Katarzyna Maniszewska
Monika Nowicka
Paulina Piasecka
Vanessa Tinker Editors

SECURITY AND SOCIETY

IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Volume 7

SRAS | Collegium Civitas

Katarzyna Maniszewska
Monika Nowicka
Paulina Piasecka
Vanessa Tinker Editors

SECURITY AND SOCIETY

IN THE INFORMATION AGE

Volume 7

SRAS

Collegium Civitas

Warsaw 2024

Contents

Preface

This book results from the 10th edition of the Summer School "Security and Society in the Information Age" held at Collegium Civitas in Warsaw, Poland, between June and July 2024.

The volume brings together papers by undergraduate students – participants in the program presenting the "Youth Perspectives on Security".

Designed and run in collaboration with a leading American study abroad company SRAS, the program "Security and Society in the Information Age" is uniquely positioned to address global issues through the lens of Central Europe's rich historical and cultural backdrop.

This year's curriculum was particularly poignant, focusing on the regional and global implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and exploring the interconnectedness of conflicts across different regions, including the Middle East. The topics discussed during the program are reflected in the papers by the contributors to this volume. The topics range from hybrid warfare, migration issues, and countering terrorism through war and peacebuilding to geopolitical strategies of powers in the multipolar world.

In 2024, twenty students from various U.S. universities participated in the program, which combines the four-week intensive course on Central Europe & Security Issues with a two-week research internship with the Terrorism Research Center – a research unit at Collegium Civitas and a leading think-tank on security issues in Poland. Collegium Civitas and SRAS are proud to offer this immersive experience that educates and prepares future leaders to understand and engage with complex global challenges.

We hope you will find the perspectives gathered in this book interesting, and we invite you to learn more about the study abroad and summer school program "Security and Society in the Information Age" at: www.securityandsociety.org.

Dr. Katarzyna Maniszewska
Vice-Rector for International
Relations
Collegium Civitas

Dr. Paulina Piasecka
Director
Terrorism Research Center

Renee Stillings
Director
SRAS

PART 1

REGIONAL CONFLICTS AND MILITARY STRATEGIES

1

A Contemporary Analysis of Armenia's Current Peacebuilding Window

Xavier RAYMONDSON

Abstract: Since the fall of the USSR, Armenia has been embroiled in conflicts with its neighbors, particularly Azerbaijan. Although Armenia's conflict with Azerbaijan has historical roots, the current conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan started with Armenia's support of the de facto Nagorno-Karabakh government inside Azerbaijan during the USSR, which had an Armenian population. Azerbaijan's strong ties with Russia and influence over Türkiye have isolated Armenia, impacting its economy and diplomatic relationships. Now, due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Armenia's newer pro-Western leadership, Armenia finds itself at a crucial crossroads. In consideration of the current geopolitical contexts and pro-Western leadership, this research aims to underline the importance of this unique window of opportunity and the urgency of continued and sustained peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It also delves into the reasons for past peacebuilding failures and potential consequences if this opportunity is not promptly seized, including further isolation, economic downturn, and a reignition of conflict.

Keywords: Armenia, European Union, Nagorno-Karabakh, Peacebuilding, Türkiye, United States

Introduction

Armenia is located at a crossroads of nations and is now politically at a crossroads of its future. Armenia borders Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Iran to the south, and Türkiye to the west, with no sea or port access. Armenia's economy and sovereignty depends significantly on the countries' attitudes surrounding it. Armenia has no allies on its borders and borders two historical enemies: Türkiye and Azerbaijan. Before 2018, Russia had been Armenia's greatest and most influential ally. The Russian military pushed out the Ottoman army during the Armenian genocide, ensured Armenian sovereignty by placing Russia's 102nd Military Base in Gyumri 10 miles from the Turkish Border, and attempted peacebuilding between Armenian and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

However, in September 2023, during Azerbaijan's renewed Turkish-backed offensive into the Armenian-backed region of Nagorno-Karabakh (which lies in the territory of Azerbaijan), Russia failed to support Armenia and effectively diffuse the situation.[1] The Armenian government saw the invasion and Russia's inaction as a direct violation of the ceasefire agreement that Russia pushed for and, more importantly, a breach of the trust of the Armenian government and people. Due to Russia's mishandling of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the relationship between the two governments has been decaying, and Armenia's government and its people have been gradually looking toward the West for long-term support.[2] The West appears to be just as interested in helping bring Armenia into the EU and integrating its economics and politics with the West.[3]

---

[1] Alexander Atasuntsev, "Long-Standing Ties between Armenia and Russia Are Fraying Fast," carnegieendowment.org, October 13, 2023, https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politi-ka/2023/10/long-standing-ties-between-armenia-and-russia-are-fraying-fast?lang=en.

[2] Joshua Kucera, "Russian Military Base in Armenia at Eye of a Geopolitical Storm | Davis Center," daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu, March 29, 2024, https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/insights/russian-military-base-armenia-eye-geopolitical-storm.

[3] Europe correspondent, "EU-Armenia: Shifting Away from Russia," Europe Diplomatic, April 5, 2024, https://europediplomatic.com/2024/04/05/eu-armenia-shifting-away-from-russia/#:~:text=Brussels%20 05.04.2024%20The%20European%20Union%20has%20agreed%20on.

Since 2018, there has been a fundamental change in Armenia's domestic and international policy. With the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict coming to a close, the Armenian government's political distancing from Russia, and a pro-western Armenian government coming to fruition, Armenia is at a historical crossroads.

Substantial research has been conducted over the past two decades on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and peacebuilding efforts between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Research has highlighted Armenia's strong national identification with Karabakh and its impact on peacebuilding.[4] Additionally, it has explored how Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shaped the geopolitical landscape in the South Caucasus and how Western interest in Armenia has influenced peacebuilding between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[5] However, there remains limited research connecting all the active groups in the South Caucasus and their effect on the current peacebuilding process between Armenia and Azerbaijan and attention to this unique window of opportunity. This paper addresses this gap, examining all the major actors and analyzing Russia's contemporary exoduses from the political and military stage alongside the new pro-western Armenian leadership. More importantly it provides an analysis on how these recent events have reshaped the power dynamics in the South Caucasus and provided the US, EU, and Türkiye with new openings for influencing the current peace proceedings.

This research will examine why past peace initiatives between Armenia and its neighbors failed, and consider why the current peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan represent a unique window of opportunity, and the potential consequences of not seizing it promptly. Secondary sources will inform the findings of this paper, primarily scholarly journals

---

[4] Artak Ayunts, "Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Current State of Affairs and Prospects of Peace over Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: View from Armenia" (Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, 2022), https://iccn.ge/files/policy_paper_armenia_gppac_july_2022.pdf.

[5] Alexa Fults and Paul Stronski, "The Ukraine War Is Reshaping the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict," carnegieendowment.org, April 25, 2022, https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/04/the-ukraine-war-is-reshaping-the-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict?lang=en; Ray Salvatore Jennings, "Upgrading U.S. Support for Armenia's Postrevolution Reforms," carnegieendowment.org (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 14, 2019), https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/02/upgrading-us-support-for-armenias-postrevolution-reforms?lang=en.

and government websites, with references to news articles due to the daily changing situation. This paper provides a brief overview of the context of the war and the new leadership. The paper then explores Türkiye's, the USA's, and the EU's opportunities in the region and finally it will discuss the future of Armenian peacebuilding and further policy recommendations.

Context of War

The USSR fell, and the wars began. After the dissolution of the USSR, the former regime left all the countries of the South Caucasus in economic and political ruin. Wars and conflicts between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia were common, leaving bitter relations between these nations to this day, especially between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Even before the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) of Armenia was attempting to negotiate with the Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) of Azerbaijan for jurisdiction over the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region, which lay within the Azerbaijani SSR.[6] The Azerbaijani SSR and the Soviet Government heavily opposed the change of who had jurisdiction over Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1988, pogroms and other violent actions took place between the Armenians and Azeris of the region.[7] During this time of violence, the idea of uniting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia became a center point of Armenian national identity and politics, setting the stage for the first Karabakh war.

In 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh declared war on Azerbaijan and, with the support of Armenia, took much of southwestern Azerbaijan and formed a connection to Armenia through the Lachin Corridor, then going on to declare independence in early 1992.[8] This resulted in an Azerbaijani and Turkish

---

[6] Nagorno-Karabakh was a primarily Armenian-populated region within Azerbaijan.

[7] Razmik Panossian, "Post-Soviet Armenia: Nationalism & Its (Dis)Contents," in *Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States*, ed. Lowell W. Barrington (University of Michigan Press, 2006), 225–47, https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.126246.

[8] The independence of Nagorno-Karabakh was never internationally recognized.

blockade of Armenia, causing a horrible financial crash and a period of one of the poorest living conditions Armenia has ever experienced.[9]

Later, in 1994, a cease-fire, mediated by Russia, was instated until 2020. Between 1994 and 2020, Armenia's leaders were openly in support of the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and willing to use the Armenian military and economy to support that ideal. However, between those same years, Azerbaijan's leadership saw the cease-fire only as a pause to the fighting, stating that the situation in Karabakh was an "injustice" and an "occupation" of Azerbaijan's land.[10]

On September 27th, 2020, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev reported that Azerbaijan started a counterattack in response to "military provocation," ending the 1992 ceasefire and starting the second war for Karabakh. The Turkish-backed Azerbaijani military swept through the territory controlled by the Armenian-backed de facto Nagorno-Karabakh military on September 27th, 2020. Two months later, on November 9th, 2020, a cease-fire was instated, brokered by Russia, and signed by President Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The cease-fire forced all Armenian forces out of the region. It also instated Russian peacekeepers there for the next five years in exchange for the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, Xankändi, remaining connected to Armenia through the Lachin Corridor. However, due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022, the Lachin Corridor Mountain pass was blockaded in December 2022 by the Azerbaijani military with little to no resistance, leading to a renewed offensive by Azerbaijan in September 2023. By October, the Azerbaijani offensive forced ~100,000 ethnic Armenians from Karabakh to flee, effectively dissolving the de facto government of Nagorno-Karabakh and ending the major fighting to this day (June 1, 2024).[11]

---

[9] Alexander Iskandaryan, "Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores," *Freedom House* (Freedom House, 2014), https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT14_Armenia_final.pdf.

[10] "President Ilham Aliyev: As a Result of Our Army's Successful Counter-Offensive Several Settlements Have Been Liberated," AZERTAC (The Azerbaijan State News Agency, September 27, 2020), https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_As_a_result_of_our_army_039s_successful_counter_offensive_several_settlements_have_been_liberated-1596557.

[11] Olesya Vartanyan, "Armenia Struggles to Cope with Exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh | Crisis Group," www.crisisgroup.org, March 4, 2024, https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/armenian-azerbaijani-conflict-armenia/armenia-struggles-cope-exodus.

While this is a significant defeat for the Armenian government, this loss has led to a prerequisite being met for a peace deal that Azerbaijan and Türkiye have been putting on the table, Nagorno-Karabakh not being occupied by Armenian forces and the end of Armenian aid to the de facto government of Nagorno-Karabakh. This has also led Prime Minister of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan March 2024 to sign an agreement to return four border villages that were part of the SSR of Azerbaijan to the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, further showing Armenia's willingness to normalize diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan.[12]

Figure 1: Outline of the Borders Between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Source: "A Humanitarian Disaster Is under Way in Nagorno-Karabakh," *The Economist*, September 28, 2023, https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/09/28/a-humanitarian-disaster-is-under-way-in-nagorno-karabakh.

---

[12] "Armenia and Azerbaijan Peace Deal 'Closer than Ever' as Countries Start Fixing Common Border," *France 24*, April 23, 2024, https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240423-armenia-azerbaijan-begin-fixing-common-border-after-decades-long-conflict; Aleksey Aleksandrovich Mints et al., "Armenia – Independence," Encyclopedia Britannica, June 27, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Armenia/Independence; Adam Zeidan, "Nagorno-Karabakh | Region, Azerbaijan | Britannica," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/place/Nagorno-Karabakh.

Context of Leadership

In 2018, Nikol Pashinyan led Armenia to a peaceful "Velvet Revolution." Pashinyan opposed the political elite and promised a less corrupt, more western, and more peaceful Armenia. He led protests around Armenia throughout 2018, and on May 8th, 2018, he was elected prime minister in a sweeping victory with 53.92% of the votes, followed by his competitor Robert Kocharyan with 21% of the total vote.[13]

Pashinyan is the first prime minister of Armenia to gain international support from the USA and the EU.[14] Due to US policymakers supporting the political direction that Armenia was starting to move in 2018, members from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) met with the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) of Armenia to discuss U.S. assistance and collaboration with the Government of Armenia ahead of the December 9, 2018 parliamentary elections. This assistance included the September 2018 signing of an $8 million aid package (adding to the $640,000 that USAID gave in June) and a four-year agreement to support the integrity of Armenian elections.[15] Furthermore, on September 24, 2023, President Joe Biden sent a letter to Prime Minister Pashinyan stating the United States' commitment to work with the Armenian government to address peace and security.[16] This direct letter from President Joe Biden points towards a political backing from the West that no other Armenian leader had ever previously received.

The Carnegia Endowment for Internation Peace states, "The present breakthrough (the election of Prime Minister Pashinyan) ranks among the

---

[13] Joshua Kucera and Ani Mejlumyan, "Armenia's Pashinyan Wins Reelection in Landslide," *Eurasianet*, June 21, 2021, https://eurasianet.org/armenias-pashinyan-wins-reelection-in-landslide.

