet adequately studied, in which the subject of the research is the influence of the international environment on integration processes within the European Union²¹. It is essential to take this factor into account because, as J. Ruskowski points out, Europeanisation means an “interaction of the EU with its internal and external environment”²².

The Europeanisation of foreign policy denotes a process in which we observe changes in the foreign policy of states resulting from the processes taking place as part of European integration. To identify these changes, it is necessary, first and foremost, to ascertain how a given country’s foreign policy has changed in general under the influence of its membership in the EU. Secondly, it is essential to determine how this has affected the policy of a given country towards the European Union itself. Thirdly, how does its presence in the EU affect the diplomacy of this state towards other Member States. And finally, what impact does this have on developing the foreign policy of this country towards third countries²³.

17 F. Schimmelfenning, *Europeanisation beyond Europe*, “Living Reviews in European Governance” 2007, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 3-5.

18 A. Cianciara et al., *Europeizacja partii politycznych i grup interesu w wybranych krajach Partnerstwa Wschodniego i kandydujących do Unii Europejskiej*, Warsaw 2015, p. 30.

19 J. Ruskowski, op. cit., p. 195.

20 R. Wong, Ch. Hill (eds.), *National and European foreign policies: Towards Europeanization*, Routledge, New York 2012, p. 8.

21 J. Ruskowski, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

22 Ibid., p. 35.

23 O. Terzi, op. cit., p. 116.

Member States of the European Union should clearly define their international identity in order to be adequately perceived by other EU members and third countries. This requires Member States to clearly define themselves as EU members who, influenced by their presence in this organisation, redefine their particular national interests and goals to be able to constructively cooperate and create positive interactions with other EU countries²⁴. This also means, especially following the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (in the Maastricht Treaty) and granting the European Union the status of an international organisation (in the Lisbon Treaty), that states should limit themselves in formulating their interests, bearing in mind the interests of the entire community.

A. Chryssogelos presents an interesting interpretation of Europeanisation in terms of foreign policy. The author associates this issue with the process of “the de-politicisation of national policymaking via its transference to a supranational setting occupied by political and administrative elite networks”²⁵. This refers to a situation when the elites shaping the foreign policy of a given country notice that they become hostage to the irrational position of a sizeable part of their own society in relation to foreign policy. In such a situation, the best method would be to gradually transfer the problems to be solved at the EU level, which would “cool down” internal political emotions and show that one’s own goals will be achieved more promptly thanks to effective policies at the level of EU institutions.

2. The Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy towards the Republic of North Macedonia

The collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation came as a great surprise to both Greece and the Euro-Atlantic structures. Athens focused their attention on the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, which declared its independence in September 1991 as the Republic of Macedonia. At that time, Greek politicians

24 B. Tonra, *The Europeanisation of National Foreign Policy: Dutch, Danish, and Irish Foreign policies on the EU*, Ashgate, Aldershot 2001.

25 A. Chryssogelos, op. cit., p. 3.

tried to block the recognition of this new state on the international arena, arguing that its emergence could threaten the Balkans' future security. Greece consistently denied the existence of the Macedonian nation and language, claiming that the northern neighbour could not call itself the Republic of Macedonia since this name belongs to the historical heritage of Greece and has nothing in common with the Slavic culture to which the inhabitants of the new state belong²⁶. In addition, Macedonia chose as its emblem the Sun of Vergina, which is the symbol of Greek Macedonia. The first version of the new state's constitution also incorporated a provision on the protection by the Macedonian state of the status and rights of the Macedonians residing in neighbouring countries, which was interpreted by the Greeks as Skopje's desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Greece²⁷. These feelings were magnified by the Greek Orthodox Church and the media, and they were also quickly applied by populist politicians from the ruling New Democracy party, which translated into the adoption of a specific course in foreign policy²⁸. As a result, in December 1991, Greek foreign minister Antonis Samaras declared in the Council of Ministers of the EC that Greece would never accept any country name including the word "Macedonia"²⁹.

Greek politicians tried to impose their policy towards Macedonia in the European Communities, and, at least at the beginning, it worked. In December 1991, Macedonia applied for the recognition of its statehood to the Council of Ministers of the EC, which, however, due to Greece's opposition, postponed its decision in time. Also in bilateral relations, no EC Member State recognised Macedonia's sovereignty, sympathising with the Greek position at that time. Athens also tried to obstruct the admission of its northern neighbour to the United Nations³⁰, however, Macedonia's lack of a stable internation-

26 S.L. Szczesio, *The policy of the George H.W. Bush's administration toward Macedonia*, "Politeja" 2014, no. 4.

27 D.A. Floudas, *A name for a conflict or a conflict for a name? An analysis of Greece's dispute with FYROM*, "Journal of Political and Military Sociology" 1996, vol. 24 (Winter), pp. 298-304.

28 D. Mitropoulos, *Greek foreign policy and mass media: Subordination, emancipation, indifference*, [in:] P. Tsakonas (ed.), *Contemporary Greek foreign policy*, Sideris, Athens 2003.

29 D.A. Floudas, op. cit., pp. 293-294.

30 K. Koźbiał, *The Greek-Macedonian conflict and its impact on the European integration process in the Balkans*, "Visnyk of the Lviv University. Series International Relations" 2020, issue 48, p. 57.

al position and the risk of another conflict in the Balkans caused the UN Security Council to recommend admitting it to the UN under the technical name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 1993³¹. The UN decision enabled the process of recognition and establishing diplomatic relations with other states and organisations. In December 1993, FYROM was recognised by some EU states, and, in February 1994, it was recognised by the US³².

All this resulted in a gradual change in the position of European states regarding the international recognition of FYROM, even more so since there was the risk of an outbreak of a bloody conflict involving this country³³. European partners increasingly distanced themselves from Greece's position, believing that its policy towards Skopje could lead to dangerous consequences for the entire European Union. Athens' rigid and uncompromising policy has led to Greece's self-isolation on the international arena, and thus to a decline in its role and position as a stable and predictable partner within the EU and, at the same time, a leader in the Balkans.

When, in October 1993, a new Greek government led by PASOK party leader Andreas Papandreou, was formed, the Macedonian issue became even more politicised. Greece escalated its dispute with Macedonia by imposing a trade embargo on the country in order to force the government in Skopje to accept Greek terms of negotiations³⁴. This step was negatively assessed by other Member States as well as the US³⁵. This caused the international situation of Greece to deteriorate and the politicians of the ruling PASOK party became increasingly aware of the need to redefine their foreign policy. Their statements

31 P. Sioussiouras, *The process of recognition of the new independent states of former Yugoslavia by the European Community: The case of former Socialist Republic of Macedonia*, "Journal of Political and Military Sociology" 2014, no. 1, p. 12.

32 J. Paquin, *Managing controversy: U.S. stability seeking and the birth of the Macedonian State*, "Foreign Policy Analysis" 2008, no. 4, pp. 447-448.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 447.

34 Th. Veremis, *Greece and the Balkans in the post-Cold War era*, [in:] V. Cofoudakis, H.J. Psomiades, A. Gerylomatos (eds.), *Greece and New Balkans. Challenges and Opportunities*, Pella, New York 1999, pp. 44-45.

