



ACADEMY OF ARMED FORCES
MILITARY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE
THEORETICAL-SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL
DECEMBER 2023

MILITARY JOURNAL

(Fourth edition)

MILITARY SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE © 2023

Publication of Academy of Armed Forces
Approved by decision no. 04, dated 13.12.2023
of the Military Journal Managing Board

Military Journal Managing Board

Board President

Colonel Msc. Bardhyl Nuredinaj

Board members

Colonel Msc. Ulsi Rexhaj

Dr. Etleva Smaçi

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Teki Kurti

Colonel (R) Dr. Ahmet Leka

Lieutenant Colonel (R) Dr. Enrik Ago

Lieutenant Colonel Dr. Fitim Karasani

PhDc. Fatjon Hoxhalli

Colonel Msc. Hysni Gjergji

Prepared for publication by:

Editing and Publishing Group

Military Scientific Research Institute (MSRI)

**Translated in english by the Translation/Teaching Group
in the Department of Foreign Languages:**

Shpëtim Madani

Kejdi Budo (Sheri)

Erin Dini

Daniela Dyrmishi

Greta Përgjegji

Esmeralda Bërdo

Çetina Hyka

Alba Hysi

Debora Bilali (Gjoni)

Ilda Basha

Klodiana Tavanxhiu

ISSN 2227-8133 (Print), ISSN 2227-8141 (Online)

Copyright © 2023 by the Military Scientific Research Institute of the Academy of Albanian Forces.

The Academy of Armed Forces has academic freedom and abides by the legal obligations expressly defined in the law on Higher Education as well as all other legal acts that are mandatory for public institutions.

The views and opinions expressed in the Military journal are those of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Ministry of Defense, the General Staff of the Albanian Armed Forces, nor the Academy of the Armed Forces. The authors of the articles will not be subject to punishment for the free expression of their individual attitudes and positions, even if their content is not in accordance with the official positions of the defense institution. At the same time, the author/authors bear responsibility for distortions of facts as well as unreferenced copying of the writing and thoughts of other authors.

Dear readers!

The fourth edition of the “Military Journal” (MJ), December 2023, is a reprint of selected articles of the three MJ editions, translated into English.

Academy of Armed Forces
Military Scientific Research Institute
Printed: December 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIRST RUBRIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING

EDUCATION ACCORDING TO THE "WEST POINT" MODEL, A GUARANTEE FOR SUCCESS

Dr. Glevin Dervishi
Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF 9

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Edmond Braneshi
Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF 17

LOGISTIC SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Colonel Msc. Avni Bilbilaj
Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF 31

SECOND RUBRIC CYBER DEFENSE AND INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

CYBER-VACCINATING THROUGH THE ASSESSING CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Anni Dasho Sharko
"Luarasi" University, Information Technology and Innovation Faculty
Prof. Assoc. Dr. Genci Sharko
"Polytechnic University of Tirana", Faculty of Electrical Engineering
PhDc. Folitjona Puravelli
"Luarasi" University, Information Technology and Innovation Faculty 53

POWER IN THE AGE OF THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Colonel Msc. Ulsi Rexhaj
Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF 63

**THE ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM - A CHALLENGE IN PUBLIC
PROCUREMENT INVESTMENTS AND SERVICES. PROTECTION OF
PERSONAL DATA AGAINST INFORMATION RIGHTS**

PhDc. Marsida Abdul

“Aleksandër Moisiu” University, Business Faculty, Durrës

Dr. Entela Abdul

“Luarasi” University, Law Faculty, Tirana

71

**APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES TO CYBER SECURITY
IN THE AGE OF BIG DATA**

Dr. Gentian Hoxhalli

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

85

**THIRD RUBRIC
SECURITY AND DEFENSE ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENTS**

**NATO-EU MEMBERSHIP OF "NEW EUROPE" STATES,
THE ONLY RESPONSE TO THE RUSSIAN HYBRID THREAT**

Colonel Msc. Hysni Gjergji

Colonel Msc. David Rroku

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

99

**HOW THE ISRAEL - HAMAS WAR IMPACTS
THE RUSSIA - UKRAINE WAR AFTER 22 MONTHS/660 DAYS**

Colonel Msc. Dilaver Hoxha

Former Albanian Defense Attaché in Ukraine (non-resident)

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

113

FUTURE OPERATIONS: MULTI DOMAIN OPERATIONS

Lieutenant Colonel Msc. Nikolin Lazri

Land Force

131

**FOURTH RUBRIC
HISTORICAL WRITINGS**

**MARSHAL ZHUKOV'S VISIT TO ALBANIA (1957): THE IMPACT ON
INCREASING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY**

Dr. Etleva Smaçi

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

143

**MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN ALBANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1948.
EFFORTS FOR UNIFICATION OF THE TWO ARMIES**

Captain Msc. Hekuran Budani

MSc. Orgest Xhangoli

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

153



FIRST RUBRIC

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

EDUCATION ACCORDING TO THE “WEST POINT” MODEL, A GUARANTEE FOR SUCCESS

Dr. Glevin DERVISHI

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

ABSTRACT

This informative article focuses on the importance of cooperation in the field of military education, between the Academy of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania and the West Point Military Academy of the United States of America, as well as the opening of new study programs. The Academy of the Armed Forces, in full cooperation with the US Military Academy “West Point” is involved in a dynamic process of substantial development of curricula and programs according to this model, as well as in accordance with national public higher education. American assistance is focused on three important components of the new programs to be launched: character building, international relations and communication sciences. In the context of the new reality we are living, the activity of the Armed Forces has been restored to the main focus of all European societies, but the dynamic developments in the field of military development cannot be seen apart from military education. The Academy of the Armed Forces as one of the leading and unique institutions in the shaping of academic and institutional capacities in the field of defense, and a tradition of about 65 years, has already entered a path of sustainable transformation, to transform into one of the higher education institutions with the most influence in the field of security in the country.

Keywords: military education, scientific research and innovation, US Military Academy “West Point”, cooperation, Academy of the Armed Forces, International Relations, field of defense, leader etc.

INTRODUCTION

Service in the Armed Forces is more than a mission, it is the embodiment of a difficult task, sacrifice, but at the same time it is the challenge of being the first where the nation and duty ask. The progress of social development processes within the country, but also the new technological dimensions we encounter, impose on us the need to develop capacities that support the tasks in the Armed Forces and the sanctity of this noble mission, both in terms of academics, standards and scientific research. Military education and training is the process that aims to create and improve the skills of military personnel in their respective duties, so the Armed Forces Academy constitutes only the foundation in this long and unstoppable process of educating the Armed Forces. Military education helps create the conditions for military success by creating the conceptual and intellectual architecture to make military operations more effective and to do so consistently.

Armed Forces Academy¹ as one of the leading and unique institutions in the shaping of military and institutional academic capacities with a tradition of about 65 years, has already entered a sustainable transformation to transform it into one of the most influential higher education institutions in the field of security in the country. In order to achieve this objective, AFA has embraced the vision to become a center of modern higher military education and scientific research in the field of defense and national security². This transformation aims to turn this academy in a “laboratory” of the shaping the new generation of junior officer, the next best leader at the national level. Within this format and full institutional consolidation, AFA, in full partnership with the US Military Academy “West Point”, is involved in a dynamic process of substantial development of curricula and programs according to this model, as well as in accordance with national public higher education. US assistance to AFA is focused on three important components of the new programs to be launched as: Character building³, International relations⁴ and Communication Sciences⁵.

This cooperation in the field of military education provides an intellectual architecture for success in the field of operationalization and training, where it also contributes to building a stable civil-military relationship, stimulating a culture of reflection and raising capacities for critical analysis.

¹ <https://www.tradoc.mil.al/rreth-kds/vizioni-misioni>

² <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/VKM-nr.-156-dt.-19.2.2020-AFA.pdf>

³ <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/behavioral-sciences-and-leadership>

⁴ <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/social-sciences/international-affairs>

⁵ <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/social-sciences>

In the wake of this commitment, AFA intends to open for the 2023-2024 academic year the educational programs “International Relations in the Field of Defense” as well as “Science and Communication in the Field of Defense”. These two programs are first-cycle university study programs offered by AFA, organized in courses and modules and evaluated in credits, according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The program “International Relations in the Field of Defense” aims to equip the student with necessary and consolidated knowledge of International Relations, Diplomacy and its supporting disciplines. These are among the basic tasks of the Armed Forces in the field of International Relations, which are offered in existing programs as general and basic knowledge. While the Program “Communication Science in the Field of Defense” aims to provide an intellectual and professional knowledge to students, presenting a variety of conceptual and perspectives in the field of communication and media, including traditional media and virtual space, as a result of direct technological developments in this field. Other formative activities closely related to the profession such as: Preparation of skilled personnel equipped with contemporary knowledge of journalism and communication in various fields of Defense; acquisition of skills to collect, analyze and then report information professionally; familiarity with issues of ethics in reporting and issues related to media and communication sciences; integration of theory and practice so that students experience aspects related to the field of study.

American expertise, in addition to serving the increase of academic capacities, modernization, further advancement in the education process, also carries a high potential in building a new practice in bilateral academic cooperation, that of student and academic exchange between the Academy of the Armed Forces and West Point. During the two meetings held with the experts of the “West Point” Academy, the academic objectives of the new programs that will be offered, the structuring of the syllabi and their enrichment with the most coherent literature, which reflects the best academic developments in this field⁶. In the design of these programs, the national specifics of our country, the historical context, the security environment where we operate, our capacities and our goals to offer a military academic model, leader in the region, have been taken into consideration.

ACADEMY TRANSFORMATION

Our ambition is for military education to continue to develop and consolidate further in accordance with the law of higher education and scientific research

⁶<https://www.tradoc.mil/al/lajme/550-nje-ekip-nga-akademia-ushtarake-e-west-point-shba-zhvilloi-nje-vizite-pune-ne-akademine-e-forcave>

in the Republic of Albania, the mission and constitutional responsibilities of FARSH, the education policy of the Minister of Defense, the requirements and standards of NATO, as well as the Vision of the Chief of General Staff for the 2022-2025⁷ period, which foresees; *“The transformation and full operation of the Academy of the Armed Forces (AFA), as the only military institution of higher education that will prepare the future officers of the Armed Forces, will be a priority of my engagement at the head of the Armed Forces. AFA will continue with the process of institutional reaccreditation, consolidating and putting in full efficiency the main units, the basic ones and other leading, coordinating and supporting bodies. Cooperation with the Military Academy will continue until the complete consolidation and transformation of this educational institution. AFA will strengthen the identity and weight in the development of military scientific thinking, anticipating changes in the security environment, as well as technological evolution”*.

With the transition to the 4-year study cycle system for the academic year 2023-2024, we intend to open the Master of Science program for both the “International Relations in the Field of Defense” and “Science Communication in the Field of Defense” programs, during academic year 2024-2025. In the long-term vision of the Armed Forces Academy, there is also the opening of doctoral programs during the 2025-2026 academic year focused on the field of International Relations, Communication Sciences, Security and Defense. This new reality will best serve the youngsters who will join the Armed Forces, because they will serve in a new operational reality, better equipped, better trained and better educated thanks to the US assistance.

Of course, this transformation cannot be seen separated from the dynamic and multifaceted developments that accompany the reality around us, the social stage, the dimension of our country as an anchor of stability in the space of Adriatic Europe, as a country that has started EU membership negotiations, in full alignment with the common foreign and security policy of the EU⁸, aiming at a continuous economic-social consolidation. The complex challenges facing our region and beyond require the adoption of a flexible approach in responding to them. An extremely important component is the formation of the new generation with the ability to analyze and respond flexibly to security institutions. Education and the culture of knowledge are an extremely important component in the national knowledge economy, so in this context the forging of a new generation of useful officers, not only as part of the Armed Forces,

⁷ The vision of the Chief of the General Staff for the period 2022-2025

⁸ <https://integrimi-ne-be.punetejashtme.gov.al/anetaresimi-ne-be/negociatat-e-anetaresimit/kapitujt-e-acquis/kapitulli-31-politika-e-jashtme-e-sigurise-dhe-e-defense/>

but also as an added value in society, it is a vital necessity for the country. Despite the nature of the challenges, facing the new realities of the security environment is no longer the domain of the Armed Forces, in the conditions when we have to face as a nation, as a society, to be on the front line with the best, gives a new dimension to this commitment.

At the core of our Military Education system⁹, is the formation of a group of adaptable and capable leaders, to think critically as leaders who have the right values, attributes and skills to perform their duties properly. This new generation of leaders must enjoy knowledge of the operation of the Armed Forces, as well as the interaction in multilateral activities with our allies and military partners. Having specific knowledge in the field of international relations, they will know how to quickly absorb the dynamics of operating in a very complex, often suspicious and very quickly changing security environment. As a NATO member country, these leaders must know how to build effective teams, fully capable of supporting joint and multinational operations, in the midst of rapid and continuous technological and organizational change, but knowing how to balance and specific sensitivities of member countries of the alliance.

In the context of the new reality in Europe due to Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, the activity of the Armed Forces has been restored to the main focus of all European societies, but the dynamic developments in the field of military development cannot be seen in isolation from military education. Many member states of NATO and EU, in addition to assistance in technique combat and financial assets, have provided as important components trainings and continuous education of the personnel of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, in the face of the Russian military aggression. This element has highlighted the importance of continuing educational processes in the field of military education, even in times of war as an important component, which should continue in a linear manner, regardless of the circumstances in which the country is located.

As part of the investment in education and training, the United States have already trained more than 3,100 Ukrainian troops in the use and maintenance of certain weapons systems, including howitzers, armored vehicles, and the highly mobile artillery rocket system (HIMARS)¹⁰. Other Western allies are also conducting training on the weapons they provide. In November 2022, the EU officially launched a training mission for Ukrainian troops called the "European Union Assistance Mission in Ukraine" (EUMAM Ukraine), constituting the largest military training mission the EU has ever launched.

⁹<https://www.mod.gov.al/images/akteligjore/rekrutimenaxhimpersoneli/2021/urdher-765-080621-politikat-arsimimit.pdf>

¹⁰<https://www.europaelire.org/a/lufta-ne-ukraine-trajnimet-shba-/32225603.html>

It aims to initially train 15,000 Ukrainian troops on the battlefield. The mission was initially designed for two years and is expected to reach the value of about 60 million euros (\$62.2 million) per year¹¹.

CONCLUSIONS

Our mission as an Academy is to develop the inner strength in each cadet, individually, of course with the help of technology and other tools as complementary instruments, in an unstoppable process and a companion in the military career.

Military education remains a permanent challenge of developing the capacities of the Armed Forces, and at the same time it constitutes a sustainable and safe choice for all young people who embrace it.

Military education is an essential and effective factor in national security. In this context, the continuous improvement of curricula and study programs remains at the center of the activity of the academic staff.

Scientific research and innovation constitute the second important component for all academic research and scientific personnel, not only as a need of the time, but also as an added value of knowledge in the field of defense.

Cooperation with partner academies, but also with higher education institutions within the country, will continue should be a priority in sharing experiences, but also in the development of joint programs and projects.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. <https://www.tradoc.mil.al/rreth-kds/vizioni-misioni>
2. <https://arsimi.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/VKM-nr.-156-dt.-19.2.2020-AFA.pdf>
3. <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/behavioral-sciences-and-leadership>
4. <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/social-sciences/international-affairs>
5. <https://www.westpoint.edu/academics/academic-departments/social-sciences>
6. <https://www.tradoc.mil.al/lajme/550-nje-ekip-nga-akademia-ushtarake-e-west-point-shba-zhvilloi-nje-vizite-pune-ne-akademine-e-forcave-armed>
7. The vision of the Chief of the General Staff for the period 2022-2025

¹¹<https://www.botasot.info/europe-bota/1903237/be-nis-dihmen-ushtarake-per-ukrainen-dhe-rembushjen-e-rezervave-t-armeve/>

8. <https://integrimi-ne-be.punetejashtme.gov.al/anetaresimi-ne-be/negociatat-e-anetaresimit/kapitujt-e-acquis/kapitulli-31-politika-e-jashtme-e-sigurise-dhe-e-defense/>
9. <https://www.mod.gov.al/images/akteligjore/rekrutimenaxhimpersoneli/2021/urdher-765-080621-politikat-arsimimit.pdf>
10. <https://www.europaelire.org/a/lufta-ne-ukraine-trajnimet-shba-/32225603.html>
11. <https://www.botasot.info/europe-bota/1903237/be-nis-dihmen-ushtarake-per-ukrainen-dhe-rembushjen-e-rezervave-t-armeve/>

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

Prof. Assoc. Dr. Edmond BRANESHI
Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

ABSTRACT

Change is a widespread phenomenon in our society and constitutes a reality in the life of organizations. The saying of the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu that the journey of a thousand kilometers begins with a single step, means that the first step is the beginning of change. By change we mean the transition (transformation) from one form to another form of acting within the organization. The question that arises is: where does this drive change in the organization come from? The simple answer is that the impetus for change in the organization comes directly from the environment. Any change in the environment makes it necessary to involve the organization in the changes of systems, subsystems and internal processes. Leaders are well aware that change is a continuous process and that changes in the environment bring inevitable impacts to their organizations. Organizational change is concerned with changing the purpose, culture, structure and method of its work in response to observed or anticipated changes in the given environment.

The task of leadership is the immediate understanding of when there is a need for change in the organization. Making internal change to adapt to external change is reactive or counteractive, while leadership (especially at high levels) should be proactive. In this case, a detailed and carefully managed “platform” can help in the successful development of the process. Change is about survival. This article will address change as a process, clarifying

the meaning of change, the stages where the change process goes through, managing resistance to change and the role of leadership for the process to be successful.

Keywords: change, resistance, process, leader, organization, group, organizational growth, stage, unfreeze, movement, refreeze, environment.

INTRODUCTION

Change is inevitable. Nothing is permanent except change. It is the leader duty to manage it properly. Organizations must closely monitor the environment and incorporate appropriate changes as the situation warrants. Change is a continuous phenomenon. Organizations must be proactive to effect change. Even in most high-performing organizations, change is a necessity to maintain a stable level. When we experience change, we move from something we know and do, through a period of transition, to a new and desired way of behaving and doing our work.

The main environmental forces that make change necessary are technology, market forces and socio-economic factors. Resistance to change is not desirable. It is counterproductive to growth or reinforcement and tends to be destructive. Leaders must develop policies to effect change. According to Barney and Griffin, “the primary reason cited for organizational problems is the failure of leaders to properly anticipate or respond to forces for change”.¹

1. CHANGE AND ITS UNDERSTANDING

Change refers to any change or transformation that occurs throughout an organization’s work environment. It can be related to change in technology, organizational structure, work processes, work environment, organizational politics and even the roles people play. Change in one part of the organization forces change in the rest of it. If it is useful, people willingly accept it.

If it is not desirable, the change will meet great resistance. If this is of no consequence to people, they may maintain an indifferent attitude. If they consider the change detrimental to their growth and progress or advancement, they may resist through opposition. This reaction is not necessarily based on reality or facts, but on their perception. Therefore, the change must be very persuasive to overcome objections. “*According to the Institute of Management, - emphasizes B. Tracy, - the most important quality that you will need to become successful in the 21st century is the quality of resilience, especially in the way you think. Resilience refers to the willingness to change and try new*

¹ V.K.Kondalkar, “Organizational Behaviour”, Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4, p. 293.

*things. This especially means that you have the ability to constantly abandon old ideas in favor of new, more effective ones*². Due to the advancement of technology and social environment, change has become a necessity. If the change occurs, the organization achieves the required (expected) balance. Thus, people tend to accept different environmental relations within the organization, they learn to adapt. The most important thing is that when people feel they need to change, and when they change, they are actually adapting to the relevant situation, so a balance is achieved with the changed environment. This process continues and never ends because change happens constantly.

1.1. Organizational growth as a sort of change.

Larry E. Greiner, a prominent American economist, former professor of management and organizations at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, elaborated the theory of change, considering “growth” (development) as a factor of change. He has identified different problems at each stage of evolution. Solving the problem makes the difference. To illustrate, he takes as an example an organization that wants to attain its “growth”. Initially, growth is achieved through the creativity of founders who are usually entrepreneurially oriented, but which creates a leadership problem (need). Regarding the problem of leadership, the relevant board hires personnel with good leadership and management skills, who take full responsibility for the situation. Over time, it is observed that prolonged leadership concentrates power in the organization. As a result, subordinates have to wait for decisions even on trivial matters. Therefore, change is necessary and this makes it indispensable to delegate authority to subordinates. This leads to another problem based on group level autonomy and control becomes difficult. Since the organization has already changed from a process of centralizing everything to a process of delegation, is it possible to cope with this change (or this new situation) to have an appropriate control over the group?

The change is in the form of issuing new orders and detailed instructions on each perceptible matter, so that while the individual enjoys autonomy in the work culture, he still has to work within the framework of rules, guidelines and regulations. Later it was noticed that excessive rules and regulations brought with it a kind of bureaucracy. This problem leads to a change in the philosophy of cooperation. In this changed situation, work is done by individuals, teams or workgroups. It will be seen that the increase in the performance of the organization will cause it to change its strategy, starting from entrepreneurship, leadership - delegation - autonomy of work groups - cooperation, which will

² Brian Tracy, “Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life, How to Unlock Your Full Potential for Success and Achievement”, Elta BS Publications, Year 2009, ISBN: 987-9951-544-08-5, page 182.

lead to the current strategy of self-control, self-discipline and individual work ethic. It is important to understand that any change that occurs is accompanied by unpredictable problems. It will also be seen that change is necessary at every stage. If this is not implemented, the organization will not be able to move forward.

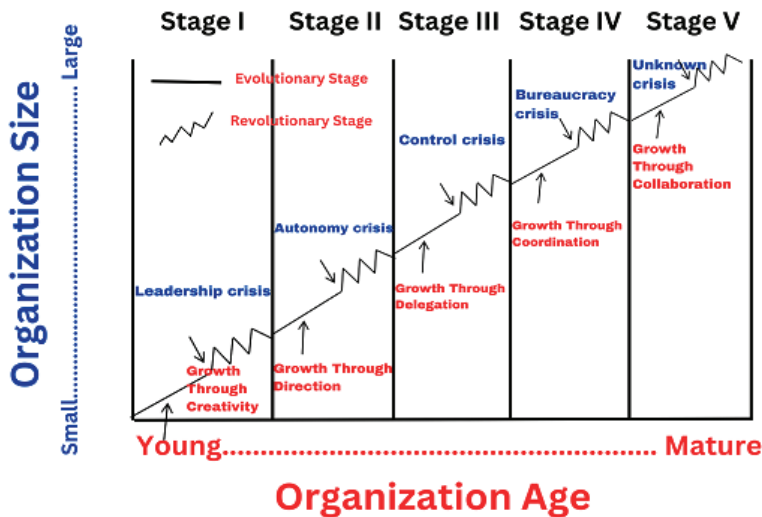


Figure 1 – Greiner’s model of organizational growth³

The Greiner model shows the various stages that an organization is likely to go through during its growth period. Issues and potential problems between stages are highlighted. In this framework, the main problem is that of leadership behavior: that is, what leaders should do to overcome these crises in relation to time space.

2. THE CHANGE PROCESS

Kurt Lewin, (1890 - 1947) a German-American psychologist, known as one of the modern pioneers of social, organizational and applied psychology in the United States, proposed the change process model for moving the organization from the current position to the changed position.⁴ This model consists of three stages:

Stage 1: Unfreeze (Creating motivation and willingness to change). Unfreeze, as the first stage of change, involves preparing the organization to accept that change is necessary, it involves disrupting the existing *status quo*

³ V.K. Kondalkar, “Organizational Behaviour”, Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4, p. 294.

⁴ Lewin Kurt, “Field Theory in Social Science”. Harper and Row, 1951.

before creating a new way of functioning. The unfreezing process makes individuals ready for change. Lewin believes that employees should be informed in advance of the impending change and that they should not be surprised. This stage involves the unfreeze of the old behaviors or situation. Edgar Schein took this brilliant idea propagated by Lewin and refined it, specifying the psychological mechanism involved in each stage of the model. Unfreeze involves creating motivation and willingness to change, creating an environment of disconfirmation of the existence of psychological safety in the changed model of behavior. This can be achieved by making relevant announcements, meetings and promoting the idea (vision, goals) throughout the organization through newsletters, boards, personal contacts and group conferences. Communicating the vision for change in the organization is extremely important.

Change is impossible to be achieved if people do not show willingness to be involved and help in this process. Meetings help to communicate the vision to all members of the organization, but the most powerful and efficient tool is the behavior and attitude of the leaders in the organization. According to Kotter (1995), senior leaders must always act in accordance with the assigned vision. They, for the most efficient communication of the vision, should embody the messages related to the vision in their daily activities as well as use any means of communication to make the relevant announcement.⁵

The unfreeze process essentially cleans and erases the old (obstructive) “psychosis” so that new models of behavior, habits, traditions can be embedded, and then transformed into a new way of doing things. According to John Maynard Keynes: “*The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.*”⁶

Stage 2: The change/movement through cognitive restructuring. After the uncertainty created in the unfreezing stage, the change stage is where people begin to resolve their dilemma, looking for new ways of doing things. People begin to believe and act in order to support the new direction. In this framework, once the unfreeze process is complete, movement occurs, which in itself involves change. People undergo cognitive restructuring. The process is carried out with the following three methods proposed by Kelman.⁷

⁵ R. Gjatoja, A. Lala, K. Xharo, E. Braneshi “Udhëheqja Strategjike“, “GEER” Publishing House, Tirana 2010, ISBN: 978-9928-105-15-8, page 302.

⁶ Laurence Haughton, “It’s Not What You Say...It’s What You Do”, “Max” Publishing House, Tirana 2006, ISBN: 99943-37-50-5, page 220.

⁷ V. K. Kondalkar, “Organizational Behaviour”, Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4, p. 297.

- **Compliance:** Compliance is achieved by giving rewards and punishments. It has been proven that the individual accepts the change if he is rewarded or punished. This is a behavior modification tool.
- **Identification:** Members are psychologically influenced to choose their model and modify behavior. If a leader can act as a role model, change is easier.
- **Internalization:** Internalization is a process of changing the individual's way of thinking in order to adapt to a new environment. Members are advised to do soul searching and adopt a new behavior.

The transition from unfreeze to change does not happen overnight: people take time to embrace the new direction and proactively participate in the change. A relevant model of change focuses on the specific issue of personal transitions in a changing environment and is useful for understanding this aspect in more detail.

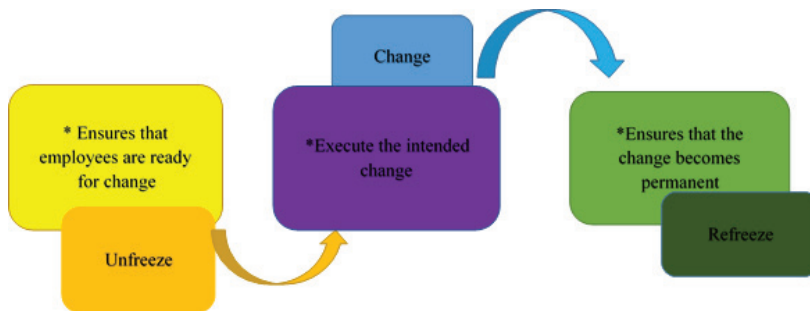


Figure 2. Organizational change process according to Lewin⁸

Stage 3: Refreeze, is about integrating new behaviors into the person's own personality and attitude. This refers to the stability. Changing behavioral norms must necessarily adapt to the social environment. Refreeze happens when the new behavior adapts to a normal lifestyle. The new behavior must replace the old one permanently. New behaviors must be constantly reinforced in order for them to "take hold". The changes take the required form and when people have embraced the relevant new ways, the organization is ready to freeze again. The outward signs of refreezing are a stable organizational chart, consistent job descriptions, etc. Also, the refreezing stage should help people and the organization to internalize or institutionalize the changes. Change is not a one-time process, it is continuous, therefore unfreezing, changing and refreezing will also be continuous.

⁸ Dritan Shoraj, PhD: "Impakti i lidershipit, kulturës dhe ndryshimeve organizative në efektivitetin organizativ të sistemit bankar sekondar në Tiranë", (University of Tirana, Faculty of Economics, Department of Management), Tirana 2014, page 59.

3. RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Change is a continuous phenomenon. Dynamic forces are always present, therefore, individuals must adapt with them and make changes. You will often notice that successful people have confidence and conviction, a sense of comfort and maybe even a little arrogance. Before you think that they were born “different”, you must understand that they acquired these qualities as a result of taking actions. *Courage comes to those who act, not to those who think, wait and wonder. The only way to cultivate this trait is by acting.*⁹ If change is not implemented, society will stagnate and become hopeless. Individuals accept change in the technical field, beyond that they resist the other, as it has great consequences for social change. However beneficial the change may be, it generally encounters obstacles (oppositions) and is always difficult to implement. It must be emphasized that change brings with it new challenges, new experiences, spirit and associated rewards and, therefore, it should be welcomed and implemented with positivity and full support.

Change affects people in the organization. It is always better to explain to them why the change is necessary, what benefits it can bring and how these benefits will be shared by the employees and the organization. Leaders speak according to their worldview. Often, surprisingly, they do not talk about what they have done or will do, but about what they see. They paint a picture of a world that others cannot imagine, and express to the latter their imagination in words. They do not use statistics to prove their opinions, but real examples.¹⁰ Free flow of information and two-way communication is necessary. If proper communication is not maintained, negative attitudes are likely to form during the implementation of the change.

There is a general impression that benefits from change that have costs to employees accrue to the organization and leaders can have the corresponding benefits. This is a false impression and should be corrected by the relevant authority. It should be borne in mind that without the full cooperation of employees no change can be planned, implemented or receive the benefits. There will be no growth or progress in the organization if the employees are not part of the change. Consolidated organizations have an internal strength that is resistant to change. The so-called “*this was not invented here*” syndrome and the pressure to make people “*wait their turn*” stand in the way of change in leadership, but also in innovation. Overcoming institutional resistance

⁹ Grant Cardone, “The 10 X rule: The Only Difference between Success and Failure”, Minerva Publishing House, Year 2020, ISBN: 978-9928-2611-2-8, page 185.

¹⁰ Dale Carnegie, “Make Yourself Unforgettable”, “Pegi” Publishing House, Tirana 2018, ISBN: 978-9928-233-24-0, page 14.

requires a leader's full attention¹¹. Leadership must understand that employees are the key element of any organization and that they must be involved from the stage of planning for change. This will support the improved performance of the organization. Being part of the change should not just be a mechanical act of calling "...come and participate". It should be clearly understood that there is no simple example (template) to be used in all situations.

Different combinations of methods, techniques and procedures are good to try. There may be a need for counseling and training of people. If the situation is not guaranteed to succeed, the plan may fall apart. Leaders must make serious efforts to remove fear from employees. Idealistic innovation leaders are good programmers; they have developed an internal gauge that keeps them grounded; are builders, investors and developers. They strive to create a better world for the people of the organization as well as for investors outside it. More importantly, *leaders see the extraordinary where others see the ordinary*.¹² They consider the genius aspects of others and they act as if each one has its own importance, because in fact it does. They help people discover and develop their genius parts. Participation should be part of the total change treatment. Such employee participation would ensure commitment and dedication to implementing the change. Individual involvement from the change planning stage is essential to ensure full commitment. At the end of the day, it should appear that the employees are asking for the change and the leader is implementing it to the best of his ability. It has been noticed that the leader is considered as the instigator of change and the organizations are considered as the pillar (base) of change.¹³ It is therefore up to the leadership to work in good faith with subordinates on the relevant situation so that they are able to convince members of the need and benefit of change. It is important that employees feel that they can discuss the modalities of change and understand the nature of the fears they may have, to know for themselves that there is no risk or trap in the planned change and that the change is for their own good and of the organization.

We will improve, first by understanding ourselves, changing our way of thinking and consequently changing our behavior. Our belief is that regardless of the level you are at, you can get better. As Jim Collins said: *"The journey to progress in a visionary organization can never be satisfactory, under any*

¹¹ John A. Barnes, "John F. Kennedy on Leadership, (The Lessons and Legacy of a President)" University Publishing House "UET Press", Tirana, December 2013, ISBN: 978-9928-4193-2-3. page 31-32.

¹² Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, "Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice", Publishing House "UFO Press", Tirana 2011, ISBN in the English edition: 978-1-4221-3879-3, page 654.

¹³ V. K. Kondalkar, "Organizational Behaviour", Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4, p. 305.

circumstances. Even when it is very successful, it can always do better, it can go further, it can find new opportunities”¹⁴ After all, we all agree that the pace of change is increasing day by day, but it rarely happens that our brains like these permanent changes. We look for consistent models in our daily lives, we want things to be somewhat predictable, and we often prefer to follow the train of thought practiced before. According to S. Soderfjall, “In order for organizations not to lose pace, to adapt and develop in this changing world, it is required for people not follow the common models of thought and behavior that no longer promotes the purpose of the activity. It is also necessary to have the ability to invent new work methods, products and services that solve problems and meet the needs of interested parties in a better and more effective way”. It also requires the ability to invent new work methods, products and services that solve problems and meet the needs of stakeholders in a better and more effective way.”¹⁵

The Coch and French’s study showed that the group, which was informed about the change and clarified with the reason why it would happen, participated in the designing and planning of the new jobs, as well as the “memorization” of the programs, demonstrating a very successful adaptation to change compared to others¹⁶. These included: 1) The group that had no orientation for change other than a brief announcement from the leader that the change would be made. 2) The group which was informed by the leader about the need for change and its problems or complications; and the workers were asked to choose their representatives to help (revise) design the necessary programs, the implementation of which would give the right result. The results were much better in the second group that included everything, compared to the first group in which only an announcement was made about the change. Resistance to change in itself cannot be said to be good or bad, or it may be based or not, but it is always an important signal that requires further analysis by the leader. It is important to understand the true nature of resistance. People may not resist technical change, but in terms of the change in human relationships that accompany technical change, they probably do. However, leaders should be very careful in this regard. Some important points about resistance during change that should be kept in mind are:

- Resistance conveys a message; it is a way of saying that an individual has needs that are not being met.