[14] David A. Grigorian, "Russia's Influence and Disinformation Campaign in Armenia," *Www.econstor.eu* (European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE), Brussels, 2024), https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/299185.

[15] U. S. Mission Armenia, "U.S. Embassy Officials Discuss Elections Assistance with Armenia's Central Electoral Commission," U.S. Embassy in Armenia, November 21, 2018, https://am.usembassy.gov/elections-assistance/.

[16] Joe President Biden, "Biden Letter," September 24, 2023, https://www.primeminister.am/u_files/file/documents/Biden-letter.pdf.

best opportunities in the past twenty years for the West to strengthen ties and advance Western security and economic interests within the country (Armenia)."[17] This demonstrates why the West now has a vested interest in the development and peace of Armenia. Due to the new political elite's Western backing, a window of opportunity for peacebuilding has opened that must be taken advantage of for the future of Armenia and the South Caucasian region.

Russia's War and Armenian Political Distancing

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine rages on, it has created a unique opportunity for peacebuilding between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since 2018, Pashinyan slowly began distancing Armenia from Russia, which further accelerated after the fall of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, and after uncovering the Belorussian arms trade to Azerbaijan in 2024. As of June 30th, 2024, Armenian membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CTSO) is still frozen due to Russia's handling of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the uncovering in June of 2024 of the Belarusian state-run arms trade with Azerbaijan, resulting in a punishing defeat of Armenia by Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh.[18]

During Pashinyan's peaceful "Velvet Revolution" in 2018, one of his key pillars was moving Armenia away from reliance on Russia. This reduction in reliance was economic but, more importantly, militaristic. The reduction of Russian military presence started with removing all Russian border and airport security forces on March 7, 2024. Armenia's Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan announced: "The Armenian side has informed (the Russian side) that it does not need (anymore) the border guard service

---

17 Ray Salvatore Jennings, "Upgrading U.S. Support for Armenia's Postrevolution Reforms," carnegieendowment.org (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, February 14, 2019), https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/02/upgrading-us-support-for-armenias-postrevolution-reforms?lang=en.

18 The CTSO is comprised of Russia, Belarus, and the former Soviet Central Asian nations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan; Daniel Bellamy and AP, "Armenia to Leave Russian-Led Collective Security Treaty Organisation," Euronews, June 12, 2024, https://www.euronews.com/2024/06/12/armenia-to-leave-russian-led-collective-security-treaty-organisation.

of Russian border guards at the airport…"[19] When Azerbaijan retook all of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, Armenia felt abandoned by Russia since it failed to act per the ceasefire document that was previously pushed for in 2020 and respond as an alliance (CTSO) when Azerbaijan started invading regions of Armenia proper. Moscow has rejected the accusations, arguing that "its troops didn't have a mandate to intervene," further souring the Armenian-Russian relation and further pushing Armenia to a decision to leave the CTSO. [20]

Furthermore, through the leaked documents, Belarus, a member of the CTSO, was found to have been selling advanced arms to Azerbaijan from 2018-2022. These weapons were used to overrun the Armenian military forces during the 2020 and 2023 wars in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. According to POLITICO, the documents that were leaked include letters between the Belarusian state arms export agency and its military-industrial firms regarding the export of state-of-the-art artillery targeting equipment to Azerbaijan and correspondence between Belarus and Azerbaijan agreeing to the trade of Groza-S counter-drone mobile warfare stations.[21] In response, Prime Minister Pashinyan stated, "We (Armenia) will leave (the CTSO)" on June 12, 2024. Prime Minister Pashinyan also noted, "It turned out that the members of the alliance (the CTSO) are not fulfilling their contractual obligations, but are planning a war against us with Azerbaijan," further pushing how Armenia now sees itself at ends with even its 'closest' ally.

With Russia's mishandling of its foreign affairs in the South Caucuses and its failure to manage its alliances, this paper argues that Armenia urgently needs Western political support. As Russia's influence in Armenian politics diminishes, Armenia has no choice but to seize this peacebuilding opportunity and turn to the West for EU ascension and Western assistance.

---

[19] "Armenia FM Comments on Russian Border Guards' Presence on Turkey Border," News.am, July 3, 2024, https://news.am/eng/news/811212.html.

[20] Daniel Bellamy and AP, "Armenia to Leave Russian-Led Collective Security Treaty Organisation," Euronews, June 12, 2024, https://www.euronews.com/2024/06/12/armenia-to-leave-russian-led-collective-security-treaty-organisation.

[21] Gabriel Gavin, "The Secret Arms Deal That Cost Putin an Ally," POLITICO, June 13, 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-documents-reveal-belarus-armed-azerbaijan-against-ally-armenia/.

As of June 30th, 2024, Russian political action and military intervention in Armenia has ceased, creating a window of opportunity for the West to establish a strong alliance with Armenia without Russian interference. This process requires immediate support for Armenia in its peace talks with Azerbaijan and the utilization of international funding to bolster the ongoing Westernization and democratization of Armenia, paving the way for its EU ascension. The urgency of this situation cannot be overstated.

Türkiye's Renewed Strength

Russia and Türkiye have always been at odds, especially regarding who gets to be the powerhouse in the South Caucasus. Between the Russian Empire and the Ottoman Empire alone, there have been twelve wars fought between the 16th and 20th centuries.[22] However, with Russia's sights aggressively homed in on Ukraine, Türkiye has found itself in a unique position to use its diplomatic and military weight more effectively than ever in the South Caucasus.

With Russia out of the picture militarily, Türkiye has been able to push back on Azerbaijan more effectively. Previously, Azerbaijani government's threats relied upon Russia being a regional military and economic player. And Azerbaijan, until recently, has been able to bend the economic arm of Türkiye through its Baku, Tbilisi, Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, the BTC's extension (Baku, Tbilisi, and Erzurum pipeline for the transport of natural gas), and their two new pipelines: The Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Trans Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP).[23]

The relationship between Türkiye and Azerbaijan is generally friendly. Both countries have similarities in that they speak a Turkic language, share

---

[22] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Russo-Turkish Wars | Russo-Turkish History | Britannica," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russo-Turkish-wars.

[23] Michael Hikari Cecire, "Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan: Trilateralism and the Future of Black Sea Regional Geopolitics," www.cacianalyst.org (The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, October 16, 2013), https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12837-turkey-georgia-azerbaijan-trilateralism-and-the-future-of-black-sea-regional-geopolitics.html#:~:text=Ankara%27s%20economic%20and%20geopolitical%20strategy%20depended%20on%20the.

similar religious beliefs, and have a history of migration and intermarriage. However, significant differences exist in their ultimate peacebuilding goals for the South Caucasus, especially regarding how peace will be brokered between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and between Armenia and Türkiye, as well as with the concessions Armenia needs to make to ensure peace. Azerbaijan has even gone as far as to say that Türkiye was committing treason by excluding Nagorno-Karabakh from their peacebuilding plan in 2010.[24] Azerbaijan was against the 2010 agreement between Türkiye and Armenia because it felt Türkiye did not consider Nagorno-Karabakh during negotiations. The agreement would have allowed open borders between Armenia and Türkiye, which goes directly against the Azeri action plan to isolate Armenia into consolidations and defeat. The efforts made by the West and Türkiye to normalize relations with Armenia in 2009–10 failed due to Armenia's connection to Nagorno-Karabakh and the de facto government it supported in what is internationally recognized as Azerbaijani territory.[25] Azerbaijan threatened not only to raise the cost of oil being sold to Türkiye but also to cut off all energy resources and sell them to Russia so that Russia could distribute Azeri oil to Europe.[26]

However, Azerbaijan selling its energy resources to Russia is not feasible due to Europe's reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the EU trying to minimize all energy imports from Russia. With Russia being cut out of the European energy market, Russia is now relying on sales to Azerbaijan, which, in turn, requires Azerbaijan to work through Türkiye. However, this window cannot stay open forever. With eight European Union countries relying on gas from Russia (and through Ukraine) and in the near EU countries attempting to get Azeri gas to run through those

---

24 Bayram Balci, "Strengths and Constraints of Turkish Policy in the South Caucasus," carnegieendowment.org (The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 18, 2014), https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2014/06/strengths-and-constraints-of-turkish-policy-in-the-south-caucasus?lang=en.

25 Svante E Cornell, "Turkey's Role: Balancing the ArmeniaAzerbaijan Conflict and TurkishArmenian Relations," in *The International Politics of the ArmenianAzerbaijani Conflict: The Original "Frozen Conflict" and European Security*, ed. Svante E Cornell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2017), 89–105, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137600066_5.

26 Nona Mikhelidze, "The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement at the Deadlock" (Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 2010), https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iai1005.pdf.

same pipelines, Türkiye can lose its superior footing and leverage over Azerbaijan to force a settlement between all three countries (Türkiye, Armenia, and Azerbaijan).[27] [28]

In sum, Türkiye currently holds a position of power in the South Caucasus. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Türkiye's return to power in the South Caucasus have created a window of opportunity for peacebuilding that must be acted upon promptly by Armenia, Türkiye, and the West. However, if Azerbaijan decides to route its energy resources through Russia, Türkiye could lose its position of power, consequently reducing the chance of achieving sustained peace in the South Caucasus between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[29]

Western Interest in Armenian Ascension

Before 2018 and the early years of Prime Minister Pashinyan's political reign, the US and the rest of the Western world resigned Armenia to being a country in Russia's orbit.[30] Now, due to Prime Minister Pashinyan's anti-Russian and pro-Western attitudes and political stances, Armenia has gained more Western support than ever.

Since Prime Minister Pashinyan's election, Armenia has made real pushes towards westernization and ascension into the EU. Prime Minister Pashinyan's decision to remove Russian military members and security guards from Armenia and leave the CTSO signals Armenia's readiness to take tangible steps towards Westernization and establish closer ties with the

---

[27] This agreement allows Russian oil to run through Ukraine into the EU, expiring at the end of 2024 and not being backed by Ukraine as of June 13th, 2024.

[28] Gabriel Gavin, Federica Di Sario, and Victor Jack, "EU Wants Azerbaijan to Fuel Russian Gas Pipeline in Ukraine," POLITICO, June 13, 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-asks-azerbaijan-replace-russian-gas-transit-deal-ukraine-expiring/.

[29] AzeMedia, "Azerbaijani–Russian Relations: Transactional Diplomacy in Action," Aze.Media, November 12, 2021, https://aze.media/azerbaijani-russian-relations-transactional-diplomacy-in-action/.

[30] Anahit Shirinyan, "Armenia's Foreign Policy Balancing in an Age of Uncertainty," *Futurearmenian.com* (Chatham House, March 2019), https://futurearmenian.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Armenias-Foreign-Policy-Balancing-in-an-Age-of-Uncertainty.pdf.

EU and the Western world. On March 9, 2024, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan of Armenia stated, "Many new opportunities are largely being discussed in Armenia nowadays, and it will not be a secret if I say that includes membership in the European Union," directly showing Armenian interest in EU ascension.[31]

Since 2018, the US has taken a stance that supports Prime Minister Pashinyan's goals of a western Armenia. The first mark of this stance was USAID's support in regulating and funding election support in Armenia during the 2018 elections in which Prime Minister Pashinyan was elected. Since 2018, the US has been growing ever more supportive of Armenian Westernization, with the EU not far behind in support and general aid.

In a document release titled "U.S. Relations With Armenia," the U.S. Department of State outlines its support of Armenia in bilateral economic relations and its membership in international organizations such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. Most notably, it recognizes Armenia's participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Partnership for Peace program.[32] Overall, Armenia has seen heightened levels of participation in all of these programs since 2018.

The US has also held joint peacekeeping exercises with Armenian military members, such as the "Eagle Partner Exercise." On September 11-20, 2023, approximately 85 U.S. Soldiers trained alongside 175 Armenian soldiers on peacekeeping drills and tactics. During this training exercise, on September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan launched an invasion. The act of aggression by Azerbaijan, even as Armenia received support from the West, underscores the need for Armenia to align with more dependable and secure Western organizations and alliances.

---

[31] "Armenia is considering seeking EU membership, foreign minister says," Reuters, March 9, 2024, http://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/armenia-is-considering-seeking-eu-membership-foreign-minister-says-2024-03-09/.

[32] Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "U.S. Relations with Armenia," United States Department of State, November 25, 2020, https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-armenia/.

U.S. Army Major General Anderson stated, "Our ties with Armenia are multifaceted and cooperative. The U.S. has consistently extended military assistance to Armenia, especially in bolstering the nation's capabilities in crucial areas such as nonproliferation and peacekeeping," further proving U.S. unilateral support of Armenia's Westernization and peacebuilding.[33] Furthermore, the "Eagle Partner Exercise" was planned to prepare the Armenian 12th Peacekeeping Brigade for the NATO Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) evaluation under the NATO Partnership for Peace program that year.[34]

The EU has also shown great support for Armenian westernization and ascension. On March 13, 2024, the European Parliament (the EU's legislative branch) endorsed the development of a closer relationship with Armenia. This endorsement included a plea for a lasting peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan and a statement, "The European Union should respond positively and take full advantage of this potential geopolitical shift and help Armenia anchor itself more strongly in the community of democracies."[35]

The EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) was the first major grounded motion towards Western intervention in peacekeeping and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. EUMA was officially launched on February 20, 2023, in Yeghegnadzor, Armenia. EUMA's primary missions are human security and to build confidence between Armenia and Azerbaijan. While the mission is only set to last two years, it was stated that it could be renewed upon request and vote.[36] Therefore, the EUMA mission, paired with US and EU interest and support, has provided Armenia a window of opportunity for viable peacebuilding and a possibility of Westernization and EU membership to help integrate Armenia's economy within the South Caucasus and Europe.