35 Th. Dokos, *Greece in a changing strategic settings*, [in:] Th.A. Couloumbis, Th. Kariotis, F. Nellou (eds.), *Greece in the Twentieth Century*, Frank Cass, London–New York 2003, p. 52; E. Kofos, *Greece's Macedonian adventure: The controversy over FYROM's independence and recognition*, [in:] V. Cofoudakis, H.J. Psomiades, A. Gerylomatos (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 380-381.

began to include arguments that the nationalist approach in the current policy should be replaced with a more flexible and realistic one³⁶.

As a result, in September 1995, the Interim Accord between Athens and Skopje was signed in New York, lifting the embargo and enabling the establishment of proper relations with the government of Skopje. Under the agreement, the Republic of Macedonia abandoned the image of the Vergina Sun in its emblem and removed irredentist provisions from its constitution. Both countries reaffirmed the integrity and inviolability of their borders. Macedonia also committed not to use symbols belonging to the cultural heritage of Greece, and Greece, in turn, declared that it would not hinder the endeavours of its neighbour, under the name FYROM, from joining international organisations.

Greek politicians finally realised that it was in their best interest to support the statehood of their Macedonian neighbour, as weakening the government in Skopje and keeping their country in a state of both international uncertainty and fragile territorial integrity may pose a threat to Greece's security. The changes that took place in Greek foreign policy also resulted from Costas Simitis, the new PASOK leader, who assumed power in 1995. He decided to put an end to the current policy associated with nationalism and populism and the perception of the international environment as a threat³⁷. Greece was supposed to be a stable, predictable country that based its presence in the Balkans on European Union membership³⁸. The government in Athens was ambitiously committed to promoting peace and stability in a Balkans underpinned by the guarantee of existing borders and constitutional order in the countries of the region as well as supporting multilateral cooperation. This shift in Greek policy was to end its image as a trouble-making Balkan country and transform it into a Europeanised, predictable state that contributes to solving international problems. Athens also began to strive for the image of the most effective advocate of the integration of the Balkan states with the European Union³⁹.

36 F. Stephen Larrabee, *Greek security concerns in the Balkans*, [in:] V. Cofoudakis, H.J. Psomiades, A. Gerylomatos (eds.), op. cit., p. 323.

37 D. Keridis, *Greece and the Balkans: From Stabilization to Growth*, Hellenic Studies Unit at Concordia University in Montreal, 2006.

38 Th. Dokos, op. cit., p. 51.

39 S.V. Papacosma, *NATO, Greece, and the Balkans in the post-Cold War era*, [in:] V. Cofoudakis, H.J. Psomiades, A. Gerylomatos (eds.), op. cit., pp. 60-61.

The culmination of Greece's role and position in the region was reached in 2003, when, during its EU presidency, the first summit between the European Union and the countries of the Western Balkans was organised in Thessaloniki⁴⁰. An important declaration was adopted at the summit, in which it was confirmed that the future of the Western Balkan countries lies in European Union membership. According to R. Panagiotou, the Greek presidency managed to place the European future of the Balkans on the main agenda of EU policy and thus confirm the role of Greece as the leader of the Balkan states and the main advocate of the European ambitions of the countries of this region⁴¹. Both Brussels and Athens perceived Greece as a bridge between the EU and the Western Balkans and as a model for carrying out reforms that would prepare countries interested in EU membership⁴².

The name of the Macedonian state, however, remained a problem. Greek politicians hoped that their role as an advocate of Skopje's Euro-Atlantic ambitions would be appreciated, and, thus, that the dispute over the name of this country would be resolved in line with Greece's demands. It turned out, however, that since 2004 significantly more countries began to recognise the country under the name of the Republic of Macedonia. The example was set by the United States and was followed by a number of other countries, including EU Member States. Once again the Greeks felt betrayed by their allies, which caused the reappearance of nationalist slogans⁴³. The same happened in Macedonia, when, in 2006, Prime Minister Gruevski took power. Nationalist tendencies strengthened as a result, and the policy of referring to Antiquity in search of Macedonian identity was revived, which violated the provisions of the Interim Accord of 1995.

As a result, in 2007, Greece started warning Skopje that FYROM's accession process to NATO and the EU would be dependent on resolv-

40 A. Adamczyk, *Prospects for extending the European Union to the countries of the Western Balkans*, "Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs" 2018, no. 4, pp. 125-148.

41 R. Panagiotou, *Greece's EU Presidency and the Challenge of Western Balkan enlargement policies in light of the crisis*, "Centre for Southeast European Studies Working Paper" 2015, no. 12, p. 5.

42 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

43 Y. Kechagiaras, *Why Did Greece Block the Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia? An analysis of Greek Foreign Policy Behaviour Shifts*, "GreeSE Paper" 2012, no. 58, Hellenic Observatory Papers on Greece and Southeast Europe LSE, pp. 16-17.

ing the country's name dispute⁴⁴. A crucial event was the veto by the Karamanlis government of FYROM's invitation to join NATO at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest⁴⁵. It also meant blocking the country's membership of the European Union in the future, which recognised the need to resolve this dispute as one of the prerequisites for accession⁴⁶. This, in turn, translated into the growth of nationalism and populism in Macedonia and the abandonment of the reforms required as part of the process of integration with the EU⁴⁷. Gruevski's government began to drift towards authoritarianism, violating the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

When, in October 2009, the PASOK party returned to power in the Greek government, George Papandreou became the new Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. He considered strengthening relations with the Balkan states as one of the priorities of Greek diplomacy, including solving the problem of the name for FYROM⁴⁸. He announced the "Agenda 2014", which assumed that by the next Greek EU Presidency in 2014 the process of accession negotiations of all the countries of the region with the European Union would have been completed. It was supposed to be a symbolic gesture of reconciliation between the Balkan states as well as the culmination of the peace process on the 100th anniversary of the commencement of World War I, which had broken out in the Balkans. The Greek Prime Minister hoped that by 2018 at the latest, all countries of this region would have joined the EU – for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. These ambitious plans, however, collided with harsh realities and did not stand the test of time. The main reason for this was the huge financial and economic crisis that hit Greece in 2009. The government in Athens struggled with an economic downturn for the following years and was unable to implement an effective foreign policy.

44 Ibid., pp. 13-14.

45 A. Chryssogelos, op. cit., p. 9.

46 A. Adamczyk, M. Karadzowski, *Wyzwanie dla tożsamości międzynarodowej Macedonii – grecko-macedoński spór o nazwę państwa*, "Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej" 2019, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 333-350.

47 B. Vankovska, *The Prespa Agreement, Ethnicity and Nationality*, "Yearbook of the Faculty of Philosophy" 2019, p. 2, https://www.academia.edu/39390181/THE_PRESPA_AGREEMENT_ETHNICITY_AND_NATIONALITY [11.07.2023].

48 J. Bastian, *Greece in Southeast Europe. Political opportunities and economic challenge*, International Policy Analysis Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010, p. 2.

