

# Groatian International Relations Review

**NATO Summit in Wales: From global megatrends to the new Euro-Atlanticism**

*Lidija Čehulić Vukadinović, Monika Begović*

**Serbia's Military Neutrality: Origins, effects and challenges**

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**NATO Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina: The pursuit of local ownership in externally-led state building**

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**The European Union Training Mission in Mali: A case study**

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**How Long Before NATO Aircraft Carrier Force Projection Capabilities Are Successfully Countered? Some effects of the fiscal crises**

*Josip Lučev*

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# Croatian International Relations Review

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## Editorial Office:

CIRR, Institute for Development and International Relations - IRMO  
 Ljudevita Farkaša Vukotinovića 2, HR-10000  
 Zagreb, Croatia  
 Phone: +385 1 48 77 460  
 Fax: +385 1 48 28 361  
 E-mail: [cirr@irmo.hr](mailto:cirr@irmo.hr)  
<http://cirr.irmo.hr>

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Dear readers,

This is the first special issue that the Croatian International Relations Review (CIRR) publishes, conveniently falling into the 20th year of the journal's existence. A decision to publish a special issue was motivated by a desire to mark another anniversary – that of the Croatian 5th year of membership in NATO.

Croatia and Albania joined NATO in 2009 and remain the only two countries – members of NATO – in the region five years after. With the exception of Serbia, all other countries in the region, more or less, express the desire to join NATO. The accession process, however, just as in the case of the accession to the European Union, is wrought with obstacles, both internally and externally. At the same time, NATO faces numerous challenges, in Europe and beyond. These and related themes are discussed in this issue.

A word about CIRR – we make significant efforts to strengthen the journal – attract excellent scholarly articles and widen the journal's reading audience. To this end, a number of changes have been introduced during the last two years. CIRR has an open-access policy and full texts can be downloaded through the CIRR website (<http://cirr.irmo.hr>), HRČAK – a portal of academic journals in Croatia (<http://hrcak.srce.hr/cirr?lang=en>) or through the De Gruyter website (<http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/cirr>), the journal's academic distributor. As of recently, full and free access to all previous issues of the journal is available at the CIRR and HRČAK websites.

CIRR is a member of COPE – Committee on Publication Ethics – and has a strict anti-plagiarism policy.

We would like to thank NATO Public Diplomacy Division for financially supporting the publication of the special issue and NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy, Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, for endorsing the idea of the special issue and writing the editorial.

**Senada Šelo Šabić,**  
editor-in-chief



# NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy

Dear readers,

It is on moments like this one that we fondly look back at our journey towards the Euro-Atlantic community, to the club of European democracies, where Croatia so firmly belongs. Five years ago, Croatia achieved an important milestone in its modern history when it became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Later, of course, we celebrated our accession to the European Union.

It was a journey full of memorable moments but also of hard work, difficult decisions, and many obstacles. We had to strictly adhere to the Alliance's high standards in the areas of security and defence while also achieving political consensus and gaining public support.

This journey would have not been possible without the dedication of many colleagues, men and women, whose firm belief in a better future for Croatia led the way through a challenging path of necessary and sometimes difficult reforms.

Croatia has lived up to its commitments. Our troops in Afghanistan and Kosovo are extremely professional. Croatia is a keen supporter of NATO's Partnership and Open Door Policy. Croatia is an active member in over a dozen "Smart Defence" projects that help Allies share defence capabilities and coordinate efforts more effectively.

Based on Croatia's experience from this process, I strongly believe that full integration of our region into the Euro-Atlantic structures is the only way to ensure prosperity and stability in Southeastern Europe.

NATO remains committed to its Open Door Policy and strongly encourages all countries aspiring to NATO membership to continue in their ongoing reforms and to adhere to the accession criteria. The road of reforms can be long, and it can be bumpy, but it is still worth it – and

not just for NATO's sake. The road to membership, no matter how long it takes, is sometimes more important than the goal itself.

Many challenges remain, as our region is charged with many politically sensitive issues. However the strong leadership and commitment of the region's governments and people should counter these obstacles and anchor the countries firmly into Euro-Atlantic structures.

NATO brings great benefits to its members: the security guarantee of collective defence; participation in one of the world's great peacemaking forces, and a full, equal voice at the table of leading Euro-Atlantic democracies, helping to shape the security of this continent.

Security cannot be taken for granted – and this is not just an empty slogan. Again and again, we have seen that peace and prosperity do not simply appear out of nowhere. Defence capabilities matter. This was evident following the terrorist attacks of 11 September against the United States. Over the past few months, as we have witnessed a crisis unfold in Ukraine, we have seen a new security situation develop in Europe – one that is less predictable and more dangerous.

For those who believe that NATO is a Cold War relic, the current events in Ukraine should be a clear signal that the Europe whole and free is still not accomplished.

During its 65 years of existence, NATO has repeatedly proved to be an indispensable part of Euro-Atlantic security, peace and prosperity. The Alliance has taken on new missions, developed new capabilities, welcomed new members and engaged with new partners. As NATO encountered new threats, it rose to the challenge, learned the lessons, and moved forward.

For 65 years, NATO has been the global gold standard for international security cooperation. With Croatia's support, the Alliance will continue to play that vital role.

The Croatian people benefit tremendously from NATO membership, and I can tell you from experience that the Alliance also benefits from Croatia's significant contributions. NATO needs committed members that are ready to carry the responsibility of advancing peace and prosperity for all citizens of Euro-Atlantic area. I am proud that Croatia has met that challenge.

**Ambassador Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**



# NATO Summit in Wales: From global megatrends to the new Euro-Atlanticism

Lidija Čehulić Vukadinović, Monika Begović

## Abstract

*Numerous representatives of theories of international relations, security theories or alliance theories have examined the new role of the North Atlantic Alliance or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the post-bipolar world. Parallel with the theoretical examination of goals and tasks, NATO has transformed itself in practice, following the realities of the contemporary global era. In trying to achieve and keep the primacy of the strongest military-political organization, the Alliance has – especially in the Strategic Concept adopted in Lisbon in 2010 – set the normative and institutional foundations of its global engagement, fulfilling the military (hard) and a wide array of non-military (soft) security challenges. This strategy has given rise to “Euro-Atlanticism”, as a subsystem of international relations based on strong American-European relations, to fit with the process of regionalization of global politics. However, the 2013–2014 crisis in Ukraine has turned the focus of interest and activities of NATO once again primarily to Europe and it has stressed the importance and necessity of strengthening Euro-Atlantic security and defence ties. The most powerful member of the Alliance, the United States, is again strongly engaged in Europe and Russia, as a kind of*

*successor to the Soviet Union, is once more detected as a major threat to European security. There have been many aspects of theories of international relations that have tried to explain the dynamic of the post-Cold War international community. However, the approach based on neo-realistic assumptions of the role of a security community, collective defence and the use of military force has proved to be dominant. NATO will continue to work on its political dimension as an alliance of the democratic world and the September 2014 Wales Summit will certainly mark the return of NATO to its roots, strengthening its security and military dimensions in the collective defence of Europe from Russia.*

#### KEY WORDS:

*North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Euro-Atlanticism, Euro-Atlantic integration, Russia, military forces, crisis, collective defence, global security, neo-realism, security dilemma*

## Introduction

The most fundamental challenges of the 21st century have been beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. When the Obama administration announced a new United States (US) defence strategy in early 2012, placing the security of Asia and the Middle East foremost, some European allies wondered whether the Euro-Atlantic partnership and NATO would still fit with future American defence objectives. Defence austerity in Europe has reached such depths that in his farewell remarks on 10 June 2011 in Brussels, the outgoing Secretary of Defence, Robert M. Gates,<sup>1</sup> warned of a dim and dismal future for the Alliance.

To avoid this coming to pass, a group of experts (Burns, Wilson and Lightfoot 2012) from the Atlantic Council of the United States has recommended that NATO should:

1. create a Strategic Consultative Group to establish a longer term strategy for the Middle East, including the area from Syria to Pakistan and North Africa;
2. work with North African countries on issues concerning the role of the military in democracy;
3. focus on cyber security as a global issue and help organize the establishment of a Cyber Security Board, which could generate both military and critical infrastructure standards;
4. enhance its capabilities by expanding its special operations forces and undertaking an advanced research and development program. (Kramer 2012: 1–12)

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1 "What I've sketched out is the real possibility for a dim, if not dismal future for the transatlantic Alliance. Such a future is possible but not inevitable. The good news is that the members of NATO - individually and collectively - have it well within their means to halt and reverse these trends, and instead produce a very different future", speech given by US Secretary of Defence Robert M. Gates on 10 June 2011: "The Security and Defense Agenda (Future for NATO)", Brussels, Belgium, US Department of Defense, <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581>. See, also, Burns, Wilson and Lightfoot (2012: 1), who state: "For the United States to achieve its international aims in a competitive and resource-constrained world, it needs a strong, capable and ambitious Europe as its leading partner".

In fulfilling these tasks, the Euro-Atlantic allies would become effective and efficient in offering security and safety in globalized world. According to a report published in 2012 by the US National Intelligence Council (NIC), the transatlantic community is entering a new era in history with a number of global megatrends that will shape how the world looks by 2030. First, there is the rapid shift of economic and military power to Asia – Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power by 2030 (NIC 2012: iv). There is likely to be an accelerated diffusion of power to non-state actors (individuals and small groups), enabled by new lethal and disruptive technologies (NIC 2012: iv). In terms of technology, four arenas will shape global economic, social and military developments, as well as the world community's actions pertaining to the environment by 2030, namely: information technology, new manufacturing and automation technologies, technologies linked to the security of vital resources, and new health technologies (NIC 2012: ix–x). Changes in global demographics, together with rising scarcities of food, water and other natural resources, will increasingly trigger regional tensions and conflicts. Experts say that trends in the demographic picture suggest that over the next 15–20 years there will be an aging population, with a still-significant but shrinking number of youthful societies and states, migration will increasingly be a cross-border issue and there will be growing urbanization (NIC 2012: 20). Fifth, there is an ongoing energy revolution that is transforming geopolitics. Sixth, it is probable that the scope of regional instability will widen. In particular, the Middle East and South Asia are the two regions most likely to trigger broader instability. Finally, there is considerable uncertainty over the development of the leadership role for the US and the West. The US most likely will remain “first among equals” among the other great powers in 2030 because of its pre-eminence across a range of power dimensions and the legacies of its leadership role (NIC 2012: 98).

These global megatrends present a number of new, unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities for NATO at the strategic and operational levels. The process of transforming NATO to meet future challenges will be a long, uncertain and uneven endeavour. NATO should therefore adapt to these global megatrends in an era of global competition (Pavel and Nordenman 2013: 1–5).

Some policy makers have argued that Europe embodies the past, whereas Asia, with the already strong Chinese economy, heralds the future. So, what should be the goal and point of NATO today? Despite the strategic rebalancing of the US in relation to Asia, President Obama has stressed more than once that the transatlantic community, led by NATO, still remains the greatest catalyst for global action. Therefore, NATO should continue to serve as a force for global security and stability. Nonetheless, many high officials within NATO hanker for the “good old days”, when NATO was more focused on traditional collective defence (Article 5) and was protecting and defending Europe from the Soviet Union (Grosser 1980). NATO turned its attention back to Europe when the crisis in Ukraine/Crimea erupted in 2013–2014.

The crisis in Ukraine/Crimea has suddenly strengthened the perception of NATO members that Russia has returned to its role of an assertive regional power, seeking to secure its spheres of influence (former Soviet space) by military force. This perception means that the “true strategic partnership” between NATO and Russia (proclaimed by the NATO 2010 Strategic Concept, the Rome Declaration in 2002 and the Founding Act on Mutual Relations in 1997) must be redefined.

Shortly after the Crimea crisis started in 2014, NATO Secretary General Rasmussen stated that NATO would focus on protecting its members, that a strong and united NATO is needed in a changed world. As he put it, “NATO’s core task is to protect and defend our Allies”. Deterring potential Russian military aggression in Europe will become one of NATO’s most important missions over the years ahead. Writing for the International Relations and Security Network (ISN), Richard Weitz (2014) stresses that “the ongoing crisis in Ukraine has provided NATO with fresh impetus and new challenges”.

This paper does not primarily address predictions of how the relationship between NATO and Russia will develop, but rather analyses and suggests how the latest crisis in Ukraine could redirect NATO in various respects:

- It considers the successful implementation of stated objectives and programmes, which have created problems in the past (the

smart defence concept, the issue of missile defence in Europe, reducing the gap in set-aside for defence between the US and European allies).

- It examines the perception of Russia as the main opponent (*Economist* 2014a: 19) with the aim of defining more clearly goals, priorities and the means of achieving them in contemporary international relations.
- It explores NATO's return to a focus on the Euro-Atlantic area, with Europe again becoming a geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic area for confrontation between the West (led by NATO) and Russia.
- It looks at the implications of a renewed focus on Europe and the means of removing the fears of some European allies that NATO will no longer be led by the "old continent" but will instead follow the global strategy of the strongest ally in NATO – the US – and its strategy of a major political, economic and security step towards the Pacific.

Following this introduction, this paper consists two further sections and a conclusion. The first section analyses theoretical insights into the adjustments and survival of NATO as a model for securing post-Cold War international security. The following section shows how the strategy of the Alliance has changed and refers to the possible benefits of strengthening the transatlantic alliance as a consequence of the current crisis in Ukraine. The conclusion confirms the thesis stressed in this introduction, namely that the crisis in Ukraine will change NATO-Russian relations that were being built for so many years after the end of the Cold War, and therefore indicates the main directions of future Euro-Atlantic ties.

## Theoretical insights into the role of NATO as a military and political alliance

New opportunities in the international arena caused by the crisis in Ukraine and the position that Russia now holds in international relations have shown that the tendentious assertion that NATO has become obsolete as a military and as a political alliance on the international scene are without a basis in fact. Since the end of the Cold War and the demise of bipolar relations, which was followed by the creation of a New World Order,<sup>2</sup> the North Atlantic Alliance has gone through specific political and institutional changes, rendering NATO not merely the opposing camp to the Warsaw Pact, but the foundation for a new means of ensuring international security. NATO has undergone several crises since the end of the Cold War, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the adaptation of NATO's collective defence remit to a changed international system, and now Russia returning to the scene of international politics.

NATO today is not merely a military-political alliance. NATO has implemented grand changes since 1989 and despite some theoretical suspicions concerning its survival, it celebrated its 65th anniversary in 2014. In a book entitled "*NATO after Sixty Years*", comprised of experts' essays, the challenges of adaptation and adjustment to post-Cold War security issues within and without its treaty-based responsibilities and competencies are described (Sperling and Papacosma 2012). NATO is positioned as a strong security actor in the international environment, in which the governments of allied countries respect the values of democracy, rule of law and individual liberty that underpin the Alliance.

Viewing NATO from the perspective of a transatlantic community and its relations with the European Union (EU), Stanley Sloan argues that NATO

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2 The term "New World Order" was first used by the US President George Bush Sr. on 11 September 1990, when he spoke about the world order after the end of the Cold War and bipolar relations, one in which countries, that had previously been enemies would jointly defend democratic principles and the foundation of free society. It was a speech made with the purpose of justifying the US war in Iraq, but also with aim of promulgating a vision of all countries in the world living in peace and harmony. The full speech is available at: [http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=2217&year=1990&month=9](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=2217&year=1990&month=9) (accessed 8 May 2014).

is a community of values shared by the Member States and cooperation in defense is an instrument to promote political change (Sloan 2005: 7). Sloan continues that NATO is not primarily designed to maintain peace among the member countries, but to protect those countries of the world around them. Therefore, although there were different political opinions within NATO when it came to enlarging it to encompass countries from the former Eastern bloc, extending its membership became a useful political move. This policy was caused by unrest in the southeast of Europe, the instability of new European countries and also the emergence of new threats (challenges of transnational terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks, etc.), so that there was a need for a strong and broad alliance.

Representatives of neorealism, the most common political theory of the new era and the dominant school of thought on international relations, predicted that NATO would cease to exist after the collapse of the bipolar world, given that the reason for its creation and existence during bipolar relations – the Soviet Union – was history.<sup>3</sup> (Waltz, 2000) As this collapse has not happened, the survival and sustainability of NATO in the new world order has in turn been justified by neorealists in terms of US unipolar hegemony.

Namely, the international system today is a combination of unipolar and multipolar factors, due to the fact that the US is the dominant superpower. Discussing the tactics of European countries in the 1990s, the following conclusion can be reached: Western European countries stayed in NATO to *balance* US forces and also former communist Eastern European countries, whereas Eastern European countries *bandwagoned* in joining NATO.<sup>4</sup> Mowle and Sacko's (2008) article

3 On NATO's role in the New World Order and the reasons for its survival from the neorealist perspective, see Waltz (1993, 2000). Waltz (2000) mentions that the fact that NATO survived the disappearance of the primary goal that it had when it was founded is one of the instances that shows why neorealists think that international institutions adjust to the needs of the states and their national interests. Therefore, NATO stops being an ordinary alliance, because if the transformation had never happened, the alliance would have no *raison d'être* without the opposite side. By adjusting to the national interests of the member states, it attracts new countries to become members and justifies its role as a transformed alliance.

4 On *balancing* and *bandwagoning*, see also: Schweller (1988, 1994). It is believed that the continuation of NATO is in the interests of the US and other member countries as it promotes global security stability. At the same time, NATO's defence planning creates the possibility of the US leading a coalition of states that want to cooperate because NATO has created an environment characterized by 50 years of peace in Europe. Both the US and EU admit NATO this role, especially in stating on the first page of the European Security Strategy (2003) that: "The United States has played a critical role in European integration and European

begins with the sentence: "NATO staggers on, nearly 20 years after its original *raison d'être* withered away" (p. 597) as an introduction to offering reasons for NATO's survival and how countries position themselves according to new circumstances.

By means of such balancing, the Western European countries joined against the prevailing threat – at that time new threats in international relations and their own weaknesses. In a sense, the Eastern European countries, left on their own with weak positions in the New World Order, bandwagoned with NATO, allying themselves with the former source of danger, but at the same time joining the strongest alliance, which provided security protection through the North Atlantic Agreement.

Neorealists explain the persistence of NATO after the Cold War in terms of collective defence in combination with an internal dimension of the alliance by which the allies control each other. Viewed from the perspective of neorealism, it can be said that states join alliances to ensure the behaviour of other allies, advance the interests of their foreign policy and reduce the uncertainty of the international system, which neorealists define as international anarchy.<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Waltz, a representative of neorealism or structural realism, discusses the reasons for NATO's survival after the end of the Cold War, viewed from the perspective that neorealists claimed that NATO would cease to exist if the international system were not characterized by the bipolar world. Waltz (2000: 5–41) argues that the changes the international system faced in the 1990s affected the ways in which states ensured their security. In the multipolar system, there was a growth in uncertainty, so

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security, in particular through NATO". Also, on the other side, the US National Security Strategy from 2002 states: "There is little of lasting consequence that the United States can accomplish in the world without the sustained cooperation of its allies and friends in Canada and Europe". This could be the context for defining bandwagoning, which in some literature is explained as the total opposite of balancing - as supporting the stronger state or even a threat in some conflict - but it is not only that. Such a kind of bandwagoning would be more similar to a form of capitulation, which is not the best strategy. Bandwagoning is not a name for surrender, but rather joining the stronger coalition. States behave in line with bandwagon theory because they want to be on the stronger side. Thus, sometimes bandwagoning and balancing simply reflect each other, so it is not possible to prove conclusively which behaviour is the dominant one. For example, when Western European countries joined NATO, they balanced in relation to the Soviet Union and *bandwagoned* in relation to the US. Without the Soviet threat, NATO becomes a "tool" for bandwagoning. One form of bandwagoning is buck-passing: allowing the unipolar force to bear responsibility for some action from which everybody will benefit.

- 5 Anarchy is the basic concept of neorealist theory. For more, see Waltz (1979, 1993), Mearsheimer (1990) and Glaser (1997). It is worth mentioning that neoliberal institutionalists stress the high level of interdependence among member states of the alliance, as well as the promotion of cooperation.

that international institutions such as NATO saw the opportunity to stress that their purpose lay in addressing issues of importance for international peace and security in a global context. Although neorealists do not believe in the importance of institutions, the survival of NATO shows how international institutions sometimes serve national goals.

Waltz (2000) continues to explain why NATO survived after losing its main purpose. The importance of the alliance has changed throughout history, so in the old multipolar world, before bipolar relations began to exist, only countries that had common characteristics, were very similar in size and would be completely dependent on each other joined forces. In the bipolar world, in which two alliances were formed, one force in each alliance provided security to its block of countries. Following this, however, NATO started to perform a completely new role. As the only remaining alliance, according to Waltz (2000: 5–41), it has also played the role of an extended arm of US foreign policy, guaranteeing the security of Western civilization. Looking at NATO purely as an alliance, Waltz believes that it is no longer only a contract that guarantees security as there is no answer to the question: assurance against whom? Although institutionalists claim otherwise, Waltz (1993: 44–79) argues that institutions, once they are founded, create reasons for their existence and start to behave as autonomous entities, independent of the will of their founders. Nonetheless, Waltz considers that this is not the case with NATO. Waltz explains why neorealists think NATO has lost its primary role. This happened after NATO became a means that the US has used to influence the foreign and security policies of European countries. The further spreading of NATO's influence actually demonstrates US power and not the strength of the alliance itself. The possibility of the US extending the life of NATO shows how international institutions are created by strong states to serve their interests.<sup>6</sup> Waltz draws the conclusion that the prognosis of neorealists that NATO would disappear after the end of the Cold War is actually not wrong, nor was it based on erroneous assumptions or bad knowledge concerning international relations, but rather the view of US power was underestimated. Although NATO did make a big step in its transformation, Rynning (2005) also shares the view that NATO did not

6 That was visible through NATO especially during the US reaction in the conflicts in the Western Balkan countries.

survive because it implemented major changes in its development, but because the US role was crucial.<sup>7</sup>

The reasons for NATO's survival as an international alliance could be examined through the views of Walt (2004), who claims that NATO must be sustained as it is beneficial for European and US interests.<sup>8</sup> In his work "*The Origin of Alliances*" (Walt 1987), he expresses the opinion that nations do not form alliances only to create a balance of power. The most influential representative of theories of alliances, whose views can be implemented in today's world, Walt thinks that power is indeed important when creating an alliance because states ally with or against some power that represents the greatest threat. When entering an alliance, states may either *balance* (ally in opposition to the principal source of danger), or *bandwagon* (ally with the state that poses the major threat) (Walt 1985: 4). Balancing is alignment with the weaker side, whereas bandwagoning means choosing the stronger. Walt's (1985) conclusion is that the threat determines the choice of an ally, but also how long the alliance will last. The balance of threat theory is based on balancing behaviour and the proposition that states will join alliances in order to avoid domination by stronger powers. States join alliances to protect themselves from other states or coalitions whose superior resources could pose a threat (Walt 1985: 5). Walt thinks that alliances cease to exist when the threat is gone, further saying that states actually seek security against threats and not influence over other powers. This is the reason Walt offers for NATO initiating its transformation, its goal being to position itself strongly in the international order, taking the initiative to defuse the crisis in the southeast European region. In addition, the war in Kosovo confirmed European dependence on US military power projected through NATO.

For neorealists, states act according to their national interests in the anarchic international system, in which the *security dilemma* prevails. This shows a lack of trust in the intentions of other states. The rivalry between states is enhanced by the fact that when one state increases its power

7 See also Yost (1999).

8 For Walt's thoughts on alliances, see Walt (1985, 1997).

to be more secure, the fear of other states naturally grows.<sup>9</sup> Neorealists view this competition and uncertainty in international politics as the cause of the need to achieve the highest possible security. According to the security dilemma theory, a state improves its defences to make it safer from potential attacks; the security dilemma arises when many of the means by which a state tries to increase its security decrease the security of others (Jervis 1978: 169). Thus, one state actually forces other states to work on their defence capabilities because of the fear of becoming weak. Thus, the safety of the states does not increase, but rather is reduced.