¹⁴ Vasil Naçi, Alma Bici, “Është rruga jonë, rruga e suksesit në AGNA Group “, published by AGNA Leadership Academy, 2015, page 68.

¹⁵ Stefan Soderfjall, “A Little Book on Leadership”, “Pema” Publishing House, Pristina 2019, ISBN: 978-9951-721-85-1, page 91-92.

¹⁶ V. K. Kondalkar, “Organizational Behaviour”, Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4, p. 306.

- Resistance is a sign to understand that the process of change has begun.
- Resistance is often misinterpreted as people not wanting to change. Indeed, people want to grow and develop in the organization. But the way change is managed creates anxiety in people and they show resistance.
- Open resistance is “healthy” because people’s concerns are understood and it is easier to work with them. While unexpressed resistance is more difficult to treat because as long as problems are not expressed, they cannot be treated.
- The way how resistance is handled will affect whether it turns into a barrier for change or not.
- Resistance should be considered “as an important form of *feedback*”. If emphasis is placed on understanding and learning from behaviors that are perceived as threatening, then better results will ultimately be obtained. If you learn how to accept resistance, you can use it as a resource and find your way to a better solution.

INSTEAD OF AN EPILOGUE

In the book “Love ‘em or Lose ‘em” with authors B. Kaye, Sh. J. Evans, in a chapter entitled “Raise questions”, quotes the opinion of a company manager regarding the newly arrived employee: “*Darren was a new employee, who was hired to bring us new ideas and an outside perspective. During the first month he started to annoy us. He repeatedly asked such questions as: “Have you thought about doing it this way” or “Why do you need eight actions to perform this process, when it can be done in four actions?”. We stuck to the way things were done: why change them when they were right? Darren stayed on the job for about six months. Then he shocked us all when he quit his job. He said that his new ideas were not appreciated. The saddest thing was that he was right*”.”¹⁷ This is a sincere concern of this manager, that for the sake of the rules they wanted to follow the respective *status quo* to avoid problems with their superiors, but in this case it had the opposite effect. Should leaders be constantly strict about the implementation of rules once established in the organization? Of course the world would be a mess if there were no rules. We rely on rules to provide safety and sound judgment in our communities and workplaces. Still, most of us agree with the opinion that progress requires raising questions about the rules. What if the following people hadn’t questioned the rules? *The Wright Brothers: Why Can’t People Fly; Steve Jobs:*

¹⁷ Beverly Kaye, Sharon Jordan-Evans, “Love ‘em or Lose ‘em” (Getting Good People to Stay, 26 strategies for busy managers who know how to engage people at work), “Max”, publications, Tirana 2005, ISBN: 978-99943-37-87-3, page 241.

Why can't everybody have their own computer? *Thomas Edison*: Why can't we light our houses with electricity? *Fred Smith*: Why can't we have an overnight delivery service around the world?

Get the idea. Our innovators are the ones who question the rules and ultimately, the ones who break these rules. They improve our lives and are the backbone of successful organizations. When innovation is so important, why is it so hard to support? Why is it so easy to first verify if there is any precedent for what an employee is asking to do? When your employees present you with new ideas and concepts or rule-breaking, they want to hear: "You have a point", "Let's give it a try" or "Maybe it will work". They want to be appreciated for their ideas and innovative solutions, and they even want you as a leader to support the questions they ask. You'll increase your chances of retaining talented employees if you trust them to question the rules of their work performance, even those related to the workplace. The most successful ones go beyond the concept of change and challenge traditional thinking. Look at organizations like Google, Apple, Facebook, etc., and you will see companies that challenge traditions and create new ways of doing things. They destroy what already works in order to improve. The most successful ones seek to create new traditions – not follow existing ones¹⁸. Don't be a prisoner in someone else's mind. Discover ways to make the most of the traditional mindset that holds others back.

Each change is accompanied by the corresponding skepticism of others. Therefore, leaders in their organization must be very careful to minimize resistance or obstacles. They should ask themselves how long has it been since they questioned the rules, and how much do they encourage questioning them? It is in the best interest of the organization that leaders allow their employees to ask questions about the performance of the work, the rules that hinder their productivity and satisfaction; support them when they question the rules; change or interpret these rules as appropriate; to break them if they can, in order for the employees to achieve what they want. Only in this way will leaders maintain the balance between people and process.

CONCLUSIONS

Change is a permanent phenomenon. It is necessary that because of external forces such as technology, systems and social changes interact with the internal variables of the organization. In order to implement change, according to Kurt Lewin's model, this phenomenon must necessarily go through the relevant stages: unfreezing the situation, implementing the change and refreezing.

¹⁸ Grant Cardone, "The 10 X rule: The Only Difference between Success and Failure", Minerva Publishing House, Year 2020, ISBN: 978-9928-2611-2-8, page 187

Individual, group and organizational changes occur continuously. Individual change refers to changing attitude, perception and also, gaining new skills to cope with the external environment. The group is the important unit (structure) of the organization. It is engaged in work and is successful because of norms and groupthink. For this reason, the organizational culture should be compatible with the culture of the majority of members and they will feel like home at work. Also, the attitude of leaders plays a vital role in changing the attitude of subordinates.

For a leader, the biggest challenge would be to convince every employee to let go of old ideas. The participative leadership culture requires a long process in achieving the obedience, willingness or readiness to work of the members. It should be kept in mind that this is a continuous process and all members should make sincere efforts to improve the work culture in the organization and change the attitude. Changes at the organizational level can be implemented by clearly defining the objectives and plans needed for change. Driving and Restraining Forces (obstructive) must be assessed during change implementation. Change is structured (detailed) when plans are well studied and conversely, change is unstructured when it is implemented as a result of immediate reaction to a situation.

There is great resistance to change due to fear of the unknown. According to L. Haughton, *anything new will meet with opposition. That's how it's always been. Every organization has a stable system of antibodies that automatically attack changes.*¹⁹ Therefore, the employees in the organization should be educated, trained, become part of the change and the benefit should be shared between the employees and the organization. Managing employees' emotions and their psychological preparation makes them wanting to implement the change that will eventually work. Fear must be removed from people's minds.

Change should be approached with optimism because it will be for the good of the organization. It is difficult to predict which strategy will succeed in implementing change. Effective communication, educating people about the impending change, active participation and involvement, and last but not least, sharing the benefits of the change with people is the essential requirement for overcoming or defeating resistance to change.

¹⁹ Laurence Haughton, "It's Not What You Say...It's What You Do", "Max" Publishing House, Tirana 2006, ISBN: 99943-37-50-5, page 212.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. John A. Barnes, "John F. Kennedy on Leadership, (The Lessons and Legacy of a President)" University Publishing House "UET Press", Tirana, December 2013, ISBN: 978-9928-4193-2-3.
2. Grant Cardone, "The 10 X rule: The Only Difference between Success and Failure", Minerva Publishing House, Year 2020, ISBN: 978-9928-2611-2-8.
3. Dale Carnegie, "Make Yourself Unforgettable", "Pegi" Publishing House, Tirana 2018, ISBN: 978-9928-233-24-0.
4. R. Gjatoja, A. Lala, K. Xharo, E. Braneshi "Udhëheqja Strategjike", "GEER" Publishing House, Tirana 2010, ISBN: 978-9928-105-15-8.
5. Larry E. Greiner, "Patterns of Organizational Change". Harvard Business Review, 1967.
6. Laurence Haughton, "It's Not What You Say...It's What You Do", "Max" Publishing House, Tirana 2006, ISBN: 99943-37-50-5.
7. Beverly Kaye, Sharon Jordan-Evans, "Love 'em or Lose 'em" (Getting Good People to Stay, 26 strategies for busy managers who know how to engage people at work), "Max", publications, Tirana 2005, ISBN: 978-99943-37-87-3.
8. V. K. Kondalkar, "Organizational Behaviour", Published by New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers, 2007, ISBN (13): 978-81-224-2487-4.
9. Kurt Lewin, "Field Theory in Social Science". Harper and Row, 1951.
10. Vasil Naçi, Alma Bici, "Është rruga jonë, rruga e suksesit në AGNA Group", published by AGNA Leadership Academy, 2015.
11. Nitin Nohria and Rakesh Khurana, "Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice", Publishing House "UFO Press", Tirana 2011, ISBN in the English edition: 978-1-4221-3879-3.
12. Stefan Soderfjall, "A Little Book on Leadership", "Pema" Publishing House, Pristina 2019, ISBN: 978-9951-721-85-1.
13. Dritan Shoraj, PhD: "Impakti i lidershipit, kulturës dhe ndryshimeve organizative në efektivitetin organizativ të sistemit bankar sekondar në Tiranë", (University of Tirana, Faculty of Economics, Department of Management), Tirana 2014.
14. Brian Tracy, "Change Your Thinking, Change Your Life, How to Unlock Your Full Potential for Success and Achievement", Elta BS Publications, Year 2009, ISBN; 987-9951-544-08-5.

LOGISTICS SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Colonel Msc. Avni BILBILAJ

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to analyze (as much as possible, within a writing space), the logistics support for military operations and the factors that influence this process. Definitions for logistics support, principles of sustainment, areas of action and interest, logistics functions and services, areas of interest, and organization of logistics units are briefly described. In the second part of the material, logistics support is described as it was planned and as it was achieved in several operations such as: "Cobra" (France, Normandy 1944), Desert Storm ("DESERT STORM", Iraq 1991), "Green Dawn" ("GREEN DAWN", Iraq 2012), as well as the recent conflict in Ukraine going on today.

Mentioning these operations in this paper has no intention of "making history". On the contrary, they are treated briefly in their essence only in the field of Logistics. In our language, it is called "Prapavija", or "Mbështetja". But "Prapavija" decides on the fate of those who fight on the war front (or defense). Because "Army marches on its stomach" - has been the sentence of the times.

Comparative evaluations are made on these operations, how the logistics support was planned to be carried out, and how it was achieved or is being achieved today in the case of Ukraine. During their evaluation, the factors of time, space, and number of engaged troops, but other factors such as language,

climate, infrastructure, and attitudes of the local population were taken into consideration. In the third part, we talk about the latest developments and challenges related to the logistic support of operations.

Conflict in Ukraine occupies a considerable volume in this scientific work. Although it is too early to reach conclusions, that war has been going on for so long before our eyes. Even in the conditions of respective propaganda information, many things and events are visible to the naked eye.

Russia's war of conquest may have warning value for any force planning a protracted war. But it is also a great lesson on how a nation can defend itself against aggression that tries to carry out a complicated operation with huge support demands.

The role of corruption in our days is known and recognized. He is the biggest enemy of every country and every nation in the world. And there was no way not to exist corruption in the ranks of the Russian forces. Many well-paid promotions "with lobbying" (that is, undeserved) in the hierarchy of the Russian Army were rumored even by the media of that country, considered close to the government.

Keywords: logistics support, sustainment of operations, supplies, transportation, medical support, maintenance, logistical challenges

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times military logistics has been a critical aspect of warfare. Throughout history, armies have needed to secure, transport, and supply their armed forces during battles and combat operations. Some well-known examples of military logistics in history include the efficient supply lines of the Roman Emperor, the use of "la grande armée" by Napoleon Bonaparte, and the logistical challenges during World War II. For an operation or battle to succeed, it requires well-thought-out planning and maneuverability, and even the action tactics or the type of weaponry, are essential. The operations and the way of organization will definitely require ammunition, transport, food, fuel support, etc. This support is provided by logistical troops. "Logistics support, commonly known as Combat Service Support (CSS), holds the key to success and victory in any military operation"¹. Major wars, such as World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf Wars, the Afghanistan War, and the Libyan Intervention; were all practically fought and won on the strength

¹ Pagonis, G. (2012). "Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War". Cambridge Mass: Harvard Business School Press.

of superior logistics support accorded to the forces in combat². Logistics in military doctrine refers to the art and science of designing, planning, acquiring, and executing the movement of forces, including their combat equipment and supplies on the battlefield (Thope, 2010).

But what is logistics and how is it defined? Military logistics, in a single word, is Calculation because it deals with the planning, coordination, implementation of movement, and maintenance of military forces and their equipment. Because it includes activities such as procurement, storage, transportation, distribution of supplies, maintenance of equipment and materials, as well as personnel to support military operations.

Admiral Henry Eccles defined logistics as... “the bridge between the national economy and the operation of combat forces”. This combination is represented in a country’s resources, processes, and systems, which are used to generate materials and personnel.³ According to NATO’s approved definition, “Military logistics is the science of planning, executing the movement and maintenance of forces”⁴.

Military logistics is concerned with all the processes and systems involved in the generation, transport, and redeployment of personnel and materials. A country’s military power depends on its ability to fulfill the abovementioned functions. The more efficient these logistical operations are, the more strategic and flexible the policies of that country. Moreover, a specific nation has the potential to be given a position of advantage. The aforementioned functions are the result of that level of warfare which turns the tactics into strategy.

The functions described above exist at every level of warfare (operational, tactical, and strategic). The most important aspect of logistics is the connection of all processes to provide the right services in the operational theater. The greatest challenge for all nations is to react to changing situations so that they can be more successful in specific missions. The more flexible a given country is in terms of resources and logistical support capacity, the more effective it is. Logistics activity focuses on providing support to meet combat readiness.

The main task of military supply chains is to ensure an effective flow of products (medicine, food, ammunition, fuel, etc.) to military units during peacetime or wartime.

² Morgan, J. (2011), “War Feeding War: The Impact of Logistics”. *Journal of Military History*, Vol 7 (6) pp.83-116.

³ Paparone & Theme, 2014

⁴ NATO Logistics Handbook, Definitions, November 2012

OPERATIONAL LEVEL LOGISTICS

There is no universal definition of operational logistics. However, there are essential functions performed by armies that fall within the definition given earlier. Below is taken as an example a definition given by the US Marine Corps, which has a general meaning: as a general guideline. *“Operational level logistics is the art of applying the military resources available to operating forces to achieve national military objectives in a theater or area of operations, or to facilitate the accomplishment of assigned missions in a military region, theater or campaign”*⁵.

If an operation is assumed to be underway, logistical forces must be oriented to meet the special needs of the operation. This effort requires planning, organization, and the necessary capacities for resupply, and support of all units on the battlefield.

The operational logistics of supporting an invasion have challenges that go beyond the normal resupply of a force engaged in peacetime operations, or even the defense of static lines in conflict. An offensive requires movement against an opposing force. Large-scale movements of motorized or mechanized forces require extensive logistical support and the most complete coordination.

In the absence of such support, the operation may stop or fail, simply because it lacks the material means to continue.

PRINCIPLES OF LOGISTICS SUPPORT AND SUSTAINMENT

Logistics support has eight principles. They are integral to extending operational reach and maintaining combat power. The most essential principles are: **1. Integration:** combining all of the elements of sustainment to operations assuring unity of effort and purpose. **2. Anticipation** is the use of professional judgment to visualize future events and prepare appropriate sustainment for them. **3. Self-responsibility** is the ability to meet rapidly changing requirements in a short period of time. **4. Simplicity** aims to minimize the complexity of sustainment. **5. Economy** focuses on the most efficient use of assets, for the greatest possible effect. **6. Survivability** is the ability to protect personnel, weapons, and supplies from destruction. **7. Continuity** is the uninterrupted provision of logistics across the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. **8. Improvisation** is the ability to quickly adapt to unexpected circumstances. These principles are independent and interrelated⁶.

Logistics functions and services: Military logistics includes a wide range of

⁵ US Marines tactics 3-40C, 2016, p. 1-1

⁶ Army Sustainment AT 4.1, 1-1

of functions and services, such as: *Procurement; Transportation; Supplies; Storage; Distribution; Maintenance and Repair; Medical Support; Petroleum and Energy support; Corps Field Services, etc.*

Nowadays, the most important factors that cause global market activity and have a great impact on logistics processes are: globalization and the rapid development of new technologies.

The current challenges in military logistics support have changed. The biggest challenge for all logistics processes is to provide services and supplies *at the right time, the right product, the right quantity, the right condition, the right place, the right customer and at the right price.*

Military logistics units are organized to provide support and maintenance to military forces during operations. Their organization may vary depending on the size and type of military force.

Logistics systems and equipment: Logistics units use many systems and equipment to perform their duties efficiently. These devices and systems include: *Air and land transport equipment; Warehouses; Infrastructure with equipment, furniture, and accessories; Medical equipment and medical device modules; Maintenance equipment and modules; Fuel and water vehicles; Communication systems; Airplanes and helicopters; and Engineering equipment.* These logistics assets are essential to ensure that military forces are well-equipped, supplied, and supported during operations, contributing to the success of the unit's mission.

LOGISTICS SUPPLY CHAIN “LOGISTICS BLOCKCHAIN”

The new concept related to the supply support of logistics materials “Logistics Blockchain” is based on global supply chain management technology. *Blockchain* is a distributed and decentralized digital ledger that securely stores transactions across multiple computers, creating a large series database of inventory, manufacturers, suppliers, controllers, users, etc. Each database is encrypted, guaranteeing the integrity and inviolability of the data. In the context of logistics, *Blockchain* technology offers several benefits and features that can transform the way supply chains operate.

“Logistics Blockchain” is applied to make possible the track of products and goods, make payments and transactions, carry out customs clearance procedures, finance in this field, etc.

SUPPLY CHAIN

There is little doubt that logistics support and supply chain resiliency are considered or mentioned beyond that of the military logistics communities. Supply chain disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic brought global

logistics and supply chains into the spotlight, with the consequences of shortages affecting individuals on a personal level. The pandemic exposed the fragility of the global economic order on which our wealth and security depend for some, but others saw the economic recovery as a reflection of the general stability of globalized approaches to logistics. Optimism may have waned in early 2022, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine worsened, affecting global logistics battles while revealing the state of the defense industrial and technological base as unprepared for anything but small-scale operations and “business” as usual. Global logistics provision has moved at a rapid pace and now we see Western nations trying to free their technology and industrial base from their dependence on less friendly nations (or direct strategic competitors) by making new agreements to share knowledge and capacity.

We, as logistics soldiers and a small part of the larger national security discussions in our countries, worry about where things are done and by whom. Ammunition production and markets have shown to be operating well below desired capacity, and their resupply has reached government-level interest in an unprecedented way for years. Naval power has become a virtual adjunct to maritime and supply chain security, as the commerce that gives life to our nations requires the protection of fleets of ships which are themselves the product of globalized industrial capacity.

Nowadays transport processes, support services and accommodation are increasing too much the cost of operations. As a result, countries try to minimize the cost by passing a part of it on to subcontractors. It has become evident the increasing use of private subcontractors. EU member states are more willing to use private outsourcing companies. This solution has many economic advantages but also some disadvantages. It can reduce the total cost of operations and help increase the quality of the process. The biggest disadvantage is that military operations rely on external partners, who are focused on the business market. There may also be some difficulties with the formal agreement between the partners (government and private companies). Private sources can be more dangerous to military operations when the security of supply processes is considered. In cases of crises in Europe, outsourcing companies will face increased cost levels because they are not using their capacities and have to reserve on the global market.

Logistical support guarantees the success of military operations. The most important factor for any operation is the team of people responsible for evaluating all the determinants. Military operations are often unpredictable, which means that the logistics team leader must be able to react logically, responsibly and quickly. A good logistics manager can indirectly contribute to the success of a military operation.

As the conclusion of this part, the level of logistics operations may be the highest all the time. Even if the battalion has a perfect strategic plan, without proper support (accommodation, equipment, food, weapons), it cannot be executed. Every logistics mission requires a logistics leader who can react quickly to different situations. The more flexible a logistics team is, the more efficient some operations are. It is essential to create a logistics team, which includes specialists in various fields related to logistics support. Unqualified people can make mistakes, which can be dangerous for military missions.

THREE OPERATIONS IN HISTORY AND...

OPERATION “COBRA”, NORMANDY AUGUST 1944

In World War II, during offensive operations, units would normally consume a much larger amount of fuel than was planned, and conversely a smaller amount of ammunition. Initially, this was not a concern for the division, corps, or army, as reserves were large. In addition to fuel, the division began to require a larger amount of ammunition than the daily rate of cartridges (Combat Load ammo) had been anticipated. It wasn't the only unit, but all units had increased demands as soon as they faced the German fortifications. Ammunition seemed to be a high priority for all units. Mission analysis following the completion of this operation revealed that the medical battalion operated very close to doctrine, with subordinate companies moving with their teams on the battlefield.⁷

From other units such as the 3rd Mechanized Division, support was provided by the logistics structures that were in the organic. This unit (armored division) consumed an average of 15,000 gallons of gasoline per day (57,000 liters) and 80 tons of ammunition.⁸ In addition to fuel and ammunition, there were other logistical concerns. In his after-action report, Lt. Col. Clarence M. Eymer (Division Chief of Logistics), noted that there were severe shortages of supplies such as knives, grenade launchers, and binoculars.⁹

Incredibly, in the early stages of the operation, no major equipment losses resulted. There were several contemporary lessons learned by the 1st Infantry Division during Operation COBRA. Even though the sustainment of forces functioned well throughout the operation, there were some inherent issues that were never truly resolved until the end of the war. At the conclusion of World

⁷ Major Leo B. Burgin, *Historical Records and History of Organization, 1st Medical Battalion* (Marigny: HQ, 1944).

⁸ Zaloga, 44. “heavy” armored divisions. “Order of Battle, World War II,” http://www.3ad.org/wwii/wwii_order_of_battle.html.

⁹ After Action Report, G4 Section (JUN 44-DEC 44 & DEC 45), 25. G4's AAR inputs (CB, Tank Bn, truck coy, etc)

War II, General Eisenhower convened a series of studies known as “General Boards,” “US Forces,” and “European Theater,” to analyze all aspects of the European Theater of Operations. These boards were perhaps the most comprehensive After Action Reviews ever conducted after operations. Yet, they did not solve every problem, nor could they anticipate future problems.

By 1948 when the army published new Table of Organization and Equipment, in an infantry division, the number of personnel increased to 19,000 soldiers¹⁰. Ultimately, logistics was a combat enabler rather than a limiting factor for the Operation. General Collins later noted, “I can recall no real supply difficulties that hampered the actual operation¹¹.”

“DESERT STORM” - IRAQ, FEBRUARY 1991

During offensive operations, the most critical supplies are classes III, V, and IX (fuels, ammunition, and maintenance spare parts). The greatest challenge would be maintaining these supplies over extended supply lines¹². The quantities of supplies were enormous. Logisticians planned on consumption factors of 4,500 tons of ammunition per day for an armored division in the attack¹³. This required a reserve unit managing an advanced ammunition supply point, with 20 trailers loaded with ammunition, to support an Infantry Brigade. Transportation assets always seemed to be a limiting factor, with suitable vehicles in desert terrain¹⁴. So many transports were required that all other logistics support material had to be dumped to haul 2 basic loads of ammunition¹⁵.

The use of tanks increased the demand for fuel, also due to the many activities of the division, a large amount of fuel was not recorded. Logistics support battalions dealt directly with this task. However, the division never ran out of fuel.¹⁶

There were 26 logistics lessons learned that the 1st Infantry Division recorded in the after-action review. The absence of GPS, M16A2 light rifles, and odometers (distance meters) that read in kilometers was evident. Many lessons learned apply to today. Every fuel and cargo vehicle should be a “HEMTT”

¹⁰ Sayen, 74. Actually there was one other TO&E published in 1945 but this was the last of the WWII era.

¹¹ “VII Corps in Operation COBRA (1),” Lieutenant General J. Lawton Collins Papers, Box 5 (July 1944), 16

¹² Forward Support Battalion, 9-1 – 9-11

¹³ Dunnigan and Bay, 289

¹⁴ LTC Edwin L. Buffington (December 13, 1991), 20

¹⁵ 1st Inf. Division Staff, Lessons Learned during Operation Desert Storm (APO NY: 1st Infantry Division, 1991), 12.

¹⁶ LTC David W. Marlin, History of the 4th Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm (Saudi Arabia: 4-37 AR, 1992), 421-423.

to keep up with the pace of supplies or advance over rough terrain.¹⁷ To carry out local procurements, there was a lack of contracting officers with maneuver units.

The bottom line was that nothing failed, due to logistics. The US Army, having designed the logistics architecture to support operational maneuvers against Soviet forces during the Cold War, tested these doctrines and capabilities in 1991. The results showed that the US logistics support system was thoroughly capable of sustaining the operation and maneuvers during Desert Storm¹⁸.

OPERATION “GREEN DAWN”, IRAQ 2012

Military planners make valid and necessary assumptions in order to proceed with the planning process. For Operation Green Dawn, many lessons learned and recommendations were taken into account to reduce the amount of supplies and support equipment, replacing them with service contractors and host nation support. However, the security of the troops, their supply, support with fuel and transport, remain the biggest concerns in this aspect for commanders and logisticians. In this operation, a mechanized and armored brigade would consume 84,000 gallons (320,000 liters), an infantry brigade would consume 22,000 gallons (83,000 liters), a fire brigade would consume 44,000 gallons (166,000 liters) and the combat aviation brigade consumed 107,000 gallons (405,000 liters) per day. The sum was for all units of the first division, the total amount of fuel consumed in one day would be 423,000 gallons (1,601,230 liters)¹⁹. In other words, this amount would be equivalent to 1.25 million gallons (4,731,765 liters) of fuel for the 1st Infantry Division during the three-day operation. Combat experience anywhere other than the oil-rich sands of southern Iraq and Kuwait, would be a limiting factor in itself. Despite the obstacles, the operational level logistics system should be able to keep pace with the fuel consumption rates for the heavy mechanized brigade. The amount of fuel was large and the storage capacity was insufficient²⁰. The technical readiness of the vehicles during the three days of the operation was 100%. About 18% of the heavy equipment was damaged, but their repair was done in the division's maintenance units. Only a small part suffered severe damage, requiring specialized maintenance²¹. The limiting factor in this operation was only the limited time. Logistical support, despite high demands for supplies, was carried out without major shortages, resulting in the success

¹⁷ Lessons Learned during Operation Desert Storm, 12-17

¹⁸ Lessons Learned during Operation Desert Storm, 32-34

¹⁹ Combat Service Support Battle Book, 4-5 – 4-9. Appendix J for the logistical results, consumption data, usage rate, loss rates, and operational readiness rates

²⁰ 1st Inf. Staff Division, Lessons Learned during Operation Green Dawn, 12

²¹ 1st Inf. Staff Division, Lessons Learned during Operation Green Dawn, 18

of this operation. The lessons learned and the analysis made of this 3-day operation, concerning logistical support, have been reflected in the planning factor of the combat operations of the infantry and mechanized divisions of the US forces.²²

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

As we discussed above what was expected to happen and what really happened, in the conflict in Ukraine the fighting is still going on, but the beginnings of this conflict resulted in some problems that we will be dealt with below. The arising question is: Was the logistical support of the Russian troops planned for such an invasion? Through this question are analyzed operations of the Russian troops in the main directions. And this analysis is laid out for the operational level because it seems to be the sector where the overall Russian campaign suffered its initial setbacks.

The logistics force was not structured or organized to support an invasion.

Russia's initial plans for the campaign were for a rapid seizure of territory. The intent was a quick tactical victory, then the "decapitation" of the Ukrainian regime. Russian military leaders set in motion "a risky coup de main to take Kyiv," relying heavily on the speed and surprise of this attack²³. Russia assumed that light resistance would allow rapid movement and reinforcement, without any significant requirement for logistics or supplies. Given that the conditions for this operation were not ideal, the logistics force structure was likely insufficient from the beginning. As anticipated in the hypothetical discussion, the demands on individual support soldiers to effectively move and coordinate support were barely executable in the best of circumstances.²⁴

Advance Support Transportation Planning was not conducted.

Russian forces as a matter of doctrine would be expected to carry out support transportation planning to ensure a well-supported movement, using combined arms. However, to achieve surprise, Russia kept its intentions secret from everyone, including its own forces, until the attack was imminent. This lack of planning and coordination led to shortfalls in numerous areas, which were paralyzed by logistical shortfalls. For example, this failure to communicate intention had a significant negative effect on the motor rifle brigades and the "Rosgvardia" (Russian National Guard troops).

²² Combat Service Support Battle Book, 4-14 – 4-16

²³ Berkowitz, B., & Galocha, A. (2022). Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine. The Washington Post, March 30

²⁴ Berkowitz, B., & Galocha, A. (2022). Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine. The Washington Post, March 30

These troops received the appropriate orders less than 24 hours before the start of the offensive to invade Ukraine. Consequently, they did not fight a methodical campaign of breakthrough and exploitation by successive echelons, as their Doctrine dictated, nor were they supported by sufficient artillery as is considered essential.

The forces were trying to move ahead without battlefield preparations. They advanced without possessing the 5 days of provisions that would be necessary for normal planning²⁵.

Supply lines and road network.

Russia initially held the belief that a swift military victory could be achieved through the rapid advancement of its army. However, the execution of this strategy faced difficulties, as the Russian Army made only modest progress and neglected the establishment of proper supply lines. Their strategy focused on a quick and efficient offensive, anticipating a rapid collapse rather than engaging in a protracted campaign. The Russian forces were inadequately equipped and trained to defend the stretching support lines²⁶. This vulnerability was astutely recognized and exploited by the Ukrainian Army, which launched attacks on multiple fronts. As a result, Russian units were forced to adopt a defensive stance instead of maintaining their intended advance. The absence of readiness for a defense-in-depth strategy left Russian units unable to effectively repel Ukrainian counterattacks, leading to significant material losses and casualties²⁷. In response to these challenges, Russian forces had to divert considerable troop numbers back to secure supply lines, causing a noticeable deceleration in their movement compared to the initial stages of the conflict²⁸.

This rapid pace caused units to become separated, leading to communication and logistics problems. Russian advance troops either did not communicate with support forces regarding need and location, or they communicated on civilian cell phones that were easily intercepted and unencrypted. In cases where communications were easily intercepted, the Ukrainians were able to locate and attack supply forces²⁹.

²⁵ Skoglund, P., Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russian Logistics in the Ukrainian War: Can Operational Failures be Attributed to logistics? *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), pp. 99–110.

²⁶ Vershining, A. (2021). Feeding the bear: A closer look at Russian army logistics. *War on the Rocks*.

²⁷ Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russia and Ukraine: uten logistikk skjer det lite på slagmarken. *Stratagem*

²⁸ Berkowitz, B., & Galocha, A. (2022). Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine.

²⁹ Borger, J. (2022, March 28). The drone operators who stopped the Russian convoy headed for Kyiv. *The Guardian*

Land forces did not receive air support, which led to increased expenditure on ammunition and supplies demand without reaching Kyiv.

Air fire support can help alleviate the workload on artillery and land transport. Russian fire support doctrine requires the use of fixed-wing aircraft to fortify and substitute land firepower³⁰.

However, for air support to work effectively, it needed careful coordination with the troops on the ground, and everyone had to be trained for it, but that was not accomplished. Due to the lack of training, the Russian Air Force did not play a significant role in the battlefield. The consequence of this ineffective performance was an increased reliance on artillery fire by Russia, both in its initial invasion and subsequent campaigns. However, using this firepower meant relying on land transport to resupply the artillery batteries, making an already overloaded system. The requirement for additional artillery was unforeseen because Russia did not plan efficiently to control the skies and provide effective air support³¹.

The sustainment in a limited road network resulted in increased traffic congestion.

The mobility of Russian forces in Ukraine was a major challenge due to limited road networks, particularly in the logistics domain. Although “tracked vehicles could move along the road where the terrain is sufficiently permissive, trucks transporting essential supplies like ammunition, fuel, and food faced constraints, significantly hindering the overall advancement of the Russian forces”. According to Russian doctrine, logistics units are ideally expected to advance at a rate of 20-30 kilometers per day. However, in the initial stages of the conflict, their actual movement was considerably below half of that distance³².

For several days, there were long lines of vehicles stuck alongside the road due to traffic. Russian convoys were also attacked by Ukrainian land forces that hadn’t been cleared from Russian rear areas. The Ukrainian artillery targeted the roads used for transporting supplies, making it complicated to continue attacks on Kyiv³³. These challenges affected various aspects, from rearming to evacuating wounded personnel. According to a source on medical evacuation,

³⁰ Grau, LW, & Bartles, CK (2016). The Russian way of war: Force structure, tactics and modernization of the Russian ground forces.

³¹ Swartz, SM, & Johnson, AW (2004). A multimethod approach to the combat air forces mix and deployment problem. *Mathematical and Computer Modelling*, 39(6–8), 773–797

³² MR. (2022). *Militäranalyst om konvojen: “Kan ha logistikproblem”*

³³ Skoglund, P., Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russian Logistics in the Ukrainian War: Can Operational Failures be Attributed to logistics? *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), 12

“the extended communication lines made it difficult to transport injured soldiers to hospitals, leading to an unnecessary increase in the death toll”. The real impact on the morale of the forces resulting from this inability to evacuate remains uncertain. However, the combined consequences of both undelivered support on time and the subsequent lack of emergency in evacuating the wounded undeniably influenced both the number of casualties and the overall morale of the troops.

Initial lack of logistics support for the development of the operation.

Large-scale mobility of motorized or mechanized forces requires extensive logistics support and coordination. This support was generally unavailable to the Russian military in the early stages of the war, leading to the initial failure to achieve objectives. The attacking forces were obliged to stop as they had reached the outskirts of Kyiv. Russian units abandoned vehicles and fled the battlefield (Jones, 2022). These defeats occurred not only as a result of inadequacies on the part of the attacking forces that were incapable of resisting Ukrainian armament but also due to the supporting forces' inability to guarantee the supply of the forces, which should have carried out an attack, instead of defending the rear areas and supply lines. The failure to achieve the planned objectives resulted in the reorientation of forces away from Kyiv and towards Eastern areas, a strategy that had been considered for years. Although this diversion to Eastern areas might have presented fewer logistical and operational challenges, it was not the war Russia had planned and various shortcomings emerged.