An important event in developing Greek policy towards FYROM was the victory of the SYRIZA party in the parliamentary elections held in Greece in 2015. The new coalition government was led by Alexis Tsipras. Nicos Kotzias, former adviser to George Papandreou, became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Tsipras' ambition was to eradicate Greece's stigma as a "troublemaker" in the European Union and NATO⁴⁹, therefore, in 2015, the new government resumed negotiations with FYROM regarding its name. The talks, mediated by an American diplomat, Mathew Nimetz, resulted in the signing of an agreement in Prespa on 17 June 2018, which put an end to a long-standing dispute between the two neighbouring countries and established the name of North Macedonia⁵⁰. The new name was to emphasise the geographical distinctiveness of this country from Greek Macedonia, and the Greeks recognised the identity of the Macedonians and the Macedonian language as derived from the Slavic family. The agreement made it clear that the attributes associated with North Macedonia's statehood had nothing in common with the historical and cultural heritage of Greek Macedonia.

The SYRIZA party, however, paid a political price for its bold and sensible foreign policy by losing the 2019 parliamentary elections. The new prime minister, Kiriakos Mitsotakis, the leader of the New Democracy party, who criticised the decision of his predecessor while in opposition, gained, however, a fairly clear international situation as a legacy of Tsipras. This referred in particular to the Prespa Agreement, which resolved the troublesome diplomatic situation of Greece in the international arena, especially within the EU. Greece was able to finally rebuild and regain the image of a Europeanised, predictable, and stable state. What is more, Athens' reconsidered position made it possible for the Republic of North Macedonia to fulfil its Euro-Atlantic aspirations by joining NATO in 2020 and initiating accession negotiations with the EU in 2022.

The Greek-Macedonian dispute over the name of the country has shown that Greece's involvement in bilateral disputes prevented it

49 A. Chrysogelos, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

50 I. Armakolas et al., *North Macedonia: What's next?*, Open Society Foundation, European Policy Institute, 2019.

from both playing the role of the leader in the Balkans and reinforcing the image of a Europeanised country. The Greek political elites were right in recognising that the best method to solve the issues of a difficult neighbourhood was a policy of supporting the European ambitions of their Balkan neighbours. They saw the dangers of promoting nationalist narratives and were aware that the European Union was the only structure that could solve the problems of the Western Balkans countries by accepting them as its members. The vision of EU accession has been the best, and a widely recognised, way of mitigating international conflicts.

Conclusions

Following the bloody breakup of the Yugoslav Federation, the Balkans were composed of separate political entities characterised by nationalist goals and hostile relations towards one another. It was somewhat reminiscent of Western Europe in the period prior to the European integration processes, which was able to overcome mutual animosities and ensure a completely new quality in mutual relations underpinned by the Europeanisation processes. Nowadays, it is the Western Balkans' turn, which undoubtedly constitutes a great challenge for the European Union as its security is dependent on full integration with this region. At the same time, Member States, in particular those bordering the Western Balkans, need to develop a suitable foreign policy since it is some form of a test of their Europeanisation, i.e., a review of their application of European values and standards in practice.

Greece was subjected to a Europeanisation test in relation to its policy towards North Macedonia. Analysing the evolution of this policy, it should be emphasised that it resembles a sinusoid. At certain stages, we could observe an increase in the level of Europeanization and an improvement in relations between Athens and Skopje, and in certain periods we could see an appeal to nationalism (in both countries) and a deterioration of bilateral relations.

In summary, it can be said that the Europeanisation of Greek foreign policy towards North Macedonia, which is the title of this article, was mainly, although not exclusively, achieved through processes which at the beginning of this paper were referred to as top-down Europeanisation. "Top-down" or "downloading" Europeanisation means

transferring European values and standards from the level of the European Union to a given Member State, in this case, Greece. It seems that the pressure exerted by the EU institutions and its Member States on the Greek political elites was primarily responsible for their attitude change to one more aligned with the spirit of Europeanisation. This applied to a much lesser extent, however, to Greek society, although there is no doubt that the processes of its Europeanisation also took place. In this context, it is worth recalling the previously cited analysis by the Greek researcher A. Chrysogelos, who, having presumably based the experience on his country, emphasised that a good method to sever from the irrational position of the society of a given country on the problems of its foreign policy is for the government to transfer them to the EU level, meaning to apply Europeanisation in practice. This was probably the case with the Greek-Macedonian dispute, and it is shameful that the process of reconciliation took both neighbours as long as it did, during which the Greeks, in particular, wasted far too much time developing their European mindset.

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Grzegorz Tutak*, Jan Gondek**

The securitization of immigration in Poland. Social and political contexts

Sekurytyzacja imigracji w Polsce. Kontekst społeczny i polityczny

Abstract: Currently, immigration issues occupy an important place in the debate on the future of Europe. One of the central themes of this debate is the issue of security. In spite of the functioning of supranational integration structures, individual states still remain a fundamental factor in shaping migration. In many cases, the issue of immigration is subjected to the process of securitization, framing immigration as a threat. It is the speech act that is important in this respect, being a kind of securitizing tool. Since 2015, one can notice elements indicating that the process of securitization of immigration has been present in Poland, too, which, among other things, is a consequence of the change of the ruling party, the immigration crisis that has taken place in Europe, and the migration situation on Poland's eastern border. The article presents the factors that influence the process of immigration securitization. Additionally, it includes numerous statements from Polish politicians securitizing the problem of immigrants as well as the results of social surveys on attitudes towards immigration. The analysis of the collected material leads to the conclusion that the securitisation of immigration in Poland is not a completed process and that this process concerns a geographically defined group of immigrants.

Keywords: immigration, securitization, immigration policy, security

Streszczenie: Współcześnie problematyka imigracyjna zajmuje istotne miejsce w debacie nad przyszłością Europy. Jednym z zasadniczych tematów wspomnianej debaty jest zagadnienie bezpieczeństwa. Pomimo funkcjonowania ponadnarodowych struktur integracyjnych państwa pozostają nadal zasadniczym podmiotem kształtowania migracji. W wielu przypadkach kwestia imigracji zostaje poddana procesowi sekurytyzacji, ujmującej imigrację jako zagrożenie. Istotny w tym zakresie jest akt mowy jako swoiste narzędzie sekurytyzujące. Również w Polsce od 2015 roku można zauważyć elementy świadczące o procesie sekurytyzacji imigracji, który jest następstwem m.in. zmiany partii rządzącej, kryzysu imigracyjnego, jaki miał miejsce w Europie, oraz sytuacji migracyjnej na wschodniej granicy Polski. W artykule przedstawiono czynniki

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mające wpływ na proces sekurytyzacji imigracji. Przedstawiono liczne wypowiedzi polskich polityków, którzy poddają sekurytyzacji problem imigrantów. Przedstawiono także wyniki badań opinii społecznej w zakresie postaw wobec imigracji. Analiza zebranego materiału prowadzi do wniosku, że sekurytyzacja imigracji w Polsce nie jest procesem zakończonym, a proces ten dotyczy określonej geograficznie grupy imigrantów.