On the other hand, if a state becomes weak, it has no possibility of coercion. Having power in international politics means exactly having the possibility of coercion because states relate to each other primarily in terms of relative power and each is limited in the use of their power, primarily by opposing the power of others. The distribution of power among a small number of the most powerful states provides a basis for political decision making when considering on which side to stand or whether to be a member of a particular alliance (Waltz 1979: 112).

The security dilemma forces states to form an alliance or to strengthen an existing one. Glenn Snyder (1984) examines two reasons for the creation of an alliance under the conditions of a security dilemma. First, if states are not satisfied with their level of security, they will stream towards alliance formation to improve the existing security. Second, when states are unhappy with the level of cooperation they have with their existing allies, they may start the process of forming another alliance. To explain why states ally, we can use Snyder's articulation of the security dilemma, namely that even when no state has any desire to attack others, none can be sure that others' intentions are peaceful or will remain so; hence, each must accumulate power for defence purposes and it is easier to accumulate power as member of an alliance (Snyder 1984: 462).

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<sup>9</sup> On the security dilemma, see Jervis (1978), in which he explains two main arguments. The security dilemma is taken as the basis for examining the states' behaviour and it occurs when one state tries to increase its security in a way that decreases the security of other states (Jervis 1978: 169). See also Snyder (1990) and Glaser (1997).

Christensen and Snyder (1990)<sup>10</sup> consider two types of security dilemma when forming or joining an alliance: *chain ganging* and *buck-passing*. In the former, all the allies are equal and this leads to a high degree of interdependence within the alliance, so that each state is intertwined with the security of its alliance partners (Christensen and Snyder 1990: 138). Therefore, refusing to cooperate could disrupt the security of the alliance. *Buck-passing* illustrates a situation in which there is a threat, which causes states to join an alliance. In this case, a balance within the alliance is not immediately created because some states aim for membership at the expense of others. Their behaviour can be explained by the fact that they do not want to pay the price of entering a war, or they consider it preferable to remain out of a certain conflict. In view of the above, Waltz (1979: 140–141) considers that a bipolar system is safe because neither chain-ganging nor buck-passing dilemmas can arise in bipolarity. Today's conditions in the international system provide motives for cooperation within an alliance and the nature of the NATO alliance was formed based on the characteristics of this system.

Both theoretical foundations – neorealism and alliance theory – offer a logical approach to understanding the origins and character of policy in the transformation of NATO over the past 20 years. This approach very easily reflects NATO's position in relation to the Ukraine crisis as the only security guarantor. Neorealists claim that states behave in accordance with their national interests and the national interests of neighbouring countries, such as Ukraine, are lined to this. NATO is needed if such countries are to be safe from threat and the threat is again seen to be Russia. The fact is that NATO will exist as long as its member states face a threat to their national security, because alliances are primarily a means of ensuring national security.

The North Atlantic Alliance should again define the appropriate form of its international activities. The transition from the defensive role of the Alliance to the institution which is a means of crisis management, guaranteeing peace and security, has created a pressure on the allies to continue their activities by redefining security threats. From the

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10 *Chain ganging* can be seen as an alliance in which the state enters an alliance with some other state because it guarantees its safety and security. In the case of *buck-passing*, a state joins an alliance in order to transfer the maintenance of the balance of power to the alliance and other member states.

analytical perspective of contemporary international relations, Sean Kay, in his (1998) book *"NATO and the Future of European Security"*, points out that regardless of the transformation and development of the EU, the European region still needs NATO as a force that imposes balance and stability in the region. However, Kay (1998: 3) also argues that "NATO's institutional tasks; organizational capacity; norms, principles, rules and procedures; and capacity for change have yet to have an independent impact on security in Europe".

Looking at the patterns of behaviour of NATO members, one can turn to Holsti, Hopmann and Sullivan (1973 cited in Bergsman 2001), who regard alliances as "a universal component of relations between political units, irrespective of time and place" (p. 2). They show that the behaviour of countries changes depending on threats and conclude that an increase in the level of threat increases cohesion within the alliance, which allows the alliance to respond to threats much more readily. This increase in cohesion is exactly what is currently happening within NATO and its member countries have shown their willingness to confront the new/old threat – Russia – which creates uncertainty and actually strengthens their connections and interdependence.

## **NATO and the new reality**

Drawing on different theoretical explanations of the role of the alliance, NATO's survival after the collapse of bipolar international relations could be explained in terms of its gradual adjustment to changes and transformation in the global picture since 1989. It should be pointed out that the transformation of the Alliance (Summit Declarations, Strategic Concepts, other relevant documents) has been much easier and more successful than the realization of many goals that NATO has set itself. With the many problems that member countries had been facing in trying to make NATO a more efficient international military-political organization, it seemed that in the latest Strategic Concept adopted

in Lisbon in 2010,<sup>11</sup> NATO defined the main areas of its operations and future development for the next decade. The NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014 should have announced the transformation from the so-called operations phase into the post-operations phase. This is the year that marks 100 years since the beginning of the First World War, the 75th anniversary from the start of the Second World War, the 65th anniversary since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, 20 years of the Partnership for Peace (based on which almost all post-communist countries, that are not members of the Alliance – including Russia – can cooperate with NATO, as can neutral nations, such as Austria and Switzerland) and the 10th anniversary of the so-called Big Bang – the second post-Cold War enlargement of NATO, when seven countries became NATO members. The close of 2014 will mark the end of the operation in Afghanistan, the largest, longest and definitely the most complex and most expensive peace mission in NATO history.

At the Wales Summit, it was foreseen that the heads of NATO would discuss three main aspects of the future of NATO:

1. implementing the operation *Determined Support* in Afghanistan after 2014 (training, assisting and advising Afghan forces and maintain some role in counter terrorism) (Piotrowski 2014);
2. finding modalities for strengthening NATO's capabilities (O'Reilly 2014) with the aim of implementing collective defence (Article 5) and crisis management;
3. defining relations and partnerships to secure cooperative security (Kramer 2013).

However, the Ukraine crisis has intervened and surprised by the Russian approach, the allies are having to set aside much of the planned agenda for the Wales Summit and concentrate not so much on the situation in Crimea and the crisis in Ukraine, but on Russia itself.

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11 NATO Strategic Concept (2010) "Active Engagement, Modern Defence" [online] Available at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_82705.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_82705.htm) [accessed 7 May 2014].

Relations between NATO and Russia have always had a special place in NATO's strategic decisions and in all post-Cold War transformations and adjustments to new global challenges. Although NATO's interests are different from those of Russia, NATO has managed to adjust its policies and find common ground. Aware that Russia has faced many problems on its path towards transition (Shevtsova 2007), as well as its desire to return to its former status of a strong country in the international arena (Bugajski 2004), NATO is cognisant that Russia, still a sizeable country, cannot be ignored nor isolated from global international order. Therefore NATO has founded numerous institutional forms of cooperation with Russia.<sup>12</sup>

However, relations between NATO and Russia have always been characterized by mutual suspicion (Stent 2014) and Clinton's strategic alliance with Russia of the early 1990s did not endure (Čehulić 2001: 93–101). Russian opposition to NATO enlargement in the former post-Soviet area is a constant in Russian foreign policy strategy. Despite all the differences between them, diplomatic relations between NATO and Russia were for the first time endangered in 2008, after the Georgia crisis (Vukadinović 2008: 160–162). After the crisis and war in Georgia (2008), NATO–Russian relations improved somewhat, but after the crisis in Ukraine/Crimea, it seems highly unlikely that a new relationship of any warmth is going to emerge relatively soon. Rather, the Ukraine crisis offers a chance to the allies to define a new mission and strategy directly more clearly towards a familiar threat: Russia.

## Reforms of NATO capabilities

Even before the global economic and financial crisis, the majority of NATO members were faced with radical cuts in their national defence budgets, yet had to finance (with less money) defence equipment which is costly and becoming costlier every year. For example, the unit cost of the Hunter fighter aircraft was GBP 4.6 million in 1995, compared

12 Russia is a member of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Council 19+1. NATO and Russia have signed numerous agreements to fight global security challenges, based on which they participate in common activities. Until the Ukraine crisis (Crimea crisis), there was even a possibility of a joint construction of a missile shield in Europe.

to its replacement, the Typhoon, which is superior to the Hunter in terms of capability and speed, but at a unit cost of GBP 72 million in 2012 (Davies et al. 2011).

NATO's Smart Defence proposal claims to do more with less money (Karnjuš 2013: 29–44), i.e. not spending more money but spending better. It is about specializing in what the Allies do best and seeking multinational solutions to common problems. It means pooling and sharing capabilities and it encourages NATO members to cooperate in developing military capabilities and coordinating efforts better (Blackwood 2012: 85–93). For Richard Weitz, (2014), the main features of Smart Defence include "aligning national capability priorities with those of NATO, promoting specialization by design rather than by default and pursuing cooperation in the development, acquisition, maintenance and operation of critical capabilities" (p. 3).

However, some NATO members, rather than sharing defence assets collectively, are still trying to have a full range of national military capabilities. Also, the concept of Smart Defence cannot ignore the incentives and constraints that operate in defence markets at both national and Alliance levels (Hartley 2012). However, now that Russia is again seen as an enemy, it will probably be much easier for NATO member states to coordinate their national defence plans and capabilities more closely to ensure that they have the critical capabilities needed for collective defence. Generally, it is argued that NATO would win any conventional war with Russia in Europe due to its superior technologies and human and financial resources. But in the last two decades, Vladimir Putin has increased Russia's national defence budget and has made sizeable investments in various R&D defence programmes. Thus, advocates of NATO's Smart Defence concept now have a concrete reason to implement it better and faster.

The same goes for the US concept of Missile Defence in Europe. After two decades of debate and quarrelling, the Ukraine/Crimea crisis resulted in consensus among NATO members that missile defence would be a component of NATO's new forces. Furthermore, NATO has withdrawn its proposal of missile defence cooperation with Russia, which involved

creating two joint centres to share early warning data and to plan and coordinate responses to a ballistic missile attack from a third country (O'Reilly 2014: 2).

Also, NATO members are aware that they have to increase their defence budgets to 2% of their national GDP, because now they face a potential threat from Russia in Europe. Once more, they have to prepare to protect their own homeland security. According to a recent report, published by the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI), military spending among most European NATO allies continues to be outstripped by Russia, China and other emerging powers (SIPRI 2013). A factor in this is that Europeans believe that they can enjoy security provided by the US without paying for it. Compared to its European allies, the US defence budget is vast at USD 600 billion in 2014, despite a drop in spending. Next year, the Pentagon's military budget is expected to fall to USD 498 billion, but it will still be around 35% of the global total (SIPRI 2013).<sup>13</sup> Also, US troops have much more battle experience compared to their European allies.

## Russia as a major enemy of NATO and the new geostrategic conflicts for the former Soviet space in Europe

The recent crisis in Crimea and then in other parts of east Ukraine is viewed at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies as one of the gravest European crises since the end of the Cold War. Jeffrey Mankoff (2014) writes this represents an escalation of the tactics that Moscow has used for the past two decades to maintain its influence across the domains of the former Soviet Union. Namely, the Kremlin has either directly supported or contributed to the emergence of four breakaway ethnic regions in Eurasia:

- Nagorno-Karabakh, a landlocked mountainous region in south-western Azerbaijan that declared its independence under Armenian protection following a brutal civil war;
- Transnistria, a self-declared state in Moldova, on a strip of land

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13 See also Economist (2013).

between the Dniester River and Ukraine;

- Abkhazia, on Georgia's Black Sea coast;
- South Osetia, in northern Georgia. (Mankoff 2014: 60)

The main problem is that in that part of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the New World Order (after the fall of bipolarism), has yet not settled. Geopolitically, geostrategically and geoeconomically, that region is still divided between the West (potential membership in NATO and the EU) and the Russian sphere of influence. A new European security architecture has to be created, but it is not an easy process. Some of these states have expressed their wish to join Euro-Atlantic and European structures (NATO, the EU), but some of them are still strongly politically and especially economically linked to Moscow. Both NATO and the EU have offered institutional ties of cooperation (NATO's "Partnership for Peace" programme and the EU's "Eastern Neighbouring" programme, Agreement of Association, etc.). At the same time, Russia views these countries (all of which were formerly part of the Soviet Union) as coming under the Russian sphere of influence (Lynch 2011: 110–118). Here, Moscow considers it has privileged interests, describing the former Soviet domains as Russia's "near abroad" immediately after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union (Trenin 2002: 150–170). Vladimir Putin has tried to enhance Russian influence in that part of Europe and Eurasia by pushing stronger political and economic integration with post-Soviet states, establishing first a Customs Union with Kazakhstan and Belarus and then trying to form a supranational Eurasian Union in an agreement initially signed by Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia in May 2014 and due to come into force in January 2015, but intended also to Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Tajikistan in 2015. This is supposed to encompass economic rather than political integration, through the formation of an economic bloc modelled on and rivalling the EU.

In this context, all frozen conflicts in post-Soviet countries and the latest crisis in Ukraine have to be seen as Russia's wish to slow down the process of integration of that part of the world into NATO and the EU. Moscow has stopped the enlargement of NATO a couple of times in recent history (the Baltic States, Georgia and Ukraine). In Russia, NATO is still

seen as an enemy, as a relic of the history of the Cold War. In its wish to resist the further enlargement of both NATO and the EU to include those countries which the Kremlin has traditionally seen as part of the Russian sphere of influence, Putin has deployed Russia's military forces in those regions. Abkhazia and South Ossetia each host approximately 3,500 Russian troops, together with 1,500 Federal Security Service personnel. Transnistria has some 1,500 Russian military soldiers on its territory and Armenia has approximately 5,000 Russian troops (Mankoff 2014: 67). All of these countries allow Russia to base troops on their territory. The Crimea peninsula already hosted Russia's Black Sea fleet and approximately 40,000 Russian troops are based on the Russia-Ukraine border. Six Russian Suhoi 27 fighter jets and three transport planes are deployed in Babrujsk in Belarus. The Belarusian President, Lukashenko, urged Moscow to deploy 10,000 Russian troops on Belarusian territory. At the time of writing, more than 3,500 Russian troops have taken part in tactical exercises on the Baltic coast near Kaliningrad close to Poland in the past few months (*JutarnjiLIST* 2014).

Russia, under Vladimir Putin, has been remarkably successful at frustrating NATO and Western projects on former Soviet territory. The Russian President, through his statements, has shown that Russia has actually got what it wanted (*Economist* 2014a). On the other side, since the start of the Ukraine/Crimea crisis, NATO has enhanced its deterrence and defence capabilities for its members neighbouring Russia. The allies have increased the number of surveillance flights over the Baltic countries and intelligence AWACS flights over Poland and Romania. Over 150 US troops are stationed in Poland and NATO has carried out a major military exercise in the Baltic territory, as well as enhancing the presence of allied naval forces in the Baltic, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Scholars from the Polish Institute of International Affairs have suggested and even demanded that the current rotational presence of the US Air Force become a permanent deployment and that the Baltic States should supplement the Air Policing mission with permanent NATO land forces on their territories. The joint procurement by several Allies of air and missile defence units, with the aim of deploying them in the Baltic States, has been suggested as the basis for the establishment of regular

exercises of NATO forces in the Baltic area over the next several years (Durkalec 2014: 2).

Of the former Soviet Republic, those of Russia's neighbours that are now NATO members (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) are particularly concerned for their territorial integrity because they are difficult to defend. Their airspaces are entirely covered by Russian missiles, but even if Russia will not attack them militarily, Moscow can start to undermine them by stirring unrest among ethnic Russians there. An additional permanent presence of different NATO forces in countries neighbouring Russia should strengthen the message to Moscow that any eventual Russian act of military or non-military aggression against neighbouring NATO members would spark immediate engagement and a response from other NATO allies.

The large Russian military exercises held in 2009, which rehearsed an invasion of the Baltic States and included a simulated nuclear attack on Poland, shows how important the post-Soviet space is to Putin. In 2013, Russia and Belarus conducted another major exercise. The Kremlin has threatened preventive attacks on parts of the European missile defence system that America is deploying more than once. To reassure the nervous NATO member countries bordering Russia, the Alliance undertook its largest live-fire exercise in 2013, "Steadfast Jazz". Around 6,000 personnel from NATO countries and Ukraine, Finland and Sweden were involved in the manoeuvres in Poland and the Baltic States. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen said that "Steadfast Jazz was a signal to anyone who might have an intention to attack a NATO ally", adding "I do not expect Russia to have any intention to attack NATO allies, so you might say it is a signal to 'whom it may concern'" (*Economist* 2013: 55). Thus, the geopolitical rivalries with continental Europe, with NATO and Russia at its core, have stormed back to the central stage.

## **NATO's return to a focus on Europe and the Article 5 clause**

While NATO has the military capacity to defeat Russian in a conventional armed conflict, the will to defend non-members is currently lacking. Since the start of the crisis in Ukraine, there has been no consensus

among all 28 NATO members to intervene militarily (Article 5) to defend the territorial integrity of Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova or other closely aligned states in the event of a Russian attack against them. It is more likely that Russia will use its military forces to protect and control its neighbouring space, which is vital to Russia's foreign policy interests. For NATO members this is not the case. Most Americans say that defending the security of allies is very important, but only 6% would use force over Ukraine (*Economist* 2014b).

It is certain that NATO will not (soon) change Article 5 on collective defence, so an armed attack on any member will be considered an attack on all member countries. The US, as a member of the Alliance, is committed to protecting its European allies. However, today the US is globally overstretched and acting as global peacekeeper and Europeans are mindful of the limits of US power. A survey by the Pew Research Centre shows that 52% of Americans want the US to "mind its own business internationally" (*Economist* 2014c: 9); this is the largest figure in five decades of polling on this theme. During his last visit to the Pacific region (Spring 2014), President Obama offered fresh guarantees that the defence treaty between Japan and the US covers all Japanese administrative territory, including the Senkaku islands, which China also claims. In the Philippines, he has signed a new 10-year agreement to give US forces greater access to local bases and the US has approximately 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea. There are some 30,000 US forces based in the whole of Europe today, compared to 213,000 in 1989.

Europe's privileged status in US foreign policy is a Cold War anachronism. Today, in a so-called post-European world (Haass 2013: 38–42) development in the Asia-Pacific region is influencing US defence priorities. In contrast, the development of the situation in Asia does not exert a major influence on European defence priorities and not all Europeans are committed to US global strategy. Since the end of the Cold War, Europeans have been afraid that the US might forget them; however, now, with the crisis in Ukraine/Crimea, they have a concrete reason to call the Americans back.

Regardless of further events in and around Ukraine, Euro-Atlanticism, based on US–European relations and their joint action against an external enemy, again has the opportunity to show its strength in the European arena (Bugajski and Teleki 2007).

## **Strategic opportunities for NATO’s open-door policy and global partnerships**

By consolidating and strengthening Euro-Atlantic ties for the defence of Europe, NATO now has the opportunity to enhance its open-door policy. Rather than become engaged in major military conflict, NATO aims to strengthen its relations with Georgia, Azerbaijan and perhaps one day with Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries, if and when they show an interest in a closer relationship with NATO. Georgia could be admitted into the Membership Action Plan for NATO at the Wales Summit (having missed the opportunity in 2008 because of the war). Furthermore, Monte Negro could receive an invitation to become a member country. Although the Wales Summit was not foreseen as a forum for enlargement, the new geostrategic Russian position means that the Summit will be oriented towards new partners and allies. Furthermore, the enlargement policy of NATO is one of the most successful policies of the Alliance, although its role in NATO's transformation is not stressed enough. NATO today is a rare international organization (the only military political one), being one in which membership countries still show their interest. At a time in which NATO is seeking more optimal ways to redefine relations with Russia, NATO can offer something more than Moscow, namely Euro-Atlantic partnership. The enlargement of NATO could be a bargaining chip in relation to Russia, because NATO would be able to consider possible new members according to their relationship with Russia.

## Conclusion

NATO should use the 2014 Wales Summit to emphasize the above-mentioned problems. As Mead (2014) notes, "...Westerners should never have expected old-fashioned geopolitics to go away. They did so only because they fundamentally misread what the collapse of the Soviet Union meant: the ideological triumph of liberal capitalist democracy over communism, not the obsolescence of hard power" (p. 68). Some Western scholars find current trends disturbing as in international relations and international politics following the end of Cold War soft power became smart power (Nye 2011). Thus, both NATO experts and NATO members have focused on a global world order based on democracy, liberalism, the role of law, global governance, human rights, climate change, energy sufficiency, the fight against terrorism, cyber security, and so on. However, hard power issues in terms of security and old-fashioned geopolitics have not disappeared from international politics. One might argue that this is good for NATO because, despite all the transformations undergone in the last two and a half decades, it is still a military alliance; as such, it is much easier to organize its structure, goals and forces when the enemy is visible and clearly defined. Seen in this light, the latest and most significant deterioration in NATO–Russian relations provides advantages for NATO.

The need for a deep revision in relations with Russia and the new European security landscape should be key features for NATO at the Wales Summit in September this year. Re-building geopolitical and geostrategic stability and predictability in wider Europe is again the focus and the main task of NATO, which is the largest, strongest, richest and most advanced military-political Euro-Atlantic organization. The crisis in Ukraine has had the unintended consequence of giving NATO a renewed sense of purpose. It is believed that the borders of NATO countries are red lines, so that Russia will not undertake a military attack on any NATO members.

Instead of a Third World War or a NATO–Russian War, the West, led by the US, has imposed financial and economic sanctions on Russia,

including visa restrictions, travel bans and asset freezes for a number of wealthy Russian people. The US has shown considerable enthusiasm for such an approach toward Moscow,<sup>14</sup> followed by the European members of NATO, especially those who have in the past developed different kinds of economic cooperation with Russia or are dependent on Russia's energy supply.

Until the Ukraine crisis, NATO was trying to transform itself into a global security alliance. Now again its focus of interest has become local: Europe/Russia. It is precisely because NATO has proved to be so amenable to and flexible in changes in the decades since 1989 that it has remained attractive for new member countries which would like to join the Alliance.

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14 The Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Democrat Senator Carl Levin, on his visit to Ukraine on 25 April 2014 called for harsher sanctions on Russian banks and energy interests. The leading Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Bob Corker, has said that the Russian stockmarket actually rose after the latest US sanctions were announced, suggesting that the sanctions imposed were weaker than the world expected (*Economist* 2014: 9).

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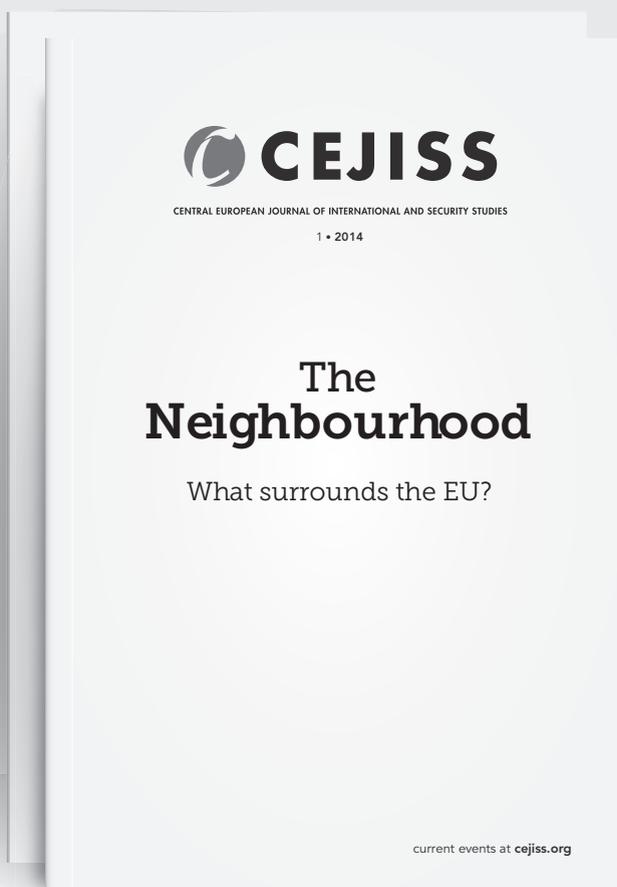
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**Monika Begović** (monika.begovic@gmail.com) gained a Master of Science degree in International Relations at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. She is active in research of different aspects of transatlantic relations, NATO's relations with the EU, especially in regards with the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. At the same Faculty, Begović graduated in journalism and later worked as a journalist in various media, and as a permanent journalist at the daily newspaper Slobodna Dalmacija, Office in Zagreb. For twelve years Begović has worked for the United Nations, where she specialized in running projects, and is currently a project manager and consultant on an EU twinning project.