Shortfalls and issues related to normal continuous supply, after the initiation of the operation.

The arrangement of initial logistics was discussed before the aggression started, as it was the first thing that failed. However, in the next phase of the campaign where the lines were largely static, the Russian forces lacked key supplies to continue the war. This is at least, interpreted as an operational consistency failure³⁴. Therefore, by mid-March 2022, Russian forces were facing shortfalls in everything from fuel to precision-guided ammunition. Medical supplies were lacking at the beginning of the war, which along with the evacuation, was thought to have led to increased losses of its personnel. The inadequacies in supply were a result of the transportation issues mentioned above. However, in some cases, these insufficiencies continued even though the forces were effectively static³⁵.

³⁴ US Army JP 4-0, 2019.

³⁵ Berkowitz, B., & Galocha, A. (2022). Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine. The Washington Post, March 30

After failing to achieve its initial goal of quickly capturing Kyiv, Russia shifted its campaign in early April 2022, directing its focus toward Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Due to Russian forces advancing from the Donbas on wide fronts and securing their rear areas, the road network did not impose many constraints compared to the offensive against Kyiv. Additionally, the proximity of the territory seized by Russia and its rail network eased logistics support challenges. The close proximity of the ammunition supply enabled the batteries to sustain an almost uninterrupted barrage on the Ukrainian positions. As a result, units positioned near the resupply point could operate with heightened effectiveness.

Corruption and Weapons Dysfunction.

Corruption's role in today's times are widely acknowledged and recognized as the biggest enemy to any country or nation worldwide. There have been widespread rumors of numerous promotions in the hierarchy of the Russian Army, supposedly not earned through merit but rather influenced by undeserved financial considerations, without neglecting the existence of corruption in the civil leadership which has been an undeniable reality admitted even by the Russian media itself, close to the government of that country. Corruption, ranging from complete stealing of materials to systematic misreporting of actual readiness, could have played a role in the collapse of the supply system³⁶. Various types of corruption were apparently present in the Russian military and its support complex. The impact of corruption became apparent very early in the Russian campaign, for example with the accounts of units operating on rations that had expired seven years earlier.

To some extent, the failure to provide artillery supply is a result of operational logistics and the previously mentioned shortfalls. However, the ongoing need to switch to undirected strikes and to keep forces away from immediate engagements highlights a more extensive issue of sustainment. Numerous weapons used by the Russian troops did not function properly due to inadequate maintenance. For instance, during the first two months of conflict, "while Russia fired over 1,900 short- and medium-range missiles into Ukraine, their performance and impact have been weak, with a reported daily failure rate of up to 60% for some types".

Russia's military defense industry was almost undeveloped and dependent on the West to deal with sanctions.

Pre-war Russia had a substantial defense industry that made up around 20 percent of its manufacturing sector. They had the capability to design, develop,

³⁶ G. Kessler, "Fact checking Putin's speech on Ukraine", The Washington Post, February 23, 2022

and manufacture a full range of advanced air, ground, missile, and naval systems. Although since 2010, Russia has been importing limited quantities of military equipment from several countries such as the Czech Republic, France, Iran, Israel, Italy, Turkey, and Ukraine. In 2019, its defense budget was estimated at 104 billion dollars. Until last year, Russia was the world's second-largest arms exporter, following the United States³⁷.

The conclusions drawn regarding the conflict in Ukraine indicate that the operational, support or strategic logistics failures were not the only decisive factors. Nevertheless, it is still too early to determine the overall outcome of the war. However, it is clear that the failure of numerous logistical and support systems and processes left Russian soldiers without the means to fight and negatively impacted their morale. The war of conquest by Russia may have warning values for any force planning a protracted conflict. It serves as a stark reminder of how a nation can defend itself against aggression attempting to execute a complex operation with substantial support requirements.

FUTURE CHALLENGES IN LOGISTICS SUPPORT

It is important to analyze the aspects and challenges of logistics that have been unresolved so far and remain relevant, as evidenced during military operations involving support troops. Addressing these challenges is a complex task and they have been a topic of discussion in military logistics communities for a considerable period. Based on current indicators, the military logistics support system needs to be more flexible, adaptable, and resilient than ever, due to unanticipated technological influences that are already having a significant impact in this regard. Thus, as we need to acquire, transport, maintain, store, and dispose of military materials and systems, consideration must persist regarding how support capabilities will be utilized in the future.

E-commerce

Much attention has been given to trends in e-commerce and the impact it has on the supply chain. Delivery of orders is one of the elements that different postal companies are evaluating. For example, "Amazon" continues to explore the use of drone delivery for considerable shipments in a certain limited distance, determining what the price will be, the time limits that will be completed, and whether these elements will attract the attention of customers? As an industry observer of online product sales noted: "It will be especially important for logistics managers to truly weigh the benefits of using supply chain information against the ability to implement improvements in their logistics strategy."³⁸

³⁷ CIA reports, 2022.

³⁸ Hayden Marshall "SIX STRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR DEFENSE LOGISTICS". 2018 Director-General Strategic Logistics at Joint Logistics Command

The increasing use of 3-D printers in commercial applications will have an impact on military logistics support. The preceding challenge of resupplying spare parts for military technology and equipment will be replaced by the challenge of resupplying printing media (plastic and metal), as well as the computer hardware and power systems required to operate industrial 3-D printers. Additionally, 3-D printers require highly stable platforms to enable the production of complex items to high tolerance levels, which may not be feasible if military forces are operating in harsh conditions or conducting long-range operations. To address these challenges, the US Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) is working to build a program that provides effective controls for data packets only available to a classified network of commercial 3-D printers when they receive orders (commands) from military units in the field.

Cyber security

Evidence-related innovations in the supply chain mostly involve improvements in information management, computer software, and the use of more efficient and effective smart tools. However, the vulnerability of computer networks and smart devices to cyber-attacks has become an increasingly concerning issue over the last decade. This has created a lot of challenges in various high-level structures of states and businesses, leading to the blocking or denial of various services. Cyber-attacks are not limited to industries and IT institutions, even government networks and world political leaders are at risk day by day. The term IoT is used to refer to an increasing number of devices that are connected to the internet. These devices include smart home appliances such as thermostats and refrigerators, medical sensors, security and alarm systems, and other similar devices. The growing number of operational technology devices (Operational Technology-OT) and industrial Internet devices (Internet of Things-IoT) has led to an increase in cybercrime and hacking, which is the theft of data or intrusion through access to sensitive data, such as; passwords, credit card numbers, but also information related to the health of individuals.

It is important to recognize that our logistics data could be of great interest to potential adversaries. Even unclassified sources can provide valuable information on stocks and maintenance availability, which could be exploited as areas of vulnerability. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of the risks and take necessary measures to ensure the security of our logistics.

INTEGRATED LOGISTICS AND THE WAR OF FOURTH GENERATION

The United States, along with its allied countries and partners, is developing an initiative to globally integrate resources and logistics support that can efficiently support military operations and meet strategic requirements, especially when faced with limited resources. The concept proposes the use

of globally integrated logistics to sustain future joint operations, which will be characterized by the need to quickly assemble forces dispersed in different territories of the globe, depending on the situation or the missions undertaken. Globally integrated logistics refers to the capability of distributing and evaluating logistics support on a global level, ensuring maximum efficiency and responsiveness while reconciling conflicting demands for limited logistics resources based on strategic priorities. This integration involves three main aspects: 1) Establishing a global distribution network; 2) Maintaining awareness of global readiness; and 3) Developing proficient logistics planning skills to ensure responsive logistics management.”

Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)

Modern military theorists have been inspired by the ideas of William Lind to highlight the emergence of a new form of warfare, where sovereign states are losing their monopoly on war. The future conflicts will be related to cultural issues rather than sovereignty. The legitimacy of states will be challenged, wars will be undeclared, and the race will primarily be for the supremacy of ideas, instead of traditional battles over territory.

The third-generation war was based on “Blitzkrieg” or rapid maneuver warfare after the First World War. Tactics of speed and surprise to “neglected and ousted” enemy forces represent a significant challenge for military logistics with a heavy reliance on decentralized logistics to support dispersed forces in different locations. Today, the challenges of fourth-generation warfare (4GW) are being discussed and addressed by logistics support personnel, now and in the future.

International relations commentator Parag Khanna made an interesting observation in his latest book. He suggests that in the 21st century “³⁹ “Supply chains and linkages will be the organizing principles of humanity, rather than sovereignty and borders “. Understanding supply chains and their dependencies is a crucial challenge for both military strategists and logistics managers. Additionally, it is also important to comprehend the interests of other parties involved in the same supply chains.

We must answer the following six questions:

1. What measures should be considered to ensure that supply chains are properly protected, different from traditional military approaches?
2. Do our readiness assessments consider supply chain variables?

³⁹ Khanna, P., *Connectography: Mapping the Global Network Revolution*. 2016 Posted on June 15, 2018 by logistics in war

3. Should applicability be verified in supply chain mapping tools?
4. Which logistical support activities will continue to be performed by military personnel?
5. How can we make the transition to 5th-generation logistics support?
6. Do we really understand the variety of changes for logistics support in the future related to new technologies that are no longer in the world of science fiction, but are today's reality?

PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSIONS

Armed forces worldwide are undergoing significant transformation and development to respond to new security challenges. The programs and ways of managing logistics support capacities have changed a lot. The traditional equipment and materials are being replaced with newer, more capable options that require different maintenance and support regimes. "Industrial Ecosystems" is dictating new possibilities for the operation of logistics services. For instance, the maintenance of new military defense equipment has changed significantly. This equipment requires less periodic maintenance (preventive) and has fewer defects. The logistics support requirements for the future force will be fundamentally different from the logistics support requirements of today's force. The increased use of systems diagnostic technology will ensure that maintenance activities are clearly defined and prioritized.

However, advancements in technology and the integration of robust data exchange systems are expected to markedly decrease the necessity for substantial reserve stocks. This can be attributed to the heightened transparency in resource management and the optimized functioning of global supply networks. In the case of many components, opting for replacement rather than repair proves to be the more cost-effective and expeditious solution. Nanotechnology is presenting additional opportunities for advancements in electronics, medical therapy, energy utilization, and environmental enhancement, thereby reshaping the requirements for logistics support. Nanotechnology is offering further opportunities for improvements in electronics, medical therapy, energy utilization, and environmental improvement, which will also reshape logistics support requirements. Artificial intelligence is gaining traction and will eventually replace many areas that are currently prone to human errors and biases, leading to suboptimal results. This will have a significant impact on the future, bringing about a lot of changes. We should always keep this in mind at the center of our assessment.

The above paragraphs highlight some of the developments and challenges that I believe will confront us in the near future in terms of logistical support for

troops during operations. These ideas should provoke thoughtful discussion and even debate, as we strive to identify other factors that impact logistical support and how we can adapt to new changes in the field of defense. With the conclusion of the conflict in Ukraine and a thorough examination of the lessons learned, we anticipate that additional challenges, options, and alternatives will emerge that will require creative solutions. Ultimately, the military logistics community aims to provide operational commanders with the assurance that the logistics system is strong enough to withstand any challenges and respond effectively to meet mission requirements.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Pagonis, G. (2012). "Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War". Cambridge Mass: Harvard Business School Press.
2. Morgan. J. (2011), "War Feeding War: The Impact of Logistics". Journal of Military History, Vol 7 (6).
3. Paparone & Theme, 2014
4. NATO Logistics Handbook, Definitions, Nov 2012
5. US Marines tactics 3-40C, 2016.
6. Army Sustainment AT 4.1, 1-1
7. Steve R. Waddell, US Army Logistics: the Normandy Campaign (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994).
8. James S. Corum, "Supplying the Big Red One," Forbes (June 5, 2008), under "France--July 1944," <http://www.forbes.com/2008/06/05/logistics-wwii-usarmy-tech-logistics08-cx-jc-0605normday.html> (accessed August 10, 2009).
9. Captain John J. King, 1st QM Company: Report After Action (Coutances: 1st Quartermaster Company, 1944).
10. LT Colonel Clarence Eymer, 1st Infantry Division: Administrative Order (France: 1st Infantry Division G4, 1944), 2
11. After Action Report, G4 Section (JUN 44-DEC 44 & DEC 45), 25. Ammunition Supply Point.
12. Captain Raymond G. Huntoon, 701st Ordnance Light Maint. Coy: After Action Report (France: 1st Inf. Div, 1944), 2.
13. Major Leo B. Burgin, Historical Records and History of Organization, 1st Medical Battalion (Marigny: HQ, 1944).
14. Zaloga, 44. "heavy" armored divisions. "Order of Battle, World War II," http://www.3ad.org/wwii/wwii_order_of_battle.html.

15. After Action Report, G4 Section (JUN 44-DEC 44 & DEC 45), 25. G4's AAR inputs (CB, Tank Bn, truck coy, etc)
16. Lessons Learned during Operation Desert Storm, 32-34
17. Combat Service Support Battle Book, 4-5 – 4-9. Appendix J for the logistical results, consumption data, usage rate, loss rates, and operational readiness rates.
18. Combat Service Support Battle Book, 4-14 – 4-16
19. Skoglund, P., Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russian Logistics in the Ukrainian War: Can Operational Failures be Attributed to logistics? *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), pp. 99–110.
20. Vershining, A. (2021). Feeding the bear: A closer look at Russian army logistics. *War on the Rocks*.
21. Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russia and Ukraine: uten logistikk skjer det lite på slagmarken. *Stratagem*.
22. Borger, J. (2022, March 28). The drone operators who stopped the Russian convoy headed for Kyiv. *The Guardian*
23. Grau, LW, & Bartles, CK (2016). The Russian way of war: Force structure, tactics, and modernization of the Russian ground forces.
24. Swartz, SM, & Johnson, AW (2004). A multimethod approach to the combat air forces mix and deployment problem. *Mathematical and Computer Modelling*, 39(6–8), 773–797.
25. MR. (2022). Militäranalyst om konvojen: “Kan ha logistikkproblem”.
26. Skoglund, P., Listou, T., & Ekström, T. (2022). Russian Logistics in the Ukrainian War: Can Operational Failures be Attributed to logistics? *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1).
27. Berkowitz, B., & Galocha, A. (2022). Why the Russian military is bogged down by logistics in Ukraine. *The Washington Post*, March 30
28. G. Kessler, “Fact checking Putin’s speech on Ukraine”, *The Washington Post*, February 23, 2022.
29. CIA reports, 2022
30. Hayden Marshall “SIX STRATEGIC CHALLENGES FOR DEFENSE LOGISTICS”. 2018 Director-General Strategic Logistics at Joint Logistics Command
31. Khanna, P., *Connectography: Mapping the Global Network Revolution*. 2016 Posted on June 15, 2018 by logistics in war.



SECOND RUBRIC

CYBER DEFENSE AND INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

CYBER-VACCINATING THROUGH THE ASSESSING CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS TRAINING

Prof. Assoc. Dr Anni Dasho SHARKO

"Luarasi" University, Information Technology and Innovation Faculty

Prof. Assoc. Dr Genci SHARKO

"Polytechnic University of Tirana", Faculty of Electrical Engineering

PhDc Folitjona PURAVELLI

"Luarasi" University, Information Technology and Innovation Faculty

ABSTRACT

Cybercrime spreads over the world like a disease. These thieves appear to be gaining more money every day, according to the amounts lost. There are numerous technical tools available to identify and stop current threats. These remedies do not, however, stop attackers from using the human as their most common attack vector. For training its staff to recognize and avoid phishing emails and other threats, a lot of large firms have budgets and teams in place. A sizable percentage of the population doesn't have access to this regular training, which is where the problem resides. The panorama of free training possibilities will be analysed in this study, together with the most common threats and typical faces, and these options will be contrasted.

Keywords: cybercrime, cyber & information security, cybersecurity awareness, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The utilization of current technical advancements, such as instant messaging and social media platforms, has resulted in an increase in the speed and effectiveness of information flow, and as a result, it is now simpler to retrieve information. New forms of cybersecurity risks, which frequently cause data loss and information misuse, have, however, concurrently evolved. Therefore, protecting data privacy in complex systems is crucial and vital, especially in organizations where students make up the large majority of users of these systems. The majority of the time, students' ignorance of cybersecurity and the consequences of cybercrime leads to data breaches and other digital malfeasance.

This study's objective was to assess the level of cybersecurity knowledge and user compliance among undergraduate students at Luarasi University using a formal questionnaire based on a number of Internet safety considerations. We conducted a quantitative evaluation of Luarasi University students' understanding of cybercrime and protection to demonstrate the necessity of user education, training, and awareness. As part of this study's quantitative research technique, we evaluated and analysed the hypotheses using a variety of statistical tests. In this study, safety problems for electronic emails, computer viruses, phishing, fake ads, pop-up windows, and further Internet outbreaks were thoroughly explored. Finally, we offer suggestions based on the data gathered to address this widespread issue.

Modern technology's rapid advancement has completely transformed our way of life, especially the ways in which we communicate with one another and spread information. Worldwide, a number of communication methods have been established. As a result, both the public and commercial sectors have started to provide more services and embrace new technology so that customers can get information whenever and wherever they need it.

In consequence, the quantity of hackers and organized cybercrime organizations has increased dramatically. These crooks have been using innovative techniques to commit cybercrime. Hacking is mostly done for the purpose of making money by stealing sensitive data and keeping it for ransom. Hackers can also make money by selling confidential information to rivals on the dark web, which makes cyberspace dangerous and exposes businesses and their clients to significant risks. [1]

All areas of an organization, not simply the IT division, should place a high priority on cybersecurity. The majority of people do not carefully abide by the security regulations and instructions offered at work, which is a major contributing factor to the global rise in cybersecurity incidents. The weakest

link in any company is its people, who provide a major security risk by making organizational assets susceptible to both internal and external actors. Human error is the most common way that hackers are able to access vital systems that are hosted in secure environments [2, 3].

Given the explosive expansion of cyberthreats and cybercrime, cybersecurity awareness in the Western Balkan countries hasn't gotten enough attention, and the significance of security hasn't been researched among university students. Students must be aware of the effects and difficulties of cybersecurity and cybercrime due to the growing frequency of hacking attacks on the data frameworks at schools and colleges [4].

In order to raise awareness of the risks associated with the loss of sensitive information, a thorough training program must be immediately established [7,8]. This is necessary since it may undermine student faith in schools and their dependability. So, concentrating on the most prevalent security threats to the environment as a whole, we conducted an empirical assessment of cybersecurity awareness and practices among students.

These are our most important contributions:

- By focusing on a number of online safety issues, we evaluated and investigated the cybersecurity knowledge level among Luarasi University students.
- Using a variety of statistical tests, we examined and evaluated students' security expertise and knowledge related information security and cybercrime.
- In order to increase student cybersecurity awareness and inform them of the dangers and difficulties that exist in computer networks, we theoretically developed methods for doing so.
- We recommend the best security measures and procedures based on the identified gap in the present state-of-the-art methods to manage events accurately and efficiently and implant security culture into the college environment.

1. METHODOLOGY

1.1. Research Tools

To accomplish the study's goals and gather qualitative data regarding the degree of cybersecurity awareness among Luarasi University students, the survey technique was employed. Online research was used to efficiently and ethically compile a sizable sample of both male and female students.

There were 40 questions in the survey, covering a variety of cybersecurity-related topics, such as:

- a. cybersecurity knowledge (5 questions);
- b. the use of security tools (anti-virus, firewall) (5 questions);
- c. internet usage (5 questions);
- d. cryptology (5 questions);
- e. phishing awareness (5 questions);
- f. social networking (5 questions);
- g. browser security (5 questions);
- h. demographics (5 questions).

Based on instruments created by other academics studying cybersecurity, the survey questions were chosen [3].

The objectives of the questions in the section on Internet usage were to examine how pupils behave when they are online. The questions about the use of security technologies were designed to assess the students at Luarasi University's existing security procedures. They were evaluated on their knowledge of phishing and viruses using the questions about phishing awareness. The purpose of the exam on browser security was to gauge the students' knowledge of how secure their typical browser is. The students' level of awareness of the risks associated with utilizing various social networking platforms and their understanding of how to handle a cybercrime incident were evaluated in the social networking and cybersecurity knowledge sections. In order to better understand the cybersecurity knowledge, skills, behavior, attitudes, and self-perception of students.

1.2. Study Setting and Participants

To make the survey comprehensible to participants and ensure reliable results, it was initially designed in English and then translated into Albanian language as well.

To assess the methods' viability and guarantee the accuracy of the inquiries, we ran two pilot tests. In order to create the survey's final version, we first reviewed the participant input and reorganized it. In the initial pilot study, it was determined that the survey's questions should be appropriate for students with various educational backgrounds and should be feasible to respond to quickly.

In order to reach 10 students from various Universities we have MoU to work together, we gave out electronic copies of the survey to them. The Luarasi University, Information Technology and Innovation Faculty which include three departments-business informatics, information technology and innovations and math & statistics-was where the first five students were chosen at random.

From three faculties inside the Luarasi University: Law, Economic and Medical Sciences representing various fields, the final five students were chosen.

The initial pilot test participants significantly suggested condensing the questionnaire and defining a few technical terminologies. The poll was ultimately condensed to 40 focused questions, with detailed explanations and definitions provided for some cybersecurity technical jargon for the benefit of people without an IT expertise. The modified survey was then posted to Microsoft Teams Forms and restricted to the intended responders.

The study's goal was mentioned on the opening page in explicit terms. To ask their assistance in sharing the survey link with the departments of their respective colleges, the Deans of all faculties inside Luarasi University received the survey link via their official Luarasi University emails. The online survey questionnaire was completed by 1000 Luarasi University Students as a result of the snowball sampling technique, which was used to enhance the sample size.

1.3. Research Strategy and Respondents' Impression

In this study, a multilayer survey procedure was used to improve the questionnaire's quality and guarantee that the survey's questions were precise and understandable. To gather information about the degree of cybersecurity awareness among Luarasi University students, the complete survey was revised in light of the feedback and then the final version was presented online. According to the survey's findings, policies were created to improve cybersecurity education and raise security awareness among Luarasi University students.

We questioned the respondents about their feelings regarding how eager they felt to complete the survey. Five options were presented to the respondents: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. In the Fig.1 demonstrates that most respondents thought the survey was fascinating, while just a small number thought it was not thrilling to take part. The survey was well-designed, as evidenced by the fact that 85% of respondents expressed excitement about taking part.

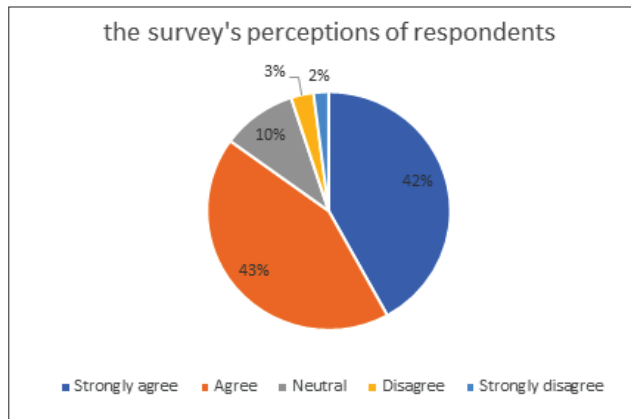


Fig 1. Survey's perceptions of respondents

2. RESULTS

The respondents were the sample chosen as a subset of the population with the intention of analysing the full population of students, which was defined as the group of students. In order to better understand students' awareness of and attitudes about various cybersecurity issues, including viruses, phishing, forgeries, pop-up ads, and patching, we set out to conduct a survey of the majority of Luarasi University students as a whole. We employed the research distribution and students' understanding of the key cybersecurity principles, countermeasures, password management, browser security, and social network platforms to accomplish our research goals.

2.1. Research Distribution.

Measuring how the life cycle demographics of students affected their adoption of cybersecurity measures was one of the research's goals. Demographic factors were therefore chosen, including sex, age, the college the participants are now enrolled in, the academic year, and the everyday use of electronics. The detailed demographic data of the study's participants is summarized in tab.1.

Table 1. Demographic information of research respondents

Variables		Number	Percentage %
Sex (Male-Female)	Male	553	55.3
	Female	447	44.7
Age (years)	18–25	936	93.6
	26–34	64	6.4
Type of Faculty/Department	Faculty of Information Technology and Innovation/Department of Business Informatics(Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 7)	180	18
	Faculty of Information Technology and Innovation/Department of Information Technology and Innovation/ (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 7)	180	18
	Faculty of Economic (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 0)	150	15
	Faculty of Law (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 0)	180	18
	Faculty of Medical Sciences/ Department of Dentistry (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 0)	100	10
	Faculty of Medical Sciences/ Department of Nursing (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 0)	150	15
	Faculty of Medical Sciences/ Department of Pharmacy (Number of IT/Cybersecurity = 0)	60	6
Year of Study	1st year	300	30
	2nd year	224	22.4
	3rd year	250	25
	4th year	226	22.6
	5th year	0	0
Daily Used Device	Smart phone	600	60
	Tablet	100	10
	Desktop	100	10
	Laptop	200	20

Given that Luarasi University students were the study’s intended audience, Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (93.6%) were between the ages of 18 and 25. Male participants outnumbered female participants by a margin of 55.3% to 44.7%. The respondents’ college attendance served as a crucial predictor of their background. The majority of participants (60%) used smartphones as their primary device, followed by laptops (20%) for frequent use.

2.2. Knowledge of Main Cybersecurity Concepts.

Confidentiality, integrity, and availability, or the CIA triad, are the essential concepts of cybersecurity. Applying specific procedures and methods to devices and services that are directly connected to the Internet will enable these features. Because hackers are employing more sophisticated techniques, academic institutions should take precautions to safeguard their networks and sensitive data from ongoing cyberattacks [5,6]. Since students are the most susceptible resources at faculties/university, we looked into what they knew about basic cybersecurity concepts.

Table 2 shows that 44.4% of students manually updated their devices whereas 43.1% of students had their devices automatically update, taking care of replacing outdated software. However, 4.6% of them either neglected to update their devices or didn’t upgrade at all, leaving them vulnerable to assault and compromise.

Table 2. Result of “How do you update your device?”

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Automatic updating (no user action required)	431	43.1
Manual update (Whenever necessary, a user upgrades out-of-date software and turns off automatic updates)	444	44.4
No update (The user fails to do the necessary upgrades)	46	4.6
Neglect update (Updates are not important to the user at all)	79	7.9

We discovered through this poll that adults today spend a significant amount of time on their cellphones and laptops. Even when they were busy, the students spent four to eight hours every day using their cellphones and computers. However, we believe that during their spare time, this duration may significantly grow.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Albania, where most users are unaware of the fundamentals of cybersecurity or the best practices for shielding their devices from malware, viruses, and frauds, higher education institutions must prioritize information security. In this study, we used a quantitative research methodology to assess cybersecurity expertise among university students at Luarasi University in Albania. Overall, we mathematically proved that senior managers and executives should aggressively support and incorporate a cybersecurity awareness and training program for students in the security management strategy. To make sure that all users are aware of the most prevalent cybersecurity dangers and vulnerabilities, academic institutions must frequently hold thorough security awareness and training sessions. We suggest the following in light of the findings of the analysis:

- To improve its students' security position, Luarasi University should encourage student awareness of common cybersecurity aspects, such as vulnerabilities, assaults, and incidents.
- Passive awareness techniques that only inform users - such as email, oral presentations, newsletters, and SMS messages - are insufficient. Incorporating more proactive techniques, such free online training and interviews, is necessary. It is more efficient and strongly advised to use both approaches together.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Dash, B, (University of the Cumberlands; Illinois State University), An Effective Cybersecurity Awareness Training Model: First Defense of an Organizational Security Strategy, *International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET)*, Volume: 09 Issue: 04 | April 2022.
2. Senthilkumar, K.; Easwaramoorthy, S. A Survey on Cyber Security awareness among college students in Tamil Nadu. In *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering*; IOP Publishing: Bristol, UK, 2017;
3. Cavana, R.; Delahaye, B.; Sekeran, U. *Applied Business Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2001.
4. Moallem, A. *Cybersecurity Awareness Among Students and Faculty*; CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, USA, 2019.

5. Abawajy, J., Tai-hoon, K. 2010. Performance analysis of cyber security awareness delivery methods. *In: Security technology, disaster recovery and business continuity*, (pp. 142–148). BerlinGermany: Springer-Verlag.
6. Albrechtsen, E., Hovden, J. 2010. Improving information security awareness and behaviour through dialogue, participation and collective reflection. *An Intervention Study, Computer and Security*.
7. Wilson, M., Hash, J. 2003. *Building an information technology security awareness and training program [online]*, National Institute of Standards and Technology. <http://www.itl.nist.gov/lab/bulletns/bltnoct03.htm>.
8. Workman, M. 2007. Gaining access with social engineering: an empirical study of the threat. *Information Systems Security*.

POWER IN THE AGE OF THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE*

Colonel Msc. Ulsi REXHAJ

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

INTRODUCTION

“A new industrial revolution has begun. Like mechanization or electricity before it, artificial intelligence will touch every aspect of our lives and cause deep gaps in the balance of global power, especially among the artificial intelligence superpowers: China, the United States of America, and Europe.” The expert of autonomous weapons Paul Scharre dives into the fierce competition between powers to implement this technology that changes the power of game for future dominance.

The classical realist Hans Morgenthau identified nine elements of national power: geography, resources, industrial capacity, military readiness, population, national character, national morale, quality of diplomacy, and quality of government. Of course, these are essential elements for measuring national power, but anyway, they were determined at a different time.

In his book “Four Battlegrounds”, Scharre navigates skillfully each area, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the four key elements that define power and warfare today: data, computing power, talent, and institutions.

* For the preparation of this article it was worked on evaluations, comments, adaptations, experiences and lessons about the book “Four Battlegrounds: Power in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”. The book was written by Paul Scharre, in February 2023. The writing evidences and expresses only the judgment and opinions of the author.

Data is a vital resource like coal or oil, but it needs to be collected and refined. Advanced computer chips are the core of computing power - control over chip supply chains gives you leverage over rivals. Talent is about people: which country attracts the best researchers and the most advanced technology? The fourth “battle” area is perhaps the most critical: the ultimate global leader in Artificial Intelligence will be him that have institutions that effectively integrate Artificial Intelligence into their economy, society and, especially, their military.

Scharre’s expectations rise with the technology of the future. It explores how Artificial Intelligence systems are already discovering new strategies through millions of wargame simulations, developing combat tactics better than the military can develop themselves, tracking billions of people, using biometrics and checking in information with secret algorithms. He visits China’s “national team,” that is, the leading Artificial Intelligence companies, to show the horrific synergy between the government, the private sector, and the state as a controller. He interviews Pentagon leadership and visits the offices of the US Department of Defense, revealing deep tensions between the military and the tech giants that control data, chips and talent. However, he concludes that those tensions, inherent in our democratic system, create resilience and resistance to autocracy towards the extremely powerful technology. Engaging and straightforward, “The Four Battlegrounds” book offers a vivid picture of how artificial intelligence is transforming war, global security, and the future of human freedom, while offering solutions and recommendations for what democracies will need. to remain at the forefront of the world order.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE FUTURE

It is widely believed that the world is on the verge of another military revolution. Artificial intelligence is poised to transform the character of war, as gunpowder, tanks, airplanes and atomic bombs have done in previous eras. Today, states are actively seeking to utilize the power of artificial intelligence for military advantage. China, for example, has announced its intention to become the world leader in artificial intelligence by 2030. “The new “Artificial Intelligence General Plan” declared that it “is a strategic technology that will lead the future.” Similarly, Russian President Vladimir Putin has stated: “Whoever becomes a leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world.” In response to the challenge presented by China and Russia, the United States has committed to a “third compensation” strategy. It will invest heavily in artificial intelligence, autonomy and robotics to maintain its advantage in defense.

Considering these dramatic developments, military commentators have

become deeply interested in the question of the military application of Artificial Intelligence. For example, in their latest book, authors *Ben Buchanan* and *Andrew Imbrie*¹ have claimed that Artificial Intelligence is “the new fire.” Autonomous weapons controlled by Artificial Intelligence – not humans – will become increasingly accurate, fast and deadly. They represent the future of war. Many other researchers and experts agree with this. For example, Stuart Russell, the prominent computer scientist and pioneer of Artificial Intelligence, devoted one of his most recent lectures to the military potential of Artificial Intelligence. He declared the rise of killer robots. He described a scenario in which a lethal quadcopter drone the size of a jar could be armed with an explosive device, an anti-personnel mine capable of wiping out all the citizens in a city and, unlike nuclear weapons, the infrastructure of the city would not be affected. Many other researchers, including Christian Brose, Ken Payne, John Arquilla, David Hambling and John Antal, share Russell’s belief that with the development of second generation Artificial Intelligence, lethal autonomous weapons - such as piles of killer drones, may be very close in time.

However, military revolutions have often been less radical than their advocates first assumed. The military affairs revolution of the 1990s was certainly important in opening up new operational possibilities, but it did not eliminate uncertainty. Similarly, some of the debate around lethal autonomy and artificial intelligence has been hyperbolic, misrepresenting how artificial intelligence actually works and what its potential effects on military operations might be, and therefore, in any possible future. Although remote and autonomous systems are becoming increasingly important, there is still little chance that autonomous drone piles will replace troops on the battlefield, or supercomputers will replace commanders as the human element. *Peter Thiel*, a leading *Silicon Valley* technology entrepreneur, has articulated the limitations of artificial intelligence eloquently: “Forget the wild science-fiction fantasy. What is powerful about existing Artificial Intelligence is its application to relatively mundane tasks such as computer vision and data analysis.” Consequently, although machine cognition and use is far superior to a human in limited tasks, it is still very fragile. Completely dependent on the data it’s trained on, even the slightest change in the current environment—or the data—makes it useless.

After all, autonomous drone swarms have already been demonstrated in obviously engineered and controlled environments. However, in reality, it will

¹ Ben Buchanan and Andrew Imbrie “The New Fire: War, Peace, and Democracy in the Age of AI”, March 8, 2022. <https://nextbigideclub.com/magazine/new-fire-war-peace-democracy-age-ai-bookbite/34479/>

be very difficult to train a drone to operate autonomously, to fight in the war that takes place on the ground.