Słowa kluczowe: imigracja, sekurytyzacja, polityka imigracyjna, bezpieczeństwo

Introduction

Poland was a country of emigration for a long time. Several reasons had an impact on this, one of which was the fact that after World War II, Poland remained a communist country for several decades. It was difficult for many citizens to go abroad, for others, it was completely impossible. The obstacles were often economic and even more often political. Belonging to the Eastern Bloc, Poland was also not a direction of migration for citizens of Western European countries and this only began to change in Poland after 1989, when the borders began to be reopened, thus making it possible for all those who wanted to migrate to do so.

For decades, a negative migration balance was a feature of population movements in Poland. In practice, this meant that more people left than entered the country. Importantly, Poland has been characterised by a positive migration balance since 2016.

Poland has not experienced mass immigration so far. It is only the events on the Polish-Belarusian border initiated in 2021 and the Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2022 that have resulted in migration pressure into Poland. Nevertheless, Poland is naturally becoming a more attractive destination for migrants.

The aim of this study is to identify factors relevant to the securitisation of immigration issues in Poland. Although, as noted earlier, changes in migration flows in Poland began after 1989, the particular area of interest for consideration will be the years following 2015. During this time, Europe experienced an immigration crisis. Moreover, the issue of immigration and its significance for security was widely discussed in Europe and Poland. This was also the year when the political party in power changed, with the Law and Justice Party winning the parliamentary elections, a party that links the issue of immigration with security threats. Furthermore, since 2021, Poland's eastern border has been characterised by immigration pressure linked to the

Polish-Belarusian border and hybrid actions as well as pressure caused by the war in Ukraine.

This article addresses the issue of the securitisation of immigration in Poland in social and political terms. Therefore, the authors will refer to the polls published by the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) in their considerations to show the attitude of Poles towards the issue of immigration and link it with security, to present the changes in attitudes towards immigrants and the factors influencing these attitudes. The second, political aspect of the deliberations will be devoted to the political discourse influencing the shape of Poland's immigration policy, as a form of state concept towards the issue in question.

1 Immigration versus state security

● Security as both a status and a process occupies an important place in the functioning of states. It influences political decisions and repeatedly constitutes the point of reference. It might serve as an excuse for taking actions or it might be a cause of the actions. Paul D. Williams claimed that the concept of security is present in contemporary social communication around the world. It is used in the speeches of politicians and authorities on the television and radio news. Further, he points out that the images broadcast on television or radio show either the presence of security or its absence¹. As a sign of human activity, transnational immigration carries a lot of positive and negative effects; on account of the complexity, dispersed nature, and inner contradiction, transnational migrations affect a nation's security in different ways than just threats². What is more, we consider immigration either as a threat or an opportunity according to our individual beliefs. It is worth emphasising that perceiving immigration through the prism of security has a political, social, and demographic character and is subjective to a large degree. Furthermore, it depends on the perspective of specific kinds of concerns and the location of

1 *Badania bezpieczeństwa. Wprowadzenie*, [in:] P.D. Williams (ed.), *Studia bezpieczeństwa*, translated by W. Janicki, Cracow 2012, p. 1.

2 F.B. Adamson, *Crossing borders: International migration and national security*, "International Security" 2006, vol. 31, no. 1, p. 197.

countries which can be in the role of sender, transmitter, or receiver. Lastly, it can be perceived through the prism of social, demographic, and economic consequences³.

As James F. Hollifield indicates, modern states face the dilemma of a “liberal paradox”. The paradox here is that, on the one hand, international economic involvement pushes states towards greater openness of borders, while the international state system and political forces call for greater closure of borders⁴. The importance of immigration for security stems from the fact that this phenomenon afflicts the existential issue of the state; security, as the primary value, should be provided by the state to every citizen. In this context, resulting from the processes of the globalization of migration, fears of immigration stem from fears of state sovereignty, citizenship, and national identity. The state’s ability or inability to control its borders, and thus shape its population in a specific way, is a sine qua non for sovereignty⁵. A similar opinion is expressed by Gary Freeman, who claims that immigration causes a change in the traditional concept of sovereignty, nationalism, and citizenship, and the current understanding of these concepts is unsustainable⁶. The issue of combining immigration with security is the result of a number of factors and events that directly affected the countries of immigration or are shaped by media messages. It is worth emphasising that these fears also result from a sense of uncertainty over the unknown. These relationships gained importance after 11 September 2001, when there were terrorist attacks in the United States of America. Also in Europe, acts of terror committed by foreigners occurred including the attacks in Madrid on 11 March 2004, the attacks in London on 22 May 2013, and finally, the acts of terrorism in Paris on 13 November 2015. Marta Jaroszewicz rightly notes that social concerns about security do not automatically make them

- 3 M. Szulecka, *Migracje jako źródło wybranych zagrożeń porządku prawnego i publicznego. Wnioski z badań jakościowych*, [in:] W. Klaus, K. Laskowska, I. Rzeplińska (eds.), *Przestępczość cudzoziemców – aspekty prawne, kryminologiczne i praktyczne*, Warsaw 2017, pp. 427-428.
- 4 J.F. Hollifield, *The emerging migration state*, “The International Migration Review” 2004, vol. 38, no. 3, p. 886; idem, *Immigrants, markets and states. The political economy in post-war Europe*, Cambridge 1992, pp. 5-19.
- 5 J.F. Hollifield, D. Jacobson, *Migration and the state*, [in:] G. Ritzer (ed.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Globalization*, Chichester, West Sussex, Malden 2012, pp. 1-2.
- 6 G.P. Freeman, *Immigration as a source of political discontent and frustration in Western democracies*, “Studies in Comparative International Development” 1997, no. 3, p. 48.

empirically proven, further noting that the links between migration and terrorism are the least proven; it is difficult to prove that the fact of origin was the decisive factor in committing an act of terrorism⁷. Despite this, these attacks showed the scale and potential of threats related to the movement of people and significantly influenced the nature of the public and political debate on migration⁸.

Nowadays, combining immigration with security can be reduced to three basic groups of threats of varying nature: cultural, socio-economic, and political. Often, in the public discourse, arguments are raised that indicate a threat to security in many aspects of the functioning of the state. These include the following arguments⁹:

- Immigrants as a threat to the social welfare system, an excessive burden and cost for the host country;
- Immigrants as a threat to increasing unemployment among native workers;
- The consequence of immigration is the segmentation of the labour market, as individual occupations are attributed to immigrants;
- Growth of the “grey zone of employment”;
- A threat to national identity and cohesion;
- Development of racist, xenophobic, and nationalist attitudes leading to tensions between immigrants and the host society;
- A threat to the family traditions of the host society;
- Epidemiological threats, development of diseases not yet present in a given country;
- The growth of immigrant clusters, the formation of “ghettos”, the transfer of problems from places of origin to the current place of stay;
- Social polarization, antagonism of social groups;
- Increase in crime and pathological phenomena.

7 M. Jaroszewicz, *Migracje i bezpieczeństwo*, [in:] M. Lesińska, M. Okólski (eds.), *25 wykładów o migracjach*, Warsaw 2018, p. 282.

8 R. Raczyński, *Wpływ migracji międzynarodowych na bezpieczeństwo wewnętrzne państwa*, “Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka” 2015, no. 2, p. 14.