---

[33] U. S. Mission Armenia, "Eagle Partner Exercise Builds upon Longstanding U.S.-Armenian Security Cooperation," U.S. Embassy in Armenia, September 15, 2023, https://am.usembassy.gov/eagle-partner/.

[34] Ibid.

[35] European Parliament, "EP Joint Motion for a Resolution," March 12, 2024, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2024-0163_EN.pdf.

[36] European Parliament, "EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA)," January 23, 2023, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EUMA-Armenia%20-2023-02_0_0.pdf.

Looking to the Future

As of June 30, 2024, conditions for viable peace talks are improving. Armenia has completely withdrawn from Karabakh, recognized Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, and has shown interest in trade and opening its borders with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Peace talks may be on the horizon.[37] However, Armenia is not in a position to force negotiations or advantageously leverage them. Azerbaijan has the upper hand and can generally set demands for peace. The uneven power dynamic between Armenia and Azerbaijan is not beneficial for sustained peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan or the South Caucasus— and certainly not beneficial for Armenia's economic future or right to self-determination.

Armenia is not a large country, and Prime Minister Pashinyan, in good faith, has already given four Azerbaijani exclaves located in Armenia.[38] Due to Azerbaijan having yet to recuperate and the recent war fresh in the minds of the Armenia people, there were massive protests and even a domestic extremist attack on a police station in Yerevan, Armenia.[39] Suppose public opinion in Armenia believes the country is being taken advantage of diplomatically in its search for peace. In that case, there is a possibility for renewed extremism similar to what was seen after the Armenian genocide.[40] Best stated by the Middle East Institute, "a sustainable peace agreement requires guarantees and must be part of a larger stable arrangement," which has yet to be realized.[41]

---

[37] Krzysztof Strachota, "Mastering the Growing Crisis in the South Caucasus: A Role for the West and Turkey," Middle East Institute, July 10, 2023, https://www.mei.edu/publications/mastering-growing-crisis-south-caucasus-role-west-and-turkey.

[38] Gabriel Gavin, "Armenian PM: We'll Hand Azerbaijan Some Territory to Avoid a New War," POLITICO, March 19, 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/armenia-pm-nikol-pashinyan-hand-azerbaijan-some-territory-avoid-new-war/.

[39] Avet Demourian, "3 Men in Armenia Attempt to Storm Yerevan Police Station and 2 Are Injured by Their Own Grenades," AP News, March 24, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/yerevan-armenia-police-station-combat-borterhood-0c9329c47908ba574c60469faaf52ed8.

[40] Directorate of Inteligence, "The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia: A Continuing International Threat," January 1984, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85T00283R000400030009-2.pdf.

[41] Strachota, "Mastering the Growing Crisis in the South Caucasus."

Policy Suggestions

Throughout the years, there have been a few "commonplace" policy suggestions presented to help resolve the conflict and create peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. One such policy suggestion is for Armenia and the West to support grassroots efforts that build public confidence regarding the normalizing relations between Armenia and Türkiye and present the benefits of the peace talks with Azerbaijan.[42] Due to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh having become attached to the national identity of Armenia, there must be real grounded efforts specifically from Armenian community leaders and organizations such churches and government centers to ensure public support and mutual understanding. This "Track II diplomacy" is often recommended to the Armenian government to build long-term support for peacebuilding and negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[43] Armenia has also been commonly recommended to enhance its security and defense systems and bolster alliances. This would theoretically allow Armenia to work more closely with Azerbaijan and Turkey through standing on "equal footing." This will enable Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey to start political normalization, open communication channels, and intertwine their economies.[44] However, while Armenia should have alliances that would support Armenia if attacked, there needs to be dramatic oversite and assurance that Armenia (or Armenian nationalist/extremist groups) would not provide an attack that would constitute an

---

[42] Artak Ayunts, "Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Current State of Affairs and Prospects of Peace over Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: View from Armenia" (Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, 2022), https://iccn.ge/files/policy_paper_armenia_gppac_july_2022.pdf; "'Preparing Populations for Peace': Implications for Armenian-Azerbaijani Peacebuilding" (Conciliation Resources, July 2019), https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Preparing_populations_for_peace.pdf; U.S. Mission Armenia, "Track II Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Initiatives," am.usembassy.gov, December 22, 2023, https://am.usembassy.gov/track-ii-conflict-resolution-and-peacebuilding-initiatives/.

[43] U.S. Mission Armenia, "Track II Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Initiatives," am.usembassy.gov, December 22, 2023, https://am.usembassy.gov/track-ii-conflict-resolution-and-peacebuilding-initiatives/.

[44] Artak Ayunts, "Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Current State of Affairs and Prospects of Peace over Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: View from Armenia" (Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, 2022), https://iccn.ge/files/policy_paper_armenia_gppac_july_2022.pdf.

allied (Western) intervention in the conflict. The remainder of this section looks at two other valuable policy suggestions.

Considering the mass arrest of members of the Armenian Combat Brotherhood organization and the three extremists who raided a police station in Yerevan, Armenia, the Armenian government needs to take more steps to combat hypernationalism and extremism. Armenian extremist attacks, especially if conducted against the people of Azerbaijan, could quickly re-ignite the conflict and delay peace proceedings. It is recommended that the Armenian security forces and intelligence reach out to international partners to receive greater training and initiate information sharing. It is also recommended that the government of Armenia reach out to Azerbaijan for intelligence on Armenian nationalist groups that Azeri intelligence organizations have deemed dangerous to peace and South Caucasus security.

The creation of an Armenian-Azeri joint task force that focuses on stopping extremist movements and hate crimes between the two groups would show international unity and a willingness for both groups to come together to achieve lasting peace. Due to a history of violence between the two groups, a paramilitary unit that is a mix of Armenian and Azeri could boost intra-country support for the peace deal and provide the two sides with a shared goal.

Due to ~100,000 Karabakh-Armenians having fled to Armenia during the 2023 conflict and blockade, Armenia has not been able to deal with the influx of refugees effectively. While Armenia is a collectivist society and has come together to house and feed many of the refugees, there are still very few long-term solutions, and even fewer are viable. If Karabakh-Armenians are not well integrated into Armenian society and given opportunities for advancement, the regions where the homeless Karabakh-Armenians reside can be a breeding ground for extremism and spoilers. When desperation meets hopelessness for a brighter future, people turn to extremes. To avoid an extremist breeding ground forming in Armenia, the US and the EU must come together for a short- and long-term relief plan for the Karabakh-Armenian refugees. Short-term aid includes

money, food, clothing, and long-term solutions such as housing, educa-
tion, and work opportunities.[45]

Figure 2: Over 100,000 people have fled to Armenia since September 2023.

Source: Olesya Vartanyan, "Armenia Struggles to Cope with Exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh | Crisis Group," www.
crisisgroup.org, March 4, 2024, https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/armenian-azer-
baijani-conflict-armenia/armenia-struggles-cope-exodus.

---

[45] More work opportunities will appear all over the South Caucasus after a peace deal is signed
between Armenia and Azerbaijan and borders are reopened between Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye.

Türkiye and the West (the US and EU) must play an active role in the peace process for a viable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA) was a promising start, but more Western engagement is needed. These additional engagement must, in part, take the shape of peace proceedings brokered and hosted by Türkiye, the EU, and the US. Moreover, the EU and the US must bolster their current programming in Armenia, such as EUMA. An expansion of EUMA would ensure that both Armenia and Azerbaijan are held more accountable and peace proceedings can be conducted with greater transparency. However, EUMA should not be militarized. If EUMA were militarized, it would show favoritism and possibly be perceived as a threat to Azerbaijan that could re-spark the conflict. EUMA should continue acting as a non-militarized actor but should be given greater autonomy in Armenia and Azerbaijan. This would require Azerbaijan to allow the EU to send an identical mission to Azerbaijan that would mimic EUMA's structure and goals. European (or Western-based) missions working in tandem on both sides would allow greater Western oversight in the region and ensure smoother and fairer peace proceedings.

Conclusion

Armenia is currently in its most viable position to have lasting peacebuilding. The Armenian government has signaled its readiness to give into some of Azerbaijan's concessions, has been distancing itself from Russia in the form of leaving the CTSO, and Türkiye and the West have been able to gain power in the region due to Russia's focus on Ukraine. However, this window of opportunity will not be open forever. A large part of why this window is open because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has diverted its attention and resources. Also, the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan can change on a dime, which could slam this window shut. For the future of Armenia and the prosperity of the South Caucuses, supporting Armenia through this period of peace negotiations with Azerbaijan is paramount to ensure fair and favorable outcomes for both sides, which in turn ensures the de-escalation and the end of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Due to the constriction of time and resources, it was not possible to conduct interviews and surveys that would have been beneficial in analyzing the post-war population's general opinions of the Karabakh War and the loss of Nagorno-Karabakh. This data would prove extremely useful in developing further policy recommendations on preventing political discontent, extremism, and spoilers. Additional research must follow up on the effectiveness of the current peacebuilding process between Armenians and Azerbaijan. In addition, future research must address how members of the displaced Nagorno-Karabakh community have affected the political climate within Armenia and how it could potentially hinder the peacebuilding process and future peacebuilding endeavors in the region.

2

Bleeding Bear: Russian Military Armor Losses in Ukraine, and the Near Future of the Russian Military

Aidan WEATHERFORD

Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.

– Napoleon Bonaparte

Abstract: This paper analyzes to what extent the Russian military has suffered losses in Ukraine, in particular, armor and light armor forces, and considers how that will affect their military strategy, capability and foreign policy in the future. The sustained losses have been dramatic, catastrophic, and yet poorly understood. Drawing from open source intelligence aggregation and analysis of reports, this paper aims to reveal the current state of the Russian army, and seeks to determine how long it will be able to sustain itself at the current rates of loss. Finally, this report forecasts whether the Russian army will be able to rebuild itself in the near future.

Abbreviations:
AFV   – Armored Fighting Vehicle
APC   – Armored Personnel carrier
BTG   – Battalion Tactical Group
IFV   – Infantry Fighting Vehicle
OSINT – Open Source Intelligence
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Introduction

On February 24, 2022, the Russian armed forces invaded Ukraine, a task that many of its commanding officers, as well as many analysts who studied the Russian military, assumed would be easy to accomplish.[46] A quick dash to the Ukrainian capital, a change in its government, multiple rapid encirclements, and the subsequent surrender of the Ukrainian army in the field followed by a potential insurgency campaign,[47] was the originally surmised outcome. This did not occur. Beginning immediately at the outset of the conflict, the Russian military suffered setbacks that forced it to dramatically change its strategy. It refocused its offensives to the east[48] and south of Ukraine. However, after desperate offensive attempts to move forward failed, the Russian military was forced to settle into a battle of attrition reminiscent of World War I with the Ukrainian army.[49]

The aim of this paper is to analyze the extent of the Russian military losses and assess how it will impact its Russian foreign policy and military strategy. This paper suggests that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has caused catastrophic damage to the Russian military to the extent that it will affect its ability to perform well in the future. It is important for the analysis of any military to understand how current or past wars have shaped its thinking. These conflicts can influence military theory, as well as the state's overall foreign policy, as its ability to conduct a war can largely be based on past performances, and the experiences incurred within them. The high losses incurred on European militaries during World War I, for example, as well as

---

[46] "US warns Russian invasion could see Kyiv fall in days, leave 50,000 civilians dead," *The Times of Israel*, February 6, 2022, https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-warns-russian-invasion-could-see-kyiv-fall-in-days-cause-50000-casualties/.

[47] "U.S. and allies quietly prepare for a Ukrainian government-in-exile and a long insurgency," *Washington Post*, May, 3, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/03/05/russia-ukraine-insurgency/.

[48] "Russia Has Launched Its Offensive in Ukraine's East, Says Zelensky," France 24, April 18, 2022, https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220417-zelensky-says-russia-aims-to-destroy-the-region-of-donbass-vows-to-defend-it.

[49] "Ukraine's War of Attrition draws parallels to World War I," *Washington Post*, August, 8, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/14/ukraine-world-war-one-two-historical-comparison-parallel-trench/.

the nature of the fighting, caused a dramatic shift in the military thinking of every nation involved, and soured many, though not all, European nations from pursuing conflict in the future as a means to achieve their aims. In addition, high losses in equipment and personnel, affect a military's base ability to fight a conflict at all, especially one they could theoretically choose to engage in within the near term.

Loss analysis, coupled with an analysis of military production levels and an understanding of a state's military strategies, can depict a realistic outlook on when that state can be capable of fighting a war at a large scale level again, and therefore when states around it need to be prepared. It is therefore imperative for analysis of this conflict and potential future ones, to understand the extent of the losses Russia has suffered, in what areas, and how soon they can recover from them, in addition to the lessons the Russian military has learned from this conflict. This will arm other states that Russia might wish to invade with the knowledge of when Russia could be capable of doing so, and what methods they might employ to do so.