**Lidija Čehulić Vukadinović** (radovanvukadinovic@yahoo.com) is a professor of International Relations, International Organizations and Euroatlantic organizations at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb. Čehulić published numerous books and articles, has worked as editor of scientific publications and has participated in different scientific conferences and seminars in Croatia and abroad. Čehulić is also active in the non-governmental sector and is a board or regular member of several associations, such as: the Atlantic Council of Croatia, the Centre for International Studies, the Croatian Association for International Studies and the International Studies Association (ISA).

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# Serbia's Military Neutrality: Origins, effects and challenges

Filip Ejdus

## Abstract

*Serbia is the only state in the Western Balkans that is not seeking NATO membership. In December 2007, Serbia declared military neutrality and in spite of its EU membership aspirations, developed very close relations with Moscow. The objective of this paper is threefold. First, I argue that in order to understand why Serbia declared military neutrality, one has to look both at the discursive terrain and domestic power struggles. The key narrative that was strategically used by mnemonic entrepreneurs, most importantly by the former Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, to legitimize military neutrality was the trauma of NATO intervention in 1999 and the ensuing secession of Kosovo. In the second part of the paper, I discuss the operational consequences of the military neutrality policy for Serbia's relations with NATO and Russia, as well as for military reform and EU accession. Finally, I spell out the challenges ahead in Serbia's neutrality policy and argue that its decision makers will increasingly be caught between pragmatic foreign policy requirements on the one hand and deeply entrenched traumatic memories on the other.*

## KEY WORDS:

*Serbia, neutrality, NATO, memory, trauma, intervention*

## Introduction

For all the Western Balkan states, the 20th century ended at the same time and in an equally dramatic way – with the implosion of the common Yugoslav state.<sup>1</sup> The period of break-up that followed was not equally intense and did not take equally long in all the countries; therefore, each of these new states began to tell political time at a different moment. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Dayton Agreement (1995) marked a new beginning, for Croatia it was Operation Storm (1995), for Macedonia the Ohrid Agreement (2001), and for Montenegro and Kosovo it was independence (2006 and 2008 respectively). All these countries made EU and NATO membership their central foreign policy objective in the new post-Yugoslav era. In Serbia, the *annus mirabilis* was the year 2000, when Slobodan Milošević lost the presidential election and was subsequently ousted in mass demonstrations on 5 October after he refused to recognize the electoral defeat. Although the changes initiated by this event were limited and gradual, in political memory this day symbolizes a break with the wars and isolation of the 1990s and the new era of democratic transition and integration. The initial post 10/5 enthusiasm largely stemmed from the expectation that Serbia would finally become a “normal” country and that although late, it would still take the path that had already been taken by other European post-Communist states. In his famous keynote address to the National Assembly on 24 October 2001, the first post 10/5 Foreign Minister, Goran Svilanović, clearly stated: “The main foreign policy of the FRY is focused on European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes” (Dragojlović et al. 2010: 278).

Today, 13 years later, the “European” part of this orientation remains the backbone of Serbia's foreign policy. Despite the slow pace, wandering and occasional setbacks in the process of European integration, Serbia became a candidate for EU membership in 2011 and started accession negotiations in January 2014. However, in the

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meantime, the “Atlantic” part of Serbia's foreign policy orientation of which Svilanović spoke was abandoned. Even though it became a member of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in December 2006, Serbia proclaimed “military neutrality in relation to the existing military alliances” in a parliamentary resolution from December 2007 (National Assembly 2007). Internationally, Serbia's military neutrality has not been recognized by any state or international organization, above all because Belgrade did not invest any effort whatsoever in achieving this goal (Novaković 2012: 11). How can all this be explained?

In this paper, I demonstrate that the adoption of military neutrality policy in Serbia has been driven by the trauma of NATO bombing in 1999. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as an “overwhelming experience of sudden and catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled and repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena” (Resende and Budryte 2014: 2). Similar to other political traumas, the trauma of NATO bombing did not fade away with time. On the contrary, it only grew as the beginning of the operation was commemorated and victims mourned year after year. The memory of NATO intervention in 1999 as an aggression against Serbia was not only endorsed by post-Milošević governments but also incorporated into the very identity of the Serbian state. As Paul Williams writes, “it could be argued that memory is crucial in the construction of a sense of belonging, of where we come from and where we are going, that it is at the heart of all identity debates and, as such, that it should be at the heart of security studies” (Williams 2008: 506). The trauma of NATO intervention in 1999 was narrated first by the Milošević regime, presenting Serbia as a victim of western aggression. After the demise of the Milošević regime, NATO bombing gradually developed into a veritable formative event in Serbia's collective memory and thus was scripted into the collective identity narrative. Most importantly, Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica endorsed the narrative, updated it for the post 10/5 era and translated it into the military neutrality policy. The trauma of NATO bombing thus became a backbone of Serbia's self-understanding and a driver of its relations, not only with NATO but also with the West more generally. Today, this collective memory complicates Serbia's relationships with its immediate neighbours and its positioning within the wider European security

architecture. However, in order to understand how this collective memory is socially constructed within political institutions, one has to look at the role of mnemonic entrepreneurs, i.e. those who strategically use collective memories in order to achieve self-interested goals.

My argument unfolds in the following manner. In the first section I explain how and why Serbia declared military neutrality and why this policy has not changed thus far. Here, I will focus especially on the official policy discourse and political debates that surround it. In the second part, I discuss the effects of military neutrality on the operational side of Serbia's security and defence policy and spell out some challenges ahead.

## The origins of military neutrality

The contemporary concept of military neutrality, or non-participation in wars and military alliances, is as old as the concept of sovereignty (Goetschel 1999: 119). Over the centuries, military neutrality has been a strategy followed by many small states that have wanted to preserve their sovereignty in the face of a balance of power among the great powers of the day. The concept lost much of its clarity with the end of the Cold War, especially in the European context. For example, three neutral states, Austria, Sweden and Finland, joined the EU in 1995. Their neutrality policy officially remained in place (as was the case with Ireland, Cyprus and Malta), but the concept itself lost its erstwhile precise meaning in the process of adaptation to the post-Cold War era and Europe's collective security needs.

Serbia's neutrality, declared in December 2007, is no exception to this: there has been much discussion about it but very little common understanding of what it actually means in practice. Moreover, these discussions are usually more normative than analytical as they serve to support or criticize, sometimes with an excess of emotion, rather than explain the policy of military neutrality itself. Opponents of NATO

membership, if they do not assume that military neutrality is self-evident “because of the bombing” or “because of Kosovo”, defend this policy as an emanation of Serbia's national identity. Advocates of NATO membership, by insisting on the mundane and daily political motives behind the neutrality policy, often trivialize its origins and thus overlook a wider context that enabled the adoption of the policy and its perseverance over time. The majority of the articles that deal with this subject are journalistic pieces, while in several academic papers on military neutrality the issue had been covered only in passing. In these works, the main motives behind military neutrality that stand out are the “policy towards Kosovo”, mentioned in the foreign policy sphere, and “gathering support” on the domestic front (Litavski 2012; Novaković 2012). However, if one wishes to understand how and why Serbia adopted a policy of military neutrality, it is necessary to go further and analyse the decision-making process that led to its adoption, but also to understand the discursive enterprise that enabled the formulation and legitimization of this policy and its survival to this day.

## Why did Serbia proclaim military neutrality?

Until 2007, Serbia had never in its history pursued a policy of military neutrality. Even during the Cold War, Socialist Yugoslavia was among the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, but it was not militarily neutral.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it concluded the Balkan Pact with Turkey and Greece in 1953, effectively linking itself with NATO. The interwar Yugoslavia was also a member of the Little Entente with Czechoslovakia and Romania from 1920 to 1938. Going back further into the past, the Kingdom of Serbia also joined the Balkan Alliance with Bulgaria, Montenegro and Greece in 1912. Even medieval Serbia did not hesitate to enter military alliances with a variety of polities in order to resist and balance the Byzantine Empire.

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2 On the difference between military neutrality and non-alignment, see Novaković (2011).

For many years after October 2000, military neutrality was not even present in the political discourse of Serbia. The official foreign policy priority of the state was Euro-Atlantic integration and the parties who opposed this goal did not propose neutrality but rather closer ties with Russia. This was the case, for example, with the far right Serbian Radical Party, the strongest opposition party, which advocated military alliance and maybe even integration with Russia, but not neutrality (Bakić 2007). The extent to which military neutrality was off the table in public discussions for many years is best illustrated by the fact that the printed media in Serbia hardly ever mentioned the term before September 2007, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Military neutrality in the printed media<sup>3</sup>**

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
No. of reports	0	4	0	0	151	122	265	186	153	215

However, it is important to note that during the first few years of democratic transition, the Euro-Atlantic narrative in Serbia explicitly referred to the EU, whereas NATO was only implicitly assumed. New democratic elites were probably consciously avoiding opening the topic of NATO membership, fearing that it would easily be linked by their opponents to the collective trauma of the NATO bombing of 1999. As there was no willingness to challenge the victimhood storylines created by Milošević and his regime, opening up the discussion on NATO membership was thus avoided as a dangerous enterprise from which only the nationalist opposition could gain immense political profit. What then happened that turned military neutrality from a non-issue in 2006 into an official policy of the Republic of Serbia in December 2007?

The answer to this question must be sought in the fate of negotiations on the final status of Kosovo. As a reminder, Kosovo had been part of Serbia since 1912 and is construed by Serbian nationalists as a “sacred

<sup>3</sup> This covers all printed media in Serbia searched through the Ebart Media Archive. All the texts published in 2007 on military neutrality are dated September or later.

space" (Ejdus and Subotić 2014). In 1999, NATO intervened in the civil war between Serbian forces and Albanian guerilla fighters. As a result, Serbian forces withdrew from Kosovo and its administration was taken over by NATO and the UN. In 2006, negotiations on the final status of Kosovo began in Vienna under the auspices of the Special Envoy to the UN, Secretary General Martti Ahtisaari. As the sides failed to come to an agreement, only a few days after the parliamentary elections in Serbia in February 2007, Ahtisaari presented his plan envisaging supervised statehood for Kosovo. In Belgrade, both President Tadić and Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica fiercely rejected the plan as inadmissible.<sup>4</sup>

In the coming months, increasingly open messages kept arriving from the Western countries that Kosovo's independence was inevitable. For example, during his visit to Tirana on 10 July, US President George W. Bush explicitly said that Kosovo would be independent. After an additional round of unsuccessful negotiations and as they realized that because of opposition from Belgrade and the Russian veto the Ahtisaari plan would not pass in the UN Security Council, Western states took the decision to go ahead with a unilateral declaration of independence (Perritt 2010: 192). This development brought relations between Serbia and the West onto thin ice. However, in contrast to President Tadić, who tried to be consistent in defending Serbia's territorial integrity but was also pragmatic in his relations with the West, Prime Minister Koštunica saw the new situation in a far more dramatic light. In the speech he gave on St. Vitus' Day (28 June) in 2007, Koštunica made the analogy with what is symbolically the most important event in Serbian history: "A new, now Serbian–American Battle of Kosovo is taking place before the eyes of the entire world. On one side stands the authority of a great world power while on the other side stands Serbia, whose argument is law" (Krstić 2007).

This was a poster case of what psychiatrist Vamik Volkan termed "time collapse", a mnemonic technology of government strategically used by ethno-nationalist entrepreneurs in order to fuse collective emotions about shared past traumas or chosen glories with those pertaining to

4 At the moment when Ahtisaari brought his plan to Belgrade, Koštunica was technically still Prime Minister of the Government for which the mandate had run out; soon after that, however, he again became Prime Minister of the new Serbian Government constituted on 15 May 2007.

the present condition. Chosen traumas – and the battle of Kosovo as the biggest defeat in Serbian history no doubt falls under this category – influence collective identity to a much greater extent than chosen glories, because, as Volkan put it, they “bring with them powerful experiences of loss and feelings of humiliation, vengeance and hatred that trigger a variety of unconscious defense mechanisms that attempt to reverse these experiences and feelings” (Volkan 1997: 82).

Shortly thereafter, as a response to these developments, a policy of military neutrality started to take shape within the DSS. At the meeting of the Main Board held on 15 September 2007, its president, Vojislav Koštunica, posed a political and moral question:

“How is it possible for Serbia to join the military alliance which first bombed us, then came to Kosovo with armed forces, and then - bypassing the Security Council and ignoring the UN – recognized the unilaterally proclaimed independence of an organic part of our country?” (Koštunica 2007)

At the same meeting, the party adopted a programme which openly opposed Serbia's membership in NATO; a month later it also adopted the *Declaration on Military Neutrality* (DSS 2007). It is interesting that this resolution does not even mention Kosovo. Instead, it only generally stipulates: “Military neutrality in relation to the existing military alliances is the best and most reliable way for Serbia to preserve its national sovereignty, integrity and independence [...]” (p. 363). It also proclaims that military neutrality does not exclude “the possibility of Serbia's cooperation with other countries in the interest of common and general security”, while giving up said neutrality – as is stated in the resolution – would obligate Serbia to participate in wars that are not in its interest, limit its independence, endanger its security and prevent its internal development. Thus, DSS, which was one of the ruling parties, formally abandoned its former policy course towards Euro-Atlantic integration. This would be only the first phase in the policy cycle that would eventually lead to the adoption of military neutrality at the state level.

In the foreign policy sphere, the announcement of military neutrality by DSS was meant to be a message of friendship to Moscow from which Belgrade expected support in its legal and diplomatic battle to preserve its virtual sovereignty over Kosovo. The support was expected primarily within the Security Council, in which Russia as a permanent member with the power of veto could have prevented the amendment of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 in 1999. The document, among other things, defined Kosovo as part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Domestically, Koštunica most likely estimated that this shift towards the policy of military neutrality could boost his falling approval ratings, as NATO membership was not very popular in Serbia.<sup>5</sup> What is more, when DSS adopted the resolution on military neutrality, it strongly resonated with the memories of the still vivid collective trauma of 1999.

The next task that was before Koštunica and his party was to turn a party decision into state policy. During October and November, the party actively promoted the idea among the public (Blic 2007; Glas Javnosti 2007a; Jočić 2007; Večernje novosti 2007). Then, in late December, Serbia's negotiating team for Kosovo, staffed mostly by Koštunica's people, provided all the caucuses in the Serbian Parliament with a draft resolution on the protection of integrity and sovereignty that also contained one sentence declaring military neutrality. Why did President Boris Tadić, whose party had advocated building close ties with NATO, agree to allow the inclusion of the clause on military neutrality in the draft of the resolution? Any account of this policy shift would have to factor into the equation the approaching presidential elections scheduled for 20 January. Tadić was probably yielding to his coalition partner Koštunica because he expected his support against the radical counter-candidate, Tomislav Nikolić, in the second round of the presidential election. In addition, according to media reports, President Tadić agreed to the military neutrality clause only after Koštunica gave up the adoption of a separate resolution that would request the EU member states not to recognize Kosovo (Isailović 2007). Finally, as NATO membership was not very popular and with not enough time to change this, President Tadić had no other option but to concede – at least temporarily – to Koštunica.

.....  
5 In December 2007, support for membership in NATO was only 28% (Glas Javnosti 2007b).

The National Assembly adopted the Resolution on 26 December 2007, stipulating as follows:

“Because of the overall role of NATO, from the illegal bombing of Serbia in 1999 carried out without a Security Council decision to Annex 11 of Ahtisaari’s rejected plan, which stipulates that NATO is ‘the ultimate authority’ in ‘independent Kosovo’, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia hereby passes the decision to declare the military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia in relation to the existing military alliances, until a possible referendum in which a final decision would be taken on the matter.” (National Assembly 2007)

Unlike the case of the DSS party resolution, the motive for the adoption of military neutrality in this document is somewhat more clearly stated: it was the overall role of NATO in Kosovo and especially its military intervention in 1999. A supermajority of deputies (220 out of 250) voted for the Resolution. Only deputies of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina (LSV) were against it, as well as the representative of the Albanian minority, Riza Halimi. The MPs of the Alliance of Hungarians from Vojvodina (SVM) abstained. Parties that otherwise opposed military neutrality but still voted for the Resolution, soon after tried to trivialize it and explain it only as temporary confirmation of the *de facto* state of affairs rather than a long-term policy option. For example, Defence Minister Dragan Šutanovac, having voted for the Resolution, argued that “The Resolution only states the *de facto* state of affairs, and it is such that we are now militarily neutral; this however is not a decision that will be in effect forever and in the future” (MČ 2010). Šutanovac later changed his tone and stated that Koštunica’s military neutrality policy “created confusion” (Nikolić-Djaković 2007). However, the policy has survived to this day, with no prospect of being revised in the near future.

## Why has the policy of military neutrality survived?

Although many in Serbia claimed early on that military neutrality was unrealistic, costly and a short-lived project of Vojislav Koštunica, ultimately doomed to fail, it has nevertheless survived to this very day with no change in sight. Koštunica was removed from office in 2008 and even from the Parliament in 2014, but his military neutrality policy seems to be as firm as ever, at least at the level of political discourse.

All the political parties that voted for the Resolution in December 2007 – and they cover virtually the entire political spectrum – have rhetorically been entrapped in the claim that military neutrality is Serbia's response to the illegitimate role of NATO in Kosovo. As long as the victimhood narrative vis-a-vis NATO is not transformed, if not entirely dropped, it is hard to expect any policy transformation. As the years have passed by, the identity of Serbia as a neutral state has not only been declared and practised, but increasingly recognized by other states. It is to this period that this section now briefly turns.

In May 2008, the new elections sent Vojislav Koštunica and DSS into opposition; however SPS (formerly Milošević's party), which was also in favour of military neutrality, joined the new government led by the Democratic Party (DS). Although there was no mention of military neutrality in the keynote speech of the new Prime Minister, Mirko Cvetković, there was no discussion of NATO membership either (Cvetković 2008). The lack of a stance regarding these key strategic issues remained a feature of the security policy of Cvetković's government until the end of its term in June 2012. Aware of the immense unpopularity of NATO among Serbia's citizens due to the victimhood narratives laid down by Koštunica's politics of trauma, Mirko Cvetković's government openly avoided this topic. Military neutrality was not abandoned, but neither was it elaborated further in any of the strategic documents adopted at a later date, probably with a view to waiting for a better moment to revise the policy. Thus, neither the *National Security Strategy* (2009), *Defence Strategy* (2009), nor the *Defence White Paper* (2010), contain a single sentence about military neutrality. When the *National Security*

Strategy was in the process of being adopted, the then Defence Minister, Dragan Šutanovac, said that he expected “criticism from the extreme ends of the public” regardless of whether they favoured the first or the second option (Tanjug 2009). In other words, fearing that the negative image of NATO generated within the victimhood narratives and by the politics of trauma would spill over into personal and party ratings, even “the Atlanticists” in the government embraced military neutrality as the best temporary solution until more “favourable conditions” would allow this policy to be changed.

The fact that Cvetković's government avoided either endorsing or revising the military neutrality policy provided additional room for the opponents of NATO membership to continue to cultivate and develop – without any hindrance – the narrative of the Atlantic Alliance as a hostile entity that had victimized Serbia in the past and continued to do so to that day. Koštunica and his party, now in opposition, had free rein to instrumentalize the neglected script on NATO, the last chapter of which was written by the Milošević regime, to serve their partisan purposes and to shape it as they saw fit.<sup>6</sup> Thus, for example, in January 2010, a Proclamation was disseminated, originating from sources close to Koštunica, in which 200 prominent figures (mostly right-wing intellectuals) called for a referendum on Serbia's membership in NATO. The document claimed that:

“By saying that ‘Serbia is East to the West and West to the East’,<sup>7</sup> Serbia's path, identity and position among the nations is defined. Serbia was never a member of any military alliance, East or West. And since it hasn't been the case so far, it would be unreasonable and detrimental to do so right now by joining the only outstanding military alliance. Remaining faithful to ourselves and to our traditions, militarily neutral Serbia is no exception.” (Proglas 2010)

6 On the opposing side there were only a few intellectuals and NGOs, institutionally in weaker positions and therefore able to exert little influence on the public discourse.

7 An apocryphal sentence attributed to the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church, allegedly formulated in a letter dating from 1221.

Military neutrality was thus presented as an integral part of a trans-historical meta-essence of the Serbian national identity rather than a matter of rational political choice. Serbia was portrayed in the document, along the lines of a widely shared geopolitical imagination on the Serbian right, as being positioned between the East and the West, destined to maintain an equidistance between the materially superior West and spiritually familiar Russia. Vojislav Koštunica, now a leader of the opposition party, knew that Serbia would not join NATO as Mirko Cvetković's government was completely inactive on this issue. He nevertheless continued incessantly to heat up this topic, hoping that strong public support for the policy of military neutrality would translate into support for his own party – DSS. That did not happen, but the support for NATO membership began to decline, dropping to 14% in 2012, almost half what it had been in December 2007.<sup>8</sup>

Most other parties also adopted a similar policy vis-à-vis NATO. According to the programme of the currently ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), “military neutrality is the only logical and reasonable solution for the Serbian state in terms of sharp confrontation between NATO and Russia”.<sup>9</sup> After the defeat of Boris Tadić and his DS party in both the presidential and parliamentary elections held in May 2012, Tomislav Nikolić of SNS became the new President and parties that had in the meantime fully endorsed the policy of military neutrality now formed the government. On the other hand, the programme of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), whose leader Ivica Dačić was appointed Prime Minister in July 2012, proclaimed that:

“Taking into account the enormous human and material damage suffered by the ravages of war in the twentieth century – in the First and Second World Wars, in the civil war, in ethnic conflicts in the last decade of the last century, and in the NATO bombing – the Socialists believe that Serbia should be militarily neutral.”<sup>10</sup>

8 Available at: <http://www.bezbednost.org/Bezbednost/4926/Opada-podrska-gradjana-Srbije-evroatlantskim.shtml> [accessed 2 June 2014].

9 Serbian Progressive Party, fundamental programme objectives. Available at: <http://www.sns.org.rs/o-nama/program-srpske-napredne-stranke> [accessed 2 June 2014].

10 Programme of the Socialist Party of Serbia, 11 December 2010. Available at: <http://sps.org.rs/documents/PROGRAM%20SPS.pdf> [accessed 2 June 2014].

In March 2014, new elections took place and the SNS achieved a landslide victory, winning an absolute majority in the Serbian Parliament. Given the overarching discourse, the SNS political programme and public opinion, it can be expected that Serbia's military neutrality is here to stay for quite some time. That the neutral role identity is being consolidated has most vividly been expressed during the recent crisis in Ukraine. Faced with pressure to take sides, Serbia has decided to be neutral vis-à-vis the Ukrainian conflict, perceived as being fought by proxy between Russia and the West. The text below sets out the ramifications of Serbia's neutrality in the future for its relationships with NATO, the EU and the Western Balkan region.