9 See S. Castles, M.J. Miller, *Migracje we współczesnym świecie*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 256-271; P. Lubiewski, *Nielegalna imigracja. Zagrożenia bezpieczeństwa*, Szczytno 2016, pp. 80-93; E. Guild, J. van Selm (eds.), *International migration and security. Opportunities and challenges*, New York 2005, p. 31.

The above-mentioned situations indicate that in many cases the presence of immigrants is a threat, in other words, there is an increased probability of negative consequences caused by the presence of foreigners. As a consequence, there is a decrease in security, which may be caused by the deliberate action of the indicated group or by the increasing population of immigrants affecting changes in the social structure of the host country.

2. The process of securitization

As already mentioned, the objective scope of the concept of security has been significantly expanded and today covers virtually every area of the functioning of the state and society. Today, many phenomena are analysed in terms of potential threats and undermining the state of security. One such tool is the securitization theory, which originated in the so-called Copenhagen School. It is one of the most widespread theories of security studies and, because of it, various phenomena and processes began to be considered in terms of security, including the issue of immigration. Securitization theory is used in two main areas – the debate on security and the analysis of the international environment. In other words, this theory can be analysed from two perspectives. The first – theoretical, as a concept of security research, and the second – practical, as a political tool¹⁰.

According to Rita Tuareck, securitization is a process in which the act of speech plays an important role, where defining a given problem as a threat to security implies taking extraordinary measures. The justification for such actions is precisely indicating a given problem as a threat. An important field of such activity is the political ground in which political decisions are made. The process of securitization, therefore, refers to the political ground in which a specific vision of politics is created, previously shaped by mutual relations between the state and society in the context of security¹¹. In their book, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, securitization theorists Barry Buzan,

10 Ł. Fijałkowski, *Teoria sekurytyzacji i konstruowanie bezpieczeństwa*, "Przegląd Strategiczny" 2012, no. 1, p. 150.

11 R. Taureck, *Securitization theory and securitization studies*, "Journal of International Relations and Development" 2006, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 54-55.

Ole Wæver, and Jaap De Wilde state that considering an issue as an existential threat provides the opportunity to make further decisions in terms of counteracting the problem. Moreover, they believe that security is a specific practice, which is formed by presenting an issue as a threat, and not necessarily by a real threat¹². The securitization process assumes that there are at least two sides. The first is the entity responsible for presenting the issue as an existential threat, and the second is the side at risk¹³.

The securitization process itself consists of three elements: a reference object, a securitization entity, and functional objects that are important for the perception of security¹⁴. The object of securitization can be sovereignty, territory, or identity. A given entity presents the issue as an existential threat, and the recipient of, for example, a group of interests or society, reacts to it in a positive or negative way.

Firstly, securitization pervades policy development and implementation. Secondly, it is mobilised through political discourse that exaggerates the risks of migration and asylum and, moreover, increases or decreases loyalty to political parties. Thirdly, securitization constructs migration as a security problem and proposes security-based solutions as the only viable remedy¹⁵.

It is worth noting that the definition of threats by the state and society does not have to be the same. However, it is the state and political elites that make a significant contribution to formulating the topic in terms of security¹⁶. The state remains the most important securitizer; it has the legitimacy to act when a given issue is considered a threat. Non-state actors are also gaining importance as securitizing entities, among whom we can point out all kinds of media – radio, press, television, and social media. This group also includes non-governmental organisations and social and occupational groups. The success of the securitization process depends to a large extent on the possibilities and means at the disposal of the securitizing entity. An impor-

12 B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. De Wilde, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, Boulder 1998, p. 24.

13 W. Kostecki, *Europe after the Cold War. The security complex theory*, Warsaw 1996, p. 48.

14 B. Buzan, O. Wæver, J. De Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

15 A. Gerard, *The securitization of migration and refugee women*, London–New York 2014, p. 39.

16 A.W. Ziętek, *Sekurytyzacja migracji w bezpieczeństwie kulturowym Europy*, "Teki Komisji Politologii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych" 2017, vol. 12, no. 3, p. 34.

tant element is also the issue, problem, or phenomenon that is being securitized and the context in which it arises. Appropriate justification for the securitization of a given phenomenon makes it possible to undertake extraordinary actions that would not be possible under normal circumstances. It is worth noting that the fact that the securitizing entity takes up the issue does not mean that the said problem is automatically included in the security context. The success of the discussed process depends on the recipients' acceptance, in other words, on adopting an attitude and belief that a given phenomenon poses a threat to security.

3. The securitization of immigration in Poland

As already indicated, Poland is increasingly becoming a destination for immigration. Along with the increased population movements, the issue of immigration has become an element of the public debate. Therefore, the question arises – since when have we been talking about the securitization of immigration in Poland? According to the authors, the first event that caused a stir in Poland and Europe was the immigration crisis that began in 2015. The second, in turn, was the change of the ruling party, which resulted in the creation of a new government that refers in its activities to multidimensional security issues. The third factor was the events on the Polish-Belarusian border, which are essentially hybrid activities of the Russian Federation with the support of the Belarusian regime of Alyaksandr Lukashenko. These factors have created a previously absent opportunity to shape the image of immigration through the prism of a threat to state security.

In 2015, the debate in Europe, especially in the European Union, focused on the problem of illegal immigration. More than a million immigrants, most of them from the Middle East, arrived at the borders of Europe at that time. Mass immigration forced extraordinary steps to be taken to eliminate the negative consequences of illegal immigration. Despite the development of the EU's common immigration policy, the crisis affecting the Member States revealed systemic inef-

iciency and a crisis of the values of the Community itself¹⁷. At that time, the aforementioned differences specified the migration “fronts” of the Member States. On the one hand, there were the members of the so-called old Union calling for the admission of immigrants, while on the other hand, some countries remained opposed to mass immigration and community mechanisms to solve the problem at the time¹⁸. Poland should be included in the second category of countries opposing the retreat. Initially, the Polish government agreed to accept a specific group of immigrants, however, after the parliamentary elections, right-wing parties won the majority of parliamentary seats, which changed the approach to this issue. Already during the election campaigns, the issue of immigration was being widely commented on. The consequence of this change was a change in the perception of the immigration issue, and thus the relocation of immigrants, and the approach to providing assistance in this regard.

The victory of the Law and Justice party can be regarded as a symbolic beginning of the immigration securitization process. This party, together with members of the United Right, created a government whose rhetoric around the issue of immigration focused on security threats resulting from immigration movements. The new Prime Minister, Beata Szydło, initially announced that the Polish government would honour the EU’s decisions on immigrants, but that the safety of Poles would be the most important aspect. Despite the above-mentioned assurances, this did not happen and ultimately Poland was one of the few Member States that did not accept immigrants under the forced relocation system. Factors of an internal and external nature had an impact on the change in attitude. An example is the terrorist attacks in January 2016 in Paris, and in Brussels in March of the same year. At that time, Prime Minister Szydło stated that Poland would not accept immigrants because there was a fear that terrorists and supporters of the Islamic State would end up in Poland among them¹⁹. Then, the

17 G. Tutak, *Polityka migracyjna Polski wobec europejskiego kryzysu migracyjnego*, “Świat Idei i Polityki” 2017, no. 17, p. 461.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 462.