By losses, it is important to clarify that this paper will focus exclusively on vehicle and equipment losses since data estimates on infantry losses vary wildly due to a lack of unclassified, diverse, sourcing that can reliably speak to the extent at which losses have occurred. Furthermore, Russia's military doctrine and breakthrough strategies are based on vehicle and other equipment availability (i.e. artillery pieces, logistics equipment, etc…). Without them, the Russian army cannot adhere to its own fighting doctrines, and will face significant challenge fighting this war and / or any other. Specifically, this paper focuses on Russia's losses in the areas of Tanks, Infantry Fighting Vehicles, and Armored Personnel Carriers, as these represent the main components of Russia's initial strategy to achieve rapid advance on the ground.

The loss data that has been aggregated and presented in this paper are drawn from a range of open sources, the most important being the French Institut Action Resilience (IAR), The International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), vehicle loss tracking websites such as Oryx and War spotting, and from independent OSINT analysts. Each of these sources have visually confirmed Russia's losses with the help of geolocation and vehicle type

analysis, including the exact location of the lost vehicle or piece of equipment, the type of vehicle, as well as the military unit within the Russian Federation it belonged to. This paper analyzes each of the armored visually confirmed vehicle losses, including individual types of tanks, Infantry fighting vehicles, APC's, and other lightly armored transports that are categorized here as "armored fighting vehicles".

In addition, Russian military vehicle storage sites within the Russian Federation are analyzed to give an idea of how many vehicles are being pulled out of storage, the rate at which they are being pulled out, how many are left, and the condition those that are left are in. Finally, utilizing the best available open source production estimates of vehicles at factories within the Russian Federation, an estimate can be made on how many vehicles they can produce a year, in addition to those pulled out of storage. This provides reliable estimates on the rate the Russian army can replace its vehicle losses, and readiness to fight in another large scale war.

Russian military fighting strategy

The Russian military before 2022 was designed to be a force of maneuver. It's operational art and method focused on "maneuver defense" and "non-contact warfare"[50] to avoid large-scale pitched battles with clear battle lines similar to those of the early 20th century. This method, known as "Battalion tactical group" or "BTG", was intended to fight small battles with the opponent at multiple sections of the operational area – anywhere from their flanks to their rear. Battalions were to consist of two to four companies of highly mobile mechanized infantry, tanks, armored personnel carriers, or infantry fighting vehicles. These vehicle centered battalions were to comprise of roughly 10 tanks, and 50 Armored fighting vehicles that were meant to operate independently of a traditional main battle line and fight independently for short periods of time. Each BTG was to include 200 infantry units, which meant that holding ground and sustaining

---

[50] Michael Kofman, Anya Fink, Dmitry Gorenburg, Mary Chesnut, et al., *Russian military strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts*, Arlington, VA: CNA, 2021.

casualties was not advisable.[51] Large scale urban or forest combat was also to be avoided as the attritional rates for these types of engagement would not be conducive to vehicle centric BTGs. According to the British Ministry of Defense, the Russian army had about 170 in 2022.[52] They were to be the main fighting force against NATO, or Ukraine. It was assumed that the combined joint force usage of land, air power, and electronic warfare would cause complete chaos amongst any opponent – both at the frontline and in the rear of a battle.

However, Russia's BTGs and pre-war strategy has been decimated in the ongoing war in Ukraine. As *Figures 3* demonstrates, the Russian Ground Forces began the war in Ukraine with 2000 tanks in active service of all types, and 6-7000 tanks of varying condition in reserve (storage).[53]

Figure 3: Table of Russian tanks available to its armed forces in 2022

Tank	Description
T-90	A high quality main battle tank, intended to be the most powerful and effective tank in the Russian army, of which they fielded around 200 and kept a small number in storage. Russia however, exported many of these tanks to other countries before the war started.
T-80	T-80 series. An older, but consistently upgraded and effective main battle tank that Russia heavily relied upon in the early part of the war. of which there were 480 in service, and identified 750 in reserve storage.
T-72	Another older but consistently upgraded tank. Russia's most numerous and effective main battle tank, of which the T-72B3 (the most upgraded variant) is the most frequently used by the Russian military. There were roughly 2,200 of these in service in 2022, and a further 2,000 in reserve storage.
T-64	An older tank produced in the 1960's primarily built in Ukraine, where most of them remained after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Institut action resilience could only discover that there were only 100 of these in reserve.

---

[51] Nicolas J Fiore, "Defeating the Russian Battalion Tactical Group," U.S army maneuver center of excellence, 2021.

[52] William Mata, "Russian forces 'have largely stopped deploying as Battalion Tactical Groups as 'intrinsic weaknesses' exposed in Ukraine," *The Standard*, November 30, 2022, https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/russia-battalion-tactical-groups-ukraine-deployment-putin-moscow-ministry-of-defence-latest-update-b1043400.html.

[53] Athene Noctua, and Cedric Mas, "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW ?," Marseille: Institut action resilience, August 31, 2023.

T-62	One of Russia's oldest in service tanks, developed in 1961, it is of low quality. There were none in service in February of 2022 though there were 1239 identified in storage.
T-55/54	-T-55/54 Series. An ancient tank, requested to be produced on the orders of Stalin in 1948. Russia has none in service in February of 2022, though there were 413 available in storage.

Source: Institut Action Resilience/International Institute of Strategic Studies Armored fighting vehicles: (Infantry fighting vehicles, and Armored Personnel carriers.)

According to a comprehensive study done by independent OSINT analysts[54] and the military balance study from the international institute for strategic studies,[55] the Russian Ground Forces began the war with anywhere between 15,000 to 27,000 armored fighting vehicles of all types as shown in *Figure 4*. These figures only cover vehicles in storage, as the active duty numbers are not currently known.

Figure 4: Table of Russian Armored Fighting Vehicles available to its armed forces in 2022

Armored Fighting Vehicle	
BTR 60/70/80 series:	A fast armored transport developed between the 60's and 90's. of which there were 3336 in storage in 2022. One of the main components of the Russian ground forces
BRDM series:	BRDM series: A fast, old armored car that does not see much service in active units, and primarily serves in the Russian police. 1119 in storage in 2022
Mt Lb series	A low profile, slow, lightly armored vehicle built in the 1970's in Ukraine, Poland and Bulgaria. 3909 in storage in 2022
Btr 50	An ancient lightly armored transport similar to the Mt-Lb. Only 125 in storage in 2022
BMD series	A fast armored personnel carrier designed in the 1960's-80's for soviet airborne forces, and later given to the Russian Airborne forces, 652 in storage in 2022

54 Jonpy, "X.Com," X (formerly Twitter), June 29, 2024, https://x.com/Jonpy99/status/180699412 6799319336?t=MZs1GXsogZY3piP9tsu5nw; @HighMarsed, "X.Com," X (formerly Twitter), November 5, 2023, https://x.com/HighMarsed/status/1721294080267710904; @waffentraeger, "X.Com," X (formerly Twitter), June 11, 2024, https://x.com/waffentraeger/status/1800507969135931786.

55 The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), *Military Balance, 2022*, S.L.: Routledge, 2022.

Armored Fighting Vehicle	
BMP series	A versatile infantry fighting vehicle developed between the 1960's-1990's. One of the other main components of the Russian ground forces and their most produced armored fighting vehicle. 6118 in storage in 2022.

Source: Insitut Action Resilience, International Institute of Strategic Studies @HighMarsed, @waffentraeger, @jompy on twitter

The Russian military since embarking on their military misadventure on February 24, 2022, has suffered losses nearing complete catastrophe for these units. The military loss tracking sources Oryx,[56] and Warspotting,[57] have visually confirmed in their databases all of the losses the Russian military has accrued. The real number is likely higher, as not everything can be visually confirmed, but they paint a disastrous picture for the Russian army in Ukraine. The Oryx open source data has virtually confirmed that Russia has lost, destroyed, damaged, abandoned or captured 3139 tanks between February 24, 2022 to June 2024. *Figure 5* shows a breakdown in the types of tanks lost during the war.

Figure 5: Number of Russian tanks lost since February 24, 2022

Tank type	# of unit lost
T-90	149
T-80	849
T-72	1497
T-64	93
T-62	156
T-55/54	11
Unidentifiable tank	384

Source: Oryx/Warspotting

---

[56] Jakub Janovsky, Naalsio26, Dan, and *et al*, "Attack on Europe: Documenting Russian Equipment Losses during the Russian Invasion of Ukraine," Oryx, February 24, 2022, https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/02/attack-on-europe-documenting-equipment.html.

[57] "Confirmed losses," Russio-Ukrainian Warspotting, https://ukr.warspotting.net/russia/, accessed July 5, 2024.

Additionally, Oryx/Warspotting open source data has also virtually confirmed that 5979 armored fighting vehicles have been lost, destroyed, damaged, abandoned or captured since February 24, 2022 as shown in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6: Number of Armored Fighting Vehicles lost since February 24, 2022

Armored Fighting Vehicle type	# of unit lost
BTR 60/70/80	1086
BRDM	13
MTLB	1161
BTR-50	9
BMD series	426
MP series	3061
Unknown	223

Source: Oryx/Warspotting

Impact

After losing over 3000 tanks, almost 6000 armored fighting vehicles, and roughly 120 BTGs in Ukraine in two years of fighting, the Russian military has had to rethink its plans – from its original strategy of maneuver warfare to a slow attritional campaign. This campaign focuses on utilizing vehicles and infantry in very short range assaults with artillery support, rather than deep armor strikes. Inevitably, this has slowed down the Russian military advances and given Ukraine time to build up defenses.

After realizing the Russian military would not be able to win the war with the force it originally deployed, it began drawing from existing old Soviet stocks. These stocks were found in dozens of bases across Russia, and in the decades prior to the war, were instrumental in perpetuating the myth of the invincible, and giant Russian army. These bases had thousands of tanks, armored fighting vehicles, and artillery within them, enough to, on paper, seemingly keep the Russian army supplied for decades with never ending equipment.

However, satellite imagery analysis has revealed that many of the vehicles are of poor quality and / or do not work at all. Rather, many of these

vehicles have been stripped of spare parts and given to other vehicles. It is also important to note that many of the vehicles destroyed are no longer manufactured anymore, meaning that it is no longer possible to build new replacements of the same model. Once the bases are drained of old soviet stocks, Russia will only be able to rely on its own currently slow and entirely inadequate production and / or receive assistance from allies to reverse its setbacks. As of the time of writing, none of Russia's allies or partners have helped it in any significant manner regarding sending vehicles necessary to continue large scale attacks.[58]

Multiple studies have sought to develop theoretical timelines to estimate how long Russia has to continue the war at the current rate of losses. Institut Action Resilience (IAR), a French based research institute, has provided one of the most in-depth studies to-date. IAR began, for example, studying Russian tank storage sites beginning in 2022 to August 2023 that looked at complied satellite data from major permanent Russian reserve bases as shown in *Figure 7*, where tanks are stored, to determine the number of left.

Figure 7: Russian tank reserve storage bases

Source: Noctua, Athene, and Cedric Mas. "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW ?" Marseille: Institut action
    resilience, August 31, 2023. (Accessed 05 July 2024)

---

[58] Chris Mueller, "No, China Isn't Providing Tanks to Ukraine for Use against Russia | Fact Check," *USA Today*, June 26, 2023, https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2023/06/26/china-claims-neutrality-not-sending-tanks-to-ukraine-fact-check/70348003007/.

IAR has also studied the rate at which Russian tanks have been pulled from storage to determine how many are left. Also, IAR has analyzed Russian production rates in factories and repair bases as displayed in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8: Russian new production model tanks

Type	Deliveries	Leaving Storage (2022)	Incoming balance
T-62 Models	0	200	200
T-72 Models	60	200	260
T-80 Models	31	300	331
T-90 Models	100	0	100
Total	191	700	891

Source: Noctua, Athene, and Cedric Mas. "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW ?" Marseille: Institut action resilience, August 31, 2023. (Accessed 05 July 2024)

Below in *Figure 9* is a map of all the analyzed active repair bases in Russia, of the Institut has identified 8 of them.

Figure 9: Russian Factory repair bases
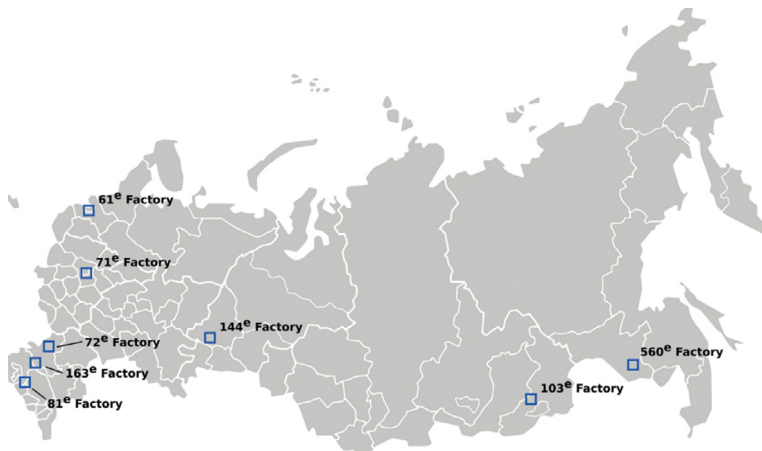
Source: Noctua, Athene, and Cedric Mas. "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW ?" Marseille: Institut action resilience, August 31, 2023. (Accessed 05 July 2024)

The 22nd Tank Reserve base, as shown in *Figure 10*, serves as an example of where Russian tanks have been removed. By June 2023, a substantial amount of stored tanks were removed to be refurbished in a repair base, and then sent to the front, with some sites completely empty, and no new tanks being put in their place.