The environment is dynamic and complex, especially in cities, where civilians and military get together with each other. There doesn't seem to be any clear data on which to reliably train a pile of drones. The situation on the ground is very fluid. Similarly, it is not easy to see how an algorithm can make command decisions. Command decisions require the interpretation of heterogeneous information, balancing political and military factors, all of which require judgment. In a recent article, *Avi Goldfarb* and *Jon R. Lindsay* have argued that data and Artificial Intelligence are best for simple decisions with very precise data. But, almost by definition, it must be accepted that only the decisions of the military command can provide solutions to complex and uncertain situations. Take, for example, that while Google and Amazon are big data companies, their managers cannot predict that one day an algorithm will make strategic and operational decisions on behalf of managers. The data, rapidly processed by algorithms, helps their executives understand the market at a depth and fidelity that their competitors cannot match. The advantage of the information has pushed them to dominance. However, knowing and using machines does not replace executive function.

The function of Artificial Intelligence and data is not primarily lethal - they are not the new fire, as some claim. Data - digitized information stored in cyberspace - is essential because it provides countries with a broader, deeper and more faithful understanding of themselves and their competitors. When massive data sets are effectively processed by artificial intelligence, it will allow military commanders to perceive the battlespace at a depth, speed and resolution unattainable up to now.

Of course that it is impossible to replace commanders with computers or supercomputers. However, this does not mean that artificial intelligence, data and the use of machines are not crucial to contemporary and future military operations. Data and Artificial Intelligence can be crucial in cyber operations and information campaigns. They have become necessary for defense and attack.

Artificial Intelligence and data are not so much the “new fire” as a new form of digitized military intelligence that utilizes cyberspace as a major new source of information. Artificial Intelligence is a revolutionary way to see “on the other side of the hill”. *Paul Scharre* once argued that Artificial Intelligence would inevitably lead to lethal autonomy. In 2019, he published his best-selling book, “*Army of None*”, which chronicles the rise of remote and autonomous weapon systems. There, *Scharre* proposed that Artificial Intelligence was

poised to revolutionize warfare: “In upcoming wars, machines may make life and death decisions.”

But even if the potential of Artificial Intelligence still excites him, he has now radically changed his mind. His new book, “The Four Battlegrounds”, published in February 2023, represents an in-depth revision of his original argument. In it, he is drawn to the cataclysmic picture. “Four Battlegrounds” is a work of political economy. It addresses the concrete issues of great power competition, industrial strategies and the regulatory systems that support it. The Book describes the implications of digitized intelligence for military competition. Scharre analyzes the regulatory environment required to harness the power of data. He reasonably claims that superiority in data, and the four battlefields to process it, will be militarily decisive in the superpower rivalry between the United States and China. Data will provide a huge advantage of intelligence. As we said from the beginning, for Scharre, there are four critical resources that will determine who will win this intelligence race: data, computers, talent and institutions (tech companies). These will have a huge advantage in future power. He argues that the United States and China are locked in a deadly war for these four resources, fully aware that whoever gains the upper hand in the “four battlefields” will benefit significantly politically, economically and, most importantly, militarily. They will know more than their opponent. They will be more efficient in the application of military force. They will dominate information and cyberspace. They will be more deadly.

RACING AGAINST CHINA?

The book presents recent developments and assesses the relative strengths of the two states. China is still behind the United States in some areas. The United States has the leading talent and is ahead in terms of research and technology. China is a backward country in the production of chips. However, Scharre cautions against US complacency. Indeed, he tends to estimate that the United States will fall behind in the data race. Therefore, Scharre emphasizes China’s advantages and its rapid advances. With 900 million internet users already, China has far more data than the United States. Some areas of its economy are much more digitized than in the United States. The Chinese WeChat, for example, has no American equivalent. Many Chinese apps are superior to American ones. In addition, the Chinese state is also unrestrained by legal restrictions or civil privacy concerns. The Chinese Communist Party actively monitors the digital profiles of its citizens, collects their data and records their activities. In cities, it uses facial recognition technology to identify individuals.

Synergies between government and technology in China are tight. China also has significant regulatory advantages over the United States. The Chinese

Communist Party has received the signature of technology giants such as Baidu and Alibaba: “Chinese investment in technology is paying dividends.” Scharre concludes: “China is not only creating a new model of digital authoritarianism, it is actively exporting it.”

The armed forces must establish deep partnerships with the technology sector. They “will have to look beyond traditional defense contractors and engage from the very beginning.” This is not easy. Scharre documents the challenging regulatory environment in the United States, compared to China: “In the US, the big tech corporations Amazon, Apple, Meta (formerly Facebook) and Google are independent centers of power, often in contrast with the government on specific issues”.

So technology companies today operate differently than the classic ones. As one of Scharre’s interviewees noted: “You can’t buy Artificial Intelligence the way you buy ammunition.” Technology companies are not selling a specific capability, such as a weapon. They are selling data, software, computing power. After all, they are selling expertise. Algorithms and programs are best developed iteratively around a very specific problem. The full potential of some software or algorithms for a military task may not be immediately apparent even to a technology company. Operating in competitive markets, technology companies therefore prefer a more flexible and open contractual system with the Department of Defense. They need security and quick financial payments. Tech companies are looking for collaborative engagement, not just a contract to build a platform.

CONCLUSIONS

“The Four Battlegrounds” is an excellent and informative addition to the current literature on Artificial Intelligence and warfare. It complements recently published works by Lindsay, Goldfarb, Benjamin Jensen, Christopher Huajt, and Scott Cuomo. The central message of this literature is clear: data and Artificial Intelligence are and will be very important to the armed forces. However, data and AI will not fundamentally transform warfare itself. It will be people who will continue to use lethal weapons systems, including remote ones, which kill people, as the savage war in Ukraine shows. The fighting situation is complex and confusing. There is required human judgment, skill and cunning to use weapons to their greatest effect. However, any military force that wants to dominate the battlefields of the future will need to utilize the potential of big data, to master the digitized information that flows across the battlespace. Humans simply do not have the ability to do this on their own. Therefore, the headquarters will need algorithms and software to process that data. They will need close partnerships with technology companies to

create these systems, as well as scientists, engineers and data programmers in operational command posts to make them work. If the armed forces are able to do this, the data will allow them to see across the depth and breadth of the battle space.

Artificial intelligence will not solve the problems of military operations. The unknowns will continue. However, empowered by data, commanders may be able to use their forces more efficiently. The Russo-Ukrainian war already provides a clear picture of the advantages that data-driven military operations offer over an adversary that still operates in a traditional way.

THE ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM – A CHALLENGE IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT INVESTMENTS AND SERVICES. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA AGAINST INFORMATION RIGHTS

PhD (c) Marsida ABDUL

"Aleksandër Moisiu" University, Business Faculty

Dr. Entela ABDUL

"Luarasi" University, Law Faculty

ABSTRACT

Referring to the most important principles of law, such as that of transparency, equal treatment, proportionality, non-discrimination or non-violation of equality in procurements, the Contracting Authorities are obliged to develop the competition in accordance and in alignment with international conventions and EU directives. After the end of the stage of classification of the offers, the competing economic operators have the right to officially address a request for information to the Contracting Authority. In this case, referring to the principle of information, the Contracting Authority is obliged to make the requested information available to the competing economic operators, but without violating confidentiality.

The implementation and operation of the new Electronic Procurement System (SPE), which does not follow the same line with the legal framework, not foreseeing all legal situations and circumstances, violates the confidentiality

of the procurement process, and the personal data of economic operators. The law in this case prevails over the SPE since the system must follow the legal provisions. Often times this controversy has brought difficulties, if not inability to finalize the procurement procedure.

From a detailed examination of the legislation, it is observed that there are contradictory and not well-regulated attitudes, regarding the border between the protection of personal data and the transparency of the procurement procedures, reflected in the standard tender documents.

Based on the qualitative analysis of the Procurement Law, on the institutional practice and the data obtained from it, in terms of the protection of personal data and confidentiality on the one hand, as well as the obligation of the Contracting Authority to make public the required information, the right to information, the purpose and objectives of this paper are presented in two directions:

- Identification of the procedural actions of the Contracting Authorities for the protection of personal data and the confidentiality of procurement procedures, in the face of the right to information.*
- Exposure of the necessity of improvements and adjustments to the Electronic Procurement System, implementing it in accordance with the legal framework and anticipating all circumstances and legal situations.*

Keywords: Personal data, procurement procedure, confidentiality, electronic system, legal framework

INTRODUCTION

Contracting Authorities during the development of procurement procedures, in compliance with public procurement rules, publish in the Electronic Procurement System and in the Bulletin of Public Announcements, the information considered necessary by the Law “On Public Procurement” for the competition of economic operators in this procedure. Specifically, in the SPE, the Contracting Authority publishes the contract notice, the standard tender documents, the record of the argumentation of the technical specifications and special acceptance criteria. The purpose of this announcement is transparency and information, which enables economic operators to decide whether or not they meet the qualification criteria and whether or not they will participate in the procurement procedures. In any case, announcements are made according to the format, part of the standard tender documents approved by law.¹

¹ Article 7, Decision of The Council of Ministers No. 285/2021 “On the Approval of Public Procurement Rules”

The purpose of the Contracting Authorities and of the Procurement Law itself is to increase the efficiency of procurement procedures and the good use of public funds by reducing expenses and increasing the quality of goods, works and services provided from the procurement procedures.

The lack of transparency and the narrowing of the competition by the Contracting Authorities directly affects the efficiency of the procurement procedures, as it aims to favor a certain economic operator and harm other competitors, undermining the equality in procurement procedures.

The involvement of technology has brought as a result that no procurement procedure can be announced or finalized if all information is not made public and easily accessible by competing economic operators. Even the legal provisions themselves, as well as the Electronic Procurement System, have facilitated this process by defining the type and argumentation of each information as well as the format and method of publishing the information. This publication is monitored in all cases by the Public Procurement Agency, which verifies and controls in every case the standard tender documents published by the contracting authorities.

In the event that the notices of the winner, the notices of cancellation and the notice of the contract turn out not to have been drawn up in accordance with the format and method defined by the law, the APP does not make the publication but returns it recommending and guiding the Contracting Authority for the correct completion of the procedure.² The decisions of the Public Procurement Agency are recommendatory and not binding regarding the information published by the Contracting Authorities in the Electronic Procurement System. For this reason, the main responsibility and challenge between maintaining confidentiality and also not violating the right to information remains with the Contracting Authorities. The objectives of the procurements are to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the good management of public funds, but also to ensure equal and comprehensive treatment to the participants. The way the technical qualification criteria are drawn up and published in the SPE can violate equality in the tender, violating integrity, competition, transparency and public trust.³

On the other hand, the purpose of the law “On the protection of personal data” is the harmonization of legal changes with the *Acquis Communautaire* and the implementation of EU standards in the field of personal data protection. The

² Article 7, Decision of The Council of Ministers No. 285/2021 “On the Approval of Public Procurement Rules”

³ Article 2, Law No. 162/2020 “On Public Procurement”

need to align the current legislation for the protection of personal data with the EU acquis in this area is important in order to guarantee the highest European standards to Albanian citizens in the field of personal data protection at a time when the processing of personal data in the digital age has multiplied. Also, the Procurement Law has been amended and aligned with European directives and standards. Always in order to protect personal data, economic operators as owners of their personal data, have the right to express their consent to the processing of this data by completing the confidentiality declaration, where they can request that a certain number of documents and information should not be made public to third parties who request it.⁴

However, the economic operator cannot classify as confidential, subject of data protection, the information related to the price of the offer, the list of prices, the catalog, information related to the selection criteria, public documents, and other information that must be made public in order to carry out and finalize the procurement procedure.

On the other hand, regarding to the right to information, the parties participating in procurement procedures but also any interested entity has the right to request information about the documentation, facts and circumstances related to the procurement procedures, thus obliging the Contracting Authority to respond within the legal deadlines.⁵

However, the right to information in procurement procedures cannot be unlimited. It is limited if it is necessary, proportionate and if the provision of information damages the right to a private life, trade secret, copyright, patents, etc.⁶ But referring to the legal provisions, the limitation of the right to information, due to subjective interests, does not apply when the holder of these rights have given their consent for the provision of information. Regardless of the legal provisions, the requested information is not restrained in case there is a higher public interest in providing it. Since currently in our country the draft law for the protection of personal data will be amended and approved, in order to avoid the legal vacuum that may be created, the draft law for the right to information is being drafted at the same time. The purpose of the draft law is to improve the existing legislation, to strengthen the rules and procedures implemented by institutions regarding the right to information, as well as to avoid and minimize the problems encountered so far regarding the dualization and conflict between the protection of personal data and the right to information.

⁴ Article 16, Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement"

⁵ Article 14 and 15, Law No. 119/2014 "On the Right to Information"

⁶ Article 17, Law No. 119/2014 "On the Right to Information"

The draft law should also provide credibility for the public administration, with the aim of increasing accountability and transparency, and hindering corruption. Referring to institutional practices, during the development of procurement procedures, an inconsistency is observed between the facts and circumstances of the legal provisions as well as the technical processes, where these legal provisions must be reflected in the Electronic Procurement System. This brings technical and legal difficulties in the daily institutional practice, affecting the finalization of the procurement procedures and contract agreement.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

A combined methodology was used to carry out this research. We have used qualitative analysis of legislation and legal changes in terms of procurement procedures, to assess the duality between confidentiality and transparency. Institutional practice and actual cases from procurement practices, obtained from various interviews with experts in the field, have also been analyzed in order to evaluate the inconsistency between SPE and legal provisions in the function of personal data protection. The literature has been analyzed and reviewed, which includes studies and various materials, treated in a comparative and historical aspect in terms of the field of public procurement and investments.

The findings obtained from the review of the literature, of the law, of the legal changes as well as the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with experts in the field, enable a detailed examination of the problem and the objectives of this paper. coming up with conclusions and recommendations, in terms of protection of personal data, without infringing the right to information, as well as technological improvement and implementation of SPE in accordance with legal provisions. They also allow us to come to conclusions and recommendations regarding the protection of personal data without violating the right to information, and also the improvement and proper implementation of the SPE in accordance with the legal provisions.

THE HISTORICAL BEGINNINGS OF PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES IN ALBANIA

Our country does not have an old concessionary tradition or the development of public procurement and foreign investments. According to Veniamin Toçi (1974) reflected in his book “The intervention of foreign capital in Albania and the attitude of democratic circles”, we encounter the first steps of concessionary developments around the 1920s. At the end of the first world war, some main problems emerged, which were:

- reconstruction of the state;
- economic recovery and development;
- finding means and ways for development.

Albania, although small in surface area, was rich in natural resources. Because of this a discussion arose as to whether this development and utilization of natural resources should be done with the country's own means or with foreign capital, even when there was a small participation of local capital.⁷ The first discussions about granting a concession were those of the kerosene concession, where there were many opinions and discussions from 1921 to 1925. The main elements analyzed were the way of granting the concession, the duration of the contractual conditions, the benefits and obligations of the Albanian state, and those of the concessionaire. Debates of the kerosene concession during this period were also included in the parliament of the time.

If we analyze the parliamentary discussions, we notice a progressive attitude for the time regarding the development of concessions, in function of the economic development of the country, defining contractual conditions as favorable as possible for the Albanian state, but without violating or harming the concessionaire. Thus, in the parliament of 1923, after the presentation of the government's project for the kerosene concession agreement with the Anglo-Persian company, Luigj Gurakuqi presented a critical analysis regarding this agreement. In this discussion, he emphasized the fact that the language of the agreement should be precise and clear, where the contractual conditions should not be left evasive and not clearly defined, which could pave the way for damage to state interests. Of great importance in this discussion of Gurakuqi was the fact that he demanded the agreement to encourage free competition and to prohibit monopolization, this very progressive principle for the time in the function of protecting the national interest, and which has a well-regulated provision in the current law "On Public Procurement". Furthermore, in this discussion he requested to clearly define the term of the concession, as well as the share of the profit for the Albanian state, so that the profit was as large as possible.⁸

During the years 1921-1925 foreign investments in Albania were also developed in the field of transport and communication works. The goal and aim of our country at this time was the construction of communication roads and several bridges. For the construction of large automobile bridges, the Albanian government announced a public auction in 1923, which was won by

⁷ Toçi V., (1974) *Nderhyrja e kapitalit te huaj ne Shqiperi dhe qendrimi i qarqeve demokratike 1921-1925*, Instituti i Historise, Akademia e Shkencave e RPSH, page 44

⁸ Ibid., page 52.

a French company. The main condition was that the Albanian state would pay 1 million francs per year, as well as allow the use of forests and mines until repayment of construction costs.⁹

Concessions had a rapid development even during the period of the monarchy, but after the second world war and the establishment of the communist regime, construction and economic development were no longer based on the concessions, and foreign investments were stopped.

PROTECTION OF CONFIDENTIALITY IN THE FIELD OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT, PRACTICAL AND LEGAL LIMIT WITH THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Referring to the rules of public procurement and the principle of transparency based on the needs for public works, goods or services, the Contracting Authority at the beginning of each year draws up and publishes in the Electronic Procurement System the annual register of forecasts for public procurement procedure. The publication of the register of forecast aims a good planning, good use of public funds as well as the timely realization of public procurement procedures, since the Contracting Authorities cannot go outside the deadlines provided in the register and outside the limit fund provided. Also, the Public Procurement Agency publishes in the bulletin of public announcements, every Monday, the various notices related to the procurement procedures, which must be made available for the public according to the right to information. All information and documentation published in the Electronic Procurement System and in the bulletin of public announcements is easily accessible.¹⁰

The Contracting Authorities also periodically publish electronically in the SPE the register of achievements, which contains public information about the procurement procedures carried out during the budget year, their finalization and the dates of the conclusion of the contracts. After the electronic publication in SPE of the contract notice and standard tender documents, which include the criteria, technical specifications, special conditions of the contract, terms and method of delivery as well as all the necessary information for the participation of economic operators in the tender, the right arises that the economic operators who choose to compete in this procurement procedure also complete the declaration of confidentiality.¹¹

Through this statement, the bidder (economic operator) defines the information

⁹ Toçi V., (1974) *Nderhyrja e kapitalit te huaj ne Shqiperi dhe qendrimi i qarqeve demokratike 1921-1925*, Instituti i Historise, Akademia e Shkencave e RPSH, page 129.

¹⁰ Article 7, Decision of The Council of Ministers No. 285/2021 "On the Approval of Public Procurement Rules".

¹¹ Ibid.

or documents that he decides to keep confidential and for which the Contracting Authority is obliged to respect the protection of personal data. An economic operator may not make public and require the preservation of confidentiality for technical or commercial secrets. It is worth noting that various institutions and institutional practices occasionally encounter many difficulties in terms of defining the line between maintaining confidentiality and the right to information.¹² This is because the economic operators participating in the tender or any interested party have the right to address a request for information to the Contracting Authority and the latter is obliged to respond within 5 days of receiving the request.

It is worth noting that without avoiding the obligations arising from this legal provision, the contracting authorities may not make public some of the requested information, if such a thing contradicts the legislation on the protection of personal data or violates the public interest, legal interests and economic of the parties. Also, if some parts of the economic offer are declared confidential, then these documents will not be made available to anyone requesting that information.¹³

During the administrative investigation procedure, the Public Procurement Agency (APP) has the right to request information from any public administration body, as well as to receive any file or material of the procurement procedures, which are related to the administrative investigation. Also, during the investigation, the APP can perform various investigative actions, such as entering any office of public institutions and inspecting on-site acts or documents related to the case it is investigating.¹⁴

It is worth noting that these investigative actions carried out by the APP, even though they are provided for by legal provisions and justify investigative actions in the function of protecting a higher public interest, at the same time come in conflict with the protection of personal data and the declaration of confidentiality drawn up by the participating economic operators. The legislation itself has created an evasive and not clearly regulated situation in terms of the protection of the legal interests of economic operators during procurement procedures. Thus, on one hand there is the obligation not to violate personal data and simultaneously on the other hand the obligation to respect the right to information.

¹² Unstructured interview with Procurement Specialist Sadika Veshi, DPÇK, Municipality of Tirana, (public institution of executive power). Interviewed by Marsida Abdul on November 27, 2023.

¹³ Article 81, Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement"

¹⁴ Article 129, Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement"

THE PROBLEMS OBSERVED IN THE ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM DURING THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS WITH REFERENCE TO LEGAL PROVISIONS

In cases where the procurement procedures are suspended in the Electronic Procurement System due to legal deadlines and complaints handling procedures, various events and situations may occur. In such cases, the law requires undertaking various procedural actions; actions which cannot be technically reflected in the Electronic Procurement System, causing serious problems in the finalization of procurement procedures. During the development of the procurement procedures, the complaint is first submitted to the Contracting Authority, which has started the procurement procedure, then it is submitted to the Public Procurement Commission (KPP). After confirming that the complaint has been submitted to the Public Procurement Commission, the Contracting Authority immediately suspends the procurement procedure in the SPE until the complaint is fully examined, and a decision has been provided by the Public Procurement Commission.¹⁵

During the handling of complaints regarding procurement procedures, either by the Contracting Authority or by the KPP, the procurement procedure in the Electronic Procurement System continues to be suspended and it can be removed from the suspension only when the KPP issues a final decision on the review of the complaint. In this case, after the KPP's decision is officially sent to the Contracting Authority, then in order to implement this decision, the Contracting Authority removes the suspension of the procurement procedure in the SPE and allows the continuation of the following steps provided in the legislation for the development of this procedure.

Article 24 of Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement", specifies:

"...The Public Procurement Commission makes decisions on the complaints submitted to it, keeping in consideration, in addition to the general principles mentioned in Article 2 of this law, the following principles: impartiality in the examination of complaints, stability in decision-making, legality, speed and efficiency, access, public character, as well as the principle of contradiction. In view of these legal provisions and referring to the decision of KPP¹⁶ where it is quoted: "The KPP is foreseen by the law as a quasi-court of law" as such, in its decision-making, the Public Procurement Commission applies the main principles of law.

It is worth noting that during the complaint review phase, when the procurement

¹⁵ Article 112, Law No. 162/2020 "On Public Procurement"

¹⁶ Decision of KPP no. 655/2018 dated 04.10.2018

procedure is suspended in the SPE, in institutional practice it happened that the lawyer/responsible employee for the procurement procedure, resigned from his position in this institution. In this case, the Order of termination of employment relations should also be reflected in his removal from the position of responsible person in SPE, since they should no longer have the credentials to enter and change the tender documents in SPE. To change the person responsible for the procurement in the SPE, the Contracting Authority must technically unsuspend the procedure again and after changing the responsible person, resuspend the procurement procedure.

The Electronic Procurement System did not technically foresee the resuspension and this procurement procedure was not resuspended, causing problems and impossibility of finalizing the procedure, lastly leading to the cancellation of this procedure. Subsequently, the KPP came to a decision that accepted the complaint of the economic operator and based on this decision, the reclassification and reevaluation of the offers in the SEP should have been done. This action was technically impossible as without suspension the deadlines for the announcement of the winner was passed.¹⁷ (Unstructured interview with procurement specialist Ivona Lame (DPÇK Municipality of Tirana, state institution-executive level). Interviewed by Abdul, Entela dt. 27 November 2023).

Finally, the Contracting Authority in this case sent a request addressed to the Public Procurement Agency (APP) for technical assistance regarding the handling of the case. The APP replied that the Electronic Procurement System has no technical way to change the responsible person and the Procurement Unit. This statement of the APP confirms the fact that the legal framework and the Electronic Procurement System are not aligned with each other and do not change at the same pace. Since the legal framework prevails over the electronic system this inconsistency causes difficulties in the realization of public services and the finalization of procurement procedures.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The practical and legal boundary between the protection of personal data and the right to information in the field of public procurement is not well regulated, as the legal framework and the best institutional practices need improvements and changes. The evolution of laws, such as the “On the protection of personal data” and amendments to the Procurement Law, has aimed to align with EU standards and enhance data protection. However, challenges arise in defining the limits of the right to information, especially when it comes to personal

¹⁷ Unstructured interview with Procurement Specialist Ivona Lame, DPÇK, Municipality of Tirana, (public institution of executive power). Interviewed by Entela Abdul on November 27, 2023.

data, trade secrets, and other subjective interests.

The antagonism between data protection and transparency is evident in the dilemmas surrounding confidentiality. While economic operators have the right to withhold certain information through a confidentiality statement, it is essential to strike a balance to prevent misuse of this provision and ensure the integrity of the procurement process.

The research reveals inconsistencies between legal provisions and the technical processes within institutional practices, particularly in the Electronic Procurement System. This misalignment poses challenges in the daily execution of procurement procedures, impacting their efficiency and completion. The need for harmonization between legal frameworks and technological systems is evident to address these challenges adequately.

Exploring the historical context of procurement procedures in Albania highlights the country's transition from limited concessionary traditions to a more structured approach. The early discussions and debates around concessions emphasized the importance of clear language, defined contractual conditions, and the encouragement of free competition - principles still relevant in the contemporary legal framework.

The new Electronic Procurement System (EPP) does not follow the same path with the legal framework, not foreseeing all legal situations and circumstances, and violating the confidentiality of the procurement process, and the personal data of economic operators.

Given that the law, in this case, prevails over the system, while the system must follow the legal provisions, we believe that the SPE should be improved by moving at the same pace as the legal framework, since otherwise there would be difficulties and impossibility in finalizing the procedure of procurement, as well as in institutional public services.

Since draft laws for both procurements and right to information are in the stages of public consultation yet to be approved, we consider that, all the problems observed during the practical implementation of these laws but also the various studies carried out in this field, should be taken into account to make the necessary legal improvements.

Balancing the interests of economic operators, Contracting Authorities, and the public is essential for building a robust and efficient procurement system and legal framework that aligns with international standards and best practices.

Transparency and Efficiency in Procurement Procedures:

The primary objective of procurement procedures is to enhance efficiency and ensure the optimal use of public funds while maintaining the quality

of goods, works, and services. Transparency is crucial in achieving these goals. The integration of technology, particularly the Electronic Procurement System (SPE), has played a vital role in making information easily accessible to economic operators, fostering competition, promoting accountability and preventing favoritism. However, challenges persist, especially in the proper implementation of the system and adherence to legal provisions.

Dual Challenges in Procurement Processes:

The research highlights the dual challenges faced in procurement processes, emphasizing the delicate balance between safeguarding personal data and ensuring transparency. The controversy between the right to information and data confidentiality poses significant obstacles, necessitating careful consideration and legal alignment.

Confidentiality Dilemmas and Operator Rights:

The antagonism between data protection and transparency is evident in the dilemmas surrounding confidentiality. While economic operators have the right to withhold certain information through a confidentiality statement, it is essential to strike a balance to prevent misuse of this provision and ensure the integrity of the procurement process.

Legal Framework Misalignment and Technological Impact:

The study underscores the misalignment between the Electronic Procurement System and the legal framework, causing challenges in implementation. The impact of technology on procurement processes is profound, necessitating continuous legal adaptation to ensure compatibility and prevent hindrances in the finalization of procedures.

Need for Legislative Harmonization:

Legislative harmonization, particularly in personal data protection and the right to information, emerges as a critical need. Aligning national legislation with EU standards ensures that Albanian citizens benefit from the highest European standards, especially in the era of increased digital data processing.

Recommendations for Improvement:

The research proposes recommendations for addressing the identified challenges. This includes enhancing the legal framework to better accommodate the intersection of personal data protection and transparency, refining the Electronic Procurement System to align with legal provisions, and promoting a more coherent and synchronized approach to legislation. The drafting of laws should aim to minimize conflicts, enhance public trust, and foster transparency while addressing emerging challenges in the digital age.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Civil Code of the Republic of Albania.
2. Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Albania.
3. Administrative Procedure Code of the Republic of Albania.
4. Law No. 162 dated 23.12.2020 “On Public Procurement”.
5. DCM No. 285, dated 19.05.2021 “On the Approval of Public Procurement Rules”.
6. Law No. 49/2012 “On administrative courts and adjudication of administrative disputes”.
7. Decision of the Public Procurement Commission No. 655/2018 dated 04.10.2018.
8. Toçi, V. (1974) “Nderhyrja e kapitalit të huaj në Shqipëri dhe qëndrimi i qarqeve demokratike 1921-1925, Akademia e Shkencave e RPSH, Instituti i Historisë”. Tiranë: Mihal Duri.
9. Bano, Elona - Ahmeti, E. (2022) “E Drejta e Koncesioneve dhe e Partneritetit Publik Privat”. Tiranë: Morava.

APPLYING STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES TO CYBER SECURITY IN THE AGE OF BIG DATA

Dr. Gentian HOXHALLI

Faculty of Defence and Security, AAF

ABSTRACT

At a time when the Internet and information technology are widely used in all aspects of modern life, cyber security has become a major challenge for organizations and individuals. With the increase in the amount of data produced and collected digitally, as well as the development of new technologies such as big data, there is a need for new and sophisticated enterprises to prevent cyber-attacks and identify potential risks. This article analyses the application of statistical techniques in cyber security, with a particular interest in the context of big data. The peculiar challenges of cybersecurity in the big data era are outlined, including the large amount of data, the changing speed of information, and the complex interactions between network elements.

The article explores statistical techniques employed in cyber security for risk analysis and detection. It encompasses diverse statistical modeling methods, including logistic regression, clustering, natural language processing, and risk-scoring analysis. Additionally, it delves into advanced machine learning approaches, leveraging Deep Learning and Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms to discern common patterns and anomalies in the continuous stream of cybersecurity data. The potential advantages of incorporating statistics into cyber security encompass early risk detection, thwarting sophisticated attacks, and enhancing the capability to pre-empt future threats in cyber environments.

Keywords: Statistical models, cyber security, Big Data, Machine Learning (ML), Artificial Intelligence (AI)

INTRODUCTION

Cyber security for network systems has been the research focus for more than three decades since the use of a wide range of network applications (Jang-Jaccard & Nepal, 2014). Such systems are vulnerable to attacks that aspire to disrupt or damage the functionality of the system whose main target is to jeopardize information security.

In today's world, cyber security is a critical issue closely related to the development of information technology and the increased usage of the Internet. Over time, the threat of cyber-attacks has grown and evolved in sophisticated ways, bringing new challenges to organizations and individuals. In this context, the application of statistical techniques has emerged as an effective tool to prevent, identify, and combat cyber-attacks in the era of Big Data.

The era of Big Data is a period characterized by the large amount of data produced and collected by information systems. Therefore, there is a need for statistical data-driven approaches and analysis of the complex data generated in multi-level network monitoring (Collins, 2017; F. Zhang et al., 2019). With the exponential increase in the use of digital technologies and social networks, the data generated has reached high numbers. An essential source of data is the operating systems of networked cars. Recently, the cybersecurity industry has introduced new capabilities to capture this data, known as endpoint detection and response (EDR) technology (Hassan et al., 2020). EDR involves adding monitoring software running on operating systems that measure various telemetry of security interest and uploads this data to either an On-Premise server or the cloud for analysis.

In this context, statistical techniques provide powerful tools to analyse and interpret large amounts of cybersecurity data. Using logistic regression analysis, cluster analysis, natural language translation, and risk ranking analysis can help identify attack patterns, predict trends, and create a preventive and safe system. The growth in recent years of Internet-connected devices and operational technologies has caused a dramatic increase in the amount of data collected, making more acute the need for automated and scalable statistical methods. In addition, there is an increase in the number of new measurement sensors being deployed in networks, and with the new data sources that capture network behaviours that were previously unmonitored.¹

In addition, sophisticated machine learning methods, such as *deep learning* algorithms and artificial intelligence, have fundamentally influenced the development of cyber security in the era of Big Data. These techniques allow

¹ <https://hdr.mitpress.mit.edu/pub/koyzu1te/release/1>

risk pattern recognition and anomaly identification, improving systems' ability to prevent attacks and protect critical data.

This scientific article aims to examine the application of statistical techniques in cyber security in the age of Big Data. We will analyse the specific challenges of this field, as well as the advances and opportunities that statistical techniques offer to prevent cyberattacks, detect risk, and stop attacks effectively. We will also examine the benefits of using sophisticated machine learning and artificial intelligence methods in cyber security implementation.

This article aims to provide a broad overview of the role and importance of statistical techniques in cyber security in the era of Big Data. We will shed light on methods used to analyse and predict cyber-attack trends, identify common patterns and anomalies in security data, and improve prevention systems.

DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE LAST DECADE IN THE FIELD OF CYBER SECURITY

Cybersecurity has become a vital challenge for organizations and individuals over the past decade. Rapid technological developments and increased use of the Internet have brought many advantages, but, on the other side, they have also opened the door to sophisticated cyber-attacks.

One of the main trends is the increase in sophisticated cyber-attacks. Hackers have developed advanced methods to breach security systems and access the computer networks of various organizations. One such example is the *WannaCry* ransomware attack that occurred in 2017². This attack by a group of hackers employed a known vulnerability in Windows systems and demanded payment for the recovery of the locked data. The attack spread globally demonstrating this way that even important organizations can be exposed to such risks.

Another trend is the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and its greater use in the field of cyber security. AI can be used to identify and predict cyber-attacks, detect anomalies, and respond to them in real-time. An example of this is the use of Machine learning technology to detect phishing attacks and help build risk prediction models. These developments are important to withstand sophisticated attacks and increase the resilience of cyber systems. Machine learning and Deep learning have been applied to combine and benefit from a variety of data sources (Sarker et al., 2020), for malware detection and prevention, (Dua & Du, 2011; Mahmood & Afzal, 2013). Many of these algorithms are monitored and used to extract features about the data that allow

² https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/FactSheets/NCCIC%20ICS_FactSheet_WannaCry_Ransomware_S508C.pdf

them to identify new instances of malware. ML has had an impact on user-level security services, for example, Gmail and Yahoo's spam filters incorporate ML methods that achieve very high detection accuracy (Dada et al., 2019). This suggests that ML can be used to similarly improve traditional security methods.