19 Szydło usztywnia stanowisko. Miało być 100 uchodźców, nie będzie żadnego, 24 March 2016, <https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/polityka/artykuly/516410,beata-szydlo-rzad-pis-uchodzczy-imi-granci-stanowisko-zamachy-bruksela-belgia.html> [2.10.2022].

head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration, Mariusz Błaszczak, spoke in a similar tone. On the issue of forced relocation, he stated: “We will not accept anyone who would pose a threat to security. There are no people at the moment that we can say do not threaten security (...) about whom we would be 100 per cent sure that they do not threaten security. Unfortunately, many of these people used false documents, so we will not do anything that would threaten the security of Poland and Poles”²⁰.

Another threat from immigrants was pointed out by Jarosław Kaczyński, the president of the Law and Justice party. During one of the election meetings, he pointed to the threat of the emergence of new, so far absent diseases and parasites carried by immigrants²¹. In turn, in 2017, during a parliamentary debate, Prime Minister Beata Szydło, referring to the attacks in Manchester, pointed to attempts to “assault civilization” and its consequences for future generations. As Agata Ziętek notes, this was an indirect indication and a combination of the issues of immigration, culture, and security²². Further, in 2019, Zbigniew Ziobro, Minister of Justice and Prosecutor General, opening the conference “Migration and integration. The problem of the impact of migration on the increase in crime” at the Institute of Justice, stated that there are many negative consequences of opening the state to immigration. In his speech, he cited the example of the events of New Year’s Eve in Cologne, where there were numerous rapes of women by immigrants²³.

From the perspective of securitization, an important factor that strengthened the narrative of the threat from immigrants was the events on the Polish-Belarusian border at the end of 2021. The migration pressure at the border was considered a hybrid activity, inspired and fuelled by the Russian Federation.

20 Szef MSWiA o uchodźcach: nie przyjmimy nikogo, kto zagrażałby bezpieczeństwu, 9 May 2016, <https://polskieradio24.pl/5/3/Artykul/1617294,Szef-MSWiA-o-uchodzcach-nie-pryjmiemy-nikogo-kto-zagrazalby-bezpieczenstwu> [2.10.2022].

21 Kaczyński: Pasożyty i pierwotniaki w organizmach uchodźców groźne dla Polaków, 13 October 2015, <https://www.newsweek.pl/polska/jaroslaw-kaczynski-o-uchodzcach/89mwbx3> [2.10.2022].

22 A.W. Ziętek, op. cit., p. 34.

23 M. Nałęcz, Zbigniew Ziobro o imigrantach: nie możemy do tego podchodzić na hurra, jak PO, 9 October 2019, <https://www.o2.pl/informacje/zbigniew-ziobro-o-imigrantach-nie-mozemy-do-tego-podchodzic-na-hurra-jak-po-6433233533953665a> [4.10.2022].

In the context of the migration crisis on the Polish-Belarusian border, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki pointed out that the Polish government would do everything to prevent mass immigration, focusing on the threat posed by illegal immigration not only for Poland but also for the entire European Union. Elsewhere, in the context of the described situation, he indicated that the government's priority would be the security of Polish citizens while claiming that "The border of the Polish state is not just a line on the map. Generations of Poles shed their blood abroad. This border is sacred. In the face of a threat, guarding the borders should be something absolutely obvious and based on the consensus of all political forces"²⁴. The quoted statement not only points to the threat of illegal immigration but also refers to historically important values for Poles such as the inviolability of borders. It is a kind of reference to a sense of national identity.

In the debate on immigration, there are many other statements suggesting that immigration is a multidimensional threat. According to politicians who stigmatize immigration, it has a negative impact on national identity, poses a threat to native culture, values, the traditional family model, and the development of crime. The rhetoric conducted, therefore, refers to the most important values professed by Poles. It is worth noting that the issue of immigration after 2015 is present in the public debate with varying intensity. This is usually the result of the current domestic and international situation. Immigration has become more than just a social issue, it is also now a political issue and has become an element of electoral strategy, not only during the election campaign but also in everyday rhetoric

As mentioned, the securitization process can be initiated by various entities. In the case of Poland, the entities that reinforce the negative image of immigration include the right-wing media. Media that, by means of audio-visual messages, intensify the sense of fear and threat in society. Stereotypes and prejudices are other factors conducive to considering immigration from the perspective of a threat.

24 *Morawiecki: Granica państwa jest świętością, za którą przelewały krew pokolenia Polaków*, 8 November 2021, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/kraj/artykuly/8287642,morawiecki-polska-granica-imigranci.html> [4.10.2022].

The success of the securitization process depends on the acceptance, i.e., the analysis of a given phenomenon through the prism of a threat. In the process understood in this way, when the securitizing entity is the state, society plays an important role. Society as the sovereign of power, the electorate, and the potential beneficiary of securitization messages. The example of the immigration crisis in Europe in 2015 showed that the protection of human life in the humanitarian aspect and the securitization logic of deterring immigrants are mutually reinforcing in the political and social discourse. The consequence of such a relationship is the humane securitization of borders, where protection of human rights is granted only to a selected category of immigrants, while the others are “animalized” in the whole process²⁵.

Poland is an ethnically homogeneous country that is only now facing large-scale immigration. Previous attitudes towards immigrants and refugees have developed on the basis of limited contact with these groups²⁶. Social attitudes were shaped mainly by media messages, often only on the occasion of terrorist attacks or emergency situations. Moreover, they were formed by political statements, interest groups, and non-governmental organisations. It is worth mentioning that often the messages coming from the various entities differed dramatically. The fear of strangers increased the fear of immigration. After 2015, especially in the context of the migration crisis in Europe, the ruling party in Poland created the image of a refugee as a total threat, with multidimensional negative consequences²⁷.

In Poland, the preferences of Poles in terms of immigration and refugees are examined by the Centre for Public Opinion Research. This part of the article will present changes in the attitudes of Polish citizens towards immigration and exile.

Poles' views on the attitude towards refugees have been studied since 2004. As the results of the research show, until 2015 there were no significant changes in the analysed issue. Over the period of 11 years,

25 N. Vaughan-Williams, *We are not animals! Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe*, "Political Geography" 2015, vol. 45, p. 4.

26 K. Pędziwiatr, *Islamophobia in Poland. National Report 2016*, [in:] E. Bayrakli, F. Hafeza (eds.), *European Islamophobia Report 2016*, Istanbul 2017, p. 418.