Figure 10: Example satellite photo of a Russian tank storage site, with tanks removed, in a study conducted by IISS:

Source: Michell, Yohann. "Equipment Losses in Russia's War on Ukraine Mount." IISS.org, February 12, 2024. https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/02/equipment-losses-in-russias-war-on-ukraine-mount/.

After compiling substantial data, IAR concluded in August 2023 that only roughly 3,000 Russian tanks are left in storage as seen in *Figure 11*.

Figure 11: Russian tanks left in storage, note this data is at this point a year old, the 2024 numbers are likely far lower.

Tank Type	Losses (oryx)	Losses (war spotting)	Est losses (IAR)	Act duty tank 02/24/22	Est stocks (IAR)	Available stocks (estimate)	Situation (IAR)	Remaining stock (IAR)
T-54/55	2	1	3	0	413	206	98.5%	203
T-62	81	69	105	0	1239	619	83%	514
T-64	64	54	83	0	100	100	18%	17
T-72	1166	1025	1512	2229	1945	972	52.8%	1689
T80	608	536	788	464	750	750	31.5%	426
T-90	74	60	97	294	0	0	67.7	197
Unknown type	265	0	344	0	1191	397	n.a	n.a
total	2260	1901	2932	2987	5639	3044	55.3	3046

Source: Noctua, Athene, and Cedric Mas. "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW ?" Marseille: Institut action resilience, August 31, 2023. (Accessed 05 July 2024)

Other studies carried out have reached similar conclusions. IISS, for example, estimates that there are only around 3,200 Russian tanks left in stock at reserve bases.[59] German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* also analyzed tanks at the bases utilizing satellite imagery. However instead of hand counting them, they trained an AI model to identify the tanks in satellite imagery taken in 2021 and 2024 to estimate the losses. It also found major reductions in storage levels, and some bases, such as the 111th Central Tank Reserve Base, now nearly completely empty of tanks.[60]

---

[59] Yohann Michell, "Equipment Losses in Russia's War on Ukraine Mount," IISS.org, February 12, 2024, https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/02/equipment-losses-in-russias-war-on-ukraine-mount/.

[60] Isabel van Brugen, "Satellite Data Suggests Russia May Be Running out of Tanks," *Newsweek*, June 27, 2024, https://www.newsweek.com/satellite-data-russia-tank-losses-ukraine-war-1918313.

In addition, analysis of every Russian repair and vehicle storage site (13 bases) conducted by independent analysts @jontxu, @highmarsed, and @waffentrager on X (formerly twitter), indicate that the remaining number of Russian AFV's in storage has been reduced to 5786 models left.[61]

Below, in *Figure 12*, is another example of a Russian reserve base that holds armored fighting vehicles, the main infantry carrier of the Russian armed forces. By 2023, significant numbers of vehicles have been removed from the base.

Figure 12: Example photo of a Russian AFV base, the 3018th reserve base, pre-war, and march 2023, note significant amount of vehicles removed
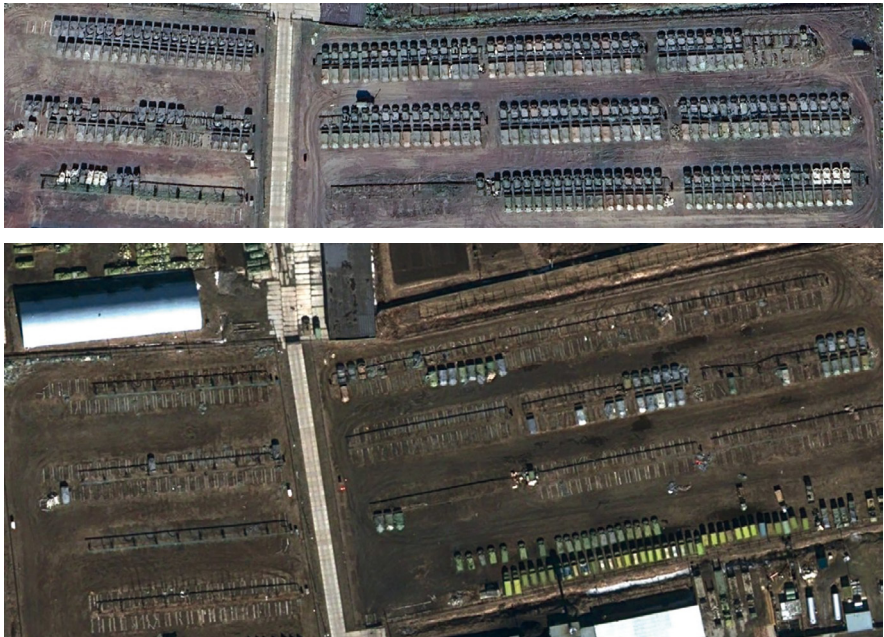
Source: @HighMarsed. "X.Com." X (formerly Twitter), February 10, 2024. https://x.com/HighMarsed/status/17563 76656543912023.

---

61 Jonpy, "X.Com." X (formerly Twitter), June 29, 2024, https://x.com/Jonpy99/status/180699412 6799319336?t=MZs1GXsogZY3piP9tsu5nw.

In total, with the numbers left in storage of both tanks and AFV's Russia can field 115 BTGs more without counting the unknown numbers of currently deployed vehicles. Both the IAR study, the IISS study, independent OSINT analysts, and the study by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* all estimate that Russia only has enough production and storage capacity to maintain the current level of fighting for two to three more years, but possibly less if it wants to have some semblance of a military left.

Production and refurbishment

With the current rate of loss, the Russian army is in a dire situation. The Russian army has lost on average about 100 tanks a month since February 2022.[62] While it is still pulling tanks from storage, at the current rate, it will run out of the tanks in storage sometime around 2026-2027 at the current rate.[63] This leaves Russia at the mercy of relying on newly built tanks, numbers, however, that are less than ideal. According to data from IISS and IAR, Russia only produces roughly 382 new tanks a year besides the ones from storage,[64] a very small number of which are top of the line T90M tanks.[65] This number is likely to slightly increase, but after storage runs out, it will not be anywhere near the amount necessary to keep pace with a loss rate of 1,200 tanks per year.

Data for AFV/IFV production is less present, but if Russian sources are to be taken at their word, they produce around 400 BMP's a year.[66] They have lost nearly 6000.[67] Forbes estimates that within 2-3 years, they will also

---

[62] Noctua, and Mas, "HOW MANY TANKS LEFT FOR RUSSIA NOW?".

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Michael Gjerstad, "Russian T-90M Production: Less than Meets the Eye," IISS.org, June 11, 2024, https://www.iiss.org/en/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/06/russian-t-90m-production-less-than-meets-the-eye/.

[66] Dylan Malyasov, "Russian Army Receives New Batch of BMP-3 and BTR-Mdm Vehicles," Defence Blog, December 14, 2023, https://defence-blog.com/russian-army-receives-new-batch-of-bmp-3-and-btr-mdm-vehicles/.

[67] Janovsky, Naalsio26, Dan, Kemal, et al., "Attack on Europe: Documenting Russian Equipment Losses during the Russian Invasion of Ukraine."

run out of the vehicles they have in storage,[68] and the numbers produced will not be enough to sustain continued operations at scale.

Future Russian Strategy

The question that remains is where does this leave the Russian army in the near future. If the Russian army continues large scale offensive action in Ukraine into 2025 and 2026, it's army will be a complete and total shell of its former self, with its main offensive power being reliant entirely on infantry, artillery, drones, and small vehicles such as motorcycles[69] or ATV's[70] to conduct its assaults. It is important to note that these tactics can, when used well, still be effective against a lightly fortified trench position held by some infantry. However, when it comes to large scale operations, particularly one that Russia might hope to embark against NATO, for example, within the near term, its military would be hard pressed to see any success. Its ability to conduct maneuver warfare would be severely limited without large numbers of tanks and troop carriers, not to mention the already depleted officer corps[71] that would have been used to command those maneuvers. In addition to this, Russia would have no large scale vehicle reserves to pull from as they did in 2022.

Russia, in the near term, will therefore be completely unable to conduct large-scale maneuver warfare against a NATO nation such as Poland or Finland, until it returns to a level at which it can comfortably operate a large modern armored force complete with modern troop carriers.

---

68 David Axe, "The Russians Could Run out of Infantry Fighting Vehicles in Two or Three Years," *Forbes*, January 10, 2024, https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2024/01/09/the-russians-could-run-out-of-infantry-fighting-vehicles-in-two-or-three-years/.

69 Munish Anand, "Fast and Furious: Russia Using Bikes to Stir Chaos in Ukraine – Times of India," *The Times of India*, July 1, 2024, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/fast-and-furious-russia-using-bikes-to-stir-chaos-in-ukraine/articleshow/111387320.cms.

70 Jake Epstein, "Russia's Increasingly Turning to Fast Atvs and Motorbikes to Find Ukrainian Targets, but They're Very Vulnerable," Yahoo! News, May 13, 2024, https://sg.news.yahoo.com/russias-increasingly-turning-fast-atvs-204815239.html.

71 Jan Kallberg, "Leader Loss: Russian Junior Officer Casualties," CEPA, December 23, 2022, https://cepa.org/article/leader-loss-russian-junior-officer-casualties-in-ukraine/.

It can at any point of course, choose to initiate war against a NATO nation with its current strength level. However, it would not be able to operate anywhere near the levels it had prior to the Russo- Ukrainian war. With current Russian production levels, (400 tanks a year) it would take a minimum of 5 years to return to pre-war modern tank active levels (2000 tanks) with no substantial reserves, and 16 years to return to active levels with the theoretical pre-war Russian reserve (6000 tanks). Building and maintaining a large armored force takes time in the modern era. Russia had the luxury of inheriting thousands of tanks from the Soviet Union, many of which were in satisfactory condition to operate after some maintenance. If Russia wishes to return to its former military prowess in a short time span, it will have to make major changes to its economy and production ability, otherwise, its army will be a shadow of its former self.

What does this mean for NATO and Ukraine?

The decimation of the ground armored mobile wing of the Russian army is of course an ideal outcome for both NATO and Ukraine. Previously, it was estimated that the Russian tank force could roll over the Baltic nations in mere days,[72] would be able to take all of Ukraine in mere weeks, and could perhaps even defeat NATO in an Eastern European conflict. Now it will be much harder for them to do so. This is not to say, however, that Russia cannot pose a threat to NATO nations, as it still can field a substantial amount of infantry and artillery, and can decide to use that force at any point. However, this scenario is highly unlikely when considering Russia's substantially damaged army, and ongoing war in Ukraine. Therefore it is imperative that western militaries take a look at how the Russian army might perform against it now, not as it did before 2022. Russian threats should be examined under a different lens, as they now pose as far less dangerous (at least in a conventional sense) than they did previously. The Ukrainian army, thanks to its steadfast defense and ability in the ear-

---

[72] Dan De Luce, "If Russia Started a War in the Baltics, NATO Would Lose – Quickly," *Foreign Policy*, February 3, 2016, https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/03/if-russia-started-a-war-in-the-baltics-nato-would-lose-quickly/.

ly war to prevent the Russian army from gaining substantial ground and penetrating its rear areas, can now be reasonably confident in its ability to hold off any Russian attempt at a large-scale armored breakthrough. The Russian army is running out of armored vehicles to throw at Ukrainian lines as it currently stands, and keeping a breakthrough force in reserve to exploit any breach in the line is not something the Russian army is now capable of doing due to the levels of armor it has left.[73] Pictured below in *Figure 13* is an aggregation, compiled with thorough analysis of the current state of the Ukrainian frontline as of July 2, 2024. The formations on the right represent the Russian army, 98% of which is deployed in Ukraine, representing the maximum current force it can deploy. It currently does not have the capability to attack elsewhere at scale.

Figure 13: All currently identified deployed Russian army units in Ukraine, representing 98% of its ground forces, dots are geolocated positions.
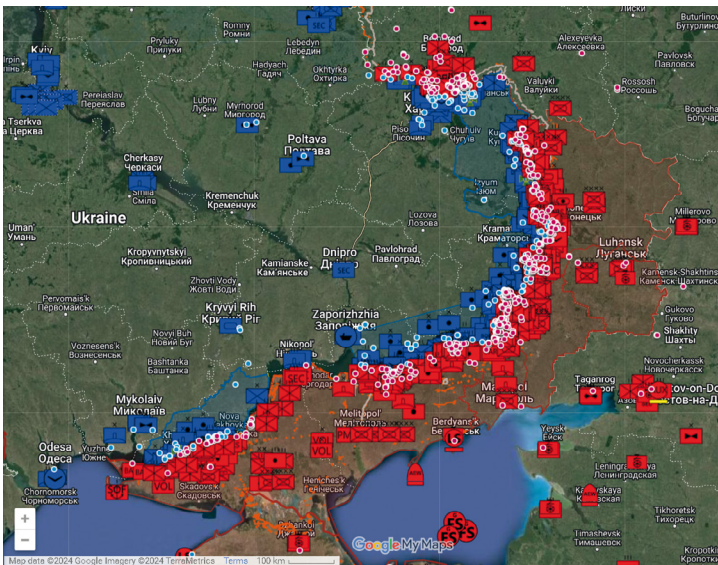
Source: @UAcontrolmap. "X.Com." X (formerly Twitter), February 24, 2022. https://x.com/UAControlMap?ref_src=tws rc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor. (accessed July 3rd, 2024).