## **The effects and challenges of Serbia's military neutrality**

As has been shown above, military neutrality has a strong emotional resonance in general political discourse in Serbia. However, it is worth noting that it has had a somewhat different impact on the operational side of Serbia's security and defence policy. In a nutshell, since the policy has never been elaborated, its substance does not go beyond the mere fact that Serbia does not seek NATO membership. However, its effects on the operational side of Serbia's security and defence policy are multiple. First, the declaration of military neutrality has not significantly disrupted Serbia's participation in the NATO PfP. Serbia joined the programme in December 2006, its Presentation Document of July 2007 stating that: "...by its active participation in the PfP, the Republic of Serbia is ready to contribute maximally to the peaceful development of the region, strengthening good neighbourly relations and resolving all disputed issues through dialogue and cooperation" (Republic of Serbia 2007: 4). Moreover, on 1 October 2008, Serbia and NATO signed the Information Security Agreement, a precondition for Serbia's participation in the activities of the PfP, as well as for the opening of the Mission of the Republic of Serbia in the NATO Headquarters in

Brussels.<sup>11</sup> Between 2009 and 2012, Serbia implemented three individual partnership programmes, while the presentation document of the Individual Partnership Action Plan was adopted in July 2011 (Republic of Serbia 2011). In addition, Serbia is participating in the Planning and Review Process (PARP) programme, which admittedly has been blocked since November 2011 due to the disagreement of Albania regarding an Article in the *National Security Strategy* in which the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is defined as the ultimate threat (Tanjug 2013). This perception concerning security is repeated not only in frequent statements by state officials but also in the majority of strategic documents that Serbia has adopted in the field of foreign, security and defence policy.<sup>12</sup> Finally, Serbia has fully professionalized and reformed its military according to NATO standards and military neutrality does not seem to have been a crucial obstacle in that direction. On the contrary, NATO assisted military reforms in Serbia through the Serbia–NATO Defence Reform Group, established in 2006 (Nič and Cingel 2014: 37).

Second, thus far, military neutrality has not hampered Serbia's relationships with the EU. Serbia was granted candidate status in March 2012 and opened accession negotiations in January 2014. Over the years, Serbia's military neutrality may even have pushed Serbia closer to the EU, in particular its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This was confirmed by the appointment of Tanja Miščević, a well-known EU expert, as state secretary in the Ministry of Defence in 2010.<sup>13</sup> Serbia's willingness to take part in the CSDP was expressed in a number of documents and on countless occasions. Moreover, Serbia concluded two important agreements with the EU to initiate its engagement with the CSDP: the Agreement on Security Procedures for the Exchange and Protection of Classified Information on 26 May 2011 and the Agreement on Establishing a Framework for the Participation of the Republic of Serbia in European Union Crisis Management Operations on 23 June 2011. In the spring of 2012, membership negotiations were commenced with the

11 The agreement was ratified by the National Assembly of Serbia on 5 July 2011.

12 "National Strategy of Serbia for the Accession of Serbia and Montenegro" (The Government of Serbia and Montenegro 2005); "National Programme for EU integration" (Government of Serbia 2008); "National Security Strategy" (National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia 2009); "Defence Strategy" (National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia 2009).

13 In September 2013, she was appointed the chief negotiator for the Accession of Serbia to the EU.

European Defence Agency, while the Serbian Armed Forces made their first ever contribution to a CSDP mission. Serbia is currently participating in two EU missions: it has five members with the EU Training Mission Uganda/Somalia and two members in the naval operation EUNAVFOR in Somalia. In 2012, Serbia's Ministry of Defence was, as state secretary Mišćević put it: "...the only ministry in the government of Serbia which had defined positions for the accession negotiations with the EU".<sup>14</sup> In May 2013, a decision was taken also to include Serbia in the planned EU mission in Mali, with no more than 13 participating members.<sup>15</sup>

Having said that, military neutrality as a policy has at times been questioned as a policy hardly compatible with full EU membership by its proponents and opponents alike. For instance, DSS argues that:

"[...] military neutrality is endangered by European integration. NATO has a key role to play in the common security and defence policy of the EU [...]. If a Serb dies for foreign interests as a professional soldier or as a recruit does not essentially change the fact that he dies as a mercenary, for the sake of foreign interests. The dam against such anti-national policies could only be the political neutrality of Serbia." (DSS 2014).

Most recently, this issue has come under the spotlight during the crisis in Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukraine supported Serbia's claim for its territorial integrity over Kosovo and expected Serbia to reciprocate when the Crimea was annexed by the Russian Federation. Moreover, as an EU candidate state, Serbia was expected to align with EU-led sanctions imposed on Moscow as a punishment for its activities in the Crimea, but also in eastern Ukraine. On the other hand, Serbia is a strategic partner of Russia with which it has signed a number of important deals, not least in the energy sector. From the very outset, Serbia decided not to take sides in order to maintain good relations with both. As Prime Minister Ivica Dačić mentioned in early March 2014, Serbia has a long-term goal to harmonize its foreign policy with the EU, but for the time being, "In spite of the expectations of the EU, Serbia remains in a neutral position towards

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14 Interview with the author, 1 June 2012.

15 [http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/ostala\\_akta/2013/RS25-13.pdf](http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/archive/files/cir/pdf/ostala_akta/2013/RS25-13.pdf)

the crisis in Ukraine" (Srna 2014). Thus, even though Koštunica's party failed to pass the parliamentary threshold in the elections held in 2014, its proposed policy of political neutrality has become the official position of Serbia, at least vis-à-vis the Ukrainian Crisis.

Third, military neutrality has not adversely affected the participation of Serbia in regional security initiatives, such as the Regional Cooperation Council, South Eastern European Defence Ministerial Initiative and many others. Although many were initially concerned about the potential consequences and implications of Serbia's military neutrality, it has not caused any significant turbulence in the region either and has been accepted with understanding. The only exception is Bosnia and Herzegovina for which Belgrade's policy of military neutrality has had somewhat more important and arguably destabilizing consequences. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been participating in an intensive dialogue on membership of NATO since 2008 and received a conditioned invitation for a Membership Action Plan (MAP) in April 2010.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, announced a referendum on NATO membership which, given the relatively low public support of only 37%, will likely end in a negative response (Vukićević 2013).

Fourth, the policy of military neutrality has opened up more room for maintaining some kind of special relations between Serbia and Russia. In the economic sphere, this refers primarily to the Energy Treaty signed between Serbia and Russia in Moscow on 25 January 2008. The treaty encompasses the issue of the South Stream gas pipeline that is supposed to transit through Serbia, as well as the sale of 51% of the shares of the Petroleum Industry of Serbia to a Russian company, *Gazprom Neft*. This agreement is in violation of Serbia's obligations set out in the Energy Community Treaty signed between the EU and the countries of the region in October 2005, as well as with European regulations, the so-called Second and Third Energy Packages. In the future, Serbia will have to harmonize its energy deal with Russia with the European regulations providing for free competition (this will be part of negotiating chapter 15) if it plans to gain full membership.

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16 Prior to this, Milorad Dodik had announced a referendum on possible NATO membership on several occasions in the Republic of Srpska. <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/11/Region/1103106/Dodik%3A+Ne+u+NATO+bez+Srbije.html>

As far as political relations are concerned, Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, represents a key ally in the battle to preserve the formal integrity and sovereignty of Kosovo. In the area of security cooperation, Russia and Serbia have signed a number of very important agreements, including the agreement on the establishment of the Serbian–Russian humanitarian base in Nis (in 2009) and the agreement on the joint development of complex combat systems (Savković 2012). In addition, in April 2013 Serbia became the only European country that had joined, as an observer, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of Collective Security Treaty (ODKB), a military alliance led by the Russian Federation (Đukanović and Gajić 2012). Finally, in May 2013 Serbia and Russia signed the Declaration on Strategic Partnership (Đukanović and Živojinović 2011). Among other things, this long-awaited document provides for closer cooperation in the fields of interior affairs, defence and foreign policy, as well as “consideration of the initiative on the conclusion of the Treaty on European Security” which the President proposed in 2008.<sup>17</sup> Should this agreement be signed – and there is presently no interest in the West to do so – European states that are currently militarily neutral, including Serbia, will probably have to remain permanently neutral, even if at some point they no longer wish to be.

## Challenges ahead

What is the future of the military neutrality of Serbia and what are the challenges that will arise out of this policy? Advocates of NATO membership often emphasize the economic costs of military neutrality. The key argument is that neutrality is very costly and can be afforded only by highly developed countries – and Serbia is not one of them. Some militarily neutral states, such as Turkmenistan for example, do indeed spend a much greater portion of their GDP on defence than average NATO members. This argument, however, is only partially

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<sup>17</sup> The draft agreement is available at: <http://www.rts.rs/upload/storyBoxFileData/2013/05/24/3325874/Deklaracija%20o%20strateskom%20partnerstvu.pdf> [accessed on 2 June 2014].

correct. Namely, due to a more favourable post-Cold War security environment, militarily neutral states in Europe on average spend less on defence than NATO members (Bernauer, Koubi and Ernst 2009). In spite of these trends, it is very difficult to reach a conclusion – at least on the basis of comparative experience – as to whether neutrality will be more costly for Serbia than NATO membership. Such an equation is incomplete without taking into consideration the indirect costs and benefits of membership. For example, in the central European and Baltic countries, foreign direct investment and GDP increased dramatically in the years after these countries joined NATO (Karaulac 2009). It should of course be borne in mind that for these countries, EU and NATO accession processes occurred simultaneously. It is therefore very difficult to ascribe these favourable economic indicators solely to either of the processes. What is certain is that membership in NATO contributed to the improvement of the overall investment climate in the new member states and that the situation would probably not be much different in the case of Serbia.

Apart from this, it is sometimes pointed out that military neutrality could be an obstacle to Serbia's European integration. The argument most often heard in public is that all the post-Communist countries first joined NATO and then the EU. Therefore, this argument reads that although membership in NATO is not a formal requirement for membership in the EU, it is an informal one. It is true that no post-Communist country has remained neutral and still become an EU member. However, as the EU has six militarily neutral or non-aligned states, three of which became members after the end of the Cold War (i.e. Cyprus, Malta and Austria), this argument does not seem to be well founded, at least formally. In addition, even EU officials have on many occasions pointed out that EU and NATO accession are two formally separate processes and that Serbia is under no obligation to join one organization in order to become a member of the other.

There is, however, another potential challenge that may arise from the policy of military neutrality in relation to the European integration of Serbia. It should be borne in mind that although the EU is not formally a defence alliance, it is a political alliance and as of 1999, it has been developing its defence and security policy. The Lisbon Treaty

introduced two clauses that moved the EU another step closer to forming a defence alliance. One is the “Solidarity Clause”, effective in the event of a terrorist attack or disaster, and the other is the “Mutual Defence Clause”, dealing with potential external attacks. Some neutral member states feared that by adopting the Lisbon Treaty, they would be sucked into a military alliance through a back door. That is why a formulation specifying that the above provisions shall not affect the defence policy of individual states, whether neutral or NATO members, was included in the text of the treaty. It served formally to preserve the neutrality of Sweden, Finland, Austria, Ireland, Cyprus and Malta, but it also satisfied the needs of EU member states to integrate themselves further into the field of defence and security. Essentially, according to many criteria, today’s EU has actually surpassed NATO regarding the level of integration, not only in the field of economics and politics, but also in the field of security and defence, as evidenced for example in the work of the European Defence Agency (Parnakova 2009). To the extent that this trend will continue, it will be increasingly difficult for neutral EU member states to maintain even a semblance of their military neutrality and in this context, Serbia will be no exception. The recent crisis in Ukraine has demonstrated well that Serbia’s neutrality, currently defined not only as a decision to stay out of military alliance but also to maintain some sort of geopolitical equidistance between Brussels and Moscow, is not compatible with EU membership.

Finally, with this self-imposed neutrality, Serbia will lose the opportunity to develop strategic relationships with the most powerful European power – the US – and to influence decisions made within NATO regarding the Western Balkans. As the other countries in the region will likely become NATO members sooner or later, it means that Serbia will remain isolated in its own environment, at least when it comes to defence, which could inflame the revival of its revisionist tendencies in the future. Maintaining good relations with Russia can only partially compensate for this loss of influence, bearing in mind that Russia, apart from its position on the UN Security Council and instruments of energy policy, does not have many ways in which to influence developments in the Western Balkans.

## Conclusion

Until recently, Serbia had never historically been a military neutral state. The Democratic Party of Serbia, led by the former Prime Minister Vojislav Koštunica, was the first to adopt the policy of military neutrality in October 2007 at the party level. This was a response to the failure to find a mutually acceptable solution to the Kosovo crisis during the negotiations led by UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari in Vienna. Shortly thereafter, Vojislav Koštunica translated a party decision into a state policy through a declaration of neutrality included in the Parliamentary Resolution on territorial integrity adopted on 26 December 2007. The Resolution states that Serbia declares military neutrality because of the overall role of NATO, from its military intervention in 1999 to its purported endorsement of Kosovo's independence. This makes Serbia's military neutrality essentially different from all other European cases: it is driven by the collective memory of NATO intervention against Serbia, portrayed as an illegal aggression in support of Kosovo's secession. Although the policy has never been mentioned or elaborated on in any other strategic document since the adoption of the Resolution, military neutrality has continued to be the official policy, supported by the great majority of citizens as well as political parties.

The policy of military neutrality has had a multiplicity of effects on Serbia's foreign and security policy. On the one hand, the policy may have slowed down but has not prevented cooperation between Serbia and NATO through the PfP programme. Had Serbia sought NATO membership, it would probably have reformed its armed forces more quickly and more thoroughly in line with NATO standards. However, in the past decade, Serbia has still managed to abolish conscription and professionalize and reform its armed forces according to NATO standards, indeed sometimes with its direct support. Also, military neutrality has not been an obstacle for Serbia in advancing its EU membership bid, including participation in its CSDP.

On the other hand, military neutrality has facilitated the deepening of a strategic partnership with Moscow. When the Ukraine crisis erupted in

early 2014, Serbia decided to be one of the very few European states to remain neutral and refused to join EU-led sanctions against Russia and its allies in Ukraine. Up until 2014, Serbia's neutrality was interpreted as a decision to stay away from military alliances, in particular from NATO. Now, its interpretation was extended to cover also a political conflict between the EU and Russia over the ongoing civil war in Ukraine.<sup>18</sup> Serbia's position stood in a stark contrast to Serbia's EU membership bid, as all candidate countries are expected to align with EU foreign policy, including economic sanctions. Although the EU initially expressed limited understanding for the specific position of Serbia, it nevertheless warned the government in Belgrade about the unsustainability of such a position (Milinković 2014). Serbia has recently begun accession negotiations and the issue of foreign policy harmonization with the EU will soon be on the agenda when Chapter 31, covering Foreign, Security and Defence policy, is opened. As Serbia progresses on its path towards EU membership, it will increasingly face pressure to revise its current equidistant stance towards Brussels and Moscow. This is related not only to close alignment with EU foreign policy, but also alignment with EU regulations in the energy sector.

It seems that not only the ruling coalition but also the ruling Progressive Party is divided on this issue. On the one hand, Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić prefers a pro-European course, although not Atlanticist, as he has stressed many times that military neutrality is here to stay. On the other hand, Foreign Minister Ivica Dačić from the Socialist Party and the President of Serbia Tomislav Nikolić from SNS prefer a more balanced approach that will not alienate Moscow. On the discursive level, the victimhood narrative concerning NATO intervention in 1999 is still unchallenged. Decision makers would have a hard time significantly revising the policy of military neutrality, even if they wanted to. However, in the future, as EU membership accession moves ahead, it will become ever more difficult to sustain or develop this policy. As a consequence, Serbia's decision makers will increasingly be caught between the rock of foreign policy pragmatism and the hard place of victimhood narratives of the past.

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<sup>18</sup> It is worth noting that the concept of either temporary or permanent military neutrality legally does not refer to civil wars but only to international conflicts and military alliances.

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**Filip Ejodus** (filip.ejdus@fpn.bg.ac.rs) is Assistant Professor in Security Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. He is a member of the Executive Board of the Belgrade Centre for Security Police, the co-chair of the Regional Stability Study Group in SEE at the PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes and academic coordinator at the Belgrade Security Forum. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Regional Security (biannual peer-reviewed journal) and President of the Research Forum at the European Movement in Serbia.



# NATO Integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina: The pursuit of local ownership in externally-led state building

Sead Turčalo, Damir Kapidžić

## Abstract

*The NATO integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is closely tied to a strong surge in externally led state building following the conflict of the 1990s. Informed by the ideals of liberal peace, one of the key components of state building was security sector reform and a restructuring of the armed forces. A shifting approach by the international community, varying between imposing decisions and insisting on local ownership, managed to establish the joint BiH Armed Forces, but allowed for the appropriation of the NATO integration process by local ethnic party elites. As a result, NATO integration in BiH regressed into an exercise in institutional reform, pursued in disarray and primarily addressing technical issues. Even if successfully brought to fruition, NATO integration will have failed to achieve the objectives of fostering substantive peace in BiH.*

## KEY WORDS:

*NATO integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina, state building, international community, liberal peace*

## Introduction

Prevalent in writings about Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is the idea that the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), brokered by US diplomat Richard Holbrooke, was designed to end the war but not bring a positive peace or build a functional state. The Agreement was unique in its design – it affirmed the wartime division of the state brought about by the use of organized force, granted the international community enormous extra-institutional powers and provided space for ethno-nationalist political parties to maintain the power they had established at the beginning of the 1990s and consolidated during the war from 1992 to 1995. In its original form, the DPA created a state consisting of two entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH, within which three mono-ethnic geopolitical units, three armed forces, and three police forces existed alongside the faint silhouette of a state institution.

The DPA did not provide the state level with any law enforcement powers or means to use legitimate force (armed forces, police, intelligence, etc.). In Weberian terms, “Daytonian Bosnia” only partially met the standards of *de jure* statehood; it has a defined state territory, a permanent population and international recognition, but only shared sovereignty.<sup>1</sup> In terms of *de facto* statehood, BiH remains fragile and unable to fill the power vacuum that was formed in the post-war period. To rate a state as consolidated, it has to perform at least three functions: security, welfare, and rule of law. To perform the function of security, “... the state has to provide physical security for its citizens – internally as well as externally” (Schneckener 2006: 31). Furthermore:

“[The] state should be able to control its territory and borders, safeguard the security of its citizens vis-à-vis each other and defend against external security threats, ensure public access to natural resources and enforce tax administration. In short, the state has to ensure the monopoly of the use of force as well as the monopoly on raising taxes and revenues.” (Schneckener 2006: 31)

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1 The DPA established the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which is responsible for implementing the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement.

Providing for welfare demands that the state be engaged in different public policies and rule of law entails an effective judiciary that compliments the political system, decision making procedures and political participation (Schneckener 2004: 513–514). Immediately after the war, BiH lacked all three of these functions. With an estimated figure of around 400,000 soldiers<sup>2</sup> conscripted in all three armed forces<sup>3</sup> and considering the contradictory political agendas of the three ruling political parties<sup>4</sup> and the overall lack of democratic control of the security sector, the international community grew aware of the need to prioritize security sector reform and a reorganization of the armed forces in order to prevent a possible renewal of violence.

## The liberal peace agenda and state building in BiH

State building in BiH took place with strong international involvement and internationally-led conflict resolution efforts. These activities were implemented concurrently by the same actors through the framework of liberal peacebuilding and are almost indistinguishable in the BiH context. This brief overview of the theoretical foundations for international involvement in BiH does not aim to be comprehensive, but rather to present the debates that informed the everyday practices of international and local actors and were simultaneously shaped by their actions.

The advent of liberal peacebuilding that came about after the end of the Cold War exerted a strong impact on international post-conflict engagement in BiH. This approach was based on the assumption that peace and social progress could be brought about through “external engineering of post-conflict societies through the export of liberal

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- 2 For different estimations of the number of people recruited in BiH during the war, see Pietz (2006: 156–157).
  - 3 Immediately after the Bosnian war, there were three, mostly ethnically defined, armed forces: the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Armija Bosne i Hercegovine, or ARBiH –although multiethnic, its members were predominately Bosniaks), the Armed Forces of the Republika Srpska (Vojska Republike Srpske, or VRS –Serb-dominated) and the Croatian Defence Council (Hrvatsko vijeće odbrane, or HVO –Croat-dominated armed forces).
  - 4 The Serb Democratic Party (SDS), the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the Croatian Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ BiH).

frameworks of 'good governance', democratic elections, human rights, the rule of law, and market relations" (Chandler 2010: 137–138). The introduction of democracy and free market economies alone was supposed to compel former adversaries to act cooperatively. Under international guidance and pressure, elections were held in BiH less than a year following the end of hostilities and the privatization of state enterprises followed soon thereafter. However, rather than producing conditions for a stable peace, these efforts reinforced the political and economic power of the nationalist elites who were least committed to inter-ethnic reconciliation (Paris 2010: 341). The introduction of political and economic competition preceded the establishment of local capacity and robust institutions that could channel and contain conflicting ethnic demands. Roland Paris (2004, 2010) argues that regulatory frameworks need to be established before liberalization processes are undertaken in order to reduce unwanted effects. Liberal peacebuilding must account for the specific local context of each intervention and enable it to handle competing interests that arise within the liberal framework. Along with the overarching goal of ensuring a strategic exit to international involvement, Paris advocates the need "to pay greater attention to building or strengthening governmental institutions" (2010, p. 342) through a policy of "institutionalization before liberalization" (Paris 2004). This approach, with a focus on strengthening institutional frameworks, has become known as "state building". The failure of early liberalization in BiH and the subsequent results of forceful institutionalization seem to confirm Paris's (2004, 2010) argument.

The period of assertive, internationally led state building in BiH lasted from late 1997 through to mid-2006 and was spearheaded by the Office of the High Representative (OHR). In late 1997, with the introduction of the so-called "Bonn powers", the role of the High Representative was newly interpreted to include the authority to dismiss elected officials and directly impose laws. This led to the creation of several institutions aimed at strengthening democratic governance and security at the state level and the removal of local officials found to be obstructing implementation of the DPA.<sup>5</sup> Some of the most significant achievements

5 From December 1997 to July 2011, the OHR imposed more than 914 decisions. Of these, 150 were related to removals and suspensions from office (mostly between 1999 and 2002). See: <http://www.ohr.int/decisions/archive.asp> (accessed 27 July 2011).

in post-conflict state building in BiH were accomplished through the exercising of the Bonn powers by circumventing elected local officials. The heavy-handed involvement of the OHR became known as a period of protectorate democracy. During this time, the promotion of genuine democratic governance and local ownership was brought into question as international actors focused on immediate outcomes and persistently used key decision-making authorities to address crucial issues (Donais 2009: 4). Chandler (1999) argues that the assertiveness of the OHR's actions undermined the very Bosnian institutions they were supposed to strengthen, creating relationships of dependency, with little done to support self-government in BiH. The period of protectorate democracy came to an end with the mandate of Paddy Ashdown as High Representative. Even then, internationally-led state building consistently followed the principles of liberal peace, focusing on outcomes rather than process and on structures rather than actors. The importance of local ownership, referring to "the extent to which domestic actors control both the design and implementation of political processes" (Donais 2009: 4) was accepted in theory by international staff but rarely practiced. Only after the enforced strengthening of state institutions did the focus of peacebuilding begin to shift towards local ownership and engendering a broad acceptance by those it affected most.

This shift toward local ownership was rather abrupt and was marked by a change in OHR leadership as well as more significant EU involvement. The immediate consequence was a significant reduction in the pace of reform due to a habit of reliance on the international imposition of decisions. With local politicians unaccustomed to taking responsibility and constrained by consensus-based decision-making procedures, the sustainability of peacebuilding efforts in BiH was called into question. New models to compel reform through local ownership were needed in order to keep the liberal peacebuilding project on track. In line with Schwarz's proposal of local ownership coupled with international standards, an attempt to reconcile a locally-driven but internationally-focused process of reform was conceived (Schwarz 2005). This approach attempted to build on the imperatives of liberal and sustainable peace and achieve them through a concentration on technical criteria and international standards, while shifting the responsibility of implementation to local actors. At the same time, it

abandoned the transformational ideals of liberalism by narrowing the focus of institutional solutions to managing a post-conflict society (Chandler 2010: 146–147). This became most evident in various rounds and stages of EU accession and NATO membership negotiations. In BiH, this meant that local politicians could further pursue ethnic and particularist agendas, as long as they did so within the institutional framework of the state and paid lip service to the principle goals of Euro-Atlantic integration. Substantive reform and post-conflict reconciliation never really had to be an important issue on their agenda. Nevertheless, by transferring the responsibility for decision making to local politicians, this focus on local ownership managed to instil a sense of public oversight and lay bare the ineffectiveness of local politics in BiH in terms of pursuing a sustainable peace agenda.