27 A. Legut, K. Pędziwiatr, *Sekurytyzacja migracji w polityce polskiej a zmiana postaw Polaków wobec muzułmanów*, [in:] R. Jończy (ed.), *Sami swoi? Wielokulturowość we współczesnej Europie*, Gliwice–Opole 2018, p. 46.

almost 75% of Poles believed that Poland should accept refugees²⁸. In one survey conducted in 2015, respondents indicated the need to help refugees, but only 14% agreed to their settlement in Poland. It is worth mentioning that Poles were much more favourable towards helping Ukrainians as refugees than the citizens of Middle Eastern and African countries²⁹. In addition to the above-mentioned survey, in 2015, CBOS conducted another survey – Newcomers from near and far, about immigrants in Poland. According to the majority of respondents (66%), the presence of foreigners has a positive impact on culture and the level of tolerance. This opinion is expressed more often by the better-educated of the respondents³⁰. Also indicated by the study, the percentage of people opposed to foreign neighbours has decreased by almost half since the end of the 1990s. It is worth noting that Poles' attitudes towards immigration are geographical in nature, i.e., attitudes towards immigrants depend on their place of origin.

Also in 2016, during the ongoing immigration crisis in Europe, research was conducted on the attitude towards accepting refugees in Poland. In September 2016, 53% of respondents were opposed to accepting people from conflict-affected areas, while 43% were of the opinion that help should be provided in places where refugees come from. It is worth noting that some Poles from this group believe that help should be provided until the situation forcing them to flee ceases to exist – 38%³¹. In 2017, there were 63% of opponents, which is 11 percentage points more than in December 2016. However, 33% were in favour of accepting refugees.

For example, Poles are much more willing to help foreigners who are culturally close. In 2017, as many as 75% opposed the relocation of refugees to Poland from the Middle East and Africa who arrived in the European Union. On the other hand, the attitude towards immigrants from eastern Ukraine, migrating from areas affected by military operations, was generally favourable. Granting them asylum in

28 K. Kowalczyk, *Polacy wobec problemu uchodźstwa*, CBOS, komunikat z badań nr 81/2015, Warsaw 2015, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_081_15.PDF [4.10.2022].

29 Ibid.

30 K. Kowalczyk, *Przybysze z bliska i daleka, czyli o imigrantach w Polsce*, CBOS, komunikat z badań nr 93/2015, Warsaw 2015, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2015/K_093_15.PDF [4.10.2022].

31 B. Badora, *Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców*, CBOS, komunikat z badań nr 169/2016, Warsaw 2016, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2016/K_169_16.PDF [5.10.2022].

Poland was approved by six out of ten respondents – 61%, while almost a third (32%) were against it³².

The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022, has caused changes in the space of interstate relations. The conflict in the immediate vicinity of Poland resulted in taking extraordinary measures to help Ukrainian citizens. In connection with the conflict, 91% of Poles believe that refugees from Ukraine should be accepted, and only 4% are against it³³.

The presented research leads to the conclusion that Poles are much more able to accept immigrants as refugees from areas affected by conflicts and who are culturally close than from distant geographical areas. This relationship translates to immigrants in general. Poles feel much greater reluctance towards immigration from the Middle East and Africa than from Eastern Europe. According to the authors, such a state of affairs may result from stereotypes that have been reinforced and perpetuated by the mass media in the context of the aforementioned immigration from the Middle East. This image is often negative, presented in the context of the Islamization of native culture and values, the feeling of being threatened, and the increased danger of terrorism. The aforementioned reluctance and argumentation of the threat, and thus the acceptance of the securitization process, is characteristic of people with right-wing views.

Conclusions

Although the issue of immigration has become more visible in public discourse in Poland, especially after 2015, it has had varied intensity. The topic usually returns on the occasion of events involving immigrants. It is worth noting that these are often merely negative messages. Terrorist attacks, threats to native culture and values, the immigration policies of Western countries and their negative effects are the most common arguments used to reinforce the securitising message. It is important to note that the process of securitising im-

32 M. Feliksiak, *Stosunek do przyjmowania uchodźców*, CBOS, komunikat z badań nr 163/2017, Warsaw 2017, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2017/K_163_17.PDF [5.10.2022].

33 M. Feliksiak, *Polacy wobec uchodźców z Ukrainy*, CBOS, komunikat z badań nr 62/2022, Warsaw 2022, https://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2022/K_062_22.PDF [5.10.2022].

migration is also based on emotions to some extent, especially those related to fear. A kind of “playing on emotions” may foster the acceptance of arguments of the securitising entity that would not normally be accepted by the recipient.

In Poland, we can currently speak of a certain group of immigrants that are most-criticised, these are the immigrants from Africa and the Middle East. This group will not include immigration from Eastern Europe, e.g., Ukraine. The securitisation of immigration from the Eastern European area would contradict the Eastern dimension of Poland’s post-1989 foreign policy. It is much easier for Poles to accept immigrants from close cultural circles than those from remote latitudes. This is why the authors of this article claim that despite the fact that a securitisation process has begun, it is unfinished. Paradoxically, it must be admitted that the process has been slowed down by the assistance given to refugees from Ukraine, and the rhetorical arguments securitising immigration have been excluded from the official political narrative. Consequently, the securitisation of immigration is only at the initial stage of acceptance primarily by the electorate of the current ruling party.

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Review

Bieber, F. (2020). *Uspon autoritarizma na Zapadnom Balkanu.* Biblioteka XX vek. Florian Bieber. The rise of authoritarianism in the Western Balkans

Over a long period of time, tendencies towards authoritarianism have been visible in many corners of the world, not exclusively in Europe. While this phenomenon is not new, it may exhibit unique characteristics depending on the region in question. This is precisely what becomes the focus of Professor Florian Bieber's book *Uspon autoritarizma na Zapadnom Balkanu. Biblioteka XX vek*. In this monograph, Bieber discusses the problem in the context of the Western Balkan countries, offering a Serbian translation of the previously published English edition, *The rise of authoritarianism in the Western Balkans* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). The author assumes that the turbulent 1990s in the region paved the way for the rise of authoritarianism in this area. He aptly notes that while numerous texts have examined the wars in the Balkans in the last decade of the 20th century, there is a deficit in studies which would explain how the authoritarian elites ascended to power and retained it.

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The book is divided into an introduction, three chapters, and then conclusions with a prologue and an epilogue. The prologue addresses “the Balkan prince”, which is an exceptionally interesting and pertinent reference to Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. The prologue offers this imagined Balkan ruler ten pieces of advice on maintaining power, each derived from a detailed analysis of the socio-political situation unfolding in individual countries of the Western Balkans over recent years. These pieces of advice not only explain how Balkan autocrats have remained in power but also serve as a blueprint for the in-depth discussions in the following chapters, highlighting the core attributes of the competitive authoritarian regimes operating in the Western Balkan states.