Another aspect to take into account is the increase in awareness and legal regulation of cyber security issues. States and international organizations have made efforts to regulate and build legal structures to protect critical infrastructures and punish cyber attackers. For example, in the European Union in 2018 came into force the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which enforces high standards for the protection of personal data and obliges organizations to take the necessary measures to prevent the violation of cyber security.

Another example of the advances in the field of cyber security is the increase in the awareness of users about cyber risks. Individuals and organizations are taking the necessary steps to protect their information and minimize the risk of cyber-attacks. The creation of company security policies, user training, and the use of security tools such as firewalls and antivirus are some of the measures taken to improve cyber security. Building effective defenses should include mechanisms driven by data analysis combined with stochastic modeling, dynamic graphs, and statistical control concepts (Neil et al., 2013; Turcotte et al., 2018).

Also, the importance of international cooperation in the fight against cyber-attacks has been pointed out. Many countries and organizations have tried to build agreements and cooperation mechanisms to share information and face cyber security challenges globally. An example of this is the creation of CERT (Computer Emergency Response Teams) and similar organizations at national and international levels to respond to attacks and protect cyber networks. Although progress has been made in the field of cyber security during this decade, the challenges continue to grow. Hacking and cyber-attacks continue to evolve and adapt to new technological developments. Therefore, organizations and individuals must keep their eyes open and be prepared to face these challenges effectively.

In conclusion, cyber security has gone through major changes in this decade. The sophisticated cyber-attacks, the use of artificial intelligence, awareness and legal regulation, the increased user awareness, and the international cooperation are some of the key developments that have influenced this field. However, challenges continue to exist and therefore it is necessary to keep investing in cyber security to prevent attacks and maintain the integrity of

cyber systems in the Age of Big Data. A continued focus on cyber security technology innovation and the use of statistical techniques has the potential to help prevent, detect, and respond to cyber-attacks more effectively.

SOME STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED IN THE FIELD OF CYBER SECURITY TO ANALYSE THE RISK OF CYBER-ATTACKS

In recent research, emphasis has been placed on the use of statistical techniques to analyse and model cybersecurity data in the Age of Big Data. For instance, the analysis of remote events and insider events has facilitated the identification of statistical models for the detection of suspicious and anomalous activities in cyber networks. The use of supported ML and DL algorithms to detect unusual patterns and identify potential attacks has been a very promising area of scientific research in this regard. Furthermore, the use of statistical techniques for network traffic analysis has been another crucial aspect in the field of cyber security. Analysis of traffic patterns, identification of data usage (packet sniffing), and detection of suspicious activities are some of the challenges that can be addressed through statistical techniques. The application of clustering techniques and community network analysis in cybernetic networks can aid in identifying resource misuse commitment and preventing massive attacks. The development of advanced statistical models and the use of advanced data analysis techniques are bringing advancements in this field. The figure below illustrates the trend of publications and scientific research related to the use of machine learning ML in the field of cyber security based on one of the most important international scientific databases ELSEVIER (Scopus). The following figure indicates that over the past decade, there is a noticeable increase in the use of ML and DL techniques in the field of security as well as an increase in scientific research in this direction.

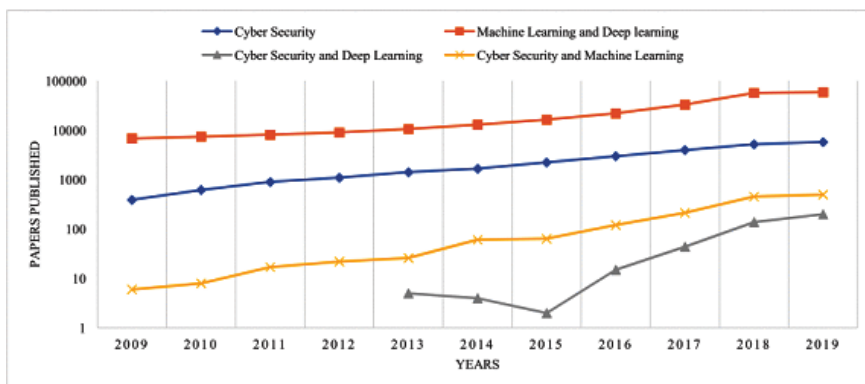


Figure 1- ML and Cyber Security research trend over the years

Source: Scopus

Research indicates that there are various approaches to security-related ML applications, including ML and Game Theory models for spam filtering in communication networks (C. Wang et al., 2021); statistical methods for anomaly detection that can reveal subtle changes in network data (Lazarevic et al., 2003); transfer learning for detecting novel network attacks (Zhao et al., 2019); and semi-supervised methods that can learn from network data (Hou et al., 2018). It has been made evident that ML algorithms are particularly vulnerable to attacks during the training and testing phases, as discussed by authors (Goodfellow et al., 2015), (Y. Zhou et al., 2012). High-dimensional deep neural networks are particularly vulnerable, for instance, Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) classifiers can be compromised by attackers applying simple “zeroth-order optimization” (ZOO) methods (P.-Y. Chen et al., 2017) to defeat the classifier. In the same line of thought, the authors continue the discussion by highlighting the advances in statistical methods for anomaly detection that have the potential to enhance enterprise system security. Cybersecurity attacks that weaken the network infrastructure of many enterprise organizations are on the rise and becoming increasingly sophisticated and threatening (Sanger, 2018).

Statistical techniques have been successfully employed in the field of cyber security to analyse and detect unconventional patterns, identify suspicious activities, and prevent cyber-attacks. Some of the most commonly used statistical techniques include:

1. Remote Events Analysis: This technique focuses on identifying statistical patterns for detecting suspicious and anomalous activities in cyber networks. By analysing remote events, such as undisclosed attempts to infiltrate the network, efforts to discover vulnerabilities, or direct real-time attacks, unconventional patterns indicative of cyber-attacks can be discovered.
2. Network Traffic Analysis: This constitutes a pivotal aspect of cybersecurity. The utilization of statistical techniques to analyse and model network traffic can assist in identifying data misuse, detecting potential attacks, and preventing suspicious behaviours. This involves techniques such as clustering and community analysis within the network to identify the misuse of network resources and massive attacks. Network analysis is categorized into three primary categories: a) signature-based which is predominantly utilized to detect known attacks while avoiding a large number of false alarm rates (FAR), b) anomaly-based which is used mainly to identify abnormal network and system behaviour, and c) hybrid based which is the combination of the above categories (a and b), to reduce the FAR for unknown attacks.
3. Risk Analysis: Statistical techniques are applied to evaluate the risk posed by cyber-attacks and to discern areas of sensitivity and exposure within cyber

systems. This encompasses the identification of potential vulnerabilities, an in-depth analysis of the plausible impact of attacks, and the determination of risk levels. Such information serves as a foundation for judicious decision-making aimed at enhancing cybersecurity measures and mitigating potential risks.

4. Attack Modeling and Prediction: The utilization of statistical techniques to model and predict cyber-attacks represents a significant challenge in the field of cybersecurity. Through the analysis of historical attack data and the application of advanced statistical models, it becomes feasible to formulate predictions regarding the anticipated types of attacks, their developmental patterns, and the necessary measures for defence against them.

These are just a few of the statistical techniques used in the field of cybersecurity. Moving forward, several other techniques include:

1. Data Visualization Analysis: The application of data visualization techniques can aid in uncovering hidden and unexpected patterns in cybersecurity data. Presenting data in graphical and visual formats makes it easier to identify trends, correlations, and anomalies in network activity.

2. Growth Analysis: This technique is employed to identify the growth of risk in cyber systems and predict potential future attacks. By analyzing the history of the attack growth and using statistical models, sensitive areas can be identified, and responses to these escalations can be enhanced.

3. Threat Landscape Modeling: The utilization of statistical techniques to model the threat landscape in the field of cybersecurity is a crucial approach. By analyzing risk data collected from various sources, such as CERT (Computer Emergency Response Teams), security reports, and international cyber security organizations, statistical models of the threat landscape can be developed to predict potential attacks and implement preventive measures.

4. Data Regularity Analysis: This methodology is employed to discern anomalous and suspicious activities within cybersecurity data. By meticulously analysing the regularity of data, it becomes feasible to pinpoint patterns and commonplace models of network activity. Any deviation from established data regularity is construed as potentially suspicious activity, warranting the implementation of requisite measures to address the situation.

These are just a few of the most widely used statistical techniques in cybersecurity. Their application, in conjunction with other cybersecurity technologies and big data analysis, provides an advanced approach to detect, prevent, and address cyber attacks. These techniques aid in identifying unconventional and suspicious patterns in network activity, predicting potential attacks, and enhancing cybersecurity activity. However, it is crucial

to emphasize that the challenges in the field of cybersecurity are continually evolving, necessitating advanced techniques to appropriately address them.

An additional technique employed in the realm of cybersecurity is the analysis of log data. This intricate process entails utilizing statistical methodologies to discern suspicious patterns, identify illegitimate entry attempts, or detect anomalous activities by scrutinizing the data recorded in system logs. The application of data regularity analysis and sophisticated anomaly detection algorithms plays a pivotal role in not only pinpointing potential cyber threats but also facilitating immediate and effective responses to counteract them.

SOME MEASURES FOR PREVENTING CYBERSECURITY ATTACKS

More and more cyber organizations are using statistical techniques to meet their cyber security goals. Their utilization helps enhance detection capabilities, uncover new attack vectors, and address cybersecurity challenges more effectively. However, it is important to understand that statistical techniques are just one tool to support cyber security and that to achieve success, it is necessary to combine them with other technologies and with a holistic approach within an integrated cyber security strategy. Thus, the use of statistical techniques should be complemented by other security measures such as:

1. **Network monitoring:** A consistent network monitoring system plays a pivotal role in discerning suspicious activities and potential cyber threats. This encompasses the utilization of cutting-edge networks, monitoring technologies, meticulous analysis of network traffic, and prompt identification of unforeseen alterations in traffic dynamics.
2. **Identification and Authentication Systems:** The utilization of secure identification and authentication systems proves instrumental in thwarting illegitimate access to systems and fortifying the protection of sensitive information. These systems entail the verification of user identities, the incorporation of dual-factor authentication measures, and the deployment of encryption technologies to ensure the safeguarding of data.
3. **Protection of operating systems:** Ensuring the security of operating systems and crafting pertinent security policies are paramount to preventing unauthorized access and safeguarding their integrity and availability. This entails the utilization of system security tools such as firewalls, antivirus software, and intrusion detection systems.
4. **Training and Awareness of Personnel:** A critical aspect of cybersecurity is the awareness and training of personnel. The application of statistical techniques to identify overall cybersecurity risks can be employed to develop

tailored training and awareness programs for staff, informing them about attack methods and secure practices.

The utilization of information and communication technology, coupled with the implementation of best security practices, is also crucial in effectively addressing cybersecurity challenges.

THE FUTURE OF STATISTICAL MODEL APPLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF CYBERSECURITY

The techniques for cybersecurity are expected to continue evolving in the future, adapting to new challenges in the field and better-addressing cybersecurity risks. Some potential developments in these techniques include:

- a. **Enhanced Integration of AI and ML:** Ongoing development is expected to involve the increased utilization of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to enhance the capability of cybersecurity systems in identifying, preventing, and responding to cyber-attacks. These technologies can be employed to discover new attack patterns, automate security processes, and detect suspicious activities more quickly and with fewer errors.
- b. **Advancement of Big Data Analysis Techniques:** With the increasing volume of data in the field of cybersecurity, there is a need for the development of advanced big data analysis techniques to identify new patterns and trends in cyber-attacks. This involves the utilization of big data analysis technologies such as Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) environments and specialized big data analysis platforms.
- c. **Security of Artificial Intelligence and ML:** While artificial intelligence and machine learning have been employed to enhance cybersecurity, it is crucial to develop specialized techniques to ensure the security of these technologies themselves. This includes the development of security verification methods for artificial intelligence and machine learning models to prevent their manipulation and ensure their reliability and safety in cyber environments.
- d. **Use of context analysis techniques (data mining):** As cyber-attacks continue to evolve, employing context analysis techniques becomes crucial for gaining a deeper understanding of attackers' methods and identifying potential risks. This entails analyzing the context of cybersecurity data, including system information, user activities, and network traffic data. By doing so, it becomes possible to discern the strategies employed by attackers and detect potential threats more effectively.
- e. **Development of computer vision analysis techniques:** Computer vision

analysis can be employed to automatically identify unexpected changes in computer systems or detect sophisticated cyber-attacks. This involves utilizing advanced computer vision technologies, such as anomaly detection or identifying suspicious activities through the analysis of images and videos from computer systems.

- f. Use of blockchain technologies: Blockchain technology is a security technique that can be employed in the field of cybersecurity to safeguard data and transactions from manipulation, ensuring transparency and accountability. The use of blockchain can aid in identity and authentication security, traffic data monitoring, and the development of advanced security systems.

These are just a few of the possible developments in cybersecurity techniques for the future. As a rapidly changing field, it is essential to monitor new advancements in technology and methodologies to better adapt to the emerging challenges and risks in the cyber world.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the application of statistical techniques in cybersecurity in the era of big data has brought about significant changes in the field of cybersecurity. These techniques provide a powerful means for identifying anomalies, detecting risks, and enhancing cybersecurity defense.

With the increase in the volume of data generated by devices, networks, and applications in the digital world, manually managing and analyzing all this information has become impossible. This is where statistical techniques come into play, used to identify common patterns, detect unexpected changes, and identify potential risks.

Statistical techniques such as event flow analysis, time series analysis, traffic data modeling, and anomaly detection methods have shown promising results in detecting cyber-attacks, identifying internal threats, and improving security performance. However, it is important to emphasize that challenges in cybersecurity continue to grow, necessitating ongoing developments in statistical techniques. The need for incorporating artificial intelligence, big data analysis, context analysis techniques, and the use of Blockchain technologies are just a few aspects that should be considered in the future.

To ensure manageable security in the era of big data, organizations need to invest in appropriate infrastructure and sufficient resources to implement statistical techniques in the field of cybersecurity.

In conclusion, the use of statistical techniques in cybersecurity in the era of big data brings a qualitative shift in how cyber-attacks can be identified and prevented. This integration between statistics and cybersecurity will continue

to evolve and improve to address future cybersecurity challenges and protect digital infrastructures from threats.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Chen, P.-Y., Zhang, H., Sharma, Y., Yi, J., & Hsieh, C.-J. (2017). Zoo: Zeroth order optimization based black-box attacks to deep neural networks without training substitute models.
2. In Proceedings of the 10th ACM Workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Security (pp. 15–26). Association for Computing Machinery.<https://doi.org/10.1145/3128572.3140448>
3. Collins, M. (2017). Network security through data analysis: From data to action (2nd ed.). O'Reilly Media.
4. Dada, EG, Bassi, JS, Chiroma, H., Abdulhamid, SM, Adetunmbi, AO, & Ajibuwa, OE (2019). Machine learning for email spam filtering: Review, approaches and open research problems. *Heliyon*, 5(6), Article e01802. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e01802>
5. Dua, S., & Du, X. (2011). Data mining and machine learning in cybersecurity. Auerbach Publications.<https://doi.org/10.1201/b10867>
6. Goodfellow, IJ, Shlens, J., & Szegedy, C. (2015, May 9). Explaining and harnessing adversarial examples. Third International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR 2015), San Diego, CA, United States. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1412.6572>
7. Hassan, WU, Bates, A., & Marino, D. (2020). Tactical provenance analysis for endpoint detection and response systems. In 2020 IEEE Symposium on Security and Privacy (pp. 1172–1189). IEEE.<https://doi.org/10.1109/SP40000.2020.00096>
8. Hou, E., Sricharan, K., & Hero, AO (2018). Latent Laplacian maximum entropy discrimination for detection of high-utility anomalies. *IEEE Transactions on Information Forensics and Security*, 13(6), 1446–1459. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TIFS.2018.2790580>
9. J. Raiyn, “A survey of cyber attack detection strategies”, *Int. J. Secur. Appl.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 247-256, Jan. 2014.
10. Jang-Jaccard, J., & Nepal, S. (2014). A survey of emerging threats in cybersecurity. *Journal of Computer and System Sciences*, 80(5), 973–993. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcss.2014.02.005>
11. Lazarevic, A., Ertoz, L., Kumar, V., Ozgur, A., & Srivastava, J. (2003). A comparative study of anomaly detection schemes in network intrusion

- detection. In D. Barbara & C. Kamath (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 2003 SIAM International Conference on Data Mining* (pp. 25–36). Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics. <https://doi.org/10.1137/1.9781611972733.3>
12. Neil, J., Uphoff, B., Hash, C., & Storlie, C. (2013). Towards improved detection of attackers in computer networks: New edges, fast updating, and host agents. In *2013 6th International Symposium on Resilient Control Systems (ISRCS)* (pp. 218–224). IEEE. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISRCS.2013.6623779>
 13. Sanger, DE (2018). *War, sabotage, and fear in the cyber age*. Random House.
 14. Sarker, IH, Kayes, A., Badsha, S., Alqahtani, H., Watters, P., & Ng, A. (2020). Cybersecurity data science: An overview from machine learning perspective. *Journal of Big data*, 7(1), Article 41. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40537-020-00318-5>
 15. Turcotte, M., Kent, A., & Hash, C. (2018). Unified host and network data set. In PR-D. Nick Heard Niall Adams & M. Turcotte (Eds.), *Data science for cyber-security* (pp. 1–22). World Scientific. https://doi.org/10.1142/9781786345646_001
 16. Wang, C., Zhang, D., Huang, S., Li, X., & Ding, L. (2021). Crafting adversarial email content against machine learning based spam email detection. In *Proceedings of the 2021 International Symposium on Advanced Security on Software and Systems* (pp. 23–28). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3457340.3458302>
 17. Zhang, F., Kodituwakku, HADE, Hines, JW, & Coble, J. (2019). Multilayer data-driven cyber-attack detection system for industrial control systems based on network, system, and process data. *IEEE Transactions on Industrial Informatics*, 15(7), 4362–4369. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TII.2019.2891261>
 18. Zhao, J., Shetty, S., Pan, JW, Kamhoua, C., & Kwiat, K. (2019). Transfer learning for detecting unknown network attacks. *EURASIP Journal on Information Security*, 2019(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13635-019-0084-4>
 19. Zhou, Y., Kantarcioglu, M., Thuraisingham, B., & Xi, B. (2012). Adversarial support vector machine learning. In *Proceedings of the 18th ACM SIGKDD international conference on Knowledge discovery and data mining* (pp. 1059–1067). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2339530.2339697>



THIRD RUBRIC

SECURITY AND DEFENSE ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENTS

NATO-EU MEMBERSHIP OF THE “NEW EUROPE” STATES, THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE RUSSIAN HYBRID THREAT

Colonel Msc. Hysni GJERGJI

Colonel Msc. David RROKU

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

ABSTRACT

The common political, economic, and military interests of Russia with Eastern Europe are traditional, old, and somewhat nostalgic, while Moscow's connection with Belgrade makes them not only supportive but also “necessary” for each other. The year 2023 started with increased tension in the situation in the assembly of Serbia and Kosovo, accompanied by Vučić's absurd request to deploy military troops to Kosovar territory, cynically using UN resolution 1244¹. The 77th session of the UN, on September 23rd to 25th, 2022, unanimously condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine, but opposed to this spirit, an agreement in the field of foreign policy was signed between Serbia and Russia². Contrary to all European states condemning the Russian aggression, there was again the signing of agreements between the two foreign ministers of Serbia and Russia in New York. Until May 24, 2022, opinions on Kosovo and its perspective were mentioned 445 times on the official website

¹ The request is based on Resolution 1244, of June 10, 1999, in chapter 2 point 6 it states that “YAF troops may return up to several hundred soldiers, to protect the lives and religious institutions of endangered SerSU in Kosovo”.

² US Ambassador Christopher Hill; September 26, 2022 “no one would have to sign anything with Russia”.

of the Russian Foreign Ministry. This indicates the growing interest of Moscow's policy for Europe and the Balkans³ in general, but also for Albanians in particular. In international meetings, Putin cites the case of Kosovo as an argument to accuse NATO of an "aggressive" and unilateral power that has attacked Belgrade and favored Pristina⁴. The issue of Kosovo's independence is being frequently used in diplomatic meetings between Lavrov and Putin, to equate this issue with the independence of Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson; whose union with "Mother Russia", Moscow recognized on September 30, 2022.

INTRODUCTION

Naturally, the events occurring along the eastern borders of the Alliance exert an influence on the Balkans. In this region, factors such as ethnic divisions, fragile democratic systems, ongoing political crises, and the detrimental impact of "proxy" states stand out as primary and significant contributors to destabilization and the instigation of conflicts.⁵

Russia aims to sabotage the Atlantic and European cohesion in the states that aspire to the EU and NATO, in the "new Europe" and the Balkans, as their democratization directly endangers the autocratic power of Putin. "Russia cannot compete with ideals, democratic ideas, or soft power, which it has never applied on its territory. That is why Moscow attacks those countries that lean towards the West; attacks the Western democratic values of the Balkans and always invests in the ideological and religious ties that have kept this region connected to the past - writes Professor Shaban Murati in "Rusët po vijnë".

Balkan, European, and global security researchers assess that the Serbia-Kosovo conflict, Putin's decoration on January 9, 2023, by Dodik, the nationalist, divisive, and anti-Western movements in the RMV, political crises involving the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, the arming of Serbia by Russia and China, the sabotage of European energy infrastructure using cyber and conventional weapons, energy, and food crises into 2023, are all actions sponsored, supported, and carried out in the interest of Russia.

The Kremlin is taking action to prevent Belgrade from getting too close to Western institutions. One of these actions is the campaign of de-recognition, which aims to hinder the European integration of Kosovo. Kosovo officially

³ Edi Rama for "Der Spiegel", September 2, 2022; "Putin is doing everything to create a new fuse of conflict in the Balkans".

⁴ Olaf Scholz meeting with President Putin on February 15, 2022, repeats the Russian thesis about NATO as a threat to Russia, as this also happened in Belgrade in 1999.

⁵ Niko Peleshi; Defense Directive for 2023

submitted its application for membership in the EU on December 12. In many ways, the Serbian state seems to be modeled after the Russian Federation, with a superficial appearance of opposition and a separation between church and state. In January 2023, a notorious group called VAGNER began to appear on murals in Belgrade, with the intention of recruiting young Serbians to join the Russian army.

SERBIA'S "YUGOSLAVIC" DREAM, RUSSIAN LONG-TERM PROJECT

Ukraine is Putin's neo-Soviet dream, as its independence and Western orientation undermine Russia's claims to its history, identity, culture, and territory. Separatists in the four Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia announced elections to be held from September 23 to 27, 2022, which were false, and the West has not recognized the results. The introduction of four republics under the state border of Russia was done to legitimize the use of force and not allow other NATO states to intervene to liberate them. If this were to happen, this would be called aggression against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation, which would justify the most likely use of nuclear weapons. The war in Ukraine has shown that the target is not only Ukraine, but all European values are more fragile and vulnerable in the Western Balkans⁶. The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia remain projects where Russian nationalism along with Serbian nationalism nurtures and tries to grow supporters through nostalgic⁷ and "useful idiots"⁸. Moscow has been working to destabilize the Balkans for years, not because it wants to conquer it, but to distract the West's attention from what is happening in Ukraine, especially now.⁹ Russia's interest in the Balkans is not related to the Balkans itself, but to the request to have an open door in Europe, and the Balkans is one of the easiest or even the only ways to achieve this objective.

The relationship between Russia and Serbia is very contradictory and complex, with 200 thousands of Russians having left the war and taken refuge in Serbia to protest against the war in Ukraine and Vladimir Putin. Surprisingly, on the other hand, Serbs in Serbia protested in favor of Putin. This is believed to have

⁶ Labor MP Fleur Anderson, 27 April 2022; "The war in Ukraine confirms that Putin intends to destabilize the Balkans in the same way."

⁷ On June 24, 2020, the Russian ambassador in Tirana Afanasov, on behalf of Putin, decorated 20 "veterans", former soldiers on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the victory of World War II; inspite of the fact that most of them had never participated in this war.

⁸ The term "useful idiot" that characterized Lenin has long been in circulation to describe naive revolutionary supporters, with no reason for SU.

⁹ Ivana Stradner, researcher at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracy in an interview with "Free Europe" Radio on August 12, 2022.

come about as a result of Russian disinformation about the war, its reasons, and the real situation in Russia¹⁰. In Serbia, the official decision is still in force, confirming the potential move of Russia to join Serbia. This is an old Serbian state project announced on April 12, 1999, with the official request of Yugoslavia being submitted to President Yeltsin with the signature of President Milosevic. The decision of the Serbian government and parliament to unite with Russia, as well as the resolution of the Russian parliament approving the union of the two states, are still valid legal acts to this day. They have not been repealed by any Serbian government or parliament, even after Milosevic's departure. The Russian Duma has not repealed its resolution on the union of Serbia with Russia, and the official documents of the two states regarding the union are still in effect. A new referendum is suggested to be organized in Serbia inquiring people about the unification. "The union of Serbia with Russia is not a decision of Vučić, but of the people. This is determined by the people through a referendum, and it is an expression of their will so that no one can claim that it is an invasion, occupation, or overthrow¹¹". The project of joining Serbia with Russia is a very dangerous plan for the Balkans, NATO, and the EU. It would be a source of conflict for NATO states in the Balkans because it would bring Russia to the borders of all Balkan and NATO member states. The Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities is expected to include ten municipalities, such as North Mitrovica, Klokot, Partesh, Ranilug, Gračanica, Zvečan, Zubin Potok, Novobërde, Leposavic and Štërpce. Together with Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina, these municipalities are likely to cause tensions in the Balkans, controlled by Moscow.

Russia doesn't need to bring tanks to Washington or Brussels to destabilize the West. It is enough to create new focal points of attention that can completely shift focus away from other actions. This is not only about Kosovo¹². Serbia, for its part, declares Croatia, B&H, Albania, and the state of Kosovo as potentially enemy states in its national security strategy. Serbia, on its part, identifies Croatia, B&H, Albania, and the state of Kosovo as potentially hostile states in its national security strategy. Belgrade responded strongly by deploying massing troops on the Kosovo border, including T-72 tanks, "Lazar" 3 armored vehicles, and BOV M16 MILOŠ multipurpose combat vehicles. Serbia has not distanced itself from the legacy of Milosevic's time, and democracy was a short-lived period in Serbia. The current Prime Minister not only failed to distance himself but also stated in the Serbian Parliament

¹⁰ VOA, February 6, 2023

¹¹ Statement by the Deputy Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Duma, Aleksey Chepa, on December 12, 2022.

¹² Ivana Stradner, research fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington statement to Radio Free Europe, December 13, 2022.

on February 4, 2023, that “Albin Kurti should not have been released from Serbian prisons.”

Serbia, through its minorities, aims to use the Serbian Republic in Bosnia, Montenegro, and the north of Kosovo, not as a bridge of cooperation, but to turn it into a sphere of influence, just as Russia wants it with Belarus and Ukraine. “The Kremlin poses a danger to the stability of the region and, in addition to Ukraine, it also affects the Western Balkans. There are two sensitive points in the region, the Republic of Serbia and the north of the Republic of Kosovo, where the integrity of these countries is being attempted to be violated. Therefore, NATO and the European Union should pay attention¹³”.

Vučić has expressed more than once that he dreams of personal glory as a unifier of “the lands of the South Slavs.” Putin nurtures and manipulates him for Russia’s geopolitical purposes, especially after the military attack on Kyiv. Vučić remains indebted to Moscow for blocking Kosovo’s entry into the United Nations. On the other hand, Serbia’s economic dependence on Russia is expanding, and Belgrade recently joined the new Russian natural gas connection through Bulgaria and Turkey, with preferential prices. Serbia, since it borders only NATO member countries, has no reason to arm itself, except as a vanguard sub-department of Russian reconnaissance in the Balkans.

The Russian-Serbian “humanitarian center” near the border with Kosovo serves as a facility for collecting information and conducting special operations for Moscow. The foreign minister of Serbia has informed Moscow that they will no longer remain militarily neutral and will instead collaborate with the CSTO¹⁴ military organization to counter NATO. Their cooperation now extends to targeting political opponents, with Moscow establishing a secret surveillance center in Belgrade to track and target Putin’s opposition in Russia. The Serbian Interior Minister, Vulin, provides information to the Russian-Serbian Joint Center of the State Secretary for National Security of Russia, Nikolai Patrushev, and the BIA¹⁵ and of the Russian-Serbian Joint Center of State Secretary for National Security of Russia Nikolai Patrushev, which led to the arrest of Russian opposition activist Andrei Pivovarov¹⁶.

¹³ From the speech of the president of RMVPendarovski on January 17, 2023 as part of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

¹⁴ Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO has actually 6 members: Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

¹⁵ BIA, the Serbian secret service (in Serbian: Bezbednosno-informativna agencija, kyrill Безбедносно-информативна агенција, БИА).

¹⁶ On January 12, 2022, the MEP ViolaVon Cramon reacted regarding the actions of Serbia to intercept the Russian opposition in Belgrade and the delivery of this secret material to the Russian authorities in the Kremlin.

Leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Dodik, receives “power” from the support of Moscow and Belgrade at the same time. The parade with troops and military vehicles in Sarajevo in January 2023 is a precedent, which can be repeated in the case of Kosovo. The Zajednica community¹⁷ may face a resurgence of old conflicts, and even the possibility of war, in Kosovo tomorrow due to the presence of an autonomous Serbian province within the territory. The withdrawal of the Serbian list from the Kosovo parliament, as well as the protests that took place in the Serbian parliament in early February 2023, have one specific objective: to reject the Franco-German plan for resolving the crisis and maintain a course of action aligned with the situation in Ukraine.

METHODS AND WEAPONS OF RUSSIAN WAR

The Cold War between Russia and the West has never stopped, and the main weapons of this war are hybrid weapons of disinformation, sabotaging, and buying political leaders. These weapons aim to take active measures to weaken the West, sow divisions of all kinds between the international community and the NATO alliance, and create discord among them. The ultimate goal is to weaken the US and NATO and make them appear untrustworthy in the eyes of the public.

“It is not so much the military ability of the commanders that determines the outcome of the war, but the will of the peoples involved in this war. Victory does not and will never depend on position, weaponry, or troop numbers. It depends on the feeling that boils in my heart, in your heart, and in the hearts of everyone who takes part in this war”¹⁸. Knowing this fate for his unjust war, Putin is trying, by all means, to influence other European states with “hybrid” and “non-linear” war methods. Russia does not have a presence with military troops in “New Europe”, but it has developed and continues to develop capacities to wage a “hybrid war” through intelligence against the influence of the West in the region, as well as the NATO and EU membership of these states.

“Old Europe” or Western Europe has been defined as an enemy organization of Russia. This reached its peak on November 24, 2022, when the European Parliament was hit by a cyberattack just a few hours after the EP had declared Russia as a state that supports terrorism. This declaration was based on the accumulated facts in Ukraine, where Russia was accused of killing civilians and launching attacks against schools, hospitals, and civilian infrastructure in general.

¹⁷ Union of Serbian municipalities (in Serbian: Заједница српских општина, ЗСО) approved as an association on 2.2.2023 by the Assembly of Kosovo, but not accepted by the Serbian opposition.

¹⁸ Leo Tolstoy, War and Peace, book 3, part two, chapter XXV.

The failure in the conventional war against Ukraine is expected to be compensated for by the increase of Russia's hybrid capabilities against NATO and its members. The war with 3S (espionage, subversion, sabotage) and 3D (Winter, Donations, and Grain) weapons is a military strategy that combines political, conventional, asymmetric, cyber, and economic warfare, as well as other influencing methods. These methods include fake news, diplomacy, financing, law, and foreign interference in elections¹⁹. Russian hybrid operations have had and continue to aim to create a climate of uncertainty and mistrust, to change and manipulate the public's perception of Western reality with ideology, politics, money, and leaders in favor of the Russian model.

There have been a series of attacks in "new Europe" reported by the media involving Russian officials from 1995 to 2023. Our region has long been an important scene of activity for the Kremlin's intelligence services with its hybrid tactics, aiming to hinder the efforts of the "new Europe" countries for NATO and EU membership. The denounced and repeated cases of espionage and sabotage have also affected several countries in the region that have close relations with Russia. However, diplomatically and in the eyes of the public, it seems as if everything is going normally.

Russian military intelligence officers in Europe have used embassies and diplomatic missions as their main base, but in most cases, they also work as businessmen, journalists, tourists, academics, and even students. Russian agents in Eastern Europe live and operate mostly "inconspicuously" on the outskirts of cities, disguising their mission well. Based on the analysis of Russian espionage activities, no country, enemy, or friend of Russia is left out.

Western media reports about a special unit, "29155", which conducts secret operations outside of Russia. These attacks are a combination of espionage, sabotage, and the execution of persons of interest to Russian intelligence or traitors within their ranks. Agents of "special unit 29155" travel using false identities, and their passports are changed every two years. These passports have serial numbers that are reserved solely for Russian GRU military intelligence agents²⁰.

Two more units, known as units 26165 and 74455²¹, have been mentioned

¹⁹ The combination of these weapons and tools constitutes the hybrid weapon which is defined as proposed for the first time by Frank Hoffman from the Institute of Political Studies, Arlington Virginia.

²⁰ Unit 29155 is reported to be subordinate to the Special Operations Forces Command, headquartered in Senezh, north of Moscow. The commander of this command is believed to be Major General Andrei Averyanov.

²¹ On April 14, 2021, US Special Counsel Robert Mueller has charged these entities in his investigation into cyberattacks on political parties in the United States in 2016.

in international investigations of cyberattacks. These units are also linked to cyberattack efforts against the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The cyberattack against the two agencies was done to destroy evidence in the investigation of Russia's use of nerve agents, including Novichok, which these agencies were developing. Despite using false identities, Western intelligence services have managed to identify some GRU agents who were implicated in the attack on Emilian Gebrev in Bulgaria, the attack on Sergei Skripal in Great Britain, the explosion of ammunition depots in the Czech Republic, and the coup attempt in Montenegro.