Current international engagement in BiH has displaced the ideals of a liberal peace through a framework of institutional standards, norms and rules, modified to fit local circumstances. Instead of enforcing liberal peacebuilding, the focus is now on inducing compliance with international Western standards through institutional reform. In this sense, planned actions geared towards NATO integration, if pursued fully by all political actors, might prove to be a major stepping stone in achieving a sustainable peace in BiH. Alternatively, if pursued in disarray, these efforts may prove to be an exercise in institutional reform that will not live up to the liberal ideals they strive to achieve.

## **Security sector reform: The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH)**

During the initial post-war years, peacebuilding in BiH made little progress in alleviating the economic and security concerns of citizens. Uncooperative elites, weak and compromised institutions and a lack of common will to govern the state resulted in ethnically divided or ineffective institutions essential to the rule of law and security. This was especially true of the armed forces, which remained divided into

separate armies with independent command structures, recruitment and budgeting. The most serious efforts in international state building were aimed at reforming the security sector, first and foremost the armed forces, as a prerequisite to consolidating peace. Through the assertive approach of the OHR, a range of institutions were created or redefined, altering the competencies of the two BiH entities and their relationship with the state. Undoubtedly, the creation of a single armed force turned out to be one of the most substantive undertakings in BiH peacebuilding, as former enemy combatants now work side by side in the military service. Initially vigorously opposed by Serb parties, the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) were created following significant international pressure, taking over all responsibilities from the existing militaries in January 2006.

Immediately after the conflict, the number of soldiers in the BiH armies was 419,000, of which 264,500 were in the Army of the Federation of BiH – into which the Croatian Defence Council was incorporated as a part of the DPA – and 154,500 were in the Army of the Republika Srpska (DRC 2003). In addition, a 60,000-man NATO-led international force (IFOR) was deployed to BiH under a United Nations (UN) mandate, to facilitate the implementation of the DPA. These troops had a short, one-year tenure within which to facilitate disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, as well as the first post-war elections, and were tasked with patrolling the border between the two entities of BiH (the Inter-Entity Boundary Line). The IFOR troops were soon replaced with a smaller stabilization force (SFOR), also under NATO leadership, entrusted with a longer-term stabilization of the peace. In 1999, the decision was made gradually to reduce the number of SFOR soldiers to a few thousand and in 2006 SFOR ended its mandate and turned over peacekeeping operations to the EU-led EUFOR. Simultaneously, the two Bosnian armed forces<sup>6</sup> were greatly reduced, down to a total of around 40,000 soldiers in 1999.

Even with the large reductions in numbers of soldiers, having two separate army infrastructures proved to be economically unsustainable.

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6 After the war, a new armed force called Vojška Federacije BiH was created. It consisted of the former members of Armija Bosne i Hercegovine and Hrvatsko vijeće odbrane, but it was only unified in formal terms. At the practical level, there were two chains of command.

Since the Constitution of BiH<sup>7</sup> did not provide much guidance on security sector issues, it soon became clear that additional provisions were needed at the state level. In July 2001, the BiH Presidency<sup>8</sup> made the significant decision to support the integration of BiH into NATO and an accession process towards EU membership. To this end, the first Defence Reform Commission (DRC) was established by the OHR in 2003 to prepare a strategy for a single defence structure. The DRC proposed the restructuring of the two existing armies to form the AFBiH, with a single operative chain of command and a single administrative structure. The reform proposal was adopted by parliaments at the state and entity levels and laid out the foundations for a unified armed force and the abolition of the defence ministries of the Republika Srpska and the Federation of BiH.

Participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme called for a "single defence establishment" and single armed forces "under fully functioning state level command and control" (DRC 2005: 1), bringing about a second Defence Reform Commission, established to amend the initial proposal. The second DRC completed its task in September 2005, issuing a report titled "AFBiH: A Single Military Force for the 21st Century". The report suggested a series of measures and their implementation within a specific timeframe. The measures called for, among other things, the establishment of a single chain of command, assignment of responsibility for policies and plans to the Ministry of Defence and Joint Staff, the abolition of the defence ministries at the entity level, a reinforced role for the state parliament in the oversight of defence institutions, the abolition of conscription and the professionalization of the armed forces, a downsizing of the armed forces, a new structure and regimental system of armed forces along the NATO model, and the adoption of a new Law on Defence and Law on Military Service (DRC 2005: 6–10). At the same time, the Presidency of BiH expressed a commitment to continue efforts towards fully fledged NATO membership. In 2005, laws were passed in both entities, together with necessary amendments to the entity constitutions – with much pressure from international actors – that allowed for the creation of a

7 The DPA contains the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Annex 4.

8 The BiH Presidency is a tripartite model, consisting of three members, one from each main ethnic group, who are collectively responsible for ensuring inter-entity cooperation.

state-level Ministry of Defence and the unified AFBiH. As of 1 January 2006, the entity defence ministries were abolished and a single state-level institution took over all responsibilities. The AFBiH are exclusively comprised of professional personnel as mandatory conscription was also abolished.<sup>9</sup> Parliamentary oversight of the security sector at the state level was proposed in the first DRC report and was established along with defence structures. The Joint Parliamentary Commission on Defence and Security was established in 2003 within the BiH Parliament to ensure democratic control of the armed forces (Klopfner et al. 2012); towards the end of 2006, NATO decided to invite Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the PfP programme.

## The rocky path to NATO membership

Since 2007, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken part in the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP). This is a tool used to identify the capacities and capabilities of partner countries to determine how they can be used in NATO-led operations, as well as to “develop affordable capabilities for their own security needs” (Pond 2004: xx). The first cycle of PARP was completed in 2009 and BiH is currently in the fifth cycle, working on a third set of 40 partnership goals. According to interviewees, the main obstacle in the implementation of the partnership goals is a “... limited military budget, especially for the goals in the field of capacity and the ability of air forces”.<sup>10</sup> Besides PARP, BiH has also been involved in the Individual Partnership Programme (renamed the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme, or IPCP, in 2013) since 2007. The country has completed six cycles of IPCP with increasing success in implementing activities. In the first cycle, BiH was able to implement 50% of the activities, while this rate reached 82% in 2012.<sup>11</sup> A third form of cooperation between BiH and NATO is the Individual Partnership

9 Active military troops numbered around 16,500 as of 2012.

10 Interview with officials of the Ministry of Security (13 May 2013) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (26 May 2014).

11 Interview with an official from the Ministry of Security (13 May 2013).

Action Plan (IPAP), one of the most important partnership mechanisms. It is designed to help partner countries deepen their cooperation with NATO and advance the implementation of reforms. It comprises four fields of reform: 1) political and security; 2) defence and military; 3) public diplomacy, science, environmental security and emergency response planning; 4) administrative and resource protection.<sup>12</sup> BiH is currently completing the second cycle of IPAP. Beyond participation in these mechanisms for cooperation, BiH also contributes to NATO-led peace operations and regional defence<sup>13</sup> and security initiatives.<sup>14</sup> Since 2009, members of the AFBiH have been deployed to the ISAF Mission in Afghanistan, with a total of 443 members contributing to the Mission. BiH has also expressed readiness to participate in a post-ISAF mission that will be launched after 2014.<sup>15</sup>

While the technical and military aspects of the NATO integration process have been largely successful, there is a lack of cooperation among political elites in fulfilling the political goals needed to join NATO. A prevailing negative stance towards any meaningful reform began with the failure of the "April package" of constitutional reforms in 2006 and continued throughout the elections and post-election periods in 2006 and 2010, characterized by inflammatory political rhetoric and hate speech (Azinović, Bassuener and Weber 2011) and a reluctance to engage in political compromise and shared rule. This has exerted a negative impact on the country's progress towards NATO membership in recent years. Yet, as BiH plunged into political chaos, the North Atlantic Council (NAC)<sup>16</sup> decided at its meeting in Tallinn in April 2010 to "award" BiH a conditional invitation to the Membership Action Plan

12 "BiH u NATO - Sigurnost za sve," 2013, Individualni partnerski akcioni plan. Available at: <http://bihnato.com/2013/02/11/ipap-individualni-partnerski-akcioni-plan-individual-partnership-action-plan-ipap/> (accessed 23 May 2014).

13 The country is involved in two regional initiatives based on the "Smart Defence" concept. One is the "Balkans Regional Approach to Air Defence" (BRAAD), which aims to decrease the costs of air defence for participating countries and help in developing interoperability between these countries and NATO (Tigner 2014; Balkan Regional Approach to Air Defence: Role of NATO n.d.: 5). BiH is also part of the initiative to establish a "Balkan Joint Medical Task Force".

14 BiH is an active participant in the South Eastern European Defence Ministerial Initiative (SEDM Initiative), the US Adriatic Charter (A5), the SEEC –Forum for Western Balkans Defence Cooperation, the South Eastern Europe Cooperation Process (SEECPP), the Conference of Heads of General Staffs of Western Balkan Countries, and others.

15 Data gathered from interviews with officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence and an officer of the AFBiH (19 May 2014).

16 The principle political decision-making body within NATO.

(MAP). The NAC linked activation of the MAP for BiH to the completion of registration of immovable prospective defence property with the state of BiH (assigned from the entities). One possible explanation for this conditional invitation is the expectation among NATO decision makers that “resolution of the immovable defence property issue would instigate regulation of the registration of the state property” which “has been at a standstill since the formation of the State Property Commission in 2004 and the OHR decision to impose a ban on the disposal of state property in BiH and both entities” (Bećirević, Ćurak and Turčalo 2014: 31).

In order to fulfil the requirement set by the NAC, the BiH Presidency identified 63 prospective military locations and the Ministry of Defence proposed two documents (the “Agreement on the Implementation of Agreed Principles of Distribution of Property” and “The Decision to Use Immovable Defence Property”) to the Council of Ministers in order to initiate the process. In addition, based on agreements between the leaders of key political parties in BiH, the Council of Ministers established a Working Group, tasked with developing a proposed solution to the defence and/or state property issue. However, the Working Group has met just once since its establishment in February 2013 and has not reached any conclusions regarding its core task.<sup>17</sup> Instead of prompting political leaders to resolve the state property issue, the condition set by the NAC has in fact immobilized the process; this has been exploited politically by party elites, particularly from the Republika Srpska. They have demanded a comprehensive solution to the state property issue and have rejected a separate solution for immovable defence property.<sup>18</sup> As the leader of the Party of Democratic Progress, Mladen Ivanić, pointed out, the “unresolved issue of defence property is an instrument for the freezing of the process of BiH integration into NATO”, adding that “it is easier for [politicians from the Republika Srpska] to talk about a dispute over property than a dispute over membership in NATO” (Bećirević, Ćurak and Turčalo 2014: 34). Although leaders from the ruling parties at the state level have repeatedly declared the

17 Political disputes also prevented the country from preparing a “Defence Review”, an essential document for specifying different security and defence issues that are not regulated by law.

18 This was in disregard of a decision of the Constitutional Court of BiH (Case No. U-1/11) in which the judges declared the existing Law on the Status of State Property in Republika Srpska unconstitutional.

state property issue solved and have signed several agreements, every proposed Law on State Property has been rejected due to a lack of support from Republika Srpska-based parties.

## NATO membership: A bargaining chip in the political arena

Various declarations of the entity parliaments, decisions of the BiH Presidency, the Law on Defence, the “General Directions and Priorities for Implementation of Foreign Policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina”<sup>19</sup> and other documents have all stated that NATO membership is a strategic interest of BiH. However, this official support is countered by the actions and discourse of political leaders, who are influenced by external and internal structures that are shaping the geopolitical vision of BiH. In terms of external actors, on the one hand, there are the neighbouring countries that are guarantors of the DPA, the attitudes of which towards NATO have a strong influence on the behaviour of Serb and Croat political elites in BiH. On the other hand, there is the international community, with the exception of Russia, which vehemently supports the membership of BiH in NATO, but considers the fulfilment of necessary requirements a commitment that must be made by local politicians.

Disagreements among political elites over the issue of state property signal a deep mistrust and a lack of a common vision in relation to the country’s foreign policy priorities, as well as the structure of the state itself. The Serb member of the BiH Presidency, Nebojša Radmanović,<sup>20</sup> claims that this mistrust among political elites is the main reason for the condition set by the Republika Srpska to solve the issue of defence property together with the issue of state property. However, debates in the State Parliament and the discourse of political leaders indicate that Radmanović’s explanation is not the only view (Klix.ba 20113).

19 Available at: <http://www.predsjednistvobih.ba/vanij/?cid=3564,1,1> (accessed 21 May 2014).

20 Interview with Nebojša Radmanović, conducted by Daniel Omeragić, Sarajevo, 20 December 2012.

Past experiences with NATO intervention in the region, as well as the influence of external actors such as Serbia and Russia, play a significant role. President of the Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik has repeatedly declared his opposition to NATO membership and stated at a Christmas reception for the 3rd infantry regiment of the AFBiH that he “will never vote in favour of BiH's NATO accession, both as RS president and when I retire; I will not forget that NATO bombed Serbs with depleted uranium” (Desk 2014). Together with the leader of the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), he has stressed that any decision on NATO membership must be made through a referendum in the Republika Srpska (Blic Online 2013). Dodik has also emphasized that “BiH's NATO accession would lead to the establishment of a borderline of the North Atlantic Alliance on the Drina River, and bearing in mind Serbia's military neutrality, the RS authorities do not want to make this possible” (Desk 2014). These views are also shared by other political leaders from the Republika Srpska. Mladen Ivanić underlined that “we cannot reach a consensus on full-fledged NATO membership as long as Serbia is neutral and does not want to become a member of the Alliance. There are purely security reasons for such a stance. No one politician from the Republika Srpska is ready to accept a scenario in which the Armed Forces of BiH as members of NATO are at the borders of Serbia, and tomorrow, hypothetically, would be in a situation to fight against Serbia as a non-member state. I believe, at the moment when Serbia decides to join NATO, we will also go further in that process. I am also sure that Serbia won't stay outside”.<sup>21</sup> This reluctance concerning NATO membership in the Republika Srpska has been strengthened further by Russia's negative stance towards the Alliance. Russia is regarded as a traditional ally of the Serbs and some analysts claim that political leaders from the Republika Srpska are working to appease Russia by slowing down or freezing the NATO integration process of BiH (Vanjskopoliitička inicijativa 2012: 6).

Other external and internal actors look favourably upon NATO membership for BiH. The current government of Croatia strongly supports the inclusion of BiH in the NATO integration process. It recently offered a strategic partnership to the BiH government based on an interstate agreement on Euro-Atlantic integration that should help accelerate

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21 Interview with Mladen Ivanić, conducted by Sead Turčalo, Sarajevo, 17 January 2013.

the process of meeting necessary membership criteria. This approach by Croatia contributes to the considerable support for Euro-Atlantic integration among Croats in Bosnia and Croat political parties in BiH readily promote and advocate NATO membership. Nevertheless, in the case of the defence property issue, the key criterion for activation of the MAP for BiH, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ BiH) – the strongest Croat party – has been adapting its position “to changing political alliances with Bosniak or Serb political leaders” (Bećirević, Ćurak and Turčalo 2014: 13).

Bosniak and multi-ethnic political parties strongly advocate fully fledged NATO membership. The attitude of these parties and their supporters is based on an almost mythical conception of NATO as the guarantor of a Bosnian state, a notion which is often used to divert the attention of voters from pressing economic and political issues, as well as from political corruption, professional incompetence and the unwillingness of political elites to implement necessary reforms.

## Public opinion on NATO

The views of the general public on NATO integration are largely emotionally driven and related to perceptions of NATO's role in the region's wars in the 1990s; they are further shaped by political disputes and a lack of knowledge of the benefits and challenges that full membership might bring. For example, 25% of respondents in a survey conducted by the Sarajevo-based Centre for Security Studies accounted for their disapproval of NATO by simply stating “I don't like NATO” (Hadžović 2009: 84). In an official opinion poll conducted in 2008 for the purpose of developing a NATO Communication Strategy, “34% of the respondents described NATO as a ‘Foreign Army’, a ‘European Army’, or an ‘International Force’”. In addition, 71% of respondents in that survey reported that they “feel either insufficiently informed or not informed at all about ‘the process of BiH approaching full membership in NATO’” (Communication Strategy of Bosnia and

Herzegovina in the NATO Integration Process 2009: 4). The group that considered themselves well informed (30%) were mostly respondents from the Republika Srpska. Another study on attitudes towards NATO, conducted in the Republika Srpska in 2011, showed similar results regarding respondents' perceptions of their own knowledge of NATO. In that survey, 65% of respondents considered themselves well informed about NATO. But the results from focus groups have revealed a general lack of knowledge in the Republika Srpska on the role and purpose of NATO. In one study, a majority of focus group participants answered that their views of NATO were related to the interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo (Atlantic Initiative 2011). Apart from intervention in the region as the main reason for a lack of support for NATO, respondents from the Republika Srpska also cited a possible increase in the military budget, the involvement of members of the AFBiH in NATO missions and increased threats from terrorism as other concerns (Hadžović 2009: 84). In the last few years, public backing for NATO membership has been rising. According to the local Foreign Policy Initiative think tank, public opinion polls conducted from 2009 to 2012 have indicated increasing support. Still, there is a clear difference between respondents in the Federation of BiH and in the Republika Srpska. In the Federation, support for NATO increased from 73% in 2009 to 82% in 2012, whereas in the Republika Srpska it increased from just 30% to 38% in the same period (Vanjskopoliitička Inicijativa 2012: 7–10). This rise in support for NATO may be related to an increasing number of public discussions about the benefits of membership, as well as to a growing awareness of the importance of being part of a collective defence system.

## Conclusion

Security Sector Reform (SSR), particularly defence reform, was introduced as part of broader state building efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A lack of democratic control was one of the main reasons the international community instigated reforms of the entire security apparatus. The three ethnic and deeply politicized armed forces that

emerged out of the war were seen as a threat to the fragile peace in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina and their reorganization was intended to introduce more transparency, as well as mechanisms that could unite the interests of former antagonists in order to prevent intra-state conflict in the future.

While pursuing its goals, the international community has applied a number of state building approaches and shifting strategies. This inconsistency has allowed BiH political elites to pursue their own, particularist agendas and to take advantage of political instability and state fragility to consolidate their hold on power. The country's NATO integration process has thus become a victim of both the vague approach of the international community and the unwillingness of ethno-political elites to compromise.

While the international community has attempted to promote local ownership by offering NATO membership as a reward for successful reform in the defence sector, Bosnian political elites have consistently avoided taking responsibility for resolving the key issue that is the major stepping stone towards achieving a sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because NATO integration has been pursued in disarray and with a focus on technical solutions, it is questionable if the process will live up to the liberal ideals it is meant to achieve.

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**Sead Turčalo** (turcalos@fpn.unsa.ba) is a Lecturer and Researcher at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Sarajevo, where he received his PhD in Geopolitics. He lectures on geopolitics, international security, and international conflict management; and, along with these topics, also researches security dimensions of state-building.

**Damir Kapidžić** (kapidzicd@fpn.unsa.ba) is a Lecturer and Researcher at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Sarajevo. He received his M.A. in International Relations at the Free University Berlin, Humboldt University Berlin, and the University of Potsdam, and his PhD in Political Science at the University of Sarajevo. He is an associate researcher with the LSE-based Justice and Security Research Programme. His areas of interest are comparative politics and democratization, while the main focus of his research is on institutional design in multiethnic states, especially the links between institutions and ethnicity, and hybrid political authority structures.

# The European Union Training Mission in Mali: A case study

Rachel Dicke

## Abstract

*For several years, the European Union (EU) has been increasing its international presence and moving into the role of a global security actor. To support the goal of greater crisis management capabilities, European security integration (ESI) has been deepening. This article therefore examines an EU operation – the European Union Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) – with the aim of gauging the success of the EU's efforts at ESI. To determine the success of EUTM Mali and thus of ESI, three propositions are examined: if EUTM Mali is a security operation showing successful security integration, there will be evidence of (i) broad participation, (ii) financial burden-sharing and (iii) the successful incorporation of troops and equipment. The first and third propositions are supported whereas the second does not receive as much support. Overall, EUTM Mali shows considerable success and bodes well for further ESI.*

## KEY WORDS:

*European Union, EUTM Mali, security, integration*

## Introduction

Over the past few decades, the European Union (EU) has progressed from an organization based on limited economic cooperation towards a more fully realized state of political integration. One aspect of this increased interdependence is European security integration (ESI), the integration of the security policies of the EU in terms of both the policies common to the EU and those of the member states. Despite differences of opinion among certain member states as to the wisdom of such action, the EU has been moving steadily in the direction of becoming a global security actor. After the Helsinki Summit of 1999, it was acknowledged that the EU should begin to develop a more unified security presence – although limited European capabilities meant that US and NATO dominance were not to be challenged (Die Zeit 2000). To this end, the EU has developed a common security policy, common defence organs and cooperative military forces. As Europe has grown stronger, as well as more deeply and broadly integrated, security integration in particular has been made a priority. Javier Solana, the first High Representative for EU foreign policy, advocated a stronger EU role, saying “the European Union is, like it or not, a global actor; it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security” (Solana 2003: 2). The Berlin-Plus Agreement of 2003 granted the EU conditional access to NATO’s crisis management capabilities, aiding the EU in beginning to conduct its own international crisis management operations (European Council 2003; European External Action Service (EEAS) 2011).

The integration prompted by this shared belief has been augmented by the onset and continuation of the current global economic downturn. With European defence spending on the decline, the need to spend more effectively is growing, not least because it is becoming increasingly untenable for states to field a comprehensive military force (Giegerich and Nicoll 2012; Menon 2011). As the EU remains committed to maintaining an international security presence, particularly in crisis management operations, and one goal of ESI has been to improve the EU’s performance in such operations, the success of ESI can reasonably be measured by the success of its performance in a crisis

management operation. Other relevant measures include the efficacy of EU security institutions, such as the European Defence Agency, and the acceptance of ESI by EU member states. However, these measures, although they would certainly provide valuable insights, are outside the scope of this article.

The method of inquiry used in this paper is a structured, focused case study in the tradition of Alexander George. Based on George's (1979) standards for case study research, a series of general questions are proposed which focus on the effects of ESI on the EU's most recent crisis management operation, allowing a relatively standardized and objective assessment of its success. Andrew Bennett (2008) affirms George's view of the case study as a valuable and scientific method of research for theory development and policy applications, *inter alia*. Drawing also on Robert Yin's (2003) work, the case study approach is considered appropriate because the event studied is contemporary, no control can be exerted by the researcher and the context is crucial – EUTM Mali is ongoing and situated within the larger context of ESI. It is also appropriate because it facilitates the development of theory through relating the data to propositions and seeks to be helpful in determining if the object of study actually relates to the observed outcome (Bennett 2008; George 1979; Yin 2003). In this case, the theory to be examined concerns the longstanding and ongoing debate between supranational and intergovernmental forces in the EU. Supranationalism entails national governments sharing power with transnational institutions legally and normatively. A supranational entity takes on many functions of the traditional state, supersedes national laws when the two conflict and has a shared set of values (Ruszkowski 2006). Intergovernmentalism is quite the opposite: the supremacy of national privilege over a supranational entity. International organizations are to be dependent on the will of national governments. In a more recent variant, liberal intergovernmentalism, domestic factors influence a state's perception of the benefits of integration and thus its willingness to engage in integration (Moravcsik 1993, 1995).

The EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali) is a useful candidate for study as it is the second most recent operation, having been initiated in February 2013, and incorporates elements of EU military and civilian

participation. The recent and ongoing nature of the mission provides ample opportunity for novel study. Also, it is the most up-to-date example of ESI for which sufficient data for study are available. The dual military and civilian aspects provide the opportunity to study European participation in a more comprehensive manner than in other instances.

## Background

EUTM Mali is hardly the EU's first effort at crisis management; between the adoption of the European Security Strategy and the Berlin-Plus Agreement in 2003 and mid-2012, the EU has initiated 24 civilian, military, or comprehensive operations under the auspices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Over the course of 2013, the total increased to 30 operations; 13 have been completed and 17 are ongoing, while one additional operation began in 2014. The Security Strategy highlights the importance of effective crisis management as a crucial aspect of the EU's collective identity, as well as emphasizing the need to combine civilian and military elements of peacekeeping. Prior to 2003, any military undertakings were carried out by the Western European Union (WEU), an organization separate from and smaller than the EU. In 1999–2000, the WEU's crisis management responsibilities were transferred to the EU and the entire organization was eventually disbanded after its functions were gradually taken over by the EU (Council of the European Union 2009; EEAS 2013a; Hynek 2011; Jacobs 2012; Muratore 2010).

Operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was the first EU-led military mission, launched in March 2003. The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, launched in January 2003, was the first civilian mission under the Common Security and Defence Policy, previously the European Security and Defence Policy. Operation Artemis (June 2003) in the Congo was the first out-of-area military operation, as well as the first operation completely independent of NATO. Many of the EU's missions have complemented the efforts of other international organizations.

As for the success of those earlier operations, in 2009, High Representative Javier Solana remarked that although the EU had made significant progress, “Our ambitions are growing, not diminishing. However, there is a gap between our ambitions and the reality of our capabilities” (Solana 2009: 2). At the same time, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, praised the success of civilian rule-of-law missions in improving state-building (Council of the European Union 2009). A 2010 RAND study identifies an impressive increase in EU civilian missions since 2003, but cautions that the bulk of these have been small and of an advisory nature. The EU has also favoured police missions, especially in the Balkans, focusing on strengthening the rule of law in countries where it is weak or absent. A few later missions, notably those to Afghanistan and Kosovo, have been more ambitious; EUPOL Afghanistan involved 19 EU member states and substantial development aid. Initial logistical and technical problems were largely overcome, although understaffing has been a consistent issue. EULEX Kosovo met with more success, although internal divisions over Kosovo's independence have created problems. In 2009, 26 member states were participating, with several large contributors (Chivvis 2010).

The general trend of early African engagements in particular seems to be moderate success tempered by setbacks. Operation Artemis in 2003 involved 14 EU member states, with a large French contribution, and fulfilled its mandate. It was, however, only three months in duration. Later missions encountered coordination issues both within the EU structure and with outside entities, although they also managed to produce some achievements and in most cases fulfilled their mandates. For example, EUFOR DR Congo in 2006 involved 21 member states and fulfilled its mandate, although interactions with the UN force were largely uncoordinated and the German command of the operational headquarters put several limitations on the EU forces. Communication problems were still seen in the 2008–2010 EU SSR Guinea-Bissau operation, together with understaffing (Revelas 2013). On the other hand, the EU Naval Force operation ATALANTA, initiated in 2008 with a mandate to deter and prevent piracy in the Gulf of Aden and to protect ships, particularly those of the World Food Program and the African Union Mission in Somalia, has met with some success. A decrease in successful attacks by pirates and numerous rescue missions are among the operation's

achievements (EU NAVFOR 2014), although it has been unable to rid the Gulf of piracy entirely. Originally intended to last one year, the mandate has been extended twice to increase not only the time frame but also the area of operations. The creation of the Maritime Security Centre – Horn of Africa (MC-HOA) and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), among other initiatives, has resulted in a reduction of successful hijacking attempts in the IRTC and among ships following MC-HOA's best practice guidelines. There are other organizations working in the area, including two NATO operations over the course of the EU operation, which makes it difficult to assign success to the EU. However, it has been noted that many of the more successful initiatives in the area have been EU-led (Muratore 2010).

By all rights, if the EU has been experiencing successful security integration, EUTM Mali should show distinct signs of that integration. The following propositions are developed to clarify and organize the quantifiable aspects of integration:

$P_1$ : If EUTM Mali is an EU security operation showing successful European security integration, then broad participation by member states should be evident.

$P_{1a}$ : A majority of EU member states participate.

$P_{1b}$ : Tasks are distributed relatively evenly among contributing states, including both troop and equipment contributions and between the necessary functions.

$P_2$ : If EUTM Mali is an EU security operation showing successful European security integration, financial burden sharing should be evident, with a good part of the funding coming from the EU collectively, and a civilian aspect should be present during, following, or concurrent with the training mission.

$P_3$ : If EUTM Mali is an EU security operation showing successful European security integration, the successful incorporation of troops and equipment from different member states will be evident.

To examine this crisis management operation, a short background on both the Malian conflict and French and EU intervention is given to provide the necessary historical context, followed by information on the level of participation, funding, nature and interoperability of the mission. The vast majority of the sources used are journalistic, with a few academic and governmental sources. The reliance on journalistic sources should not be a hindrance given the nature of the inquiry, particularly as at least one of the journals used is exclusively concerned with the affairs of the EU. The necessary information is presented and supplemented with government information, reports, statements and a very few academic papers.

## Conflict and Mission Background

The conflict in Mali has been ongoing since January 2012, although the Tuareg people have been in near constant conflict with the Malian government since Mali gained its independence in 1960, with more recent events in the early 1990s and the period 2007–2009, so it is useful to examine the more recent events leading up to intervention. The Tuareg are a nomadic people living in the northern areas of Mali and have developed a culture that is somewhat divergent from the wider culture of the entire state. In the 1990s, the Tuareg began a rebellion for the purpose of gaining territorial and cultural autonomy. The conflict was exacerbated by the 2011 revolution in Libya, when an influx of arms and an increasingly chaotic situation created an opening for the regional al-Qaeda group, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), to move into Tuareg land. After a military coup in March 2012, which ousted President Toure before appointing civilian interim President Traore in April, AQIM and the main rebel group, the National Movement for the Liberation of the Azawad (MNLA), joined forces and established harsh military law in the north. After only a few months, the AQIM turned on the MNLA and began to move south towards the capital, Bamako. When they reached Konna, a city in relatively close proximity to the capital, the Malian government asked for French intervention, which

they quickly received in the form of Operation Serval. This included French helicopter raids on terrorist cells and the provision of French soldiers to guard the capital city. France's intervention, which received UNSC support and was justified by French President François Hollande under Article 51 of the UN Charter (providing a "natural right" of defence should a member state come under armed attack), was intended to provide support until an Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) contingent could be deployed, which was considered too far in the future to be safely relied upon (Alexander 2013; BBC News 2013a; Le Monde 2013).

In June 2013, a deal was brokered between the government and the MNLA after weeks of negotiation facilitated by the President of Burkina Faso. The deal called for a ceasefire and for government troops to reclaim some rebel territory taken from the Islamists after the French intervention in February. It paved the way for the July 2013 presidential election, one held up as legitimate, even "credible and transparent" by the EU and the UN (BBC News 2013b; Deutsche Welle 2013a; UN News Centre 2013). Periodic violence has continued into 2014; despite clashes between northern Malian rebels and Malian troops, rebels and the elected Malian government participated in a ceasefire in May 2014 and peace talks in June and July 2014 (Markey 2014; Penney 2014).

The timeline of EU intervention is slightly more reactionary. Prompted by the French intervention almost a week earlier, on 17 January 2013 approval was granted for EUTM Mali by EU Foreign Ministers in an emergency meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), creating a legal basis for the mission. The launch of operations required a separate legal act that was agreed for the next month (Vaudin d'Imécourt 2013). Citing UNSC Resolutions 2071 and 2085, as well as the Malian authorities' direct appeal to the EU, the FAC not only established EUTM Mali, but also named French General François Lecointre the Mission Commander. They invited Lecointre to accelerate the existing preparations, in place since December 2012, with an eye to launching the training mission in mid-February at the latest and to send a technical team to Bamako within a few days. The FAC decision also covered financial assistance to Mali, restating a willingness to resume development cooperation that had been suspended in 2012 after the coup and supporting an

immediate increase in assisting the humanitarian organizations in Mali and its neighbours (*Council Decision 2013/34* 2013; Council of the European Union 2013a).

The launch of EUTM Mali was decided a month later on 18 February 2013 with the intention of beginning the operation in March. Headquarters were established just northeast of Bamako and a cap of 200 instructors plus support staff and protection forces for the instructors and staff brought the initial total to around 500 EU personnel with a 15 month mandate (Fiorenza 2013a). The Council Decision to launch the EU military mission approved the Mission Plan and Rules of Engagement presented in the proposal from High Representative Catherine Ashton and officially authorized Mission Commander General François Lecointre to begin execution of the mission. Although formal approval was granted on 18 February, the first experts were already working in Bamako, Lecointre having previously been asked to send the first technical team to Bamako on 20 January 2013 (*Council Decision 2013/87* 2013; Radio France Internationale 2013; Vaudin d'Imécourt 2013). The FAC decision was passed without any debate, thus concluding the protracted process of creating an EU crisis management operation ahead of schedule. Approval covered the approximately 500 European soldiers who participated in the operation and placed the mission under French command with an initial budget of around €12 million and a goal at the outset of training 650 Malian soldiers. Both of these estimates were later increased.

When the 200 EU instructors arrived in Koulikoro on 2 April, ready to train the first battalion of 670 soldiers out of an expected number in excess of 3,000, the peak number of EU troops was to be 550. Of these 150 were allocated to be a protection force. Although 16 states initially announced a desire to participate and a few followed through in the beginning months, only a very few of those states were prepared to shoulder the more risky task of securing instruction sites. Excluding the French, who had already demonstrated their willingness to participate in every way, many other member states offered political or logistical support, preferring not to assist militarily (Africa News 2013; Glaudot 2013; Radio France Internationale 2013; Speak 2013).

As the expiration of the initial mandate neared, EUTM Mali was extended by the Council of the EU for two years. On 15 April 2014, the completion date of the mission was moved to 18 May 2016. The additional common cost to EU members of extending the mandate is expected to total around €27.7 million (Council of the European Union 2014).

The legitimacy of the mission stemmed from two separate sources, each holding significant diplomatic weight; the UNSC produced several resolutions concerning Mali, the two most relevant being UNSCR 2085 and UNSCR 2071. The Malian government also requested assistance from both the EU and France specifically. UN Security Council Resolution 2085 was passed on 20 December 2012 and authorized the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) for an initial period of one year, to be executed in coordination with international partners, at one point referring directly to the planning of an EU mission. UN Security Council Resolution 2071 called on UN member states, regional and international organizations, including another direct mention of the EU plan, to “provide as soon as possible coordinated assistance, expertise, training, and capacity-building support to the Armed and Security Forces of Mali” (UN Security Council 2012a: 4). The goal of this assistance was to restore the Malian government’s authority and thus to preserve the state’s territorial integrity by reducing the threat from AQIM and its ilk (UN Security Council 2012a). Part of authorizing AFISMA included working closely to “contribute to the rebuilding of the capacity of the Malian Defence and Security Forces” with the EU (UN Security Council 2012b). As for Mali’s request, on 11 January 2013 when Malian interim president Dioncounda Traore declared a state of emergency, French President François Hollande responded to Traore’s appeal for French help in stopping the advance of Islamic rebels towards the capital city (Al Jazeera 2013).

Public justifications for EU participation and for the earlier French participation were based on similar rationales. President Hollande justified his country’s intervention on 11 January by stating that the rebels were attempting to “deal a fatal blow” to Mali and “France, like its African partners and the entire international community, cannot accept that” (Al Jazeera 2013). EU High Representative Catherine

Ashton echoed Hollande's reasoning, citing the intentions of terrorists in northern Mali to destabilize the government along with several other related reasons for the Union's involvement, among them the human rights abuses committed by terrorists and the threat to neighbouring countries and the EU itself, saying "they have taken many hostages, a lot of them originating from European Member States. We cannot be indifferent" (Ashton 2013).

## Examination of Propositions

In terms of proposition 1, concerning EU participation in EUTM Mali, the number of contributing member states started relatively small and grew as the mission continued. When the training mission was formally approved by the EU's foreign ministers in February, only 10 countries had signed up: Cyprus, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and the UK (Vaudin d'Imécourt 2013). In February, Cyprus had dropped out, but 11 other countries had joined (EEAS 2013b, 2013c). By the time the mission began in April, the number of participating member states had jumped to 23 with the addition of the Netherlands and there were around 550 soldiers scheduled for deployment. The largest troop contributor at the time of initiation was, unsurprisingly, France. The country sent 210 troops to the Bamako and Koulikoro camps, consisting of three sections composed of just under 30 people each with the addition of a 10-member command group. Germany, Spain, the UK and the Czech Republic completed the list of the top five contributing states. Other contributors included Swedish and Lithuanian instructors, although their numbers were small, as well as German doctors and Belgian helicopter pilots (Glaudot 2013). As of April 2014, 23 of the 28 member states were still contributing – every country barring Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Malta and Slovakia (EEAS 2014). Several more detailed analyses are presented below, beginning with and focusing predominantly on the states contributing the largest numbers of troops.

France's participation is somewhat unique among the European states for its early entrance and independent mission. On 11 January 2013, the French led land and air forces into Mali with support from other EU member states (Coolsaet, Biscop and Coelmont 2013). French troops began withdrawing in February 2013, to be replaced by Malians trained by the EU and the 3,300-strong AFISMA (Fiorenza 2013a). In early April, when the EU mission took control, French troops were the only ones engaging in combat operations, using the early months and 1,200 troops to carry out follow-up operations in northeastern Mali, although they were preparing to hand over military responsibility to the Malian army along with a regional African force (Speak 2013). As of late April 2013, France had 3,850 troops in Mali and was participating in conflict against insurgents. The air force had flown 130 sorties and contributed 40 fighter jets. French Minister of Defence Jean-Yves Le Drian's plan was to reduce troop levels to 2,000 in July (Svitak 2013). In June, the withdrawal of French forces was in train, albeit slowly so as to coordinate with the 1 July UN mission. Between 3,500 and 3,600 French troops remained, primarily performing searches for weapons caches and terrorist networks, something Le Drian called "mopping up" after securing relative stability (Le Drian 2013). In September 2013, French President François Hollande declared victory for Operation Serval, claiming the north to be secure and praising the elections that resulted in the inauguration of Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. Although there were still 3,200 French soldiers in the country, the goal was to leave only 1,000 in place by the end of 2013. Hollande guaranteed that French forces would remain to assist, but that it should be first and foremost Africans ensuring their own security (Revault d'Allonnes 2013).

Germany did not contribute to Operation Serval, although the Cabinet decided on 19 February 2013 to send military trainers, medics and transport and tanker aircraft to Mali for EUTM. On this, final approval rested with the Parliament, the Bundestag. As of the Cabinet's decision, Germany already had three transport aircraft supporting AFISMA, which is separate from but bolstered by the EUTM, operating from Senegal and transporting African troops to just two airfields in Mali. The new mandate would allow the German aircraft to operate throughout Mali, directly supporting French forces militarily and refuelling French

planes. Both the AFISMA and the EU mandates lasted initially until 28 February 2014 (Müller 2013). On 28 February 2013, the Bundestag approved the aforementioned second mandate regulating air transport support and mid-air refuelling services. The combined troop ceiling for the two mandates was 330, with up to 180 soldiers involved in EUTM as of March 2013. Of these, 80 soldiers were earmarked for training engineering units and up to 100 soldiers for logistical and administrative services on the ground and medical services. Germany's contribution to the AFISMA mission was to be up to 150 soldiers for air transport inside Mali and mid-air refuelling. In addition, the Bundeswehr's Airbus A310 tanker aircraft would be used to support French aircraft (The Federal Government 2013). The two mandates were approved simultaneously by a vote for the EU mission of 496 to 67 in favour and a vote for the AFISMA mission of 492 to 66 in favour (Fiorenza 2013b). As for the extension of the mission, on 5 February 2014, the German Cabinet decided not only to extend the mandate, but to expand the state's participation by raising the maximum troop allowance to 250. The Bundestag approved the Cabinet's decision on 20 February. Although German troops will participate in the extended mandate, they will only be present until 28 February 2015 (Associated Press 2014a, 2014b; German Federal Foreign Office 2014).

Spain was the second state to contribute to the Mali intervention, sending a transport airplane with 50 servicemen in late January at France's request to participate in Operation Serval. Spain also deployed 54 soldiers to EUTM Mali but resisted a request for 30 more to protect the mission force. Spain's soldiers arrived in mid-April (La Vanguardia 2013). More specifically, the Spanish troops arrived at the training base in Koulikoro on 13 April with a platoon of 32 servicemen to protect the base and 15 Special Operations Unit instructors. Before the mission even formally began, however, eight Spanish servicemen joined the scouting party on 8 February to act as liaisons and reconnaissance officers and six officers joined them on 1 March (ABC 2013; EUTM Mali 2013). After the Spanish Ministry of Defence approved an increase in forces to a maximum of 110 troops on 7 June, 43 paratroopers (Light Infantry Parachute Brigade) were sent in July as a protection force for the instructors. Spain and Belgium were tasked with protecting the instructors and alternated command every six months. As for Spain's role

in the training, the country was responsible for the Waraba battalion's commando units; 15 Spanish instructors taught the first 35-member Malian special operations team and training was underway for the second group in late June. For the third and fourth battalions of the Malian army's tactical groups, 10 instructors and one superior officer focused on artillery and mortars (Servimedia report on ABC 2013).

The UK initially committed to sending approximately 40 soldiers (Radio France Internationale 2013). British and Irish troops were jointly deployed for the first time under a UN military mandate, with eight Irish soldiers and 18 British soldiers deployed at the end of February (Flanagan 2013). In September 2013, the British sent an additional regiment of instructors for six months, including civilians specializing in human rights and humanitarian law to underscore the importance of civilian control over the military, a key factor in military reform in general and in the restructuring some believe is necessary for Mali's military after the September inauguration of its newly elected president, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, or IBK as he is often known (Lowery and Paolo 2013).

The Czech Republic initially committed to sending some 50 soldiers to the training mission (Radio France Internationale 2013). By the first week of April, more than 30 Czech soldiers were already securing mission HQ and escorting vehicles to Koulikoro (Glaudot 2013). According to a Czech newspaper, in early April the Czech Republic had the fourth largest contingent in Mali (France had 207 troops, Germany 71 and Spain 54). On 13 March, the Czech Senate, the Senát, voted to send 50 soldiers to Mali beginning 1 April. The first contingent deployed held 34 soldiers who were on protection duty, including guarding the HQ in Bamako. After six months, 16 instructors were sent (Speak 2013). By April 2014, the Czech Republic had 40 soldiers remaining in Mali. They are expected to stay through to the end of the year, although any further participation in the extended mission is uncertain (Czech News Agency 2014).

Belgium also participated in Operation Serval with mandates lasting only through to March 2013. The Belgians provided two C-130 aircraft based in the Ivory Coast with which they flew the second most supply missions in Operation Serval after the French according to the Belgian

Ministry of Defence. They also supplied two medical helicopters based in Gao, Mali. After their participation in Operation Serval, this equipment was assigned to EUTM Mali and helped protect the training camp in Koulikoro together with 50 troops deployed for the EU training mission on 10 July. These troops were given the task of protecting convoys and EU instructors during training (De Standaard 2013; Fiorenza 2013c). Belgium was the first country to commit to providing two helicopters for medical evacuations from the instruction site, a critical ability promised at the mission's inception (Radio France Internationale 2013).

As for the remaining states, many contributed approximately 20 troops or fewer, some sending only one or two. Italy planned in January to provide logistical support in the form of two C-130 transport planes and one 767 refuelling plane together with around 20 instructors (Defense News 2013). When the Polish government adopted President Komorowski's motion on 30 January 2013, Poland also sent 20 instructors, 10 of whom were responsible for logistics training, at a cost of PLN 5.8 million (EUTM Mali 2013; Polish News Bulletin 2013). Austria was initially planning on sending 10 medical personnel to the camp in Bamako, but by June had reduced that number to seven. Although maintaining a small presence and determining that its troops were not to take part in combat, Austria has provided a great deal of humanitarian aid and food aid since the crisis began – €3.1 million in 2012 with another €1.25 million set aside for further aid in 2013. Mali's neighbouring states are also receiving aid (Austrian Foreign Ministry 2013a, 2013b; GlobalPost 2013). Sweden is participating with up to 15 army personnel, decided in late January 2013. This comes after the provision of a C-17 transport aircraft in support of AFISMA – a deployment lasting from 24 January to 31 May 2013 (Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN 2013). In February 2013, Finland decided to send a maximum of 12 soldiers to participate as instructors and to serve in the mission HQ. Finnish trainers also head up the Nordic-Baltic training unit (Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2013). Hungary contributed 10 soldiers: six marksmen, three medical officers and a liaison, deployed on 18 March. The Hungarian marksman began training "elite shooters" in Koulikoro in April. Bulgaria sent five medics on 7 March and Slovenia sent three troops. Romania approved sending 10 soldiers. Slovakia was politically supportive in April and said they had instructors and medics standing by if they were needed. Greece sent

four intelligence specialists to train Malian forces in Koulikoro, also in April (EUTM Mali 2013; Speak 2013).

Lithuania sent two military instructors on 24 March 2013 to serve until mid-2014. The Lithuanian instructors will be part of the Nordic-Baltic training group led by Finland and serving in Koulikoro, marking the first direct participation of Lithuanian soldiers in an African mission (Baltic News Service 2013a; Lithuania Tribune 2013a). According to one of the Lithuanian instructors, the work has been going well, with the first batch of trainers sent home in September after successfully completing their mission, progressing from basic skills to more advanced tactical instruction. In addition to the instructors, Lithuania has also sent an officer to Bamako to serve in a logistics unit (Lithuania Tribune 2013b). Estonia has provided only two personnel, sending one officer and one non-commissioned officer (NCO) to Bamako in March to plan the training of Malian armed forces. In so doing, they will work closely with other European personnel. In mid-September the Estonian contribution grew with the addition of a six-person team serving with the Nordic-Baltic training group; the personnel are responsible for imparting soldiering skills and platoon tactics. Estonia has chosen to specialize in providing ship protection, consistently contributing to EU naval operations such as Operation ATALANTA and becoming a leader in defence spending (Baltic News Service 2013b, 2013c). In March 2013, Luxembourg sent a single NCO as an instructor, who was replaced by an Army sergeant in September (Luxemburger Wort 2013). As of late June 2013, the Netherlands had still not sent soldiers to EUTM Mali despite a stated desire to do so by the Dutch cabinet. Some in the government view the lack of participation as undesirable and seek to atone through strong participation in the UN mission in Mali, led by former Dutch Development Minister Bert Koenders (DutchNews 2013a, 2013b; Volkskrant 2013).

In relation to proposition 2, concerning funding, the EUTM Mali has partially been financed by ATHENA, the mechanism for funding common costs in EU missions into which member states pay according to the size of their economies. Costs covered include HQ running costs, medical services and essential equipment where appropriate (Council of the European Union 2013c). The joint costs of the operation for the initial 15-month mandate were €23 million as of September, up from €12.3 million at the

onset, and each state finances its own troops (EEAS 2013c; Van Puyvelde 2013). For the second half of the proposition, having to do with a civilian element, Britain's humanitarian civilian instructors fit the bill quite well. Britain's contribution works well with Lecointre's inclusion of theoretical basics in the Malian training regimen, including courses on how to comply with humanitarian law, enacted because of an observed need to rebuild the Armed Forces "from the ground up" (Glaudot 2013). So too does EU development aid to Mali. The European Commission authorized €523 million in aid (EEAS 2013c). €50 million has been earmarked specifically for AFISMA support, mainly for financing troops and officers; no military equipment is covered. In addition to the monetary contribution to AFISMA, technical assistance has also been granted to help ECOWAS manage the African-led mission in Mali financially (Africa News 2013).