---

[73] Watson, Eleanor. "U.S. Does Not Expect Significant Russian Breakthrough in Ukraine's Kharkiv Region." CBS News, June 13, 2024. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kharkiv-ukraine-russian-break-through-pentagon-comment/.

Conclusion

The Russian army as the world once knew it is gone. It is now a severely dilapidated force, with next to no ability to carry out some of the operational tenets it once tried to adhere to. Its reserves, and production capacity are dwindling, and it cannot hold onto the current pace of losses for much longer unless it wishes to decimate the Russian army in its entirety. If NATO wishes the Russian armored wing to be entirely destroyed, it must help Ukraine in every sense of the word to achieve this goal. Not only will this help Ukraine defend itself, it will also rob the Russian army of its most effective conventional capability, and in turn, make the nations on Russia's border much safer, as Russia will not have the capability to invade them as effectively as before. Russian foreign policy towards these nations will likely remain hostile so long as Putin remains in power. However, is highly unlikely Russia will attempt to invade neighboring countries to enforce its political aims. Rather, Russia will likely look to its partners such as China, Iran, and North Korea to assist them with their armored force. Yet, Russia's allies' ability to do so will remain limited, as the tanks in many of these countries, are not in active service and their quality is questionable. Although the Russian army would like to the world to believe it is unstoppable, its reserves infinite, and that the west is doomed to challenge them, this report has shown that not to be the case. The Russian army can be defeated, its threat to Europe is diminished, and its mythos is destroyed. All it takes is a matter of time.

3

Defending our territory: The Polish Territorial Defence Force concept and the war in Ukraine

Nicholas AYERS

Abstract: The Polish Territorial Defence Forces is a Polish reservist force meant to act in peacetime to guarantee security and in wartime to defend Polish territory as well as act as a support to the regular Polish military. This paper will seek to demonstrate the utility of the Polish TDF by examining the organization itself, comparing it with the TDF of its neighbor Ukraine and looking into the Ukrainian TDF's combat performance during the full-scale Russian invasion before looking at the future of the Polish TDF. The paper will accomplish this by examining various military, academic and industry sources. The conclusion that came as a result of this analysis was that the concept behind the Polish TDF has been proven to be largely effective based upon the combat performance of Ukrainian TDF units during the full-scale Russian invasion.

Keywords: Brigade, Polish TDF, Ukrainian TDF, Unconventional Warfare, Russo-Ukrainian War

Introduction

What kind of force do you need when you must defend your territory against foreign aggression? For Poland, it believes the answer is the Territorial Defence Forces (TDF), taking inspiration from citizen-soldier forces such as the Estonian Defense League, Latvian National Guard, and Norwegian Home

Guard as well as the concept of comprehensive defense.[74] With such forces being maintained by multiple militaries, are these forces actually effective in combat and do they have a sound concept behind them? In order to examine the effectiveness of the Polish TDF and, by extension, these other forces, we first need to ask several questions. What exactly is the Polish TDF and how was it developed? How does the Polish TDF compare with the TDF of one of Poland's neighbors, Ukraine, and how has Ukraine's TDF performed under real combat conditions? Moreover, considering the combat performance of Ukrainian TDF units combined with Poland's massive military build-up, how will the Polish TDF evolve? This research demonstrates that the Polish TDF, based upon the performance of its Ukrainian equivalent during the full-scale Russian invasion, could be an effective force in its doctrinal role. This paper will seek to answer these questions by first examining the Polish TDF itself and the strategy behind it. This examination will be followed by a comparison of the TDFs of Poland and Ukraine, after which the combat performance of the Ukrainian TDF will be used as a case study and compared with aspects of the Polish TDF. Finally, this paper will be concluded by a look into the future of Poland's TDF. The methodology for this research consists of analysis of various academic, military and web sources.

Background to the Polish TDF

The Polish TDF, a reservist military force, had its first brigades[75] established in the summer of 2016.[76] The principal reason for its formation was Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine on the Crimean Peninsula and in

---

74 Maciej Klisz, "The Polish Territorial Defence Forces (POL TDF): a significant component of national resistance," *Insights* 2, no. 8 (August 2022): 2-3, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/603415 0d85deb0136ad574f2/t/62e943e3d638fb7137283256/1659454439093/KCIS+INSIGHTS+Klisz+2-8+August+2022.pdf.

75 In the Polish TDF, a brigade contains around 3,000 soldiers and is subdivided into 3-5 infantry battalions (each consisting of 765 soldiers) and several company-sized support units. Fornůsek and Bartoszewicz, "Modern Army for Modern Times or Private Paramilitary? Polish Territorial Defense Forces as a Benchmark Case in conflict Evolution," Democracy and Security 20, No. 1 (2024): 79, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/17419166.2023.2220108.

76 Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 3.

Ukraine's eastern lands.[77] The TDF also had several missions prescribed to it. As laid out on the TDF's website, the primary missions of the fifth branch of the Polish Armed Forces are to provide deterrence against Poland's enemies, conduct strategic defensive operations during acts of enemy aggression, conduct crisis management in support of local Polish communities, provide Host Nation Support for the forces of Polish allies within Poland's territory, counter asymmetric/hybrid warfare and finally promote patriotism amongst Poland's population.[78] In accordance with its mission, as of August of 2022 the TDF has around 32,000 soldiers under its command, who are assigned to 20 different brigades.[79] The administrative structure of the Polish TDF is meant to match with Poland's administrative divisions, with Polish TDF brigades, battalions and companies interacting with voivodeships, counties and boroughs. [80] Each company (the TDF's basic operational unit) has their borough as their so-called "Permanent Area of Responsibility", with any contingency that happens in that borough being the primary responsibility of that company.[81] The TDF has also received a variety of equipment to accomplish its mission. This includes weapons such as the modern MSBS Grot rifle, single-use anti-tank launchers and grenade launchers, support weapons such as light mortars and machine guns as well as anti-aircraft weaponry such as the Grom missile system[82]. During peacetime, the TDF's primary role is to ensure domestic security, seeking to operations in cooperation with other Polish agencies such as law enforcement agencies and other emergency services.[83]

During wartime, the TDF's role shifts to that of an organization meant for the defense of Polish territory[84] as well as of a support force for the Polish

---

[77] Ibid., 2.

[78] "Territorial Defence Forces," gov.pl, accessed July 4, 2024, https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/territorial-defence-forces.

[79] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 3.

[80] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 3.

[81] Fornůsek and Bartoszewicz, "Modern Army or Paramilitary," 79.

[82] Ibid., 80.

[83] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 4.

[84] Ibid., 3.

Armed Forces.[85] In the event of a full-scale Russian invasion, the TDF would work to blunt the Russian invasion forces by waging unconventional warfare against the enemy. In a Polish context, unconventional warfare means a united struggle waged by the nation against aggression and occupation on Polish soil.[86] The TDF has not only prepared for waging unconventional warfare theoretically but has also practiced it in the field. In December of 2022, Polish TDF soldiers participated in Exercise Ridge Runner, a training program run by the West Virginia Army National Guard that allows for participants to train in unconventional tactics, having also participated in the same exercise in 2019.[87]

However, the Polish TDF are not expected to be a force engaging in direct conventional combat.[88] Doing so would be extremely problematic for the TDF for a variety of reasons, the first being an imbalance in force structure between forces of the Polish TDF and Russian Ground Forces. This first manifests itself in the infantry forces of the two forces. Compared to the lightly equipped Polish TDF, Russian Ground Forces infantry, known as the Motorized Rifle Troops, are completely mechanized, riding into combat in armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles.[89] These Russian motorized riflemen are supported by tanks, which constitute the main striking arm of Russia's Ground Forces.[90] The Polish TDF would likely struggle against such a force with their light armament.[91]

---

[85] Ibid., 6-7.

[86] Ibid., 5.

[87] Holi Nelson, "West Virginia Guard Hosts Irregular Warfare Planning Conference," *National Guard*, December 16, 2022, https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/3248692/west-virginia-guard-hosts-irregular-warfare-planning-conference/.

[88] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces", 6-7.

[89] Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles, *The Russian Way of War: force structure, tactics, and modernization of the Russian Ground Forces* (Kansas: Foreign Military Studies Office, 2016), 212. https://fmso.tradoc.army.mil/2016/the-russian-way-of-war-force-structure-tactics-and-modernization-of-the-russian-ground-forces-dr-lester-w-grau-and-charles-k-bartles/.

[90] Ibid., 223.

[91] Waldemar Skrzypczak, *Poland's Territorial Defence Force-Its Role, Significance and Tasks* (Warsaw: Casmir Pulaski Foundation, 2017), 6. https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Pulaski_Policy_Paper_No_9_17_EN-Polands-Territorial-Defence-Force-%E2%80%93-Its-Role-Significance-and-Tasks.pdf

Furthermore, the Polish TDF would struggle against the artillery-heavy Russian army since currently they are only equipped with light mortars. Unlike NATO armies, Russian formations have a much higher allotment of artillery systems[92]. Each Russian motorized rifle or tank brigade on paper has two battalions of self-propelled howitzers, one battalion of MLRS launchers as well as an antitank battalion.[93] Furthermore, the Russian doctrine emphasizes the usage of artillery to destroy enemy formations.[94] Thus, with only light mortars as a means of fire, the Polish TDF would find itself outgunned in a direct conventional fight against the Russian army. Thus, the TDF is ill-equipped to take the Russian Ground Forces head on. However, this armament level might be adequate for the TDF's job of supporting the Polish Land Forces. This includes protecting the flanks of regular Land Force units, manning positions that the Land Forces don't have the resources to man as well as setting up lines of defense.[95]

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, the TDF is also expected to defend Polish communities during wartime[96] as well as counter hybrid warfare.[97] This is necessary as Russia maintains substantial forces for fomenting chaos behind enemy lines. On a larger scale, this includes Russia's airborne forces, known as the VDV.[98] These forces, which are considered the most elite branch of Russia's Armed Forces and are intended for usage as a strategic reserve during wartime.[99] In the event of a large-scale Russian invasion of Poland, it is predicted that the VDV would seek to support the Russian Ground Forces by conducting landing operations on Polish ter-

---

[92] Mason Clark and Karolina Hird, *Russian Regular Ground Forces Order of Battle* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of War, 2023), 12. https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/October%2012%2C%202023%20Russian%20Orbat_Final.pdf

[93] Grau and Bartles, *Russian Way of War*, 235.

[94] Clark and Hird, *Russian Order of Battle*, 12-13.

[95] Fornůsek and Bartoszewicz, "Modern Army or Paramilitary", 82.

[96] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 7.

[97] gov.pl, "Territorial Defence Forces."

[98] The VDV is a mechanized force (separate from the Russian Ground Forces) with both air assault and parachute elements, used to achieve tasks that are politically sensitive. Grau and Bartles, *Russian Way of War*, 359.

[99] Clark and Hird, *Russian Order of Battle*, 11.

ritory.[100] In terms of capability, the Russian VDV is a mechanized force, although to maintain air mobility, they make use of lighter vehicles such as the BMD-4M, though also having access to non-airmobile T-72B3s.[101]

Additionally, Russia also maintains forces to wage unconventional warfare on enemy territory. Firstly, this includes the GRU's[102]Spetsnaz units. Their missions include conducting reconnaissance as well as carrying out attacks on important targets behind enemy lines.[103] Then there is Russian SSO, a Russian special operations force. It is assumed to be a force that can be expected to perform unconventional warfare operations in support of Russian political objectives.[104] Thus, with Russia maintaining substantial forces from which it can use to foment chaos both behind Polish lines and within Poland itself, there is a need for a force that can maintain both rear-area security and homeland security during wartime.

The Polish TDF concept drew from many sources and came about as a result of Poland's unique situation. The Polish military decided that a reservist force like the TDF would be the best option to defend the Polish homeland since a restoration of conscription was not viable due to economic and political reasons.[105] The Polish TDF also received special talent in its creation. Much of the TDF's leadership were personnel transferred from the Polish Special Operations Forces, which had a major impact on the branch.[106] The Polish TDF also drew further inspiration from sources outside its borders. Specifically, it drew inspiration for the unconventional warfare framework from NATO Special Operations Headquarters.[107] However, this doctrine on its own remains theoretical. How would such a force perform

---

[100] Skrzpczak, *Polish TDF Role, Tasks*, 4.

[101] Grau and Bartles, *Russian Way of War*, 361.

[102] The GRU is a directorate of the Russian General Staff responsible for handling matters such as analysis and covert operations abroad, being similar to the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. Ibid, 280.

[103] Bret P. Woellner, "The Advent of Russian Special Operations Command" (Masters Thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), 26.

[104] Ibid., 36.

[105] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces," 2.

[106] Ibid., 5.

[107] Ibid.

under actual combat conditions? To understand this, the next section looks at the TDF of Poland's neighbor, Ukraine.