DENUNCIATIONS OF RUSSIAN HYBRID ATTACKS FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

In the past three years, according to media reports, it is evident that every European country has been subjected to Russia's hybrid attacks. International courts are increasingly recognizing this escalating threat. Thus, on September 21, 2021, the European Court of Human Rights delivered a decision emphasizing that Russia bears responsibility for the assassination of former security officer Aleksandar Litvinenko in London. Litvinenko tragically passed away in 2006 after ingesting tea that had been contaminated with poison, Polonium-210, a rare radioactive isotope. The problem in the world of espionage, subversion, and sabotage is that the concern lies not in what is exposed but rather in "what remains undisclosed and concealed for future use." It is speculated that the theoretical ratio of discovered to undiscovered agents stands at roughly 1 in 100, leaving us to ponder the presence and activities of countless others in proximity to us at this very moment.

- Poland's counterintelligence service apprehended a Polish national in December 2022 on suspicion of espionage for Russian secret services. In response, Poland expelled 45 Russian diplomats believed to be involved in espionage²². The Prosecutor General's Office of Poland has stated that a Russian citizen, at the behest of the Russian intelligence agency GRU, has been detained under suspicion of gathering information on Polish military units, logistics, and personnel. On April 12, 2022, the Prosecutor's Office in Gdansk announced that the suspect, whose identity had not been disclosed, had been placed in custody for three months, with limited information provided. Stanislav Zarin, spokesperson for the intelligence services, has revealed that the suspect was apprehended on April 6 and could face a sentence of up to ten years in prison if convicted of espionage.²³

²² Almir Terzic reports for Anadolu Agency (AA) on March 23, 2022.

²³ Radio Free Europe, April 12, 2022.

- Czech and regional media reported on October 16, 2020, that a significant explosion occurred at an ammunition depot in the Czech town of Vrbetice, resulting in the loss of two lives and substantial material damage. A similar explosion had previously taken place in December 2014, which also caused significant material damage. Following the incident, Prague immediately deported 18 GRU agents who held diplomatic passports and were part of the diplomatic staff at the Russian embassy in Prague, suspected of being involved in these attacks²⁴. On April 19, 2021, the Czech prosecutor's office added two additional GRU officers to the list of suspects: Alexander Mishkin (using the alias Alexander Petrov) and Colonel Anatoliy Chepiga (using the alias Ruslan Boshirov). They were implicated in the warehouse explosion of ammunition that occurred on October 16, 2014. Petrov and Boshirov entered the Czech Republic in 2014, using forged Moldovan and Tajikistan passports. Both individuals are also wanted by the United Kingdom in connection with the attempted assassination of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Julia.

In 2018, our country made the decision to expel two Russian diplomats as their actions were found to be inconsistent with their diplomatic status. This action demonstrated Albania's alignment with the United Kingdom, European Union, United States, and Canada, who jointly responded to the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Julia, in Salisbury, England. In January 2021, our country once again expelled a Russian diplomat for violating regulations aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. The Albanian government declared Aleksei Krivosheev *persona non grata* and requested that he leave the country within 72 hours, citing the diplomat's repeated violations of pandemic restrictions since April 2020. However, it is important to note that these are not isolated incidents, as Russia has consistently engaged in actions that run contrary to the Euro-Atlantic interests and aspirations of our country. On March 7, 2022, Russia²⁵ officially declared Albania as an enemy state, attributing this decision to Albania's official opposition and imposition of sanctions in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Croatia, under the leadership of Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, has officially announced its decision to express "solidarity with the United Kingdom" by declaring a Russian diplomat, who is facing espionage charges, as *persona non grata*.

²⁴ The explosion occurred on October 16, 2014, in a storage in the town of Vrbetice storing 50 tons of ammunition, and causing two casualties. Another explosion with 13 tons of ammunition occurred in the storage on December 3, 2014.

²⁵ Statement of Dimitry Medvedev; The Government of the Russian Federation has approved on March 7 a list of foreign states and territories that carry out unfriendly actions against Russia, its companies and citizens.

North Macedonia has declared a Russian diplomat as *persona non grata*, requiring them to depart within a few hours. The announcement was made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, which cited Article 9 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations as the basis for its decision. The Ministry stated that the diplomat from the Russian Federation embassy in North Macedonia was deemed *persona non grata* due to their behavior, which was not in accordance with the expected standards of conduct in Macedonia²⁶.

Romania has also announced its decision to declare a Russian diplomat as *persona non grata*. The diplomatic relations between Romania and Russia have been strained, particularly since the annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014. Over the past few years, there have been various instances of expelling Russian diplomats who were discovered to be employed by intelligence agencies. The Slovak Security Intelligence Service (SIS) has long been issuing warnings about the escalating activities of Russian secret services.

Slovakia's inclusion in the SIS²⁷ annual report on security highlights that the operations of Russian secret services within the country revolve around the recruitment of informants within state administration bodies, energy sectors, and security and defense forces. The report further indicates that Russian spies exhibit high levels of activity in Slovakia, employing advanced techniques in their endeavors²⁸.

In October 2016, a plot was uncovered in Montenegro involving Serbian ultranationalists and Russian intelligence officers. The objective of the plot was to overthrow the government of President Djukanovic. Relations between Montenegro and Russia have been strained due to a previous Russian-backed plot to assassinate Montenegro's prime minister, destabilize the government, and hinder the country's NATO membership. Montenegrin's prosecutors have revealed that the coup attempt during the 2016 parliamentary elections was carried out by two GRU officers using false identities. This was further confirmed by the case of Eduard Shishmakov, who had assumed the real identity of Eduard Shirokov²⁹ while in Serbia. In absentia, the Montenegrin Supreme Court has sentenced Eduard Shishmakov to 15 years in prison and Vladimir Popov to 12 years in prison for their roles as Russian agents in this plot.

²⁶ According to the media, on May 14, 2021, Russian Ambassador Sergei Bazdikin was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova to be informed that one of the diplomats in his embassy had been declared a person undesirable.

²⁷ Slovakia Intelligence service

²⁸ Statement by the Slovak Defense Minister, Jaroslav Nad, on August 11, 2020.

²⁹ Eduard Shirokov, had served as a military attaché at the Russian embassy in Poland and in 2014 was deported "non grata" from Poland, after he had tried to recruit a senior officer of the Polish army for espionage.

Kosovo declared on October 24, 2021 “non grata” 2 Russian diplomats who are accused of espionage, violation of national security, and exceeding their diplomatic status³⁰. On August 7, 2022, another person was declared “Persona non grata” by the Russian intelligence³¹.

PRODIGALS “SONS” OF MOSCOW

Serbia, along with Greece and Bulgaria, did not act like other countries in support and solidarity with Britain for the Skripal case. However, this stance didn’t last long, as the Serbs eventually came to realize, through direct experience, that the “Russian brothers” spared no one in their hybrid attacks.

- For many years, Greece has been acknowledged as a strategic partner of Russia, primarily due to the strong ties between the two countries’ Orthodox Churches. Nevertheless, this dynamic shifted in June 2018 when the Greek government made the consequential decision to expel two Russian diplomats and prohibit the entry of two others. These actions were taken in response to “serious allegations of subversion and espionage, which were believed to endanger Greece’s national security and undermine its integrity”. Their actions were believed to involve obtaining and disseminating sensitive information regarding national security. Russia’s attempts to disrupt important geopolitical matters in the region, particularly concerning the issue³² of naming Macedonia, were cited as the catalyst for these measures. This development occurred one month after the historic agreement between Macedonia and Greece, in which they settled on the name “North Maqedonise” following a 27-year-long dispute.

- Bulgaria was considered Moscow’s most reliable political ally in Eastern Europe during the Soviet era. However, even in later years, it continued to have several political parties that maintained pro-Russian stances. In the Skripal case, for the sake of this friendship, Sofia initially disagreed with the Western countries. This dilemma did not last long. In October 2019, the leader of the Bulgarian “Russophiles” movement, Nikolay Malinov, was arrested on charges of “espionage in favor of Russia”³³. Malinov was released on bail.

³⁰ Statement by the president of Kosovo, Vjosa Osmani, on October 22, 2021, about the two diplomats of the Russian Liaison Office in Kosovo, who have been declared non grata and ordered to leave the country.

³¹ On August 7, 2022, the “Reuters” agency, referring to the interior minister Svelca, writes that the Russian journalist Daria Aslamova, who works for Komsomolskaya Pravda, was detained for Russian espionage activity, on the northern border in Kosovo.

³² The signing of the historic agreement between the two countries on the issue of the name of North Macedonia, in the border region of Prespa, by the Greek and Macedonian Prime Ministers Alexis Tsipras and Zoran Zaev, on June 17, 2018.

³³ Journalist Krassen Nikolov, EURACTIV.bg research, 29 September 2021.

Although he was not supposed to leave Bulgaria, he managed to escape to Moscow and was decorated with a medal by Russian President Vladimir Putin. After this serious event, Bulgaria expelled one Russian diplomat and another was denied the right to enter the country. In September 2020, Sofia again faced Russian espionage and expelled two Russian diplomats accredited to the country as persons “non grata”. They are accused of “collecting secret state information about Bulgaria to hand it over to another country.” Bulgarian prosecutors have accused a first secretary in the consular section of the Russian embassy in Sofia of being involved in espionage since 2017. They allege that the individual was seeking information related to the election process with the aim of compromising it. Furthermore, another Russian diplomat, serving in the office of Russia’s trade cooperation in Sofia, has been accused of gathering confidential information on energy security since October 2018. Bulgarian prosecutors have also charged three Russians with the attempted murder of an arms dealer and the poisoning of two other Bulgarians. This case is currently being investigated by Sofia for possible links to the poisoning case in Skripal. Bulgarian prosecutors have announced that six Bulgarian citizens are accused of spying for Russia. They state that this group “constitutes a serious threat to national security, as it collects and delivers to Russia the secrets of Bulgaria, NATO, and the European Union”. According to the prosecutors, the NATO Navy Coordination Center, secretly inaugurated in Varna, is of particular interest to the spies.

- The Russian-Serbian friendship has been known as a brotherly alliance for centuries, but surprisingly, it has turned out to be a fierce intelligence war in recent years. In November 2019, Serbia faced Russian espionage, despite the external perception of the historical ties between the two countries. The support for pro-Russian nationalist groups in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as the penetration of Russian espionage into key security institutions in Serbia, is intended to not only keep Belgrade supported but also controlled.³⁴ The senior Serbian officials, “embarrassed” and surprised, made hints and accusations about Bulgaria as a country that was “undermining” the historic Serbian-Russian friendship. It is about a video published by a Bulgarian journalist, where pure espionage from Russia towards Serbia is proven. In the video,³⁵ a Russian officer and a Serb are seen exchanging a bag of documents

³⁴ Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Zorana Mihajlovic; September 1, 2022, “Russia is misusing the fact that we have not imposed sanctions against Russia, as a thesis that shows Russia’s just war in Ukraine. In fact, we have supported the UN resolution, which condemns this war”.

³⁵ The video was made public on Radio Free Europe on November 19, 2019, in the Serbian language. It was reported that a Russian diplomat and member of the GRU Military Intelligence Service, Georgij Kleban, was filmed handing over money to a high-ranking Serbian military official, who is allegedly his secret agent in Serbia.

and counting the money. The Russian officer has been identified as Georgiy Kleban, the deputy military attaché at the Russian embassy in Belgrade.

President Vučić accepted the authenticity of the Russian spy video, addressing Moscow with only one word that carries a lot of disappointment: “Why?!” In June 2021, a series of explosions occurred at the “Sloboda” ammunition factory in Čačak, Serbia. According to Serbian media, three workers who worked in the warehouse were injured by these explosions. From 2001 to 2012, there were 36 explosions and sabotages in weapons depots in Serbia, without a perpetrator. Regarding these explosions, journalist Milomir Mariq³⁶ says that this could be the work of the Russian secret services. “There are different plans for the Balkans, for which Aleksandar Grusko³⁷ has promised us that Russia will protect the lives of us Serbs, but the Russians have different methods of “protection.” Everything was done according to the principle of distrust and interest; “friendship is friendship, but control must be control.”

CONCLUSIONS

- The inclusion of the Western Balkans in the NATO agenda, as well as in the Strategic Concept 2022-2023, would be the only strong warning to the “autocracies” attempting to sabotage and destabilize our region through hybrid tactics³⁸.

- Alliance Moscow, Minsk, and Kyiv, as a recreation of BS³⁹, must face the Western alliance⁴⁰ by joining NATO-EU as soon as possible in the Western Balkans. Otherwise, Moscow will fill the gap. NATO and the EU must draw up clear plans to guarantee security in the Balkans and disarm the arsonists. Otherwise, Washington and Brussels will be forced to put out many fires.

- Russian influence in the region and Albania is sometimes visible and sometimes hidden, but it always has consequences. Moscow’s supporters are mostly found among the cheering parties or leaders in our region, using slogans like “Down with Russia,” “Long live America,” and “We are NATO, we are the EU.”

- In the framework of regional stability, the AAF should promote concrete

³⁶ Milomir Mariq, author of “Deca Komunizma” (children of communism) and journalist of “Tv Happy” in Belgrade.

³⁷ Aleksandar Grusko, Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

³⁸ Olta Xhačka, statement at the forum of NATO foreign ministers, Riga, December 2021.

³⁹ Alexander Lukashenko, the president of Belarus, declares that he is ready to accept Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian soil if NATO does the same by bringing nuclear weapons located in Germany closer to the east.

⁴⁰ On December 15, 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated that it is in the interest of Germany and Europe that the remaining Balkan countries join the EU.

cooperation with the Kosovo Security Force, including the implementation of joint exercises, training, education, and the provision of the best military expertise. Additionally, the AAF should strongly support participation in regional and global initiatives in the field of security and defense⁴¹.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. UN Resolution 1244, 10 June 1999.
2. Fleur Anderson, statement to the British Parliament, 27 April 2022.
3. Leo Tolstoy, *“War and Peace”*, book 3, part two, chapter XXV.
4. Shaban Murati, *“Rusët po vijnë”* 2022; Dita newspaper, February 7, 2023.
5. Strategic Defense Review, 2019.
6. Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2010.
7. National Security Strategy of Albanian Republic, 2014.
8. Military Strategy of AR, 2015.
9. NATO Summit, Madrid, June 2022.
10. Fatmir Xheladini *“Paradigmat e sigurisë së Maqedonisë: Sfida dhe Mundësi”*.
11. Egidio Ivetic, *“Balkan Wars”*.
12. Rexhep Qosja, *“Shqipëria dhe Kosova, si kanë qenë dhe si duhet të jenë”*.
13. Bardhyl Demiraj, *“Shqiptar dhe shqa”*.
14. Defense Directive, for the 2023 year.
15. Chief of GS Brigadier General Arben Kingji; Inauguration speech August 2022.

⁴¹ The speech of the Chief of GS of AR General-Brigade Arben Kingji on August 5, 2022

HOW THE ISRAEL - HAMAS WAR IMPACTS THE RUSSIA - UKRAINE WAR AFTER 22 MONTHS/660 DAYS

Colonel Msc. Dilaver HOXHA

*Former Albanian Defense Attaché in Ukraine
(non-resident)*

Military Scientific Research Institute, AAF

ABSTRACT

The Russian aggression in Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2021, continues to have a profound impact on the global geopolitical scene. Under the pretext of a “Military Operation,” Russia initiated the war in Ukraine, resulting in significant changes to the global security architecture. In response, the US, the EU, and other democratic nations swiftly condemned Russia’s military intervention and continue to provide unwavering support for the establishment of peace and the restoration of Ukraine’s full sovereignty in all occupied territories.

The consequences of this war primarily burden the Ukrainian population, who are enduring extreme hardships in all aspects of life. The conflict-ridden areas have suffered immeasurable damage and the loss of innocent lives, including many women and children. Infrastructure, residential houses, hospitals, schools, and other social-cultural facilities have been severely damaged. The disruption of main food and export products, which are crucial to the global supply chain, has been substantial.

Simultaneously, while Russia’s military aggression in Ukraine continues, the Middle East witnesses the rekindling of the Israel-Palestine conflict. On

October 7, 2023, Palestinian militant groups led by Hamas launched a large-scale attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip, called “Operation Al-Aqsa Flood.” The conflict escalated rapidly as Hamas forces breached the border and attacked Israeli cities with rockets. This ongoing war has resulted in the loss of many innocent lives, predominantly women and children.

These two simultaneous conflicts, the war in Ukraine and the Middle East, are likely to have far-reaching implications for future geostrategic developments worldwide.

THE ONGOING UKRAINIAN CONFLICT: KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Since February 24, 2022, when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the nation has witnessed significant developments in its fight for sovereignty. Following months of speculation and escalating tensions, Russia intensified its aggressions in Donbass, the eastern region of Ukraine encompassing Donetsk and Luhansk. In a controversial move, Russian President Vladimir Putin declared these enclaves as independent states, deploying his forces to solidify control. Despite the Kremlin’s denials of further aggression, an estimated 170,000 Russian troops amassed near Ukraine’s borders.

In the early hours of February 24, 2022, under the misleading guise of a “special military operation” for “demilitarization,” President Putin declared war on Ukraine around 5 am while most Ukrainians were asleep. However, this deceptive rhetoric could not veil the true nature of the brutal and large-scale invasion.

For the past 22 months, 660 days, the conflict in Ukraine has persisted without respite, leaving an indelible mark on global consciousness. Let us examine some of the significant events that have shaped this ongoing struggle:

February 2022 – Russia’s Invasion and the International Response

On February 24, 2022, around 5 a.m., President Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine on multiple fronts: from Belarus in the north, Russia in the east, and Crimea in the south. With aspirations of swift victory, Russian forces advanced towards the Ukrainian capital of Kiev but encountered staunch resistance, eventually necessitating a retreat.

The international community swiftly condemned Russia’s aggression, leading to widespread sanctions imposed by Western nations against Moscow. As a result, numerous countries, including the European Union, the United States, Canada, and more, opened their doors to offer refuge to the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians displaced by the conflict. Initially seeking safety

in neighboring countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Romania, Ukrainian refugees embarked on arduous journeys by train, car, and even by foot. Some nations criticized perceived disparities in the treatment of Ukrainian refugees compared to those fleeing violence in the Middle East or North Africa. Notably, this debate would resurface during the Israel-Palestine Conflict that erupted in October 2023.

March 2022 – First effects of war: The weaknesses of the Russian military leadership, the withdrawal of Russian forces from Kiev, the first war crimes and the collapse in global trade.

In March 2022, weaknesses in Russian military leadership became evident as they encountered strong resistance around Kiev. Several senior Russian commanders lost their lives in attempts to gain control of the situation at the front. Russia displayed significant deficiencies in leadership, management, logistical support, and command structure. The withdrawal of Russian troops from areas surrounding Kiev revealed evidence of war crimes, particularly in Bucha, where mass graves were discovered containing hundreds of civilian bodies. Following intense resistance from Ukrainian forces, Russia was compelled to revise its objectives and shift its focus to the Donbass region.

Russia's aggressive actions shocked the world, leading to a sharp increase in food and energy prices, placing a heavy burden on the cost of living, even in Western countries. The Kremlin responded by cracking down on independent media and suppressing opposition to the war within Russia.

April 2022 -The failure of Russian forces in Kiev, the expansion of war crimes, and their transition from large-scale attacks to localized attacks.

In April 2022, Russian forces faced setbacks in their attempt to encircle Kiev, and Ukrainian forces capitalized on the opportunity, declaring a victory. However, along with this triumph came grim scenes of war crimes and extensive damage inflicted by the Russian army in the vicinity of Kiev, particularly in Bucha, which deeply shocked the global public opinion. The undeniable evidence of mass executions of civilians, torture, rape, and looting served as a chilling testament to the atrocities committed. Addressing the situation, US President Joe Biden referred to the war in Ukraine as a “genocide,” stating, “It has become increasingly evident that Putin is attempting to erase the very existence of Ukraine. The mounting evidence speaks for itself.”

Despite the horrific events in Bucha, Russia continued to escalate its attacks. One of the most tragic incidents occurred when Russian forces launched a devastating rocket assault on the Kramatorsk train station in the Donetsk region, where thousands of civilians were gathered, awaiting evacuation. This ruthless attack resulted in the loss of 61 innocent lives and left 121 others

wounded, including women and children. It marked a significant shift in the Kremlin's strategy, signaling their intent to withdraw from northern Ukraine and advance toward the complete occupation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the actions, stating, "They lack the strength and courage to face us on the battlefield, so they cynically target and destroy the civilian population."

Amidst the intensifying conflict, Russia suffered yet another humiliating defeat, as two Ukrainian R-360 Neptune anti-ship missiles successfully sank the Russian Black Sea Fleet vessel Moskva. On a humanitarian front, the United Nations reported that over 5 million people were displaced from Ukraine, while approximately two-thirds of Ukraine's children were uprooted by the war. The UN refugee agency labeled the conflict as Europe's largest refugee crisis of this century.

In May 2022, Russian forces occupied Mariupol while NATO was awaiting its expansion with neighboring countries of Russia.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia prompted Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership, causing a shift from their previous policy of military non-engagement. This political move faced initial opposition from two members of the Alliance, Turkey, and Hungary. Following this development, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg emphasized the significance of the moment during a ceremony at NATO headquarters, stating, "This is a historic opportunity that we must seize."

Conversely, President Vladimir Putin has cited NATO's expansion as one of the primary reasons for the invasion of Ukraine. However, the invasion appears to have had an unintended consequence of strengthening the Western military alliance¹.

During the course of the conflict, Russia successfully captured the strategically significant Black Sea port city of Mariupol. After a valiant three-month resistance against relentless bombardment by Russian forces, the remaining Ukrainian defenders reluctantly released their hold on Mariupol's last stronghold, the Azovstal steel plant. The fighting concluded with the plant's capture, serving as a poignant symbol of Ukraine's resilience and resistance against Russian occupation.

In June 2022, the global food crisis deepened, while restrictions on oil imports from Russia were imposed. Additionally, further developments occurred on the battlefield.

¹ Euronews, May 2022: NATO grows

After more than 100 days of war, the consequences of the conflict have become increasingly significant, leading to a significant increase in the number of casualties, wounded individuals, and displaced civilians. In a historic move, the leaders of the EU have expressed support for Ukraine by granting it candidate status, marking the first step towards full membership in the EU.

EU leaders have agreed in principle to reduce 90% of oil imports from Russia by the year-end. Meanwhile, the Kremlin is intensifying its efforts to exert pressure on Europe by cutting gas deliveries through the main pipeline. Russia's blockade of Ukraine's main ports in the Black Sea continues, preventing ships carrying Ukrainian grain from using the primary trade route. This situation has led to a looming global food crisis, with millions of tons of Ukrainian grain left unused in silos since the beginning of the war. According to UN forecasts, over 40 countries may face acute food insecurity.

The Ukrainian army has withdrawn from the last areas of the city of Sievierodonetsk, allowing Russia to secure a tactical victory and move closer to its goal of capturing the entire Luhansk region. However, Ukrainian forces have achieved a major victory by forcing Russian troops to withdraw from the strategic Snake Island and retaking control of it. Regaining control of the island has enabled Ukraine to resist the Russian blockade of Odesa and has dealt a blow to Moscow's image of naval power.

In July 2022, Russian advances continue in various eastern areas, while a grain agreement between Russia and Ukraine is being negotiated.

As of early July, the last city in the Luhansk Oblast region falls under Russian occupation, causing the remaining Ukrainian forces to focus on defending Donetsk. Donbass, a highly industrialized region and a significant part of the country, becomes the main battleground in Europe. Meanwhile, Russia continues its deadly attacks against civilians in the West-Central region. Ukrainian forces, equipped with HIMARS self-propelled artillery missiles obtained from the US, have targeted ammunition depots, logistics, and command and control systems.

Inflation in the Eurozone reaches its highest levels as Russia periodically shuts off gas pipelines, escalating pressure on Europe. It is worth noting that prior to the war, Europe imported more than 40% of its gas from Russia. After two months of negotiations involving the UN, Turkey, and Russia as mediators, an agreement has been reached to unlock Ukrainian grain exports through the Black Sea. The agreement ensures the safe passage of grain from the affected southwestern ports, alleviating concerns about global food shortages.

In August 2022, the intensity of fighting increases in the occupied areas, and Russia imposes a ban on gas exports to Europe.

Ukrainian forces initiate a counteroffensive in Kherson, the only land gateway to Crimea. Equipped with advanced Western weaponry, including the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) obtained from the US, Kyiv begins to undermine Moscow's presence in the occupied territories. Key Russian positions, ammunition depots, and an air base in Crimea become targets of Ukrainian strikes. Explosions rock an airbase on the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula.

In this tense situation, the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia remains a high-priority area of concern for the region. Russian forces have been shelling the occupied Enerhodar nuclear power plant, turning it into a potential ticking time bomb and endangering nuclear security. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns that the threat of nuclear confrontation has resurfaced after decades, describing Russian shelling of Zaporizhzhia facilities as an "act of suicide" with global implications.

On August 31st, Gazprom cuts off all gas exports to Europe, causing immediate price surges.

In September 2022, we witness Russian mobilization, a Ukrainian counteroffensive, and the annexation of occupied territories.

President Putin's order for a "partial mobilization" of 300,000 troops to engage in the war leads to unrest among neighboring countries such as Georgia and Kazakhstan². Thousands of people from ethnic Russian minorities protesting the mobilization are arrested.

Ukraine launches a swift and successful counteroffensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region, prompting Russian units to retreat and allowing Kiev to regain control of the city - a major strategic victory. As the Russian military weakens, evidence of war crimes emerges, including the discovery of mass graves and torture chambers.

On September 30, Russia officially annexes Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. "In an illegal listing under international law, Putin states that the annexed regions are now part of Russia "forever"." However, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, asserts that any decision to recognize the annexation of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions would hold no legal value and should be condemned. Simultaneously, Zelenskyy announces Ukraine's application for fast-track entry into NATO.

Meanwhile, in Europe, there are four leaks in the Nord Stream pipelines, which are vital for transporting gas from Russia to Germany beneath the Baltic Sea.

² Euronews, September 2022: Mobilisation

NATO labels these leaks as deliberate acts of sabotage.

October 2022 witnesses the destruction of the bridge connecting Russia and Crimea, as well as the destruction of energy infrastructure.

On October 8, a major explosion occurs on a road connecting Russia and Crimea over the Kerch Strait, a crucial route for Moscow's forces in Ukraine. The bridge was illegally built after Russia's invasion of the peninsula in 2014. In retaliation, Russia launches its first missile attacks on Kiev in months.

Just two days later, Russia initiates a campaign to disrupt electricity supply, causing power outages ahead of winter. These attacks severely damage the country's energy infrastructure, affecting 30% of it. Military analysts claim that this strategy aims to escalate the situation and demoralize the nation. In response, the EU discusses increasing measures against the energy sector, labeling these attacks as "inhumane" and with extensive barriers to work.

November 2022 witnesses the liberation of Kherson and a deepening humanitarian crisis in the region.

Ukrainian troops free the southern port city of Kherson on November 11, which was earlier captured by Russian forces. Russia is forced to order its troops to abandon the city. Kherson was one of the four regions that Putin claimed would be part of Russia "forever."

Officials warn of a humanitarian catastrophe in the war-ravaged ruins. Russia hopes that rising consumer prices and an influx of Ukrainian refugees will weaken European leaders' resolve. By mid-November, nearly half of Ukraine's power system is severely damaged due to extensive Russian attacks.

After the liberation of the southern regional capital, Zelenskyy proposes a 10-point peace plan to G20 leaders. The plan includes demands for a complete Russian withdrawal, the return of prisoners and deportees, food and energy security, nuclear safety, justice for Russian war crimes, and other important aspects. NATO acknowledges Ukraine's desire for membership but remains skeptical about the conditions and fails to set definitive deadlines.

Ukraine receives long-awaited Western air defense systems, including NASAMS and Aspide, in preparation for possible missile and drone attacks by Russia.

December 2022 is marked by the war in Bakhmut and President Zelenskyy's first visit to the USA since the conflict began.

Donbass, particularly the Bakhmut area in eastern Donetsk, becomes the epicenter of fierce fighting. Ukraine utilizes drones to strike Russian air bases deep within the country, damaging several strategic bombers. The

West increases aid to Ukraine, with the EU approving a macro-financial aid package totaling 18 billion euros. Moscow continues its efforts to destabilize Ukraine's energy infrastructure, resulting in extensive damage to thermal and hydropower plants across the country.

During President Zelenskyy's visit to Washington, DC, he meets with President Biden and addresses the US Congress. Zelenskyy emphasizes that assistance to Ukraine is an investment in democracy, and President Biden promises to provide Patriot air defense systems to help Ukraine defend against Russian attacks on its energy infrastructure, stating that "Ukraine will never be alone." Russia warns the US against sending more weapons to Kiev.

On Christmas Day, Putin claims that Russia is "ready to negotiate" with Ukraine, a demand dismissed by Ukrainian leaders. However, on New Year's Eve, Russia intensifies its missile and drone attacks, causing civilian casualties and displacements.

January 2023 witnesses the supply of war equipment to Ukraine, the occupation of the city of Soledar, and dismissals in the Ukrainian administration due to corruption.

Responding to persistent demands from Kiev, the West agrees to supply modern tanks to Ukraine. President Biden announces the delivery of M1 Abrams tanks, while Great Britain pledges to supply Challenger 2 battle tanks and Germany confirms the supply of Leopard 2 tanks. These deliveries provide a crucial boost to Ukraine, enabling potential new offensives, although questions arise regarding the quantity and effective use of these tanks on the battlefield by Ukrainian forces.

The Armed Forces of Ukraine target Russian troops stationed in the occupied city of Makiivka, located in the Donetsk region. Concurrently, Russian forces, supported by conscripts, make initial gains on the battlefield by capturing the industrial town of Soledar in eastern Donetsk. They shift their focus to the strategically significant city of Bakhmut, considering it crucial for maintaining control over the Donbas region. Urban warfare ensues, resulting in staggering losses on both sides.

Russia and Belarus commence joint exercises, raising concerns that Moscow may utilize its ally to launch a new ground offensive in the spring. During a live address at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, President Zelenskyy tells world leaders, "The world has overcome apartheid, the pandemic, and financial crises. Now the world is fighting Putin, and we will overcome him once again."

Ukraine witnesses its most significant government reshuffle since the start of

the full-scale war, following numerous corruption scandals. Several officials, including a deputy head of the President's office, a deputy attorney general, several deputy ministers, and governors, are dismissed from their positions.

February 2023 marks one year of fighting in Ukraine, President Zelenskyy's visits to Europe, and corruption allegations within Ukraine's Defense Ministry.

In early February, President Zelenskyy embarks on a tour to garner support ahead of the war's anniversary. He visits London, Paris, and Brussels, meeting with the leaders of various European countries. During his visit to Brussels, Zelenskyy addresses the European Parliament, highlighting the joint fight against "the biggest anti-European force of the modern world."

Rallies are being held across Europe, calling for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine and the liberation of occupied territories. Zelenskyy marks the anniversary of a year blighted by "pain, sorrow, faith and unity" striking a tone of grim defiance. "We survived the first day of the full-scale war. We didn't know what tomorrow would bring, but we clearly understood that for each tomorrow, you need to fight. And we fought," he said in an early morning video address. "[It was] the longest day of our lives. The hardest day of our modern history. We woke up early and haven't fallen asleep since."³

Fighting intensifies in the east, as intelligence reports indicated that Putin has ordered his troops to capture the entire Donetsk region by March. Zelenskyy warns of an imminent retaliatory attack from Russia to avenge last year's setbacks.

As Ukraine prepares for a new counteroffensive in the spring, Western nations commit to providing hundreds of modern battle tanks. Just days before the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion, President Biden surprises everyone with a visit to Kiev, demonstrating unwavering support. During this visit, he states, "Putin thought Ukraine was weak, and the West was divided.

In February, a corruption scandal unfolds within Ukraine's Ministry of Defense, involving inflated contracts for supplying frontline troops with food. To prevent these allegations from undermining the willingness of Western allies to provide essential military support, Zelenskyy vows to swiftly bring those responsible to justice.

March 2023 is marked by the Battle of Bakhmut and the supply of tanks to Ukraine by its allies.

Fierce fighting erupts in Bakhmut, with both sides claiming control of the city

³ Euronews, February 2023: Festering corruption

repeatedly. In this merciless battle, Wagner's mercenary force, despite being reinforced with new recruits, suffers significant losses, but Ukrainian forces also face heavy losses.⁴

Ukraine receives its first batch of heavy tanks from Britain and Germany, while Poland supplies fighter jets. The White House states that Poland's decision to provide MiG fighters is a sovereign choice and will not influence President Biden's decision on supplying US F-16s to Ukraine.

Turkey and Hungary ratify Finland's NATO membership, though without including Sweden.

Chinese President Xi Jinping meets Russian President Vladimir Putin during a state visit to Russia from March 20 to 22. China expresses its interest in brokering a negotiated solution to the war in Ukraine.

April 2023 could witness a possible Ukrainian counteroffensive and objections from Wagner.

As Ukraine prepares for the much-anticipated counteroffensive, Russia heightens its readiness to counter it. In the midst of this, the EU reaches a deal to resolve a dispute over Ukrainian wheat after Poland and Hungary impose a "protectionist" ban, which the EU deems unacceptable.

The battle for Bakhmut continues, with Wagner's mercenary leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, claiming that his forces have gained "legal control of the city".⁵ He further threatens the Russian military establishment to withdraw from the war if his demands are not met.

May 2023 - Peace Efforts at the G7 Summit and Escalating Threats in Russia

The G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, once again firmly condemned Russia's aggressive actions towards Ukraine, emphasizing their commitment to raising consequences for Russia and its supporters. Meanwhile, Beijing attempted to portray itself as a peacemaker in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. The EU Foreign Affairs Council also discussed the ongoing Russian aggression, focusing on providing continued military aid to Ukraine and implementing measures to isolate Russia.