Turning to proposition 3, which has to do with the integration of national troops in an international mission, there are several examples of such interoperability; the "historic" joint British and Irish contingent and the Nordic-Baltic training unit mentioned above are good examples. The Finnish and Swedish-led unit formally invited Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to form a multi-national team of instructors. Finnish, Swedish and Estonian teams and Latvian and Lithuanian personnel have been deployed in Koulikoro having completing compatibility training as a unit in Finland (Baltic News Service 2013c; Lithuania Tribune 2013a). The German transport and refuelling of French planes also supports this. Further Franco-German cooperation was initiated in February 2014 when it was decided that a French-German brigade would be deployed as part of EUTM Mali in the spring. This is the first deployment of the joint forces in Africa since WWI and the first under the auspices of the EU (Agence-France Presse 2014; Associated Press 2014b). In addition, during a visit to the Koulikoro camp, Minister Le Drian remarked on the coherence of the EU instructors and their ability to put aside national considerations and strive towards a common goal (PR Newswire 2013). However, France has fielded so many troops that they have formed their own units, as have a few other states.

## Evaluation of Propositions

The first proposition of this paper that if EUTM Mali is an EU security operation showing successful ESI, we would expect broad participation by member states, can be broken down into two main aspects: (i) the scope of participation across the EU and the nature of that participation; (ii) the relative equality of participation across states and which tasks states chose to fulfil. In terms of the scope of participation, the proposition is supported. Well over three quarters of EU member states have contributed in some way. That number is even more impressive when Denmark's defence opt-outs and Malta's extremely limited military capabilities are taken into account. However, the second portion of the proposition is not well supported. France has borne almost half of the burden of the operation in terms of troops and accordingly a large part of the financial burden not taken care of by ATHENA. The French component is necessary to the functioning of the mission; the two Mission Commanders have been French and the whole operation follows from French leadership in Operation Serval. Relatedly, French troops are engaging in combat in support of AFISMA forces, which is forbidden for EUTM Mali troops but necessary for ensuring stability. However, several of the other main contributing countries have provided troops for protection as well as instructors and equipment.

The second proposition – if EUTM Mali is an EU security operation showing successful European security integration, we would expect a good part of the funding to come from the EU collectively and to include a civilian element – is supported in part. The EU crisis management funding mechanism ATHENA has been employed for EUTM Mali, one of only a few EU operations to receive such funding. Relatively, compared to other EU operations, the mission is highly Europeanized. A good deal of collective funding has been provided but individual countries are still obliged to finance their own troops. The civilian element is not present within the framework of EUTM Mali, but when the context is broadened to include EU assistance to Mali, this aspect finds more support. Significant development aid is the most fitting example.

The third proposition, concerning the incorporation of troops and equipment within European structures, is supported to a degree. The limited number of troops sent from many nations necessitates their cooperation within larger units. In addition, this situation means that several states have sent transport and refuelling equipment to assist troops not of their own nationality.

## Conclusion

EUTM Mali has shown not only significant improvement from early crisis management operations, but also a successful result in its own right. When it comes to displaying signs of successful security integration, a vast majority of EU member states have worked together to train Malian Armed Forces personnel and to transport and protect those who are doing so. Furthermore, despite initial reluctance to place their people in harm's way, many countries have taken on the relatively more dangerous task of securing the instructors and the mission's camps and HQ. Not only have the troops taken on diverse tasks, they have also worked effectively together, particularly within units but also between them. Funding for the mission came in no insignificant part from a common EU mechanism, showing a unified approach. Balancing out these indicators of success, however, are elements indicative of strong nationalistic tendencies. The French have been far and away the largest contributor of troops, providing almost half of all involved personnel. This contribution means France has also provided a great deal of funding, as each state is responsible for funding its own troops. The reverse is true of those states which have contributed only a handful of troops; they have contributed individually very little. In terms of relation to theory, the mission shows supranational elements in its initiation and extension by an EU body and its successful cooperation and common funding. There was also a normative agreement on the necessity of the mission, as demonstrated by the citing of human rights abuses as a justification for intervention and the broad participation of member states. However, the mission also shows an

obvious intergovernmental element in the varying degrees of national contribution. Despite the downsides of the mission in Mali, its strengths outweigh its flaws and a strong showing of supranational elements balances the intergovernmental tendencies of the member states. While French intervention was critical, EU participation has been broad; although troop funding is national, mission funding has come from the EU. Thus it is not unreasonable to conclude that this mission, while not completely supranational, nevertheless presents a good showing of ESI. Given the decades it has taken to bring ESI to its current standpoint and the relative success of EUTM Mali, the findings presented here suggest that it bodes well for the successful integration of EU security policy currently under way and for further integration in the future.

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**Rachel Dicke** (rd42d@mail.missouri.edu) is a student at the University of Missouri in the Political Science PhD program. She graduated with a Bachelor's of Arts in Political Science from Truman State University and a Master's of Arts in Political Science from Eastern Illinois University. She has research interests in European Integration, international organizations – particularly those with a focus on international security, and European security policy. Her most recent research project dealt with evaluating three aspects of European security integration through examination of an institution, several member states, and a European Union-led Crisis Management Operation.



# How Long Before NATO Aircraft Carrier Force Projection Capabilities Are Successfully Countered? Some effects of the fiscal crises

Josip Lučev

## Abstract

*Growth and fiscal policy conducive to economic development have been severely jeopardized in most NATO member countries since 2008. In sharp contrast, China has experienced only a relatively slower GDP growth, which it has mitigated with a fiscally expansionary outlook. Under these conditions, when can we expect the politico-military position of NATO to be challenged? This paper surveys amphibious force projection capabilities in six countries: the USA, the UK, France, Russia, India and the People's Republic of China (PRC). An assessment of the current capability for aircraft carrier building and a survey of carrier-related ambitions is undertaken to offer projections of probable aircraft carrier fleets by 2030. The three non-NATO countries are far better positioned to build aircraft carriers than the three NATO members, with China in the lead. Nevertheless, there is a high probability of the continued military dominance of the USA and NATO, but also of a military build-up focusing on the Indian Ocean.*

## KEY WORDS:

*fiscal crises, force projection, NATO, aircraft carrier*

## Introduction

Are we living in an increasingly multi-polar world? It is true that NATO generally and the USA in particular have held a politico-military hegemonic position for decades. It is also true that the substantial force projection capabilities enjoyed by NATO cannot be surpassed, or even challenged, in a short time span. However, countries such as China and India have enjoyed a long sequence of years with high growth rates, while Europe and the USA have suffered very serious economic difficulties in the past seven years. These circumstances make themselves felt on a fiscal and military level. After all, global military dominance requires sustained and generous military budgets and these have diminished in many NATO member states affected by the fiscal crises since 2010. But how serious are these changes and when can we expect the politico-military position of NATO to be challenged?

First, to speak of a multi-polar world after Hiroshima and Nagasaki carries a horrifying implication. If an armed struggle materialized between roughly equal belligerents militarily speaking, armed with nuclear weapons, what could be done to ensure that they did not extinguish our civilization itself in their battle throes? In this thought, the forgotten horror of the early Cold War years returns to haunt us. And yet, we have lived with the possibility of nuclear annihilation for several generations; we regulate this possibility through treaties and enforce the relative scarcity of these weapons through concerted diplomatic action and imposed sanctions. Indeed, assuming they are never used, effective nuclear weapons can be no more than a political bargaining chip. In the hands of a recognized nuclear power, their use remains taboo. But if these weapons are not used, what will be used in their place? Which capabilities imply a credible threat? In a global war, what counts is the ability of force projection. Even enormous conventional armed forces are irrelevant if they cannot be deployed where they are deemed necessary. Therefore, if a state wishes its military force to be felt in distant locations, it requires large naval vessels: amphibious assault ships and landing platform docks (LPDs) to carry and support assault troops and aircraft carriers to ensure air domination and force weaker navies from the

water and weaker armies from the land.

Of course, this is not the only way in which force can be projected. We live in a world in which force projection is increasingly dissociated from the physical presence of troops. B-2 bombers taking off from mainland America are capable of attacking (more or less) any target in the world, while cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) are effective without any physical presence of ground troops on site. Let us call this dissociated type of warfare a “Stage 1” intervention. It should be said that Stage 1 interventions are inherently destabilizing if not complemented by other forms of intervention. While it is entirely plausible to intervene in this manner whenever a localized target presents itself, it is impossible to even attempt to enforce a monopoly of violence without the presence of ground troops to take control over a territory. Let us call these ground troops a “Stage 2” intervention. For such an intervention in a non-adjacent state, amphibious assault ships and aircraft carriers are a necessary resource. As the lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq show us, we can only hope for full stabilization once we co-opt a portion of the population and thus attain a credible local partner. Let us call this “Stage 3”. Even in the case that a NATO intervention supports an already existing local partner (e.g. in Libya in 2011), such support will necessarily primarily come from aircraft carriers and similar vessels. Therefore, while force projection capabilities are not exclusively tied to the resources described in this article, a credible, stabilizing force projection very well might be. It is aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships and LPDs that provide states with a credible force to assist in the fulfilment of their political objectives.

If ours is an increasingly multi-polar world, this will show itself in the global equilibrium of the most important military assets. To ascertain the current state of the world, in the section following the theoretical background, I survey the existing capabilities in six chosen countries: the USA, the UK, France, Russia, India and the People’s Republic of China (PRC). This is followed by projections of the probable relative sizes of aircraft carrier fleets by 2030; such projections allow us to assess the probable future military-political global equilibrium. This part of the article focuses exclusively on aircraft carriers as these take the longest to build and use the most resources for maintenance compared to other vessels.

Therefore, their construction should be the least problematic to predict. In the third section, a very simple model is suggested, combining economic growth, public debt levels and existing shipbuilding experience in a single measure to estimate the capability of the six states in terms of building aircraft carriers. The following section then assesses the ambitions of building such resources to complement the data on carrier-building potential. It also outlines the possibility of an increase in the Chinese carrier fleet and an expected response in India. This seems to indicate the possibility of an arms race focusing on the Indian Ocean. The paper then analyses the role of other possible blue water navies in the theatre. The conclusion summarizes the available information to project the two most probable developments by 2030: the continued military dominance of the USA and NATO and a military build-up focusing primarily on the Indian Ocean.

## Theoretical background

The theoretical background to this article is the literature focusing on hegemonic and war cycles. This body of knowledge assumes a long-term historical perspective to explain the rise and fall of great world powers and the wars that precipitate them. In short, the assumption is that global wars are predictable with respect to the historical repetitiveness of the conditions that cause them. There are a number of authors who have pointed to the cyclical nature of global wars, starting with the pioneering work of Quincy Wright (1942) and continuing with Toynbee (1954), Modelski (1978), Goldstein (1985, 1988), Chase-Dunn and Podobnik (1999), Tausch (2006) and others. It is also helpful to refer to the world systems approach, which emphasizes the role of the changes in the world economy known as hegemonic or systemic cycles. There is only a single state that benefits most from the world system at a given time and this produces the fiscal capability for political and military dominance. Wallerstein (1980: 38) identifies three historical hegemonies: "...only Holland, Great Britain, and the United States have been hegemonic powers [...], and each held the position

for a relatively brief period, Holland least plausibly because it was least of all the military giant of its era". Following Immanuel Wallerstein and Fernand Braudel, Giovanni Arrighi (1994, 2007; Arrighi and Silver 1999) develops a similar scheme concerning successions of global power. It suggests a shift in global power once the production-driven economy of the core is replaced by an economy dominated by the financial sector, which itself crashes in several decades. These are in fact the precise conditions in which the world finds itself today.

This line of thought is quite worrying as it suggests a global confrontation might be upon us. And when are we to expect this carnage? As one of the most influential war cycle theorists wrote in 1988: "As a first approximation, I suggest the period around 2000 to 2030 as a 'danger zone' for great power war" (Goldstein 1988: 353). Writing much later, he would still persist in his prediction of a global war in the 2020s (Goldstein 2006: 143). By trying to gauge present and future multipolarity, this paper seeks to ascertain the current probability of a global confrontation by 2030. It does so under several assumptions:

- An all-out nuclear global war is not to be expected. Whatever form(s) the next global military confrontation takes, all major actors (states strong enough to hope for a hegemonic position) should be rational enough not to destroy civilization and themselves.
- A conventional global war between major actors would probably eventually lead to a nuclear confrontation. It is therefore also not to be expected.
- This does not preclude a military build-up. The type of force projection capabilities of interest to us are primarily aircraft carriers (and also large amphibious assault vessels). These may be used in a number of ways, most obviously in a military intervention directed at an opponent without nuclear capabilities (the only type of war they have been used in since WWII). Here, a number of states may pool their resources in order to provide a joint moral and military stand-point.

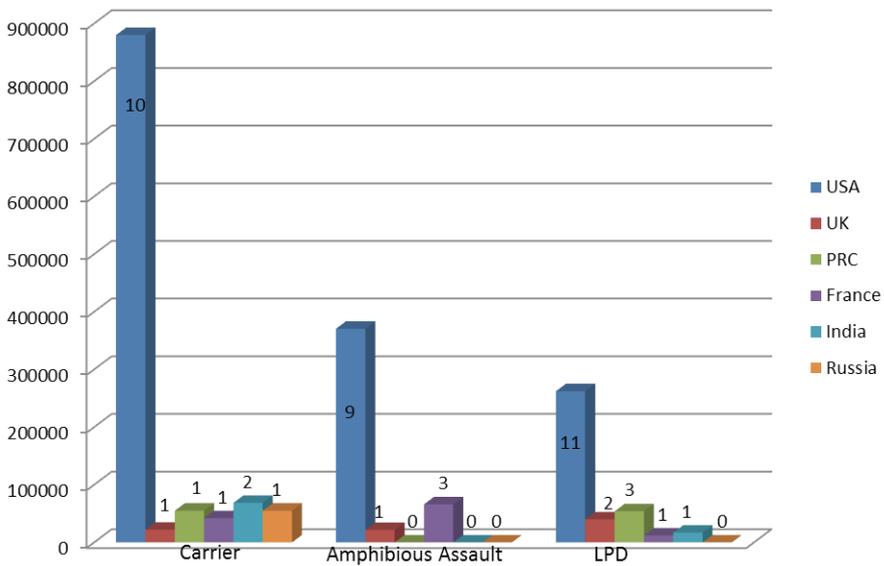
- Aircraft carrier building programmes are large, complex, costly and time consuming. During the long life-cycle of a modern aircraft carrier (50 years), specific strategies, foreign policy, friends and foes are all bound to change numerous times. Therefore, the focus of this article is by definition on long-term phenomena (carrier building programmes and expected comparative fleet sizes), rather than short- to medium-term phenomena (their organization and use).

## Current global force projection capabilities

This article undertakes an in-depth comparison of the capabilities of six countries: the USA, the UK, France, Russia, India and the PRC. What these have in common is an aircraft carrier capability and a nuclear arsenal. These make each one of these countries a formidable player in world diplomacy. However, this selection does leave out several navies in states which have not developed nuclear weapons, most notably Spain and Italy. This omission will be discussed and defended by the end of this section. Three types of vessels were chosen for comparison of global force projection capabilities: aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships and LPDs. Smaller warfare vessels and other surface combatants would certainly also be used in an amphibious operation. However, as explained in the introduction, it is the three chosen types of vessels that are the most important.

There is a large discrepancy in the comparative sizes of these forces as the USA often operates far larger and more numerous units than the rest of the world. This is why they are compared by both indicators (size and number); the bars in Figure 1 show the comparative displacement by country and type, while the labels note the number of vessels by country and type.

Figure 1 – Current capabilities by type and country as of 1 June 2014



Sources: US Navy (2013a, 2013b, 2013c), Royal Navy (n.d.), Marine nationale (2013), Naval Technology (2014), MOD Russia (n.d.), O'Rourke (2014b), Ireland (2010), own calculations

The USA currently operates 10 *Nimitz* class nuclear powered supercarriers. These vessels displace approximately 88,000 metric tons<sup>1</sup>, carry more than 60 aircraft and are staffed by over 5,000 men and women (US Navy 2013c). Amphibious assault ships are designed to land and support troops and provide a very important service to any global power. In this category is the sole remaining specimen of the *Tarawa* class (to be replaced by the new vessel, the *America*), as well as the eight vessels of the *Wasp* class. These displace 40,000–42,000 metric tons, carry 23 helicopters and six VSTOL aircraft, and are staffed<sup>2</sup> by approximately 2,800 men and women altogether. LPDs are somewhat smaller vessels with a similar role, but a far smaller aircraft complement, which limits their capacity. Two US classes are counted in this category: two *Austin* and nine *San Antonio* class vessels. These displace 17,000 and 25,000 metric tons respectively, carry 1,050–1,300 staff and can deploy 4–6 rotary aircraft.

1 All of the displacement measures in this article are conveyed in metric tons rather than short tons or long tons  
 2 For the sake of simplicity, I somewhat incorrectly count the crew, the air wing personnel and the standard transported marine infantry force as "staff" for all vessels.

The HMS *Illustrious*, an *Invincible* class carrier, is the only aircraft carrier in the UK. It has been relegated to the role of helicopter carrier in this late period in its life-cycle. It displaces 22,000 tons, is staffed by 1,100 personnel and can carry up to 24 helicopters. It will soon be replaced by a much larger vessel (see below). The HMS *Ocean*, the only amphibious assault ship, displaces approximately 22,000 metric tons, carries up to 18 helicopters and is staffed by 941 personnel. The two British LPD vessels, the *Bulwark* and the *Albion*, displace approximately 20,000 metric tons at full load and are staffed by 625 personnel (Royal Navy n.d.).

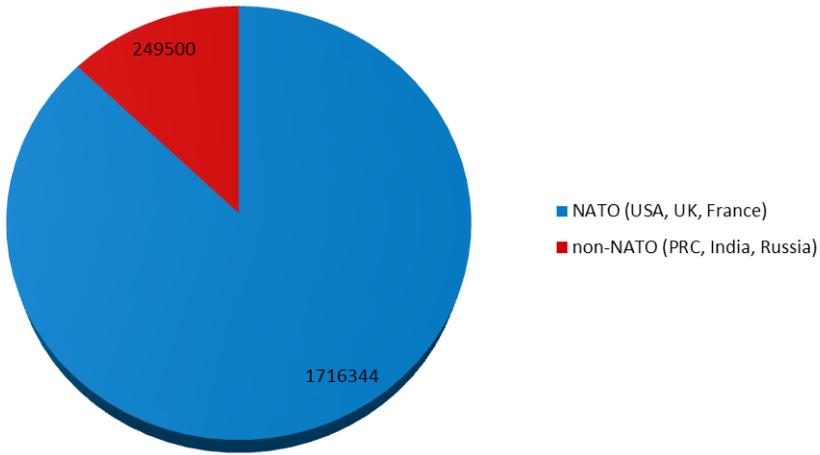
The French Navy operates what is still the only non-US nuclear aircraft carrier. The *Charles de Gaulle* displaces 42,000 metric tons at full load, carries 40 aircraft and is staffed by 1,950 men and women. The three *Mistral* class amphibious assault ships displace 22,000 tons, carry 16 helicopters and are staffed by 630 personnel. The sole LDP in service, the *Siroco*, displaces 12,000 tons, carries up to four helicopters and has a staff of 639 (Marine nationale 2013).

The *Admiral Kuznetsov* is the only currently available Russian vessel in any of the three categories. It is a carrier with a 55,000 metric ton displacement and a staff of 1,960. It carries 36 aircraft – 12 fixed-wing aircraft and 24 helicopters (MOD Russia n.d.).

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN –the Chinese Navy) currently operates only the aircraft carrier *Liaoning*. Bought unfinished and disarmed from the Ukraine, it was rebuilt and was declared operational in 2012. It belongs to the same class as the *Admiral Kuznetsov* and similar capabilities should be assumed. PLAN also operates three Type 071 LPDs, displacing 18,000 metric tons and carrying four helicopters (O'Rourke 2014b: 66).

The Indian Navy currently operates two aircraft carriers: the *Vikramaditya* (formerly the Russian *Admiral Gorshkov*) and the *Viraat* (formerly the British *Hermes*), which displace 42,000 and 26,500 metric tons and are staffed by approximately 1,500 and 1,170 personnel respectively. Each vessel carries approximately 30 aircraft (Ireland 2010: 242–243). India also operates an *Austin* class (17,000-ton displacement, staff of 1,320 and up to six helicopters) LPD vessel.

**Figure 2 – NATO and non-NATO displacement tonnages**



Sources: US Navy (2013a, 2013b, 2013c), Royal Navy (n.d.), Marine nationale (2013), Naval Technology (2014), MOD Russia (n.d.), O'Rourke (2014b), Ireland (2010), own calculations

Adding the displacement tonnages from Figure 1 according to NATO membership, we can obtain the global comparative NATO position as a whole (Figure 2). As noted, this comparison omits the Spanish and Italian navies, both of which can substantially supplement NATO forces.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the non-NATO data omit several ambitious navies operating either aircraft carriers or amphibious assault ships, in particular the South Korean, Brazilian and Thai navies. It should be understood that Figures 1 and 2 apply exclusively to the six countries chosen for comparison according to the criteria outlined in the introduction. It should, however, also be emphasized that the capabilities of these six navies dwarf those of the rest of the world, which suggests that the projection of global trends would not substantially change with the inclusion of smaller navies in the comparison. Also, none of the nation states that currently possess aircraft carriers or amphibious assault ships (Italy, Spain, the Republic of Korea, Brazil and Thailand) could seriously be considered as aspiring to the current US position in the world order. Therefore, it seems

3 The Italian Navy operates two aircraft carriers and three small LPD vessels (Marina Militare n.d.), while the Spanish Navy operates a single aircraft carrier and two LPD vessels (Armada Española 2014).

safe to compare only the six original countries that combine the ability for conventional force projection with nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, some of the smaller navies are large enough to be formidable regional players. This article analyses the current fleet sizes, but also the future carrier building capabilities (next section). Considering the possibility of an arms race in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the paper then analyses four further ambitious navies operating in that theatre (Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Australia).

The NATO membership status of the six selected countries will almost certainly remain stable until 2030 and this distinction has informed the comparison. However, the non-NATO category should not be construed as anti-NATO. India, in particular, has shown signals of moving towards NATO and the USA, perhaps caused by anxieties over the ambitions of the PRC.

## **Current aircraft carrier building capability – what can we expect?**

The following two sections attempt to provide a prediction of global military power relations in the near future. For the sake of manageability and with a view to enabling accurate projection, the analysis focuses on aircraft carriers as the single most important asset of blue water navies.

**Table 1**

	<i>Aircraft carriers recently produced (n)</i>	<i>Average real GDP growth rate 2003–2012 (g)</i>	<i>Public debt as a percentage of GDP in 2012 (d)</i>	<i>Current capacity indicator (x)</i>
USA	3	1.8	102	1.8
UK	1	1.4	89	-4.2
France	0	1.1	90	-7.9
Russia	0	4.7	13	3.3
India	1	7.8	67	4.3
China	0	10.2	26	7.4

$$x = 3.33n + 0.98g + 0.1d$$

*n* = successfully launched or commissioned aircraft carriers since 2003 = average real GDP growth rate 2003–2012

*d* = general government gross debt in 2012 as a percentage of GDP

Sources: IMF (2014); own calculations

The data in Table 1 quantify the current capacities for aircraft carrier building in the six selected countries. The first relevant indicator (n) is the number of aircraft carriers successfully launched or commissioned since 2003. This indicator shows whether existing shipbuilding capacities have recently been used to produce aircraft carriers. We can observe a large and proven capacity in the USA, which suggests no large investments in infrastructure would be needed for any further order to be accomplished. The UK and India have very recently built one aircraft each. In sharp contrast, France, Russia and China have not recently produced such vessels. With France in possession of significant shipbuilding infrastructure, this should not present a problem if funds were to be made available. China is currently expanding its capacities, but its inexperience in building aircraft carriers is bound to be felt when actual production starts (although the refit and rearmament of the former *Varyag* has no doubt presented a valuable lesson). Russia would be presented with the largest challenge in the sense of necessary infrastructure investments as the crucial sites of the Soviet aircraft carrier programme are located in western Ukraine.