The introduction provides an analysis of the 1990s events that were important for the history of the Balkans. The author attempts to explain why the model of systemic transformation of the Central European countries failed to be implemented in the post-Yugoslav states as well as how to understand the competitive authoritarian regimes that emerged. The next chapter discusses the obstacles to democratic consolidation in the Western Balkan states. The author also clarifies the grounds for the emergence of semi-authoritarian regimes in the 1990s in the region and why it was not possible to build a consolidated democracy there. Moreover, he indicates the instrumental use of nationalism by those in power and stresses that the period between 1997 and 2000 marked a turning point in the history of the Western Balkans, adding that at that time, the region had already reached a consensus on a pro-European direction. In the next chapter, the author analyses the characteristics of the weakening of democracy in the Western Balkan countries. He reviews specific cases from the region in a manner that is both analytical and concise yet illustrative. The final chapter focuses on the instruments of authoritarianism such as governance through perpetual crisis, leveraging early elections to consolidate power, gaining external support/legitimization (e.g., from the EU), undermining the opposition, appropriating the state and weakening state institutions (which is exacerbated by the weakness of opposition forces and civil society) as well as mobilizing the media in favour of those in power. Bieber also points to the entry of new players like China and the United Arab Emirates in the Balkan political arena, where they compete with the well-established influences of the

EU, Russia, Turkey, and the United States. He astutely observes the strengthening grip of authoritarian leaders in recent years despite the simultaneous process of integration into the EU. The epilogue revisits the Balkan prince, echoing what was expressed in the prologue.

Clearly, the elements of authoritarian systems identified by the author do not manifest uniformly across different countries, which the author himself emphasizes by referring to Macedonia and the Colourful Revolution (*Šarena revolucija*) as a distinctive case where protests successfully facilitated change, debunking the notion that demonstrations are futile, especially since the Balkan autocrats are able to skillfully stage their own counter-protests and support rallies.

In the analysis of the patterns identified by the author, Montenegro stands out as a notable exception. After three decades, a shift in power finally transpired in 2020. Despite winning the elections, the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS) was unable to forge a new government, resulting in the formation of a government without the involvement of that party, formerly dominant in Montenegrin politics. In a further turn of events in 2023, the previously uncontested leader Milo Djukanovic was defeated in the presidential elections, which marked the end of the reign of the long-standing “Balkan prince” through democratic means. Set against the backdrop of developments in other Balkan nations, the Montenegro scenario emerges as especially intriguing. Understanding why this political shift occurred necessitates a deeper and more nuanced exploration than might initially be apparent. Public protests and the influence of the famous liturgical processions of the Serbian Orthodox Church might have played a part in this transition, but they were not necessarily the sole factors. It is important to consider the public sentiment at the time, characterized by general fatigue, notably among the younger generation, with the persistent reign of the DPS and Djukanović. The policy that exacerbated divisions among citizens of different nationalities – primarily Montenegrin and Serbian, but also including Albanian, Bosnian, and Croatian groups – certainly had a role to play as well. Furthermore, a new player entered the political arena: the Europe Now Movement (*Pokret Evropa Sad!*, PES). This group chose to steer clear of these divisive issues, instead focusing their campaign on economic and social matters, a strategy that led many to view them as a credible alternative to the DPS. However, the victory of the Europe Now Movement

in the parliamentary elections, and that of its party member Jakov Milatović in the presidential race, does not necessarily indicate a substantial shift in governance. It remains to be seen what real changes will occur, and this assessment will take time. In addition, when examining the phenomenon of strong leaders – a recurring theme in Balkan history – the current Kosovo Prime Minister, Albin Kurti, serves as a noteworthy figure. The key question remains: should Kurti be regarded as a rare democratic leader in the region, or simply another in the line of Balkan princes?

Another interesting case in the analysis of the present situation in the Balkans is North Macedonia, which according to Prof. Bieber managed to distance itself from authoritarianism following the ousting of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski. After the Prespa agreement, which resolved a long-standing dispute with Greece, there was an expectation that Macedonia's European integration process would speed up significantly. However, the process became entangled once again due to firm demands from another neighbour, Bulgaria, and this fostered a sense of disillusionment with the EU, stirring nationalist sentiment among the Macedonian society. The possibility that VMRO-DPMNE, once led by the aforementioned Prime Minister Gruevski, may return to power in the forthcoming elections presents a dilemma: will it hinder the country's integration process again, or will it foster agreements with international partners and continue pro-European policies? Moreover, is there a risk of another unresolved bilateral conflict resulting in a return of a Macedonian "prince" or possibly even several "princes"? Having in mind the role of the Democratic Union for Integration, the largest Albanian party in Macedonia, it is possible that its leader, Ali Ahmeti, has already taken up, and continues to hold, the role of such a prince. Finally, there are the cases of Serbia and Albania, where President Aleksandar Vučić and Prime Minister Edi Rama respectively maintain extremely strong positions despite their lengthy tenures. Numerous protests in these countries have not facilitated a change in government; in fact, the existing authorities appear to have fortified their standings¹. The Montenegrin example

1 However, it should be acknowledged that with the outbreak of protests against violence in Serbia, the president's position was at its weakest since he took over the state.

illustrates that no reign is eternal; the “Balkan princes” will, sooner or later, see the end of their rule, possibly in a less dramatic fashion than one might anticipate from the long history of Balkan coups and revolutions. Yet what remains uncertain is the nature of their successors – will they be democrats eager to enhance the rule of law, or will they tread the path of autocracy?

Unfortunately, the emigration of young and educated people could hinder the process of removing the Balkan princes, necessitating further analysis. Professor Bieber’s book stands as essential reading, not just for researchers of the Balkans but also for scholars exploring nationalism, populism, and leadership. It serves as an excellent starting point for research in this field, extending beyond the Balkan region.

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the humanitarian components of the latest Russian-Ukrainian war, which is qualified by its authors as a hybrid war. In principle, it is about the ideological basis, historical and religious mythology, and the information support of Russia's revanchist policy in Ukraine, which the current Russian regime uses in its armed aggression against Ukraine. The authors convincingly and argumentatively prove that non-military instruments in Russia's war against Ukraine are subordinated to a single goal – the restoration of the Russian empire and its international political influence. In order to achieve this goal, the Putin regime uses all the means available to it, including the spread of pseudo-historical myths and fakes that justify the expansionist policy of the Kremlin in Ukraine and in the countries of the post-Soviet space. Using a widely sourced base, the authors of the article refute the most common Russian pseudo-historical narratives.

Walenty Baluk, Mykola Doroshko, Bohdan Cherkas
Humanitarian components of Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine in 2014-2022

The article analyses and evaluates Polish-American cooperation in support of Ukraine after Russia's full-scale aggression in 2022. It answers the question regarding the importance of Polish-American cooperation in supporting the Ukrainian state and society. It assumes that Polish-American cooperation plays a key role in the areas of military and non-military assistance for Ukraine and Ukrainians. Both countries are among the main donors of military equipment to Ukraine, which is delivered via the territory of Poland. In addition, they put great pressure on European countries to increase military support to Ukraine. Polish-American cooperation in non-military areas is also of great importance. Poland's aid for Ukrainian refugees is crucial, and the US is involved in its delivery and financing. The US, in turn, is of paramount importance in imposing sanctions on Russia to force it to stop its aggression and in providing economic assistance to Ukraine. Poland participates in the sanctions system and strives to make them as severe as possible. Another area of Polish-American cooperation is LNG trade, which allows Poland, and potentially also other CEE countries, including Ukraine, to secure natural gas supplies after abandoning imports from Russia. During the research, interviews with American scientists and experts were conducted, and the method of analysing the content of text sources was used.

Łukasz Jureńczyk
Polish-American cooperation to support Ukraine after Russian aggression in 2022