In early May, rumors circulated about a potential Ukrainian counter-offensive, although Kiev has remained tight-lipped about its military plans. Tensions increased further following a drone attack on the Kremlin, which Ukraine was held responsible for, prompting Moscow to escalate its bombings in Ukraine.

⁴ Euronews, March 2023: Back and forth in Bakhmut

⁵ Euronews, April 2023: Shocking revelations

Additionally, there is growing tension between the Russian army and the Wagner military group, with Wagner's leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, accusing the Russian army of abandoning positions and failing to provide necessary support.

June 2023 - The Kherson Dam Explosion and the Rebellion of the Wagner Group

A major disaster occurred when the Soviet-era Nova Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine, under Russian control, was destroyed. Ukrainian President Zelenskyy held "Russian terrorists" accountable, although Moscow denies any involvement.⁶ With an increase in military activity along the front line, it is believed that Ukraine's counter-offensive has commenced.

Meanwhile, Yevgeny Prigozhin and his Wagner mercenaries rebelled against Russian leadership, capturing Russian cities and marching towards Moscow. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko intervened and brokered a deal, convincing Prigozhin to withdraw his troops and allowing them to live in exile in Belarus, thus avoiding criminal charges.

July 2023 - Impact of the NATO Summit and Moscow's Withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Agreement

The main NATO summit took place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11-12, 2023. Among the key outcomes, Sweden became the newest member of NATO after reaching an agreement with Turkish President Erdogan. The NATO allies reaffirmed their support for Ukraine's aspiration to join the alliance, offering a guarantee that Kiev's future lies within NATO.

The Group of Seven (G7) signed a new framework to provide long-term bilateral security commitments to Ukraine. These measures encompass various areas, including the provision of advanced military equipment, training, intelligence sharing, and cyber defense.

As Wagner's mercenaries began training with Belarusian troops, Moscow decided to withdraw from the Black Sea grain agreement on July 17, which resulted in shelling of Ukraine's export infrastructure. This had consequences for many countries' grain supplies, particularly those in Africa.

August 2023 - Peace Talks and the Accidental Death of Wagner Chief Yevgeny Prigozhin

Peace talks held in Saudi Arabia resulted in expressions of goodwill but no concrete announcements. Russia did not participate in these talks, considering

⁶ Euronews, June 2023: Kherson dam explosion and Wagner's mutiny

them insignificant for defining their strategies. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva commented that the attention of BRICS countries was focused on the war between Ukraine and Russia, urging them to contribute to the war effort. European Council President Charles Michel stated that the EU should prepare to accept new members from Eastern Europe and the Balkans by 2030.

Greece became the 14th country to join the G7, receiving guarantees from the United States and other members.

On August 23, 2023, a Russian airliner crashed north of Moscow, and Yevgeny Prigozhin, the leader of Wagner, was among the passengers.

September 2023 - United Nations Assembly Summit and Poland-Ukraine Relations Violation

September witnessed numerous developments in the diplomatic realm, culminating in the UN General Assembly meeting. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered a speech calling for a united front against Russian aggression, highlighting Moscow's attempt to use Ukraine's resources as a weapon against international order.

The G20 summit held in New Delhi on September 9-10 addressed global challenges such as poverty, food security, climate change, development, digitalization, health and pandemics, and conflicts. The summit produced a consensus statement that avoided explicitly condemning Russia's war in Ukraine but called on all states to refrain from using force to seize territories. Russia portrayed the summit as an "unconditional success" since the final statement did not explicitly condemn its invasion of Ukraine. In response, Kiev expressed disappointment with the G20's stance.

Other notable diplomatic activities related to the war in Ukraine included China's support for Ukraine's territorial integrity while refraining from desiring Russia's defeat; talks between Putin and Erdogan in Sochi to discuss reviving the Black Sea grain agreement without concrete results; US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Kiev, emphasizing the objective of denying Russia any strategic success in Ukraine; the Secretary-General applauding Ukraine's counteroffensive progress, with Ukrainian forces breaching Russia's frontline defenses and inflicting heavy damage on the Russian Black Sea fleet; Rustem Umerov appointed as Ukraine's new defense minister, replacing Oleksii Reznikov; Russia organizing elections in the four southern and eastern regions of Ukraine it occupied and claimed to have annexed the previous year. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made a notable statement, expressing Russia's expectation to end the war in Ukraine by 2025.

Upon analyzing the developments in the ongoing conflict, the Commander-

in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Great Britain expresses hope that Ukraine has successfully reclaimed over 50% of the territory seized by the Russian Federation since February 24, 2022. On a related note, the former Minister of Defense, Oleksii Reznikov, underlines the staggering cost of war for Ukraine, estimating it to be around 100 million dollars per day. In a separate statement regarding the Russian President's meeting with his North Korean counterpart, US General Mark Milley suggests that while North Korea may potentially increase the supply of artillery ammunition to Russia for the Ukrainian war, the overall impact is expected to be minimal.

Based on a statement from Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland initially aimed to halt the supply of various weapons to Ukraine due to a dispute over the export of Ukrainian wheat through Polish territory. However, Polish President Andrzej Duda later clarified that Poland remains willing to aid in the transportation of Ukrainian wheat to countries outside Europe, despite the ongoing market access dispute. Duda suggested the use of special transport corridors to facilitate the movement of grain from Ukraine to destination ports.

October 2023 - Ongoing War in Ukraine and the Beginning of Conflict in the Middle East

While Ukraine focused on its counteroffensive in the south, sudden fighting erupted in Gaza with Hamas forces launching attacks on Israeli forces. On October 7, Hamas carried out one of the deadliest massacres in Israeli history, resulting in the deaths of over 1,400 people in a single day. In response, Israel initiated airstrikes targeting the Gaza Strip, leading to the deaths and injuries of thousands, predominantly civilians, including women and children.

The United States could not overlook these developments in the Middle East. US President Joe Biden, in a national speech addressing the wars in Ukraine and Israel, emphasized the firm stance against allowing terrorist groups like Hamas and tyrants like Putin to succeed.

Throughout October, notable diplomatic developments with implications for security included the Russian Federation Council's revocation of the ratification of the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Slovak Prime Minister's announcement that Slovakia would no longer provide military aid to Ukraine and would oppose further sanctions against Russia.

November 2023 - Resumption of Russian Drone Strikes and New Recruitment Drive

In mid-November, after a nearly two-month hiatus, Russian forces resumed

large-scale missile and drone strikes against Ukraine, primarily targeting the Kiev region.

The Kremlin has shown renewed interest in recruiting new forces, particularly in the occupied areas of Ukraine. A Russian defense official called for sending approximately 500 men each week from Yakutia, a region in northeastern Siberia with a non-Russian ethnic majority, to the Ukrainian front.

Notable diplomatic developments in November included reports of North Korea increasing arms and ammunition transfers to Russia and the Wagner Group planning to provide Pantsir-S1 air defense systems to Hezbollah. The US Department of Defense (DoD) has recently made an important announcement regarding military aid packages to strengthen Ukraine's air defenses. Alongside these efforts, measures are also being taken to facilitate the upcoming presidential elections in Ukraine. However, there have been certain legislative and electronic election system changes that are viewed as favoring Russian President Vladimir Putin.

NATO tried to overcome the pessimism surrounding Ukraine. The NATO Minister of Foreign Affairs meeting on November 28-29 stood out as the pivotal transatlantic gathering focused on Ukraine, its outcome was not favorable for Kyiv. The summer offensive in Zaporizhzhia fell short of its objective to sever Russia's land corridor from Donbas to Crimea. The conflict in the Middle East has diverted the focus of the media, the government and the public from the war in Ukraine. However, NATO Secretary-General decided to emphasize the importance of the conflict with Russia for Europe and orchestrated a diplomatic effort to lend support to Ukraine. He underscored the achievements of the Ukrainian army and dismissed Western pressure for peace talks. NATO countries have pledged to maintain arms supplies to Ukraine.

According to Mediazona, in early November, the Russian opposition confirmed that a significant number of Russian servicemen, approximately 35,780, have tragically lost their lives in the war in Ukraine since February 24, 2022. Disturbingly, this includes 923 deaths in just the past two weeks. On the other hand, the Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi's latest essay, titled "positional war", was met with no comment from the Russian side. However, experts view it as pessimistic.

December 2023 - Western Commitments to keep supplies in Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin issued an order to increase the country's military personnel by almost 170,000, bringing the total to 1.32 million. This move comes as Moscow's military involvement in Ukraine enters its 22nd month⁷.

⁷ MOSCOW (AP), December 1, 2023

On 5 December 2023, the Chief of staff of Ukrainian President's, Andriy Yermak, speaking at the U.S. Institute for Peace during a visit to Washington, said failure by Congress to approve more aid to Ukraine could make it "impossible" to liberate more territory captured by Russia and "give the big risk to lose this war."

CONCLUSIONS

1. Over the last four months (September – December 2023), several significant events have occurred that have had an impact on Ukraine's engagement with its western allies. These events include a grain dispute with Poland, the decision to remove Ukraine aid from the US federal funding bill, and unfavorable election results in Slovakia for Kyiv. Additionally, the attention focused on the conflict between Hamas and Israel has diverted the spotlight of major world powers and the media, affecting processes that weaken confidence, trust, and aid to Ukraine. In this context, the dynamics of internal politics, particularly during the approaching election, seem to take precedence over a multilateral strategy. When it comes to maintaining or gaining power, local political interests often dominate over commitments made in international forums, without being held accountable. Nevertheless, many countries continue to believe that NATO, the European Union, America, and Germany are providing the necessary support that Ukraine needs.

2. The US and some Western countries have displayed a pro-Israeli stance, while also reiterating their commitment to supporting Kyiv. It is important to note that the war, which began when Russia attacked Ukraine, is projected to continue until at least 2024. The coexistence of these simultaneous conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe presents complex challenges for Western diplomacy. Let us examine how these conflicts may impact the situation in Ukraine.

3. While the US is dedicated to supporting Israel, it does not waver in its support for Ukraine as well. The US has unequivocally condemned the criminal organization Hamas for its attacks in Israel, expressing unwavering support for Israel in its fight against terrorism. Conversely, Kyiv's troops have experienced inconsistent supplies of ammunition from Western sources, which have, on occasion, hindered the pace of their military operations. Ukraine heavily relies on several thousand rounds of artillery ammunition procured from the West each day, underscoring the vital need for sustained US supplies in the foreseeable future.

4. A prolonged war in Gaza is likely to divert the attention of the West. The involvement of new actors, such as Iran and Hezbollah, coupled with

the additional challenges posed by countering the activities of Russia, China, and Iran diplomatically, could further distract the West, particularly the United States, from addressing one of the most critical global challenges to date – providing aid to Ukraine. The occupation of the Gaza Strip and the resulting civilian casualties may spark heightened public reactions, potentially complicating the actions of Arab authorities and their relations with the United States. Furthermore, President Zelenskyy’s declarations of support for Israel may lead to a loss of the hard-earned support from the Global South for Ukraine.

5. Russia is expected to gain strength at Israel’s expense. While the Kremlin has condemned the actions of terrorists, it has also called for an end to the “siege of Gaza.” This stance has faced opposition from Israel, who initially maintained a neutral position in response to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine. While Israel has provided humanitarian aid to Kyiv, it refrained from delivering weapons. Russia is utilizing civilian casualties in Gaza to bolster its alliance with the so-called Global South against the West. On October 23, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva issued a joint statement calling for a ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid. Russian diplomats in African and South American countries argue that the crisis in the Middle East was caused by the United States, stressing that its roots trace back to the colonial history of Anglo-Saxon rule in the region. This perspective is shared by many non-Western partners.

6. NATO and its Secretary-General assumed the role of advocates for Western support for Ukraine. The comments by Jens Stoltenberg aim to remind allies, particularly European countries, that Russian aggression poses a threat to the stability of the continent, and that Ukraine is fighting in the interests of the West. However, Stoltenberg can only enhance strategic communication, and the continuation of defence support necessitates a greater commitment from the governments of European NATO countries than before.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas continues to divert international attention away from the war in Ukraine. As violence escalates, it risks intensifying competition for limited U.S. military resources currently supporting Ukraine. This could force Ukraine to conserve ammunition over the winter months, constraining their operational flexibility and initiative against Russian forces. Simultaneously, political disagreements in the U.S. Congress threaten to complicate prospects for further aid to Ukraine. Additionally, while hard evidence is still emerging, Russia may seek to inflame tensions in Gaza through proxy actors or media propaganda. Their goal could be to propagate

anti-Western narratives and rally like-minded partners opposing U.S. and European involvement in the Middle East.

The potential for wider regional war is altering perceptions of the existing balance of power dynamics. It was assessed that the U.S. was reducing engagement while enabling Russia to solidify influence through partnerships such as with Syria and Iran. Concurrently, China assumed a mediating role with Arab states. However, emerging alignments show the U.S. and Europe supporting Israel while Russia and China back Arab countries against Western priorities. This geopolitical polarization strongly resembles divisions over the Ukraine crisis, with many non-Western nations echoing Palestinian criticisms of historical Western policies in the region. In summary, further escalation between Israel and Hamas risks distracting from Ukraine during critical shortages, exacerbating global fractures highlighted by the situation in Eastern Europe.

The unfolding of these two parallel conflicts are likely to have reciprocal and compounding effects on one another.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. War in Ukraine - Daily Report, Col Dilaver Hoxha, Ex Albanian Defense Attaché in Warsaw and nonresident in Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, 2021-2023.
2. Institute for the Study of the war - Russian offensive campaign assessment, Feb 22, 2021 to Dec 4, 2023: <https://www.understandingwar.org/>
3. CNN- Russian invasion of Ukraine Russia news: <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news/index.html>
4. Ukraine war, Euro News: <https://www.euronews.com/2023/01/30/ukraine-war-a-month-by-month-timeline-of-the-conflict-in-2022>
5. Aljazeera, Russia - Ukraine war: List of key events, day 1 to 660:
6. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/15/russia-ukraine-war-list-of-key-events-day>

FUTURE OPERATIONS: MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS

Lieutenant Colonel Msc. Nikolin LAZRI
Land Forces

ABSTRACT

This paper provides a general overview of multi-domain operations. The preparation of this material is based on the definitions of the U.S. Army Field Manual (FM-3.0), published on October 1, 2022, incorporating statements from Clausewitz, Machiavelli and Sun Tzu to strengthen the arguments and explanations made in the material. What is presented in this material is a modest attempt to offer basic information on multi-domain operations, as the concept, principles, and development of these operations cover a vast space, the treatment of which requires specific expertise. This material is not exhaustive (there are many questions that require answers). This effort is to present things seen as the basis of these operations. Summarized, using graphical illustrations extracted from FM-3.0, issues related to these operations have been addressed, incorporating quotes on violence, war, enemy resistance, made by renowned military strategists.

The main part of the material deals with the Respective Domains in a general sense, and more specifically, the Land Domain. In a summarized and graphical way, the interaction between the Domains has been presented, focusing on the Land Domain. The graphical presentation in the material offers a clearer understanding than written explanations.

The distinct feature of this material lies in providing general information and detailed explanation with graphics and texts about the levels of warfare, strategic context, and operational environment, using them as a connecting bridge to move on to knowledge of multi-domain operations. Citations are included as arguments but intentionally left unexplained to allow each individual to create their perspective and approach.

Keywords: Domain, Respective Domain, war, crisis, armed conflict, operation, dimension, operational environment.

INTRODUCTION

The strategic security environment has changed dramatically. Recent military activities (the war in Ukraine) have demonstrated the violation of the rules and principles on which the regional and global security architecture is based. Aggressive actors have oriented their positions towards war, violating every international norm or law.

The prevailing theme in current developments revolves around threats to war and the initiation of armed conflicts. These threats encompass the potential use of nuclear weapons, the risk of forcibly altering borders, and the menace of employing advanced technology to subdue populations.

But possessing these capabilities and threatening others to use them is not a mere game of words. *“The threat of bloodshed, in itself, is more dangerous than bloodshed.”*¹ Every state exercises its legitimate right to defend itself in case of a threat of war or aggression because: *War constitutes something of fundamental value for the state: a matter of life or death; “the path, therefore, that leads to survival or ruin.”*²

Regardless of international rules, accepted and approved, technological developments, improvements and adaptations in concepts, doctrines and manuals, the reality shows that the nature of war remains unchanged (violent, comprehensive, and entirely political).

Aggressive, provocative, imposing, and conquering policies have increased tensions among states, escalated conflicts, and shed the blood of innocent people. All of this to achieve illegal national objectives and internationally unacceptable, paving the way for war. This shows that *the political goal is the objective, and war is the means, and a purposeless means cannot be understood.*³

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, “On Conspiracies and Other Essays,” Publishing House Book House sh.p.k. 2022, page 11.

² Sun Tzu, “The Art of War,” Pema Publishing House, 2018, page 11.

³ Karl Clausewitz, “On War,” Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 46.

However, the overt actions of some actors in their activities have not found leading states in the national, regional, and international security sector unprepared. *Violence to confront violence appropriates inventions, arts, and science. Violence is the means: the goal is to impose our will on the enemy.*⁴ Preparations to be custodians of security have been made in time, representing the latest technological developments, supported by concepts, principles, and doctrines, demonstrating determination to respond with all available means and demonstrating superiority in the operational environment.

However, it must be acknowledged that there is no fixed way to completely eliminate risks and uncertainties. Knowing the opponent does not mean that all aspects of war are clear, and the opponent is predictable at every step. What can be done is the preparation and mobilization of security and defense of all capacities and their use through the development of multi-domain operations, in the 5 Respective Domains and in 3 dimensions.

Certainly, not all states have the opportunities and capabilities to cover all these fields and organize and develop MDOs, but during the planning and development process of operations, it must be understood that everyone benefits in various forms and ways from the products and activities of these Domains.

DEFINITION / MEANING OF TERMS

Although challenges have been addressed in the material, which will accompany these operations, the biggest challenge is translating the concepts and terms used in the U.S. Army Manual (FM-3.0) into Albanian. This way, to avoid misunderstandings and provide a clearer picture, a special attention has been given to defining and explaining the terms used in the material. Their meaning is as follows:

- a) **Land Forces.** In this material, the term is used not as a component but as the structure that operates based on the land (to avoid misunderstanding in the Albanian translation: Army = Ushtri. In the USA, it is one of the services).
- b) **Respective Domain.** It is in the meaning of the word “Fusha Përkatësie” and selected as one of the possible translations.
- c) **Competition.** Two or more states or non-state adversaries have conflicting interests but do not require armed conflict.
- d) **Crisis.** An incident or situation that threatens national interests and creates the conditions for the use of military forces to achieve national/strategic objectives.

⁴ Karl Clausewitz, “On War,” Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 21.

e) **Armed Conflict.** A state or non-state actor that uses lethal force as the primary means to achieve their interests.

f) **War.** A state of armed conflict between different states, state-like entities, or armed groups to achieve political objectives.

g) **Combined weapons.** The simultaneous and synchronized application of weapons to achieve a greater effect than would be achieved if each element were used separately or one after the other.

h) **Relative advantage.** A condition or location, in any domain, subordinate to an opponent or enemy, which provides the opportunity to advance or achieve an objective.

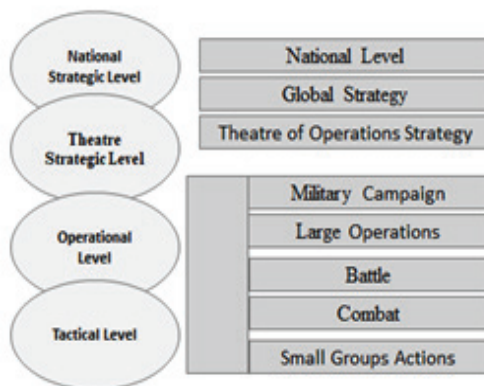
i) **Multi Domain.** Multi Domains at the same time

LEVELS OF WARFARE

*Winning a hundred out of a hundred battles does not constitute the pinnacle of mastery. Subduing the enemy without the need for direct conflict is considered the epitome of perfection.*⁵

It is possible that the strategic level of states, through national policies and global strategy, can ensure national interests by removing the desire of aggressive states to undertake actions that may escalate to the use of force.

However, when the issue goes to lower levels, undoubtedly, it is about the execution of operations (campaigns, major operations, battles, and engagements). The aim will be to achieve excellence but not forgetting the development of capacities to conduct operations (MDO).



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

*Warfare never erupts suddenly and does not unfold within an instant. Each of the adversaries can, therefore, form, on a broad scale, an understanding of each other's actions and reality.*⁶

⁵ Sun Tzu, "The Art of War," Pema Publishing House, 2018, page 19.

⁶ Karl Clausewitz, "On War," Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 27.

The accompanying graphic illustration provides an overview of the strategic context and range of military operations. The contexts in which operations can take place are:

- a) Competition at a level lower than armed conflict. *Basic forms of warfare: Duel. Warfare is essentially nothing more than a duel on a broader scale.*⁷
- b) Crisis.
- c) Armed Conflict.

The higher the level of violence and the more national interests are at stake, the greater the level of involvement in the duel will be (starting from competition, escalating to crisis, and culminating in armed conflict).



*The greater and more powerful the causes of war, the more they touch upon the vital interests of peoples, the higher the tension that leads to war, the more the latter approaches its abstract form, the better the political goal aligns with the military one, and the more the character of war will appear purely military and less political*⁸.

MULTI DOMAIN OPERATIONS

*War is not comprised of a single isolated action.*⁹ Confronting aggressive forces and ensuring superiority in the operational environment must be done with a comprehensive and 360-degree approach. To achieve this, the approach will involve the planning and execution of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

Definition of Multi-Domain Operations: The use of combined arms capabilities of Land Forces and Joint Forces to create and exploit relative advantages that

⁷ Karl Clausewitz, "On War," Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 20.

⁸ Ibid., page 46.

⁹ Ibid., page 28.

enable the achievement of objectives, defeat of enemy forces, and consolidation of success on behalf of the Commanders of Joint Forces. All operations are multi-domain operations. Land Forces employ their organic capabilities in various types of operations, continuously benefiting from the capabilities of other Domain Forces (strategic maritime and air transport, space and cyber capabilities, which they do not control, including global positioning, satellite communication, as well as detection, surveillance, and reconnaissance).

At lower levels of command, opportunities created by joint or other Domain Forces may not be apparent, but their leaders must understand how the lack of these capabilities affects the concept of operations.

MDO - A NEW CONCEPT?

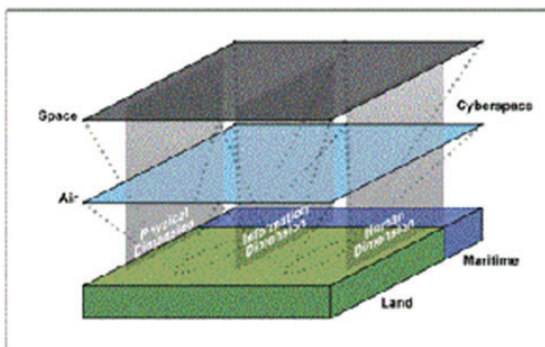
Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) are not unknown or new. The definition “use of combined arms...” draws our attention to the fact that the use of arms in the interest of one another is a concept as old as the history of warfare itself. Land Forces have been utilizing land, maritime, and air capabilities for over a century, starting from balloons, aircraft, rockets, and satellites. Moreover, for more than two decades, they have been using space and cyber capabilities as well.

Nevertheless, the term “Multi-Domain Operations” was first used in 2018 by the U.S. military as a national doctrinal concept. Beyond the U.S. military, especially within NATO, the term is more general, and it is clear that different states have different interpretations.

Regardless of how it is understood within the U.S. military or NATO countries, a common theme can be observed: the shared desire of allied and partner states to move forward and face the challenges imposed by future complex conflicts through the utilization of technology. Commanders and their staff, beyond the tradition of conventional operations, must incorporate ideas involving drones, satellites, and cyber piracy into their strategies.

Operational Picture (graphic view)

Operational environment, the environment in which multi-domain operations will take place, consists of 5 domains and 3 dimensions, graphically presented below. The diagram illustrates the division of domains and dimensions, as well as their interactions.



DOMAINS

In the context of the Operational Environment, a Domain is a physically/ clearly defined part of an Operational Environment that requires a unique set of combat capabilities and abilities.

The operational environment consists of 5 Domains, which do not have borders indicating a complete separation from each other (there is overlap in the separation lines). In general terms, their meanings are as follows:

- a) Land Domain, which is the space of the Earth's surface up to the shores of seas/oceans.
- b) Maritime Domain, which includes oceans, seas, bays, islands, coastal lines, and the airspace above them.
- c) Air Domain, which is the atmosphere, starting from the Earth's surface/ globe up to altitudes where their effects on operations become insignificant.
- d) Space Domain, which begins above altitudes where effects in the atmosphere over aerial objectives become insignificant.
- e) Cyberspace Domain, which deals with interconnected networks of information technology infrastructure and stored data, including the internet, telecommunication networks, computer systems, installed processors, and specific parts of the electromagnetic spectrum

LAND DOMAIN

The Land Domain is the most crucial. Operations may unfold at sea or in the air, but if the “soldier's boot” does not touch the ground, the operation does not ensure the achievement of political or military objectives. Competitions, hostilities, attacks, and other threatening activities are currently “brewing” on the ground. The most significant consequences and benefits are on the ground.

Beyond this, it should be emphasized that the variety of terrain configurations, climatic conditions, and population diversity have a greater impact on operations conducted in the Land Domain compared to other domains. The nature of warfare in land operations is unique due to the influence that the terrain has on all combat functions and the application of military force. However, it should be considered that the terrain offers opportunities to enhance the resilience and survival of forces, but it also provides these opportunities for the enemy.

The Land Domain is interconnected with the other domains, contributing to and benefiting from them. It contributes because the other 4 domains are in a way dependent on the Land Domain (airports, ports, control stations, servers, radars, etc.). These domains have the majority of cyber capabilities and resources used for their operation installed in networks established on

land. The energy used to supply the majority of maritime, aerial, and space platforms comes from locations on land.

It benefits because operations in the Land Domain rely on the capacities of other domains (air transport, maritime, cyber networks, reconnaissance methods, surveillance and intelligence, as well as fires not based on land).

Regardless of the importance of the activities carried out in the Land Domain, it must be kept in mind that victory is not guaranteed. *Even if territory may be conquered, the war is not over until the will of the enemy is subdued, meaning as long as their government and allies are not determined to sign peace.*¹⁰

DIMENSIONS

The operational environment is divided into 3 dimensions: Physical, Information, and Human. Operations reflect the reality that warfare is a forceful act (in the physical dimension) that compels/imposes (in the information dimension) the decision-making and behavior of enemy forces (in the human dimension). *War is an act of violence that aims to force the adversary to implement our will*¹¹. Understanding the dimensions of each Domain helps commanders and staff to assess and anticipate the influences they have on their operations. Actions in one-dimension affect factors in the other dimensions. Understanding the interconnection and interaction between dimensions aids the decision-making process in how to create and leverage advantages in one dimension to achieve objectives in the other dimensions, without causing unintended consequences or effects.

Description and detailed elaboration of these dimensions require an individualized treatment, but in general terms, the following data is provided:

Physical Dimension. Characteristics of material and capacities, both natural and industrial, within an operational environment. While warfare is a human endeavor, it takes place in a material environment and is carried out with physical entities (terrain, weather, military formations, electromagnetic waves, weapon systems, and many other elements that support operations). Activities and conditions in the physical dimension create effects in the information and human dimensions. The electromagnetic spectrum is one of the material characteristics that intersects all domains.

Information Dimension. Devices, data, and processes used by individuals, groups, and information systems to communicate. Information is transmitted through all domains of relevance in one way or another.

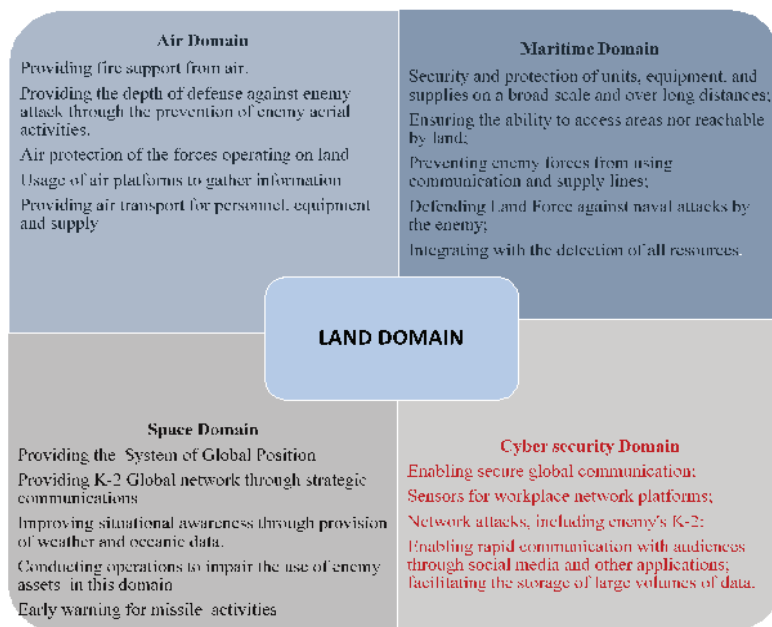
¹⁰ Karl Clausewitz, "On War," Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 51.

¹¹ Ibid., page 20.

Human Dimension. People and interactions among them, based on how they understand information and events, make decisions, foster the desire to act, and operate within an operational environment. *Adversaries dictate laws to each other*¹².

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF THE DOMAINS (GRAPHIC)

The domains are not separate, isolated, or distinct. The graphic below illustrates the interconnectedness among them, with a focus on the Land Domain, benefiting from the other domains. The benefits and contributions among Respective Domains are more extensive than those presented in this material (only a few of their activities are listed).



CHALLENGES

Conducting multi-domain operations will present its own set of challenges. Firstly, not everyone has the capabilities to organize these types of operations. Secondly, the organization, coordination, and synchronization of activities across all Domains are not easy. If one decides to employ these operations, it comes as a result of the need to eliminate any opportunity for the adversary to react. *In order to compel the adversary to submit to our will, they must be put in a more difficult position than the sacrifices we demand from them*¹³.

¹² Karl Clausewitz, "On War," Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 24.

¹³ Ibid., page 24.

Having a vision, having a means, having a desire are the first necessities and the cornerstone to ensure security and superiority over the adversary. But when it comes to materializing them in practice, it is not as easy. *In war, everything is very simple, but the simplest thing is not easy*¹⁴.

However, there are other factors that have influences regarding the planning, organization, and development of these operations. Operations involve various components and states, each with their characteristics arising from language, culture, technological development level, procedures, national constraints, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The nature of war has not changed; the character of war has. Every means, form, and method are used to achieve political objectives through the use of military instruments. Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) are not a concept of the future but an operational concept. The development of operations must ensure 360-degree defense, demonstrating to the adversary the responsive capability and the force it will face if seeking engagement.

The planning of multi-domain operations is the clearest signal given to the enemy that, if seeking confrontation, it will receive an immediate response in space and time, finding itself in significantly inferior positions. *The most unfavorable condition for a belligerent state is to be entirely unable to defend itself*.¹⁵

The domains and dimensions are intertwined and interact with each other. Actions in one dimension or domain influence factors in other domains and dimensions.

The Land Domain is the most crucial. The human dimension exercises activities, makes decisions, and seeks solutions in the Land Domain. “Boots on the ground” are decisive. Land Forces utilize not only capabilities positioned on land but also those situated on platforms at sea, in the air, space, and cyber domains, contributing to and benefiting from them simultaneously.

Even if capabilities in all five domains are not owned, benefits come from these services.

REFERENCES:

1. FM 3-0, dated October 1, 2022.
2. Karl Clausewitz, “On War,” Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020.
3. Sun Tzu, “The Art of War,” Pema Publishing House, 2018.
4. Niccolò Machiavelli, “On Conspiracies and Other Essays.”

¹⁴ Karl Clausewitz, “On War,” Helga Secrets Publishing House, 2020, page 112

¹⁵ Ibid., page 24.



FOURTH RUBRIC

HISTORICAL WRITINGS

MARSHAL ZHUKOV'S VISIT TO ALBANIA (1957): THE IMPACT ON INCREASING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

Dr. Etleva SMAÇI

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes Marshal Zhukov's visit to Albania in October 1957. The visit took place two years after Albania's inclusion in the Warsaw Treaty. Zhukov's arrival in Albania was an event of both political and military importance.

In the Albanian historical literature, the visit has been analyzed and treated by some researchers of political history. The aim of the article and its novelty lies in analysing its clearly military aspects. This will serve to contribute to the debate if the visit was accompanied by strategic ends regarding the vision for national defense.

Part of this debate is also the point of view on the decisions taken to increase defense capabilities in the framework of the Cold War.

Key words: Marshal Zhukov, People's Army, national defense, Cold War

INTRODUCTION

Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov, the glorious marshal of the Red Army was a revered name in Albania in the early 1950s. He was not only the Minister of Defense of the USSR, but also among the few remaining figures from the time of Stalin, after the elimination of the anti-party group. The visit to Albania from such a high figure obviously had a great political and military value. Zhukov arrived in Albania on October 17, a month after the conclusion of the military agreement that initiated the commencement of works on the Vlora Naval Base.