The second indicator (g) is the average growth rate in the 10-year period 2003–2012. The first five years of this period were generally well-

performing global boom years and the last five years were those of crisis/global recession. The average performance in this 10-year period for each country therefore reflects performance in the context of both boom and crisis. An economy that grows at high rates ensures large revenues for the government, which are a prerequisite for large military investments. This indicator should also be taken into account when surveying the third measure (d). This is the public debt level expressed as a percentage of GDP. First, the funds for large investments such as aircraft carriers can be ensured either through large revenues or through deficit spending. Under the current institutional checks and political atmosphere in the EU and the USA, large deficit spending is not possible, particularly not with the high debt levels shown in Table 1. Second, a rapidly growing GDP will, *ceteris paribus*, cause the ratio of debt to GDP to drop and vice versa. Therefore, a large public debt/GDP ratio with high growth rates is far less problematic than the same ratio with low or even negative growth rates. This means high debt levels (d) and low growth levels (g), both of which would lower the final indicator of capacity, are indicators of the possibility of fiscal crises.

2012 was chosen as the end year as it is the most recent year with fully measured data from the IMF (2014) for all six countries in both indicators. The three measures are combined in a very simple model to ascertain current comparative capacities for aircraft carrier building.<sup>4</sup> An alternative way of comparing the probability of carrier building would be to compare military spending. However, such data would need to be refined to be truly comparable as they may hide the real spending on large naval procurement projects. Also, the real amount may fluctuate substantially with respect to available funds and even production costs. In contrast to this, the method in this article seeks to determine the long-term capacity of states to build aircraft carriers. The three indicators (n, g, d) reflect the readiness of the shipbuilding industry to produce new carriers, the behaviour of the economy in various situations and the fiscal manoeuvring space.

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4 The weights were chosen so that the maximum value in each column is calculated as an index value of 10. In this way, the spreads of values of all of the three indicators (n,g,d) are allotted equal weight in calculating the index {x}.

The resulting index (x) shows us that the three major latent challengers to NATO are far better positioned to build aircraft carriers, with China in the lead. The USA is in a relatively neutral position. France is by far in the worst position and as the following section will show, this is mirrored by the aspirations of the French navy. Of course, these figures present a rough guide and will not necessarily be directly reflected in actual behaviour. After all, if a nation decides to build carriers for reasons of national pride, it may build them even if it is irrational to do so in the given economic/fiscal situation. Therefore, these figures should be viewed in the light of the analysis of shipbuilding plans in the next section.

## **Ambitions and plans**

This section is intended to supplement the data in the previous section with accounts of actual carrier building ambitions in the six countries. The best available sources were used in order to make the most probable projections of carrier fleet sizes by 2030. However, readers should be aware that these projections are merely conjecture: a specific vision of a possible future.

### **The future of NATO force projection – how many carriers do we want to have?**

#### **USA**

In the context of the late Cold War, the number of carriers deemed sufficient for the USA was 15. From the 1990s this number dropped to 12, which became the statutory minimum in 2006 (O'Rourke 2014a). This minimum was reduced to 11 in 2007 and is currently not being met with only 10 operational aircraft carriers. This legal discrepancy will be

remedied only after a period of several years when the CVN 78 *Gerald R Ford* is commissioned in the Navy.

The expected life span of US nuclear carriers is 50 years, with a necessary refuelling and complex overhaul (ROCH) procedure approximately halfway through the cycle (25 years). This creates a schedule for the availability of the fleet and dictates a continued building programme, with new carriers continually taking the place of those being decommissioned. The most recent 30-year US Navy shipbuilding plan (2014–2043) projects the availability of 11 carriers in 2030 and 10 by 2040 (Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 2013). Therefore, even building the maximum number of carriers if the funds are available will assure a slow decline of the number of US carriers in service.

The fiscal crisis in the USA culminated in a *budget sequestering*, or a severe limit on fiscal policy, including the possibility of a budget cut in fixed amounts. In this context, the size of the US carrier fleet was put on the agenda. Charles Hagel, the Secretary of Defence, proclaimed that a fleet of only eight or nine carriers may become plausible (Cavas 2013). If the need arises, the carrier fleet could be reduced in two ways:

- New aircraft carriers could stop being produced. Funding for CVN 79 and 80, which are to be produced through to 2023, are not yet secured, although Congress approved the building of CVN 79 and provided some initial funding (O'Rourke 2014a). A recent report by the Congressional Budgetary Office (CBO) analysed the possible savings from not buying any further carriers after CVN 79. If this option were adopted, it could reduce the fleet size considerably in the long term. However, the long interval necessary for building these ships suggests that the US Navy would keep the current level of 10 carriers until 2030 and it is only by 2040 that this number would dwindle to seven (CBO 2013).
- The oldest carrier currently in service is the CVN 68 *Nimitz* and it is not expected to be retired until 2027 (Yardley et al. 2008), but there are alternatives. Existing carriers nearing their mid-life ROCH could be disposed of instead. The CVN 73 *George Washington* is the next carrier in need of a ROCH procedure and the funding for

this is still unclear (LaGrone 2014). By the time the *Nimitz* is scheduled to be decommissioned, four carriers will need to undergo ROCH, including CVN 73 (Schank et al. 2011). Any or all of these could be skipped.

In the very unlikely scenario that all of these options were implemented, the US Navy would be left with only seven carriers after the *Nimitz* is retired in 2027. While this worst case scenario would only come to pass in the event of fiscal catastrophe on a far larger scale than 2012/2013, it is useful to bear in mind that this is the absolutely lowest possible number of carriers in 2030.<sup>5</sup> The maximum long-term size of the carrier fleet is supplied by the navy shipbuilding plan (11 in 2030). Assuming some fiscal difficulties in the future, coupled with the desire for a large navy, the probable number of carriers in 2030 is nine or ten. If the seamless process of carrier production that has been in place at Newport News in Virginia for many decades is stopped, the unit cost for any further carriers would become substantially higher. Indeed, any vessel produced at this site would become more costly, as some overhead costs would have to be transferred (CBO 2013). Therefore, common sense logic dictates that it will be beneficial to keep production alive for as long as possible.

## France

The French Navy currently operates only one aircraft carrier. As a governmental White Paper on Defence and National Security pointed out in 2008, the credibility of force projection can only be maintained if there is a carrier available at all times (Commission sur le Livre blanc sur la défense et la sécurité nationale 2008: 214). Due to necessary and prolonged maintenance, this is only possible with two or more aircraft carriers (which then take turns undergoing maintenance). This argument could be used in any one-carrier nation. However, the scarce resources available make two carriers a luxury for the austerity laden states of Europe and France is no exception. By the 2013 White Paper on Defence and National Security, ambitions for two carriers

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5 Under the assumption that the Navy will find the rest of the necessary funding for CVN 79 and that it would not retire carriers before a large investment is needed or lose carriers due to unforeseen incidents.

had dissolved in favour of cooperation with Great Britain (Commission sur le Livre blanc sur la défense et la sécurité nationale 2013: 93). The White Paper specifically references the Lancaster House treaties from 2010, which will enable a joint Franco-British carrier strike group in order to circumvent the one-carrier deficiency.

## UK

The British Navy recently (2010) retired one of its two small *Invincible* class aircraft carriers. The UK is currently building two larger aircraft carriers (65,000 tonne displacement) of the *Queen Elizabeth* class, although the most recent Strategic Defence Review allowed for the possibility of retaining only one of them and selling the other (HM Government 2010: 23).

## Latent global challenges to NATO force projection

For many of the countries analysed below, the transparency of defence strategy might not be a priority. Whereas the analysis of the three NATO countries is facilitated by access to various official documents, here it is necessary to make do with statements by various officials covered by the media.

## PRC

The PRC has a unique economic incentive to invest massively in its military. Real GDP growth in China<sup>6</sup> has experienced a relative deceleration from 14.16% in 2007 to 7.7% in 2012 (IMF 2014). Nevertheless, this rate of real growth is far higher than comparative indicators in any NATO country. Therefore, the economic agility that can enable massive military investment is still present in the PRC. The fiscal ability to do so is also available. While EU members and the USA are doing their best to

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<sup>6</sup> GDP corrected for inflation.

enact budget cuts wherever possible, China has chosen the opposite, fiscally expansionary route, which is roughly a Keynesian anti-cyclical crisis response. With its foreign markets reeling since 2007/2008, it was necessary to manage its aggregate demand at home.<sup>7</sup> The active fiscal policies needed to achieve this expansion more than tripled China's general government gross debt in nominal terms in the period 2006–2013 (IMF 2014). As a consequence of the fiscal stimulus, the ratio of government expenditure to GDP rose steadily from 18.9% in 2007 to 24.8% in 2013 (IMF 2014). And so, just as many western countries stimulated their aggregate demand by militarization before and during WWII, China is doing so today. Economic ability meets with necessity in producing huge increases in the military budget (Martina and Torode 2014). This suggests that the PRC's ambitious plans for naval expansion will most probably be well funded and are therefore plausible.

The *Liaoning* (formerly the *Varyag*), the very first aircraft carrier of the PRC, has only recently become operational. Bought unfinished and disarmed from Ukraine in the late 1990s, the work necessary in completing it gave the Chinese shipbuilding industry the experience needed for future building programmes. There are currently reports suggesting the imminent –or perhaps already started – construction of two further aircraft carriers, the first to be built entirely in the PRC. The first such carrier is to be finished by 2020 (Blanchard and Lim 2011; Hoffman 2014; USNI 2014). Judging by the time needed for the production of the first indigenous carrier in India and assuming that initial work on a new aircraft carrier may have started as early as 2012, we should probably not expect the commissioning of this vessel before late 2021. However, if shipbuilding capacities are ambitiously expanded, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) could hope for as many as four commissioned aircraft carriers by 2030 (counting the already existing *Liaoning*). This would meet the desired fleet size stated by PRC officials in the Chinese state media in early 2014 (USNI 2014).

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7 The components of aggregate demand (basically GDP) are consumer demand, investment demand, government expenditure and net exports. Chinese export growth was hurt by the global crisis and barring monetary or tax based stimulus, a fiscal solution was the only possibility.

## Russia

The Russian military budget is set to increase substantially by 2015 and a number of naval projects are being funded (Oxenstierna 2013). Also, there have been sporadic statements by high military, political and shipbuilding industry officials predicting the building of anywhere between one and five aircraft carriers (Kislyakov 2007; Pettersen 2011; RIA Novosti 2011a). However, to the best of my knowledge, there were no official plans or funding for these projects at the time of writing this article. The fiscal position should not be a problem for Russia as the real GDP growth rate remains relatively stable and the general government debt/GDP ratio is comparatively very low (IMF 2014). The largest setback Russia will have to overcome in order to rebuild and maintain its carrier fleet is its lacking infrastructure. To create the blue water navy many Russian officials seem to desire, there will have to be ample investments in naval bases and the shipbuilding industry. The first tentative steps in this direction have already been taken. In late 2010, Russia purchased two *Mistral* class amphibious assault ships from France, with an option for two more vessels of the same class. Russian industry was to be included in the building of the first vessel at Saint-Nazaire, thus enabling Russia to gain experience (RIA Novosti 2010). The delivery of the *Mistral* ships is currently a controversial subject due to the Russian involvement in the 2014 crisis in Ukraine. If the third and fourth ships are also bought, they are to be built in Russia in currently non-existent shipyards (RIA Novosti 2011b). If the option on these two ships is taken up and they are built according to these plans, this will provide Russia with starting investment in the necessary carrier building capital. However, it is most probable that the size of the fleet by 2030 will still be one or two carriers.

## India

In August 2013 India launched its first indigenously built aircraft carrier. The *Vikrant* displaces 37,500 metric tons and it is to be commissioned in the Indian Navy within the next few years (Indian Navy 2013). India is now ready to begin work on the second carrier built in India. The

planned *Vishal* is to be a nuclear powered vessel with a displacement of 65,000 metric tons and may enter the fleet by 2025, assuming the timely start of construction (Sharma 2012). With the *Viraat* (an aging ex-British vessel) being decommissioned before this date, India should have three aircraft carriers altogether in 2025. However, if the Chinese aircraft carrier building programme reaches the scope and speed outlined in the projections in this paper, India would have a strong incentive to pick up the pace of its programme, or to buy more vessels from abroad. Therefore, a three or four carrier navy seems most likely in 2030. Fiscal issues do not present a problem for India at this point as real GDP growth remains stable and the general government debt/GDP ratio continues to drop (IMF 2014).

To summarize, fiscal situations may have a great effect on the funding of large projects such as the building of aircraft carriers. From the point of view of Keynesian economics, the decision to enforce fiscal consolidation (austerity measures) during a recession is equal to inducing a self-perpetuating fiscal crisis. Of course, this is precisely what happened in the aftermath of the 2009 economic crisis for most NATO members. In sharp contrast, the growth rates and/or fiscal positions of India, China and Russia have remained enviably unproblematic in the post-2009 period.

The fiscal crises in the USA, the UK and France have prompted debates on the desired size of their respective carrier fleets. While there have been calls for a continued downsizing of the US fleet, the longevity of US nuclear carriers and the structure of the fleet suggest that the probable number by 2030 will be nine or ten, with the reasonable minimum set at seven. France and the UK have curtailed their ambitious plans somewhat and are opting for closer cooperation instead. For the foreseeable future, their joint size of carrier fleets will be two or three vessels, but may conceivably rise to four by 2030 if their economic growth and fiscal situations improve considerably in the next few years.

As far as China, India and Russia, as the major world power aspirants, are concerned, Russia is the least likely to fund an ambitious carrier building effort by 2030. The major obstacle to be overcome is the lack

of infrastructure, which requires considerable funding. However, it is fully plausible that Russia could fund a second aircraft carrier in time for it to be commissioned by 2030. India and China have both started indigenous aircraft carrier building programmes. While India is more advanced in experience and shipbuilding industry capacity, China seems to have a far larger manoeuvring space in terms of GDP growth and the public debt/GDP ratio. It is also facing the possibility of an export crunch, which has already prompted it to engage in fiscal stimulus and might further this effort in the future. This creates considerable incentives for China to invest in large military projects, including the construction of aircraft carriers. If China reaches or outpaces India's desired carrier fleet size of three, it is plausible that India will react with a further investment in aircraft carriers.

In this security dilemma scenario, it is possible that each navy could have four aircraft carriers by 2030. In this case, the three NATO states might conceivably have as few as 12 carriers in 2030 (and supported by the smaller NATO navies still as few as 14), while the three non-NATO states may have as many as 10. In this case, the global supremacy of the USA and NATO would be challenged by the growing military powers by 2030. However, these numbers suggest that NATO generally and the USA specifically will remain the strongest military global players by this date. A global war in the hegemonic transition vein would therefore be unlikely even if the major actors were not armed with nuclear weapons. As they are, a global, full-blown war among them hopefully remains impossible.

## **Military build-up focusing on the Indian Ocean**

As explained above, the six analysed countries were chosen on the basis of two criteria: aircraft carrier and nuclear capability. However, the likely military build-up focusing on the Indian Ocean will surely involve other countries as well. Conventional wisdom on Indian Ocean strategic development states that the Chinese String of Pearls strategy,

seeking to envelop India, is pushing India into closer cooperation with NATO. The String of Pearls refers to the development and maintenance of ports by private and public actors from the PRC. While some of these ports are quite close to India (Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh), they seem to be commercial rather than military in nature. On the other hand, China has reached the point at which its enviable long-term economic growth is spilling over to its ability to fund large military projects including the building of aircraft carriers. This may cause legitimate concerns among its regional counterparts. The previous section showed how China and India could become involved in an arms race. This section shows the proximate role of other actors in the region. Specifically, there are four countries (Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia and Thailand) that either currently operate, are acquiring or are planning to acquire resources belonging to one of the two larger categories of interest here (aircraft carriers or amphibious assault ships).

## Japan

Japan has a large and modern fleet, which has deliberately been limited in capability in line with the (in)famous Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan stating that Japan will not maintain land, sea or air forces. This has subsequently been reinterpreted as a prohibition on maintaining weapons that are offensive in nature (such as ICBMs, aircraft carriers or strategic bombers). In consequence, the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force does not operate a single vessel belonging to any of the three categories covered by this article (aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships or LPDs). However, Japan has attempted to meet the need for the roles played by these vessels by employing less conventional designs. Japan currently has three Helicopter Destroyer vessels (two in the *Hyuga* class and one in the *Izumo* class), with a further *Izumo* ship currently being built. These ships have relatively large decks and may operate helicopters (up to 11 for *Hyuga* and up to 14 for *Izumo*). The three *Osumi* class LSTs (tank landing ships) are also somewhat over-capable for their stated class and may operate up to eight helicopters. In effect, the navy of Japan has effectively bridged some capability gaps by carefully manoeuvring in relation to the existing political obstacles.

The need for such manoeuvres may be diminishing. On 1 July 2014, the Prime Minister of Japan announced a further reinterpretation of Article 9 (Sieg and Takenaka 2014). However, even if the political constraints on the navy of Japan should disappear, the experience gap will remain. Even in Japan, a country with a rich maritime tradition, which was one of the aircraft carrier design pioneers, it will not be easy to build aircraft carriers or amphibious assault ships without experience. It is probably for this reason that overtures to buying an amphibious assault vessel manufactured in the USA have already been made (Takahashi and Hardy 2014).

Therefore, while technically not possessing a fleet which would merit an inclusion in this analysis, Japan seems to be removing the obstacles that would prevent it obtaining one. By 2030, Japan may well play a considerable part in the expected military race.

## Thailand

The Royal Thai Navy operates a single aircraft carrier – the diminutive *Chakri Naruebet* – built in Spain. The carrier was designed to carry VSTOL jet aircraft, but these have been retired and it currently only fields helicopters (Ireland 2010). The development of the Thai Navy was precipitated by the favourable economic conditions preceding the Asian crisis of 1997. While Thailand has purchased a number of new ships in recent years, the ambitious pre-1997 development programme was never restarted and it seems unlikely that Thailand will acquire further significant resources belonging to the categories analysed here by 2030.

## Korea

The Republic of Korea Navy operates a single *Dokdo* amphibious assault ship (ROKN n.d.). Two more were originally planned and the eventual acquisition of one or both now seems likely. Bearing in mind the ambitious Korean tendencies in the development of blue-water capabilities since 2001, it is not unfeasible that Korea will attempt to

acquire naval resources capable of operating fixed-wing aircraft, either through reworking the *Dokdo* class or eventually acquiring aircraft carriers.

## Australia

The Royal Australia Navy currently operates no vessels belonging to any of the three categories analysed here. However, it is currently in the process of acquiring two amphibious assault ships (the *Canberra* to be commissioned in 2014 and the *Adelaide* to be commissioned in 2016). They can carry 8–18 helicopters. Their design (a modification of the Spanish class *Juan Carlos I*) enables them to carry STOVL fighters, but it is not currently planned that they will do so (Royal Australian Navy n.d.). If Australia opts to obtain the F-35B aircraft, it could acquire a vastly improved platform in the *Canberra* and the *Adelaide*. It would also be the first time Australia could boast such capability since the carrier *Melbourne* was retired in 1982.

## Conclusions

There is no evidence to suggest that NATO will lose global force projection primacy by 2030. Such a situation could come to pass only by a protracted exacerbation of negative economic/fiscal trends in the USA and Western Europe, coupled with the continuation of positive trends in India and China. Nevertheless, the failure of the West to resolve its economic difficulties even after seven years and the continued focus on fiscal responsibility does allow us to take this possibility seriously. Current trends suggest that in the decade following 2030 (i.e. beyond the projection horizon of this article), NATO generally and the USA specifically will probably become only one of several global players, with a force projection capability comparable to others – a fully multi-polar world. However, nothing points to a global war in the 2020–2030 decade as predicted by Joshua Goldstein.

The decade 2030–2040 might bring a new global military hegemony (possibly China). This will be the final step of the journey started when the USA lost its global trade dominance. Among the six countries compared here, China has enjoyed the highest GDP growth rates both before and since the 2007/2008 global financial fiasco (IMF 2014). It also has considerable fiscal manoeuvring space (see Current global force projection capabilities), and strong incentives to use it (see Current aircraft carrier building capability – what can we expect?). However, it will have to contend both with the Indian Navy and the US Navy. The latter has a very large and very resilient carrier fleet, which it will probably continue downsizing as slowly as possible. The former, while small, has had a far earlier start than China as far as a blue water navy is concerned. The navies of South Korea, Japan and Australia and their desire to counter the flexing muscles of China are also not to be underestimated (see Military build-up focusing on the Indian Ocean). All of this spells out a high probability of a military build-up centring on the Indian and Pacific Oceans heating up in the period 2020–2040.

However, this projection is not the sole possibility. NATO members may eventually follow Japan in its recent expansionary fiscal policy frenzy. After all, it is only such fiscal behaviour –which would be considered reckless in current western mainstream thinking – that can hope to break the economic rut in which we find ourselves. Only a state which is unburdened by the permanent need to find more room for fiscal consolidation, a state that finds itself with the real ability to spend, can enact the large-scale projects needed for global force projection. However, this is unlikely for most NATO members. In the rapidly aging western world, the social expectations of the state are increasingly large. Likewise, in the world of rising fiscal controls (e.g. the Excessive Deficit Procedure in the EU and the current minority party blocks to further US debt), the fiscal playgrounds of the 1945–2007 period seem increasingly distant. It is for these reasons that we should expect the continuing reduction of aircraft carrier groups in NATO countries in the next 15–25 years. Only the future can tell the pace with which this downsizing will occur.

On the other hand, the ambitious Chinese aircraft carrier building programme could fail to materialize. The economies of China and

India could experience a hard landing. This would create fiscal and therefore military procurement problems. However, the fact that these export-oriented economies have weathered the global demand crisis of previous years so well does not suggest such a crash is imminent, particularly not in China. Therefore, as long as China's shipping industry capacities can match its ambitions, the projection of a military build-up which includes aircraft carriers does not seem unrealistic.

Under the assumption of the low likelihood of a nuclear war, no global war can be expected as a result of these processes. However, the literature on hegemonic transitions and war cycles seems to be justified in a different sense. The economic, military and political preconditions for a hegemonic transition will probably have been met by 2030–2040. Such conditions have historically precipitated global wars. On the other hand, this is the first transition that will have to take place in the context of the possibility of nuclear warfare. We will witness something unprecedented. There are two general possibilities for a radically new hegemonic transition. It may resemble the Cold War, with opponents conducting proxy warfare. Unlike the Cold War, the economic foundations and most probably the results of such warfare would be different. On the other hand, it may be directed in a spirit of partnership. In this case, a far closer military and political relationship with the new hegemony would have to be developed by the West. This suggests that even when the waning period in the NATO military position is reached, we will have an opportunity to guide this transition on the road to global peace and security.

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**Josip Lučev** (jlucev@gmail.com) was born in Novo Mesto, Slovenia in 1986. In 2005 he moved to Zagreb in order to study Political Science. He holds an M.A. degree in Political Science since 2010, and an M.A. degree in Social Policy since 2013. He delivered lectures and/or seminars in the courses of Political Economy, Global and Comparative Political Economy and Development Policies at the Faculty of Political Science in Zagreb. He is currently a doctoral candidate at the same institution. His academic interests include the fields of Political Economy (particularly Keynesian macroeconomics and New Institutionalism), Political Theory (particularly Lacanian psychoanalysis) and Security Studies.