The Polish and Ukrainian TDFs compared

The Polish and Ukrainian TDFs are both similar but different. Doctrinally, the Ukrainian TDF appears to have roughly the same mission as the Polish TDF. The website of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence lays out multiple tasks for the Ukrainian TDF, many of which overlap with those of the Polish TDF. These include defending against sabotage and other irregular elements, in addition to homeland defense tasks.[108] Structurally, they are also very similar. Like Poland, Ukraine envisioned one TDF brigade per Oblast (region), with Kyiv receiving an additional brigade, making around 25 brigades total.[109] This similarity in structure might even be deliberate. According to a statement by Brig. General Klisz, the Polish had been conducting military exchanges with Ukraine on matters pertaining to territorial defense prior to the invasion.[110] The two forces also, at least doctrinally, were also meant to have the same equipment. Much like the Polish TDF, the Ukrainian TDF was originally equipped largely with light weapons such as RPGs, mortars, machine guns and recoilless rifles.[111] However, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine would result in the Ukrainian TDF starting to diverge from the similar allotment of equipment that was given to the Polish TDF.

As the war in Ukraine continues, some Ukrainian TDF units have started to get their hands on heavier equipment when compared to their Polish counterparts. For example, the Ukrainian 98th Azov Battalion began

---

[108] (Note, auto-translated using Google Translate's browser feature) "Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, accessed July 4, 2024, https://www.mil.gov.ua/ministry/sklad-zbrojnix-sil-ukraini/sili-teritorialnoi-oboroni-zbrojnih-sil-ukraini.html.

[109] Magdalena Kowalska-Sendek and Robert Sendek, "Lesson Right from the Front," *Polska Zbrojna*, July 15, 2022, https://www.polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/37680?t=Lesson-Right-from-the-Front.

[110] Ibid.

[111] David Axe, "Ukraine Deradicalized Its Extremist Troops. Now They Might Be Preparing A Counteroffensive," *Forbes*, December 16, 2022, https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/12/16/ukraine-deradicalized-its-extremist-troops-now-they-might-be-preparing-a-counteroffensive/.

the war as light infantry, however the battalion gained a massive boost in firepower with access to armored vehicles.[112] It is not just equipment where the Ukrainian TDF brigades have changed, but even in their role and branch of service. For example, territorial defense forces associated with the Azov movement raised for the defense of Kyiv have been reorganized into the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, now equipped with M113s and captured Russian artillery.[113] There are also differences in overall personnel. Whereas the Polish TDF currently has around 32,000 soldiers and is slated to expand to 55,000,[114] the Ukrainian TDF has a total strength of more than 120,000 soldiers.[115] The next section considers how the Ukrainian TDF has performed in combat.

The Ukrainian TDF in combat and what this means for the Polish TDF

As a whole, the combat experiences of Ukraine's TDF during the full-scale Russian invasion have to a large extent validated the concept of Poland's TDF, although there have been some exceptions to this rule. As is envisioned with the role of the Polish TDF, the Ukrainian TDF has been largely successful at maintaining rear-area security and foiling Russian subversive methods. An example of this would be the contribution made by the Ukrainian TDF in stopping the Russian VDV assault on Hostomel Airport within the greater Kyiv area.[116] Ukrainian TDF soldiers have also proven adept at thwarting actions by Russian unconventional forces to foment chaos in Ukrainian rear areas. of the 120 arrests made of Russian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in Kyiv, two-thirds of them were assisted by

---

[112] MilitaryLand.net (@Militarylandnet), "Ukrainian 98th Battalion Azov on the move somewhere in the area of operations.", X, December 16, 2022, https://x.com/Militarylandnet/status/1603 777511535841280.

[113] Stephan Korshak, "Ukraine's Counteroffensive, Units to Watch #1-3rd Separate Assault Infantry Brigade," *Kyiv Post*, May 12, 2023, https://www.kyivpost.com/post/16955.

[114] Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces", 3.

[115] Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, "Territorial Defense Forces."

[116] Ismail Khan, *Ukraine's Territorial Defense Force: War Creates Defiance* (Stockholm: Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2023), 2. https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208248.

TDF soldiers.[117] This demonstrates that the Ukrainian TDF and by extension the Polish TDF can function extremely well as rear-area security forces, helping to keep the area behind the frontlines as well as important strategic locations safe.

Experiences from the war have also validated the concerns that the Polish TDF needs to be a support force and should not be used in high-intensity combat operations due to the mixed performance of Ukrainian TDF units under these combat conditions. This rule, however, is not absolute since under the right circumstances, the Ukrainian TDF has proven extremely effective in high-intensity combat. This was particularly made clear in battles taking place in urban conditions. Participation by TDF elements helped prevent Russian encirclement of Ukrainian urban areas, with isolated actions conducted by Ukrainian TDF units in urban areas also proving stubborn enough that Russian forces were required to divert assets needed from other areas to deal with them. [118]

However, once fighting began shifting to eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian TDF began running into issues during high-intensity combat. During these battles, Russian forces began making heavy usage of artillery to blast away at Ukrainian positions, during which the lightly equipped[119] TDF struggled.[120] To more readily be able to fight under such conditions, some Ukrainian TDF brigades have been forced to acquire heavier weaponry, with for example, the 110th Territorial Defense Brigade having been spotted making use of a captured Russian T-62M tank.[121]

---

[117] Maksym Butchenko, "Ukrainian Territorial Defence on a War Footing," *International Center for Defense and Security*, April 13, 2022, https://icds.ee/en/ukraines-territorial-defence-on-a-war-footing/.

[118] Mykola Bielieskov, "*Ukraine's Territorial Defence Forces: The War So Far and Future Prospects*," Royal United Services Institute, May 11, 2022, https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraines-territorial-defence-forces-war-so-far-and-future-prospects.

[119] (Note, auto-translated via Google Translate's browser feature) Vlad Voloshyn and Evgeny Provorny, "Foreign grenade launchers have almost supplanted Soviet models of these weapons in our unit-TrO instructor," *armyinform*, June 17, 2022, https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/06/17/inozemni-granatomety-majzhe-vytisnyly-radyanski-zrazky-cziyeyi-zbroyi-v-nashomu-pidrozdili-instruktor-tro/.

[120] Bielieskov, "Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces."

[121] David Axe, "Ukraine's Territorials Need Tanks. They're Getting Them… From Russia," *Forbes*, October 24, 2023, https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2023/10/24/ukraines-territorials-need-tanks-theyre-getting-them--from-russia/?sh=121e5c476452.

The Polish strategy of using the TDF as a force to wage unconventional warfare against an occupying power has also been validated by the war. During the course of the war, Ukrainian TDF forces have conducted operations associated with guerilla warfare.[122] Additionally, the war has shown that, as proposed in the Polish TDF doctrine, TDF forces can be useful in bolstering the strength of regular forces. In Ukraine, this has manifested itself in a diverse array of tasks from the TDF providing soldiers to boost defense efforts by regular forces in urban areas such as Kyiv and Kharkiv[123] to TDF soldiers assisting the border guard with security on the border.[124] One area of the Polish TDF doctrine that has not been validated by the war in Ukraine is the deployment strategy for TDF units. Whereas the Polish system mandates that TDF units conduct operations within their area of responsibility, Ukrainian TDF brigades have been forced to deploy on operations outside their home regions.[125]

How has the Polish TDF changes since the war began

Thus, the war has shown how the concept behind Poland's TDF is valid, with examples ranging from the success of Ukraine's TDF in combating Russian subversive elements all the way to demonstrating that light reservist forces such as territorial defense forces are not the best kind of force to use in high-intensity combat operations against a heavy opponent such as Russia. So how has the Polish TDF evolved since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine? There have been several changes made. Even before the war there plans underway to enlarge the TDF. Whilst originally at around 32,000 soldiers, it was planned for the force to reach over 50,000 troops[126]. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine,

---

122 Ismail Khan, "Ukraine's Territorial Defence Force," 2.

123 Mykola Bielieskov, "Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces."

124 Butchenko, "Territorial Defence in War."

125 Bielieskov, "Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces."

126 Klisz, "Polish Territorial Defence Forces", 3.

it appears that the Polish government has doubled down on this goal. In addition to requests for an increase to 250,000 active-duty members of the armed forces, the previous Defence Minister, Mariusz Blaszczak, sought to reach the target of 50,000 soldiers in the TDF by 2035.[127] Despite the change in Defence Ministers in late 2023,[128] the Polish TDF appears to be sticking to this goal, at least when pertaining to the TDF. In early 2024, the Ministry of National Defence stated its intention to recruit 8 thousand TDF soldiers by next year, bringing the total number of troops in the force to 41,000.[129] The new Defence Minister, Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz (leader of the Polish People's Party) has also praised the effectiveness of the Polish TDF and has requested that it be placed directly under the Polish Defence Minister.[130]

Aside from the changes in government, the war in Ukraine has also led to some proposed changes regarding how the Polish TDF is deployed and armed. At a conference hosted by Defense 24, Brigadier General Krzysztof Stanczyk, commander of the TDF, stated that the war in Ukraine demonstrated that Polish TDF brigades need to be able to deploy on operations outside their home region.[131] Additionally, Brig. General Stanczyk announced that the TDF would receive a boost in firepower. He announced the TDF's intention to form a couple of artillery-equipped support companies, with said artillery having a range of out to a distance of 20 to

---

[127] Robert Czulda, Poland's Military Modernisation-Still Many Challenges Ahead (Warsaw: Casmir Pulaski Foundation, 2023), https://pulaski.pl/en/pulaski-policy-paper-polands-military-modernisation-still-many-challenges-ahead-robert-czulda-2/.

[128] Jakub Borowski, "Poland: Kosiniak-Kamysz Becomes Deputy PM and Head of the MOD," *Defence 24*, December 13, 2023, https://defence24.com/defence-policy/poland-kosiniak-kamysz-becomes-deputy-pm-and-head-of-the-mod-/poland-kosiniak-kamysz-becomes-deputy-pm-and-head-of-the-mod.

[129] (Unclear ff MOD meant 2024 or 2025) Jakub Barowski, "Polish Ministry of Defence Outlines the Priorities and 2024 Budget: Large Army, Full Readiness of the Territorial Defence Component," *Defence 24*, January 1, 2024, https://defence24.com/defence-policy/polish-ministry-of-defence-outlines-the-priorities-and-2024-budget-large-army-full-readiness-of-the-territorial-defence-component.

[130] Jakub Barowski, "Head of Defence Ministry."

[131] Jakub Borowski, "Generals: High Time to Polish Command System Reform. Artillery Assigned to Territorial Defence," *Defence 24*, May 10, 2024, https://defence24.com/armed-forces/generals-high-time-to-polish-command-system-reform-artillery-assigned-to-territorial-defence.

25 kilometers.[132] This could be a be a change after observing the Ukrainian TDF's challenges in high-intensity combat due to a lack of artillery systems. However, even with this boost in firepower it would still be questionable to send Polish TDF units against the Russian Ground Forces. In terms of range, the hypothetical TDF artillery units would still be outranged by some artillery pieces found within Russian Ground Forces brigades such as the 2S19 Msta-S which using rocket-assisted ammunition has a range of 36 kilometers[133] and the BM-21 Grad MLRS (depending on rocket, with ranges going from as low as 20 km to supposedly as high as 45 km),[134] though the hypothetical TDF artillery units would outrange the older 2S3 self-propelled howitzer that is potentially included within Russian army brigades[135] (max range of around 17.3-20 km).[136] However, in the TDF's doctrinal roles, the addition of these artillery companies to its structure might provide it with some advantages. In its role as a support force to the Land Forces, the hypothetical range of Polish TDF artillery systems would give the TDF an advantage over isolated Russian motorized rifle battalions, whose artillery assets consist of a mortar battery equipped with 8 2S12 "Sani" systems (using rocket-assisted munitions, a range of around 13 km).[137] This advantage also extends to the TDF's role as a home guard force. The hypothetical TDF artillery would outrange the 2S9 Nona-S used by the VDV (though Russia is working on replacing the system),[138] which has a range of around 13 km.[139]

The Polish TDF also feels war in Ukraine has demonstrated the validity of the total mobilization of society to defend the nation, which is why the TDF has worked on agreements with Polish civilian agencies.[140] An example of how Poland views assets from civil society as useful tools

---

[132] Ibid.

[133] Grau and Bartles, *Russian Way of War*, 235.

[134] Grau and Bartles, *Russian Way of War*, 236.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 232.

[137] Ibid., 238

[138] Ibid., 361.

[139] Ibid., 232.

[140] Kowalska-Sendek and Sendek, "Lessons from the Front."

for national defense can be seen with the Polish TDF's contract with Polish State Railways, since in Ukraine railways were used to help move forces around.[141]

Conclusion

As this paper discussed, the Polish TDF is a force doctrinally intended to support local communities during times of peace, as a force meant to support the Polish Armed Forces, for waging unconventional warfare, and maintaining rear-area security in wartime. Furthermore, the paper highlighted how the Polish and Ukrainian TDFs share many similarities in structure, initial equipment and general role, even if they differ in some areas such as size. This similarity bodes well for the Polish TDF due to the Ukrainian TDF's relative success in its efforts during the Russian full-scale invasion.