His visit was not accidental. It was part of the marshal's tour in the Balkans, a region where Moscow was interested in strengthening its positions in the framework of the Cold War. Marshal Zhukov was the first important military man to visit Albania.¹ The Albanian side had expressed its interest in Zhukov's visit to Albania since the spring of 1957.² The Central Committee (CC) of the USSR Communist Party (CP) had responded to the request of the Albanian side by approving it by the decision of the presidium of the CC of USSR CP on August 15, 1957.³ The invitation was also welcomed by Zhukov himself. "I think that the visit to Albania will be very useful, especially due to the fact that during the voyage we will have the opportunity to get to know the most important part for us, that of the South-Western theater of military operations: in the Bulgarian -Turkish direction, which will be an addition to the reconnaissance, which I did to this direction in September of 1956, with the area of the Black Sea strait and with the territory that extends towards the Aegean, Mediterranean, Ionian and Adriatic seas".⁴

Zhukov himself had also requested that the Central Committee of the Soviet Union's Communist Party consider the possibility of combining his visit with the visit of the Communist leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev. This suggestion was argued by the fact that the purely military nature of this visit would be less noticeable. In fact, the joint visit was not only prevented, but the deeply military nature was noticeable even from the accompanying delegation itself, which included the commander of the troops of the Odesa

¹ In May 1956, Pospelovi visited Albania. After Pospelov, Marshal Zhukov's visit as a senior military officer was a very important moment in Albania's international relations.

² H. Kaba, E. Çeku, *Albania and Kosovo...*, CW., p. 168-169. Doc. No. 44. Conversation recorded between the Charge d'Affaires of the USSR in PRA, M. Ja. Hoshev with the first deputy Premier, B. Balluku regarding the anti-Albanian activity of the Yugoslav mission in PRA and the invitation of Marshal G.K. Zhukov to Albania.

³ Ibid., p.170. Doc. No. 45. Decision of the the CC Presidium of the USSR CP "On travel measures for Comrade Zhukov's visit to Yugoslavia and Albania".

⁴ Zhukov's personal notes, Letter to the CC of the USSR CP.

military district, colonel general A.I. Raxijevskij, the deputy commander of the Black Sea Fleet, rear admiral S.E. Chursin, deputy head of the General Political Directorate, lieutenant general F.P. Stepchenko, as well as a general appointed for the Minister of Defense of the USSR.⁵

This decision coincided with the time when Enver Hoxha was on vacation in the USSR. He was informed by Khrushchev that Marshal Zhukov would visit Yugoslavia and Albania during the month of October. In his notes, E. Hoxha claims that he was happy with this news, which apparently seemed more enthusiastic than it should have been and Khrushchev did not like it. "Look at Enver, how happy he is to receive Zhukov, he told his friends."⁶ Zhukov was received in Albania with all the required honors. The Ministry of Defense prepared a special protocol for his reception, detailed with the schedules and visits he would make during his stay.⁷ Although not foreseen in this protocol, at the airport Marshal Zhukov was received by E. Hoxha himself.⁸ He made a number of visits such as: to the State University of Tirana, the Textile Plant, the United Officers School, agricultural cooperative enterprises, etc. The Albanian communist leadership took care to demonstrate great love and loyalty to the USSR. This attracted the attention of the marshal, who was excited by the reception of the Albanian people, which he clearly expressed in the telegram he sent to the CC of the USSR CP from Albania to the USSR. He wrote that it could be safely said that the Albanian people was a sure and loyal friend.⁹

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY IN MARSHAL ZHUKOV'S ESTIMATION

The impressions of the Albanian army from the documentation turn out to be positive. During his stay in Albania, Zhukov attended the training of military troops in the mountains near the city of Korça [the training took place in the area of Voskopoja E.S]. According to the marshal, the Albanian army was capable of war. The entire military corps [soldiers, NCOs and officers] showed high endurance and good agility during the actions in the mountains.¹⁰ Ideological education was also valued as a good point. But during the visit, he found problems with anti-aircraft and landing defense, as well as the old

⁵ Ibid... document no. 5

⁶ E. Hoxha, Diary 1955-1957, Tirana: "8 November" Publishing House, Vol 1, 1987, p. 361.

⁷ CAAE, Stock 100/1, V.1957, D.10, pp.1-6. Order No. 0058, dated 19.09.1957. On the arrangements for the reception of the Minister of Defense of the USSR, Marshal Zhukov.

⁸ E. Hoxha, Diary..., CW, p.360. According to Hoxha's notes, Zhukov represented not only the Minister of Defense of the USSR, but also "the senior officials of the Bolshevik Party and the Hero of the Red Army.

⁹ H. Kaba, E. Çeku, Albania and Kosovo..., CW., p.172. Document No. 46. Telegram from the Minister of Defense of the USSR, G.K. Zhukov, sent to the CC of the USSR CP, on the progress of the visit and the talks with the leaders of Albania.

¹⁰ Ibid

methods of preparation in army units. But the real focus of this visit was the strategic recognition of the Albanian coast, which is clearly stated in point four of the telegram that Zhukov sent to Moscow, during his stay in Albania. Zhukov himself claims that the issue of defending the Albanian coast deserves special attention.¹¹ It was already known the intention of the Soviets to turn the Albanian coast to a base for the deployment of submarines that would operate on the Mediterranean Sea.

The Ministry of People's Defense made a preliminary study of the country's defense needs on the occasion of Zhukov's visit. In this defense plan, point ten is of interest, according to which it was requested that missiles be installed on the Albanian coast, to be defended against Greece.¹² In the same study, the issue of the Navy is also covered. The conclusion of the Albanian side was that the navy should remain as it was. For the submarines expected to arrive under the agreement of September 12, 1957, it was proposed that they have Soviet personnel. "The Soviets wanted to come with their crews."¹³ At the time of the visit, the Albanian navy did not have specialized personnel for submarines. This also explains why it was not only accepted but also requested that the Soviets bring both the submarines and their crews. This proposal is important to understand the ensuing conflicts that were caused by the presence of two crews inside the same submarine.*

Being a specialist himself, Zhukov found that the Albanian coast - which from a strategic point of view was extremely important for the entire socialist camp - was in serious need of coastal defense¹⁴. He proposed to fortify the Albanian coast with cannons [artillery] which meant defense war against enemy ships in the channel of Otranto. One of his companions, at the same time the military attaché of Albania to Moscow, Halim Ramohito, in his confession affirms that "the marshal's thoughts did not consider the dangers that could result from any potential attack against our country, but the possibility of their hegemony from that strategic direction."¹⁵

During his visit to Karaburun, he described it as a "wonderful place for shells,

¹¹ Ibid

¹² AFCA, Fund 100/3, V.1957, D.41, page 34. Report for the Minister of Defense, B. Balluku.

¹³ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁴ *During the Albanian-Soviet crisis at the Vlora Base in 1960-1961, the existence of two crews in it the same submarine brought many problems. The Albanian crews claimed that they had passed the test to use the submarines, while the Soviet crews remained, claiming that the Albanian side was incapable. Since Soviet crews were usually called instructors, in this capacity they should left the submarines, as soon as they were handed over to the Albanian side.

H. Kaba, E. Çeku, Albania and Kosovo..., CW., p.173.

¹⁵ H. Ramohito, *On duty...*, CW., p.64.

planes and anti-ship missiles with a range of 5-600 km.”¹⁶ Zhukov proposed the construction of four missile stations¹⁷. The Vlora station would be equipped with anti-aircraft missiles. Likewise, another station had to be erected for the defense of the capital.¹⁸ In this visit, the place where the works would be carried out was determined.¹⁹ Zhukov’s enthusiasm is already known through his statement: “This is a wonderful bay! The Black Sea, where we have part of our fleet, is actually a lake. Let us deploy the fleet we have there here at this base.”²⁰ But the Albanian side, also, calculated its benefits. During the October 24 meeting requested by Enver Hoxha, he reiterated to Zhukov how important his visit was for the Albanian people, party and government. This visit was used as a demagogic element to reinforce the shaky positions of ALP. Strengthening the country’s defense was another major benefit.²¹

THE ATTITUDE OF THE ALBANIAN LEADERSHIP TOWARDS ZHUKOV’S PROPOSALS

In the minutes of the meeting of the Politburo, on October 24, 1957, through the discussion of Enver Hoxha and the reporting of Beqir Balluku, the essential reasons that pushed the communist regime to accept the creation of a Naval Combat Base, which would have a large number of Soviet military personnel. The Albanian army lacked not only in the materiel, but also qualified people.²² With the provision of modern technology and the arrival of submarines, there was not enough time to train Albanian officials. The acceptance of Soviet military members and technicians was a must, and both sides knew it.

Reading the minutes of the October 24 meeting, the statements made by Enver Hoxha shed light on the fact that he understood that the Albanian coast would be used for a possible confrontation with NATO. “Soviet comrades and especially Zhukov made it even clearer to us the great importance of the

¹⁶ CSA, Stock 14 AP/OU, V.1957, D 20, p.2. Minutes of the PB meeting

¹⁷ Missile defense was among the most advanced strategies for the time.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.2. According to the minutes, Zhukovi and Enver Hoxha had discussed a system of tunnels in Karaburun. Based on the type of weaponry mentioned in the minutes, it is understood that the Bay of Vlora was preparing to face military actions that crossed the borders of the defense of our country. So it was closer to a combat theater of attack, where the two blocs could be involved.

²⁰ H. Ramohito, In service..., CW., p. 28

²¹ CSA, Stock 14 AP/OU, V.1957, D 20, p.2. Beqir Balluku, while reporting to the Politburo, explains that the the USSR’s donation 4 submarines in 1958 and the promise of 8 more in 1959, was closely related to the fact that the area was of great interest in strategic defense or attack plans. Also see: Ana Lalaj, “Albania: From the Warsaw Pact...”, CA., p.177.

²² Ibid., p.2. The equipment with modern combat vehicles posed the problem of modernization of the army with tactical units. Such were an aircraft division and a bombing regiment, which were to serve combat operations in this region.

Mediterranean basin in a future war.”²³ The Sixth American Fleet, along with its Italian, English, and other partners, was gathered in this region. Under these circumstances, Enver Hoxha supported the idea that a strong defensive base should be established on the Mediterranean [that is the Vlora Base] and even went further, demanding that this base be simultaneously offensive.”²⁴ In continuation of this idea, Enver Hoxha also reported in PB the conversations that Zhukov had held with the Soviet officers who accompanied him. “We must manage to annihilate the US Sixth Fleet from the bases in Albania.”²⁵

Zhukov did not hide the fact that for the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus and the islands of Greece were a major obstacle. Albania was a very good opportunity for the Soviet Union. Therefore, the willingness to bring new submarines was justifiable for the Soviet side. The Albanian side was happy with the increase in the country’s defense force but worried that this defense capability exceeded the economic and human capacities of Albania. All this armament required a dedicated military budget. The Albanian government did not have the necessary personnel and the cost of maintenance for these combat vehicles was estimated at millions of rubles.²⁶

The minutes of this meeting clearly show the idea that the 8 new submarines should be kept by the Soviets. But “the officers and the people who will serve in them should wear the Albanian uniform and the vehicles should carry the Albanian flag.”²⁷ Without mentioning names, but using the general term “enemies”, E. Hoxha made it clear that this action undertaken would cause trouble.²⁸ So, the political-military implications that this base brought to the region were not unknown and the decision-making cannot be considered naive. The creation of such a military base could not go unnoticed by either the neighbors or the West. Expressions such as “the trouble of the enemies does not affect us at all”, suited the pragmatist choice, conditioned primarily by internal circumstances. At this moment, the Vlora military base presented as a WT base was seen not only as a solution to defense problems but also as

²³ Ibid., p. 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., p.5.

²⁷ Ibid., p.6. From a military point of view, starting from the process of engaging foreign troops in another country, these troops should be declared within the alliance. Even in the case where it was a bilateral agreement, this troop deployment could not be done without approval by the People’s Assembly. There is still no discussion on the legal basis about the deployment of Soviet troops in our country. Bilateral agreements between the two Ministries of Defense are taken into account as valid documents.

²⁸ Ibid.

a means of prestige. With an apparent euphoria, the defense of Albania was seen as closely connected with the defense of the entire socialist camp.²⁹

Seen in military terms, the Vlora base would be the front line of the war. This reasoning derives from unconditionally agreeing with the arrival of 12 submarines and opening the way for the Soviets to send as many “defensive” combat vehicles to Albania as possible to liquidate the American fleet. Based on the combat radius based in Sazan and Vlora, the base would serve to block NATO’s supplies on the Adriatic in case of conflict. Paralleling the crisis with that of the Suez Canal³⁰, Enver Hoxha also “justified” his position that the base should be given to the Soviet comrades who probably expected such a thing from the Albanian side.³¹ Giving this strategic area over was seen as an acceptable thing and because according to the reasoning of Enver Hoxha “there was nothing principled”³², as the existence of the country was very closely linked with that of the USSR.

The truth of this statement is closely related to Enver Hoxha’s urgent personal needs to maintain power at the time when the proposal was made. These internal needs were so urgent that even in the speech given by Hoxha, the urgency to propose this initiative to Zhukov was felt: “we do not ask that they give us this or that, but we think that the defense of our country should be considered as the defense of every point of the USSR”.³³ Vlora would, thus, become a fortress in front of Sevastopol, preventing the American Fleet from crossing into the Black Sea. For this reason, not only submarines should come to Vlora, but also the presence of cruisers³⁴ was welcomed, not simply for the parades as it had happened in the visits of 1954 and 1956, but because they should be given to the Albanian army to increase its combat capabilities. Militarily, this was an open call for an offensive, rather than defensive, war. Although the Albanian military doctrine did not foresee such a thing, the strengthening of the base with combat vehicles of this category caused its mission to be transformed. In the conversation dated October 24, Zhukov promised the Albanian side that the submarines that were predicted to arrive

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ The Suez Crisis of 1956, caused by the Egyptian government was sponsored by the Soviet Union.

³¹ Ibid

³² To understand the meaning of this expression, we can refer to the ideological principles categorized by Brzezinski on which the satellite countries of Eastern Europe had signed their bilateral agreements with the USSR. First, Soviet supremacy in the international proletariat, second, the fight against imperialism internationally and domestically, third and perhaps most important in this case, the universal acceptability of the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

in 1956 would be equipped with missiles with a range of km.³⁵ All these facts gave the West the right to see the Vlora Naval Base as a threat in the framework of the Cold War.

CONCLUSION

The decision to return Vlora to a powerful military-naval base was promoted as a decision of the entire Albanian people and that would be welcomed with enthusiasm. E. Hoxha ceded Vlora without hesitation, convinced that he had made a very profitable agreement with the Soviets. The presence of a large number of Soviet soldiers in the territory of Albania was covered with the propaganda “how much the people love the Soviet people”, and even comparisons were made within the socialist camp, such as, “Albania is not like Poland.”³⁶ Two days after the departure of Marshal Zhukov from Albania, the Council of Ministers issued the “Top Secret” instruction, which prohibited the navigation and staying of foreign and Albanian ships in Pashaliman Bay (Vlora) and the designation of the Karaburun peninsula as a military zone.³⁷ On its part, the Ministry of People’s Defense requested the Council of Ministers to issue a decision that Pashaliman, from an open bay based on the International Code, should return to a closed bay. Strict measures were enforced with the establishment of police checkpoints. The movement of personnel of diplomatic missions in the direction of Vlora was restricted, and they were to be searched by the Ministry of the Interior. Search would also be exercised over the Vlora - Gjirokastër bus drivers.³⁸ Although at a distance from the coastal area, another category that had to be kept under control were the internees in the Llakatund area. A reminder was also made about the residence process in the city of Vlora. All this to avoid agential activity.

The establishment of the Naval Combat Base of Vlora, which recognized a new strategic role for our country, led to the creation of a military state. The number of soldiers was increased over the number foreseen on the basis of the structure defined by the Warsaw Treaty, even though Marshal Zhukov had repeated the idea that Albania should not have a large army.³⁹ The consequences of this extreme militarization began to be seen in the first years of the conversion of this base. In the letter that Mehmet Shehu sent to

³⁵ CSA, Stock 14 AP/OU, V.1957, D 20, p.2. Minutes of the PB meeting

³⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

³⁷ CAAF, P.100/1, V.1957, D.42. Order No. 788, “On the ban on the navigation and staying of foreign and Albanian ships in the Pashaliman bay (Vlora) and on the designation of the Karaburun peninsula as a military zone”.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 2. CM Order dated 15.09.1958 point 5.

³⁹ CSA, Stock 14 AP/OU, V.1957, D 20, p.2.

N. Khrushchev in August 1960⁴⁰, to request a loan of 125 million rubles, explained that the Albanian government had spent the amount of 204 million rubles donated based on the agreement of March 9, 1956 for the rearmament of the People's Army, as well as a loan of 38 million rubles with a repayment term up to 10 years, starting from 1960. As a result of this spending, the expenses of the rearmament plan, amounting to 58 million rubles, were left uncovered.⁴¹

Zhukov's visit to Albania did not have the "happy ending" that the Albanian leadership would have liked. It was on his journey from Albania to Moscow that Zhukov would receive the news of his dismissal from the post of Minister of Defense and his replacement by Marshal Malinovski. The way in which Zhukov left office undoubtedly shocked Enver Hoxha. Even in the analysis they made in his memoirs of the dismissal of Zhukov, he calls it "anti-democratic; it sounds like a coup".⁴² But the Albanian leader kept these grievances to himself. Beqir Balluku, in his capacity as Minister of Defense, sent a congratulatory letter to Zhukov's successor, Marshal Malinovski. Military cooperation between the parties was a priority in the policy of the Soviet Union towards Albania. As for Zhukov, the anecdotal expression "you were discharged in the air, like Zhukov" remained. Regarding the military projects, they were short-lived, as the break with the Soviet Union would happen before they became a reality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Archives

Central State Archive of the Republic of Albania [CSA]

Stocks:

F:14/Archive of the Party – Leading Bodies, AP/OU, year 1957/ file:20

Central Archive of the Armed Forces [CAAF]

Stocks:

F: 100/1- General Staff of the Armed Forces [GSAF], year 1957/ file: 42

F100/3 – Year 1957, file: 10.382.

⁴⁰ CAAF, P.100/3, V.1960, D.382, p.4-5. Letter from the Premier, M. Shehu, sent to N. Khrushchev for granting the Albanian Army a loan of 125 million rubles.

⁴¹ Ibid. p. 4-5.

⁴² E. Hoxha, *Diary 1955-1957...*, CW., p. 378.

2. HOXHA, Enver, *Diary 1955-1957*, Tirana: “8 November” Publishing House, Vol 1, 1987,
3. LALAJ, Ana, “Albania in the Warsaw Pact, 1955-1968”, in: *Historical Studies*, 2004, no. 1-2.
4. SMAÇI, Etleva, doctoral dissertation, “*Albania in the Warsaw Treaty*”, Tirana, 2017.
5. Kaba, H & Çeku, E, *Albania and Kosovo in the Russian archives*, Pristina: Brezi 81, year, 2011.
6. Ramohito, H, *In the service of my people*, Tirana: Grandprix, 2015.

MILITARY RELATIONS BETWEEN ALBANIA AND YUGOSLAVIA 1945-1948. EFFORTS FOR THE UNIFICATION OF THE TWO ARMIES

Captain Msc. Hekuran BUDANI

Msc. Orgest XHANGOLI

Faculty of Defense and Security, AAF

ABSTRACT

In the early stages of close relations between Albania and Yugoslavia, the reorganization of the Albanian Army played a special role, especially considering the issues with the Greek-Albanian border. In this regard, requests for support and advice were directed towards Yugoslavia.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the military relations between Albania and Yugoslavia from the end of World War II until 1948, and specifically examine the efforts made by both parties to unify the two armies.

Based on archival documents from the State Central Archive and the Central Archive of the Armed Forces, as well as other secondary sources, this study reflects several attempts made by the leadership at that time to unify the two armies in issues such as ideological-political unification with soldiers and officers, assistance from Yugoslav officers at different levels, doctrinal unification, a unified operational plan in case of war with the Yugoslav army, legislation as well, including the Albanian army in the Yugoslav army budget, etc.

Key words: military relations, unification, Albania, Yugoslavia, platform, memorandum, radiogram.

INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, Yugoslavia was the first country to recognize the Albanian government and establish diplomatic relations with it. As a result of the cooling off with the West, Albania's new orientation would be towards communist powers, and since Moscow did not show any particular interest in Albania, the latter turned towards neighboring Yugoslavia.

Albanian-Yugoslav relations after World War II until 1948 were developed on political, economic, and military unifying platforms. The Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance between the two countries (July 9, 1946) would be followed by a series of economic agreements. Among them, the "Convention for the Coordination of Economic Plans, Customs Union, and Currency Equalization" (November 27, 1946) was prominent. In the military field, relations reached their peak especially in the second half of 1947 when efforts for unification were already fully documented with the opening of archives.

All of this Yugoslav strategy towards Albania was done with the knowledge and permission of Stalin. In the meeting that Tito had with Stalin in Moscow in May 1946, the latter suggested to Tito to sign as many bilateral agreements as possible with Albania, in order for the union between the two countries to be sought from below, by the Albanians themselves. It was precisely one month after this meeting, in June 1946, when Enver Hoxha was invited to Belgrade, where the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance between Albania and Yugoslavia was prepared. The following months were filled with the signing of bilateral agreements in various fields such as economy, finance, military, culture, etc. "In practice, we are creating a Federation," J.B. Tito would express during this time.

In June 1947, when the front line of the Greek Democratic Army's battles with the Greek National Army had shifted to the border with Albania, in the mountains of Vici and Gramoz, Albania's role for the emerging communist bloc gained importance for Moscow. Enver Hoxha was urgently summoned by Stalin in Moscow (July 14-26, 1947), while Tito increased pressure on the Albanian communist leadership for Albania's inclusion in a common federation. Albania's inclusion in Yugoslavia would strengthen Yugoslavia's geostrategic position, giving it a coastal line stretching from the Adriatic to the Ionian Sea; while a united Macedonia (including Vardar, Pirin, and Aegean Macedonia) within the Yugoslav federation would enhance its credibility among the southern Slavic peoples.

The Soviet Union, with its indifference and lack of concern for Albania and its open preference for Tito's Yugoslavia, allowed Yugoslavia to have a free hand to gradually extend its influence and intervention in Albania to such an extent

that it seriously threatened its independence and territorial integrity.

It is a fact that until they themselves entered into conflict with Tito, the Soviet leaders showed no concern or interest in the fate of Albania and the Albanians as a whole. They believed that “the Yugoslavs should deal with them.” Even Molotov, the number two in the Soviet leadership at that time, declared that “we provide economic aid to Albania through Yugoslavia.” This statement is supported by V. Stojniçi’s declaration at the Second Plenum, stating “You are small!” and “Without Yugoslavia, you cannot maintain the situation. Therefore, your perspective is a “Confederation and beyond.”¹²

EFFORTS TO UNIFY THE TWO ARMIES

“Authors Malltezi and Plasari in their publication of several documents on Albanian-Yugoslav relations in the years 1945-1948 state on page 90 of the book, where they say ‘E. Hoxha... was fully in favor of uniting the Albanian Army with the Yugoslav Army.’”³

Based on this thesis, which is also found in articles, scientific debates, and historiography texts, we decided to research archival documents and other sources that, as we will see below, provide many facts and events that allow us a deeper interpretation of this thesis.

The first step towards establishing inter-state relations between Albania and Yugoslavia was taken on February 20, 1945 in Belgrade, where the treaty on alliance and mutual assistance between Yugoslavia and Albania was signed.⁴

The treaty, signed by Josip Broz Tito on behalf of the National Liberation Committee of Yugoslavia and Myslim Peza on behalf of the Albanian government, aimed to develop and strengthen good neighborly and friendly relations between the allied peoples of Yugoslavia and Albania. The treaty highlights the fact that these relations were formed with a special “sincerity” during the war against the Nazi-fascist invaders.

Cooperation between the two respective communist parties was significant, with many Yugoslavs being placed in our state institutions as experts. Albanian-Yugoslav relations were further strengthened after Enver Hoxha’s visit to Yugoslavia on July 23, 1946. The scope of cooperation between the two communist countries undoubtedly extended to the military field as well.

¹ E. Hoxha, *Titistët*, Tirana, f. 198.

² CSA, *Fund 14, Record of the Meeting of the IX Plenum of the Central Committee of the Part of Labour of Albania, September 1948.*

³ Plasari, N. & Malltezi, L. (1996), *Albanian-Yugoslav Relations 1945-1948 Documents*, General Directorate of Archives.

⁴ Krisafi, Ledion (2017) *Albania and Yugoslavia 1945-1948*, Tirana

In May 1946, Koci Xoxe wrote to Aleksandar Rankovic, the Yugoslav Minister of Internal Affairs, regarding the organization of the secret service, which also included details about the Albanian army.⁵

*A similar advice to the Yugoslavs, but regarding the issue of the Albanian army, Enver Hoxha also requests it in a letter sent to Tito at the end of 1946. "Through this letter, I wanted to consult with you about some issues that are particularly related to our army and the actions we plan to take during 1947," begins Enver Hoxha's letter.*⁶

Furthermore, he continues by providing details about the Albanian army. "To make my picture clear, I want to inform you briefly about the situation of our National Army. It has a total strength of 44,015 personnel, excluding the police forces."

*Furthermore, Enver Hoxha lists 2,927 officers, 5,321 non-commissioned officers, 34,937 soldiers, and 800 military cadets. He outlines the organizational structure of the numbers mentioned above by specifying how many of them were enlisted in the army in the years 1942-43-44, respectively 8,987 individuals. He also mentions how many of them were called up as reservists in August 1946 and how many in October of the same year.*⁷

Additionally, in documents discovered in the Archive of the Armed Forces, we have found a radiogram where the military cabinet of the Ministry of Defense of Albania sends a message to the Albanian military attaché in Yugoslavia, expressing among other things: "Request from the Yugoslav headquarters to bring us the draft law on mobilization, recruitment of soldiers, and prior military service if possible."⁸

These efforts by the Albanian government for a more unified army with the Yugoslavs would also reach their peak. In a memorandum addressed to Enver Hoxha in 1947, Mehmet Shehu wrote that the unification of the two respective armies should be done as soon as possible, explaining the main points that needed to be undertaken. Enver Hoxha not only gave his approval but also emphasized some issues in another letter that could serve the unification of the two armies but were missing from Mehmet Shehu's memorandum. These issues included: "1) Unification of ideological-political work with soldiers and officers. 2) Unification of the organization of political organs. 3) Yugoslav officers will be sent: one in Shkodra and one in Vlora; they will bring or

⁵ Lala, Brisejda, the project of the Balkan federation in Albanian-Yugoslav relations in 1945-1948, acts vi, 5: 486-490, Tirana 2013.

⁶ Central State Archive (F14\AP, file 5, year 1946), Tirana

⁷ Central State Archive (F14\AP, file 5, year 1946), Tirana

⁸ Central Archive of the Armed Forces (F1, file 116, year 1946), Tirana

establish the same line of development in all sectors of our armies. 4) The budget should be unified, not divided, for administrative purposes and to avoid any confusion that may arise, etc.”⁹

Yugoslav military advisors and instructors were deployed near the Albanian army. They were distributed within the Ministry of National Defense, alongside directorates, divisions, regiments, and the officer's school, etc.

During a visit to Belgrade in December 1947, the Albanian party and government delegation, composed of E. Hoxha, K. Xoxe, H. Kapo, and K. Themelko, were received by Tito, Kardeli, and other members of the Political Bureau of the CPY. In this meeting, Tito expressed satisfaction that “the CC of the CPA has seen the right path to follow.” Regarding the army, he said that “Albania cannot bear all the expenses as they burden the economy. Therefore, everything, equipment and armaments, will be included in the Yugoslav budget.” Meanwhile, Hoxha declared that “training and organization will be the same.”

To implement these decisions in the military sector, a high-level Yugoslav delegation arrived in Albania from December 24th to 27th, 1947, led by Lieutenant General Rade Hamović, Chief of the Operational Directorate of the General Staff. Lieutenant General Sava Derlević, commander of the rear guard, and Major General Branko Petričević, deputy chief of the Political Directorate of the Yugoslav army also participated in it.

After discussions, they came to the conclusion for a unifying platform of the Albanian army with the Yugoslav army. The platform begins with these words: “In the interest of defending our countries and strengthening the Albanian Army, various military issues were discussed and common views were identified for all matters, which views will be presented to the Supreme Commanders of the Yugoslav Army and the Albanian Army for their approval.” The first point of this Platform was:¹⁰

1. To quickly unify the Albanian army with the Yugoslav army:

- the Albanian army should have a unified operational plan in case of war with the Yugoslav army;*
- all orders of the Yugoslav army would also be valid for the Albanian army;*
- legislation as well;*
- the Albanian army to be incorporated into the budget of the Yugoslav army.*

⁹ Central Archive of the Armed Forces (F2, file 32, year 1947), Tirana

¹⁰ Lalaj, Ana “Platform of the unification of the Albanian army with the Yugoslav army in 1947”, Tirana 2014.

2. At the same time, the proposals emphasized that:

- *“A delegate from the Yugoslav Ministry of People’s Defense would be stationed at the Ministry of People’s Defense of Albania;*

- *Chief of Staff, General-Colonel M. Shehu, to be removed and replaced by Colonel Beqir Balluku; and there was no longer a need for Soviet military instructors to come to the Albanian army as previously announced.”*

REASONS THAT LED TO THE FAILURE OF UNIFICATION

Despite all the efforts of both parties, the Albanian army did not join forces with the Yugoslav army, not even in the years 1946-47 when relations between Albania and Yugoslavia were at their closest.

Yugoslavia’s conflict with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, as well as its condemnation and exclusion from the socialist camp and the International Communist Movement in 1948, immediately affected Albanian-Yugoslav relations. The dispute between Yugoslavia and its Soviet partner reached its peak at a meeting of the Communist Information Bureau in Bucharest. On June 28, 1948, the Yugoslav Communist Party was accused of deviating from Stalin’s strict Marxist line. Stalin did not view favorably the increasing strength of the Yugoslav state in the Balkans and Tito’s almost independent policy. On April 13, 1948, a copy of the letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union dated March 27 arrived in Albania, accusing the Yugoslav Communist Party and its leaders of their anti-Soviet and anti-Marxist line.^{11 12}

Albania, on its part, had long been dissatisfied with Yugoslavia. The pressure exerted by the Yugoslav government on the Albanian government to include it in the Yugoslav Federation was unbearable, so the greatest desire of Albanian leaders was to distance themselves from Yugoslavia. This letter came as a gift from heaven to E. Hoxha, who under these circumstances wanted nothing more than to distance himself from Yugoslav influence.

Stalin began to take an interest in our country when our relationship with Yugoslavia was coming to an end. In this case, Albania would have been of great importance to the Soviets as it would have provided them with access to the Adriatic Sea. Albania had a favorable geographical position, being a neighbor of Greece (a British influence zone) and only a few kilometers away from Italy by sea. “On the other hand, after the breakdown of Soviet-Yugoslav

¹¹ Lala, Brisejda, the project of the Balkan federation in Albanian-Yugoslav relations in 1945-1948, acts VI, 5: 486-490, Tirana 2013.

¹² Central State Archive (AQSH 1949, D. 18: 11), Tirana.

relations, Stalin also needed an Albania positioned against Tito's Yugoslavia, in order to narrow the circle of isolation for the heretic Yugoslav leader who dared to oppose him." In these circumstances, Albania became more and more the center of attention for the Soviets. Thus, E. Hoxha made a clever move by separating from Yugoslavia and expressing his loyalty to the USSR, eliminating his political opponents. In this context, several members of the Political Bureau, including K. Xoxe, Minister of Interior, were executed on the pretext that they were considered traitors to the people for collaborating with the Yugoslav government in an attempt to overthrow the government in power. The Party of Labor of Albania did not hesitate for a second to break away from Yugoslav influence. This was a lifesaver for the communist regime and for Hoxha himself personally.

On July 1, 1948, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania sent two letters to the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, stating that all Yugoslav experts who were in Albania in all departments had to leave within 48 hours and at the same time Albania would abandon any agreement it had signed with Yugoslavia.¹³

CONCLUSIONS

This work aimed to take a look at the military relations between Albania and Yugoslavia in the years 1945-1948 and specifically illustrate with archival documents the efforts to unify the Albanian army with the Yugoslav one.

Based on archival documents from the State Central Archive and the Central Archive of the Armed Forces and other secondary sources, we have come to the conclusion that there were concrete plans for unification between the two governments at that time, but actual implementation failed due to external factors that went beyond even the relations between Albania and Yugoslavia. The relations between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia would have a great influence on Albania's relations with the Soviet Union in the future.

The choice of Yugoslavia as a "first partner" was not entirely a voluntary decision by the Albanian leadership. Meetings between Tito and Stalin show that Albanians strongly wanted to go to Moscow first and then to Belgrade, but the Soviet leader thought otherwise. It was mostly a choice made by the Soviet Union that determined Albanian-Yugoslav relations. After the Soviet Union became Albania's main partner and helped it on the path to communism, Albania did not regret the break in relations with Yugoslavia.

On the contrary, it felt liberated from them and turned to the Soviet Union, finding a political and economic ally in it.

¹³ Krisafi, Ledion (2017) Albania and Yugoslavia 1945-1948, Tirana

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archive:

1. ASHA - Central State Archive, Tirana.
2. CQAF - Central Archive of the Armed Forces, Tirana.

Texts and articles:

1. Plasari, N. & Malltezi. (1996), "Albanian-Yugoslav Relations 1945-1948 Documents, General Directorate of Archives."
2. Krisafi, "Albania and Yugoslavia 1945-1948", Tirana 2017.L.
3. Smirnova, N. "History of Albania during the 20th century", Tirana 2004.
4. Gurakuqi, R. "The problem of the Albanian-Yugoslav federation", July, Tirana 2011.
5. Gjilas, M. "The Face of Totalitarianism", Tirana 2006.
6. Hoxha, E. "Titistët ", Tirana 1982.
7. Lala, B. "The Project of Balkan Federation in Albanian-Yugoslav Relations in 1945-1948", acts VI, 5: 486-490, Tirana 2013.
8. Lalaj, A. "The Platform for Unification of the Albanian and Yugoslav Armies in 1947", Tirana 2014.
9. Duka, V. "History of Albania 1912-2000", Tirana 2007

For any further information, you can contact at:

Address: Academy of the Armed Forces (AAF)
Military Scientific Research Institute (MSRI)
Editing and Publishing Group
Rruga e Dibrës, Tirana, Albania
No. Phone: 516/1515