Moreover, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion in Ukraine, this paper discussed how the Polish TDF has evolved in a variety of ways. These changes range from new equipment such as the artillery systems proposed by Brig. General Stanczyk to the reworking of TDF doctrine to allow for brigades to deploy outside their home region. Thus, Poland has developed a solid force with which to bolster its national security. Future research remains needed to examine whether, for example, the Polish TDF model would be suitable in other countries outside of a Central European threat environment, such as in Australia and Taiwan in the Asia-Pacific. What remains uncertain, is whether the Polish TDF, in light of all of the described changes, would be able to counter the Russian Armed Forces in the future.

---

[141] Ibid.

Deescalation in the Horn of Africa: An Eritrean-Ethiopian Case Study 1974-2023

Katherine SANCHEZ

Abstract: This article seeks to highlight Eritrea's geopolitical importance to the international community by placing the current instability in the region into a deeper historical context. It focuses on the background of the ongoing tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the pertinence of the Tigray War. It argues that Eritrea holds significant economic and military sway and underscores the imperative to counteract China's base and port monopoly in the region while maintaining essential infrastructural investment. Additionally, the article proposes that to maintain peace in the Horn of Africa, the international community should apply greater economic resources and diplomatic care to Eritrean and Ethiopian affairs. This approach would aid Eritrea's transition from a totalitarian regime to a democratic governance structure and stabilize the region.

Introduction

Eritrea's socio-political, economic, and ecological instability, combined with its critical geopolitical position at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, requires greater international attention. This attention is necessary to mitigate the

utilization of the country's vulnerabilities by outside actors. Eritrea's strategic location at a crucial maritime chokepoint on the Western bank of the Red Sea gives it significant influence over shipping routes through the Suez Canal. Therefore, the international community should enhance soft power diplomacy in the region to safeguard the Red Sea waters from the threat of monopolization.[142]

China is Eritrea's biggest trade partner and has dedicated an enormous amount of time and money to implementing infrastructural progress, especially in connection with Eritrea's ports.[143] China and Eritrea have had historically good relations since Eritrea became independent in 1993. Eritrea's southern neighbor, Djibouti, already hosts the first Chinese military base in Africa. If China gains additional control of Eritrea's ports it could blockade the Bab el-Mandeb Strait- resulting in disastrous consequences for global shipping and security. To avoid this situation, the international community should intensify diplomatic efforts in Eritrea, taking into account the underlying historical and cultural aspects of tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and acknowledging Eritrea's traumatic past that has predisposed it to reject international intervention.

Historical Context

Eritrea was an Italian colony from the late 19th century until WWII. Under Italian rule in the 1930s, Asmara, Eritrea's capital, became one of Africa's most modern cities. However, Eritreans themselves enjoyed very little of this progress as Italy was one of the most racist regimes in the world at the time.[144] After Italy's defeat in 1941, Eritrea was placed under British

---

[142] This article focuses specifically on China and Eritrea's relationship. It is important to note that China has made huge investments throughout the Horn of Africa. Additionally, China is not the only player contending for power over Eritrea's coastline. Russia and Turkey also have a significant presence in Eritrea and throughout the Horn of Africa.

[143] "What Is the EBA?," Monitoring Missions and Priorities in Eritrea, accessed July 11, 2024, https://gsphub.eu/country-info/Eritrea#:~:text=Trade%20Partners,import%20market%20for%20Eritrean%20products.

[144] Dan Connell, "He Didn't Do It For Them," *Middle East Report* 238 (Spring 2006). https://merip.org/2006/03/he-didnt-do-it-for-them/

administration. Far from liberators, the British were just another name in a long line of colonizing powers. A British officer's racist comment to an Eritrean woman celebrating Italy's defeat epitomizes this colonial exploitation: "I didn't do it for you, nigger."[145] In 1950, the UN federated Eritrea with Ethiopia, promising autonomy. However, in 1962, Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie dissolved the federation, annexing Eritrea as a province. This sparked resentment and an armed struggle for independence.[146]

In 1974, Selassie was overthrown by the Derg, a Marxist militant group notorious for mass executions and brutality. The Derg's cruelty targeted members of opposition groups and ordinary Ethiopians alike. The regime became deeply unpopular, and its inability to address Eritrea's movement for independence further drove many people to join opposition parties including the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF), and the Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front (EPLF). By 1977, Ethiopia plunged into a civil war oriented around Eritrea and Tigray.[147] The Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) emerged as an Amhara opposition group, allying with the TPLF. In 1989, the TPLF and EPDM formed the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), dominated by the TPLF. The TPLF's prominence in the coalition would have a lasting impact on Ethiopia's future government in which the group would maintain its standing as the main power of the four-party ethnically based coalition that dominated the Ethiopian political scene for nearly three decades.[148]

In 1991, the EPRDF coalition overthrew the Derg in Addis Ababa, while the EPLF seized Eritrean cities, including Asmara. Eritrea gained de facto independence in 1991 and was formally recognized as an independent state in 1993 after a UN-supervised referendum. Despite independence, the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia remained disputed, leading to

---

[145] Michela Wrong, *I Didn't Do It for You: How the World Betrayed a Small African Nation* (New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins, 2005).

[146] "The Ethiopian Revolution, The Derg, Civil War and Famine," Ethiopian treasures, accessed July 4, 2024, http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/derg.htm.

[147] "The Ethiopian Revolution, The Derg, Civil War and Famine."

[148] "Ethiopia's Tigray War: The Short, Medium and Long Story." BBC News, BBC, 29 June 2021. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54964378.

the Eritrean-Ethiopian War in 1998. The war began in May 1998 and lasted until June 2000. It was ultimately provoked by the countries' dual claims to the small border town of Badme. Though Badme had little in terms of resources, its significance represented a deeper struggle for dominance between the two newly separated countries. Eritrea and Ethiopia both spent millions of dollars on the conflict, and additionally, suffered the loss of tens of thousands of their citizens who were killed, wounded, or displaced.[149]

The war officially ended with the signing of the Algiers Agreement in December 2000. This agreement called for a cease in hostilities and established the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) to demarcate the border. In 2002, the EEBC ruled that Badme belonged to Eritrea. However, Ethiopia initially rejected this decision and continued to occupy Badme, leading to a tense stalemate that would last for nearly two decades.[150]

From an outsider's perspective, the Eritrean-Ethiopian war was unexpected. It made little sense for the two nations, respectively led by the same groups who had worked closely together during the period of liberation, to suddenly turn on one another. However, the alliance between the TPLF and EPLF during the revolutionary period was uneasy at best and included many breaks in contact. While they shared the common goal of defeating the Derg, there were significant differences between the TPLF's and the EPLF's ideologies, military tactics, and concepts of nationality. Even after liberation and their co-victory over the Derg in 1991, the TPLF and EPLF maintained animosity towards each other throughout the 1990s.[151] While the TPLF believed in Eritrea's right to independence, the EPLF was viewed as egotistical and contemptuous. On the other hand, the EPLF had trained many of the TPLF soldiers and saw the group's rise to power after liberation as something they had helped to create. As a result, the EPLF believed

---

[149] "Eritrean-Ethiopian War." New World Encyclopedia. Accessed June 27, 2024. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eritrean-Ethiopian_War.

[150] Richard Reid, "A Very Ethiopian Tragedy: Tigray, the TPLF, and Cyclical History." *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, January 26, 2021.

[151] "The Ethiopian Revolution, The Derg, Civil War and Famine." Ethiopian treasures. Accessed July 4, 2024. http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/derg.htm.

they should be given some political and military influence in Ethiopia.[152] These past tensions between the EPLF and TPLF are vital to understanding the dynamics of current Eritrean-Ethiopian relations as cultural memory perpetuates generational conflicts.

Contemporary Developments and Renewed Tensions

The animosity between Eritrea and Ethiopia following the 2002 border decision was finally resolved when the new Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, came to power in 2018. During this time, diplomatic relations were restored with the establishment of telephone connections between the two countries, the ability for Ethiopia's airline to fly to Eritrea, and the opening of embassies in the respective capitals. Additionally, Prime Minister Abiy expressed interest in his landlocked country's use of Eritrea's ports,[153] which were the country's major loss when Eritrea became independent.

Since 2018, tensions over Ethiopia's use of Eritrea's ports have resurfaced. As of 2023, it seems the friendly relations between the two countries reestablished only 5 years earlier have deteriorated back to a state of "no war, no peace." In an October 2023 speech, Abiy insisted that Ethiopia's claims to Red Sea access were backed by history, as well as a practical necessity due to the economic, demographic, and security vulnerabilities.[154] Verifiably, from 1952 to 1993, Eritrea and its Red Sea ports had been part of Ethiopia, however, Abiy's claims align with other, current, Ethiopian nationalist ways of thought that regard Eritrea's separation from Ethiopia as a historic mistake. Whether Eritrean president Isaias (Eritre-

---

[152] "The Ethiopian Revolution, The Derg, Civil War and Famine."

[153] Elias Meseret, "With Hugs, Leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea Restore Relations." *AP News*, July 8, 2018. https://apnews.com/article/9c5c3675d2114e0ea089e51df902d1b7.

[154] Michael Woldemariam, "Taking Ethiopia-Eritrea Tensions Seriously." United States Institute of Peace, December 19, 2023. https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/12/taking-ethiopia-eritrea-tensions-seriously.

ans use the first name)[155] acknowledged Abiy's Red Sea request is somewhat a matter of speculation. However, and perhaps more importantly, the nuances of current relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, can be best understood through an analysis of the pretenses in which the two first came to an agreement in 2018. At the heart of the peace deal was an alliance between Addis Ababa and Asmara to contain, corral, and perhaps defeat the Tigray People's Liberation Front.[156]

The Tigray War, emerging from the 2018 peace agreement, began in November 2020 and lasted two years. The TPLF had been the leading political power in Ethiopia since its liberation from the Derg regime in 1991 and additionally controlled the majority of the country's security forces[157] despite Tigrayans only making up around 6% of Ethiopia's population. However, after coming to power in April of 2018, the new Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed, marginalized the once dominant TPLF by replacing the previous ruling faction, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), with the new Prosperity Party in December 2019.[158] The TPLF declined to join the new government, sparking tensions that led to an all-out war in 2020. Ethiopian, Amhara, and Eritrean forces, with support from foreign allies, fought against the Tigray Defense Forces (TDF).[159] During the war, both the Ethiopian federal government, which was aided by the Eritrean military, and the TDF committed war crimes which included persecution, murder, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Members of the Amhara forces also committed crimes against humanity including deportation or forcible transfer and committed ethnic cleansing in western Tigray.[160] The war

---

[155] "The Despotism of Isaias Afewerki: Alex De Waal," The Baffler, September 2, 2022, https://thebaffler.com/latest/the-despotism-of-isaias-afewerki-de-waal.

[156] Woldemariam, "Taking Ethiopia-Eritrea Tensions Seriously."

[157] Alexia Underwood, "The Sudden End of the Ethiopia-Eritrea War, Explained," Vox, July 31, 2018. https://www.vox.com/2018/7/31/17595988/ethiopia-eritrea-peace-abiy-ahmed.

[158] Reid, "A Very Ethiopian Tragedy: Tigray, the TPLF, and Cyclical History." /

[159] Mehari Taddele Maru, "What Ethiopia and Tigray Need for Peace Talks to Succeed," *Al Jazeera*, September 22, 2022, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/9/22/what-ethiopia-and-tigray-need-for-peace-talks-to-succeed.

[160] Anthony J. Blinken, "War Crimes, Crimes Against Humanity, and Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia," U.S. Department of State, March 20, 2023, https://www.state.gov/war-crimes-crimes-against-humanity-and-ethnic-cleansing-in-ethiopia/.

ended in 2022 with a peace deal between Abiy and the TPLF in Pretoria, further straining Ethiopian-Eritrean relations. The agreement allowed the TPLF's survival, maintained a large Tigrayan militia, and aligned Addis Ababa more closely with the United States, creating security concerns for Eritrea.[161] Understanding these dynamics is essential for comprehending the ongoing tensions and the delicate balance of power in the Horn of Africa.

Tigray region has been pivotal in shaping Ethiopia as an empire-state over centuries.[162] Understanding the current instability in the Horn of Africa requires recognizing Tigray's geographic and social connection with Eritrea. The Tigrinya people of central Eritrea share cultural and linguistic ties with Tigray. Over 50% of Eritrea's population is Tigrayan, posing a challenge to the Isaias regime. Many Eritrean-Tigrayans feel Isaias, not being from Eritrean land, has no right to govern them. However, some believe Eritrea was founded as a non-ethnocentric country, making the leader's ethnicity irrelevant. Regardless, many Eritreans, Tigrayan or not, feel the Isaias regime has overstayed its welcome.[163]

Eritrea's Authoritarian Regime

Eritrea is controlled by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), the direct successor of the EPLF. This executive-dominated government runs a one-party state, banning independent media, suppressing non-party NGOs, and detaining dissenters without trial or appeal. Citizens have no guaranteed rights, only privileges granted or revoked at the dictator's discretion. Since separating from Ethiopia in 1993, Eritrea has been ruled by President Isaias Afwerki, who has never held an election in over 30 years. Eritrea lacks an enforced constitution and has a dismal human rights record, including indefinite conscription of men and unmarried women into

---

[161] Woldemariam, "Taking Ethiopia-Eritrea Tensions Seriously." y

[162] Reid, "A Very Ethiopian Tragedy."

[163] R/Eritrea (@kachowski6969), "Why Tigrayans Will Always Be at Odds with Eritreans," Reddit, December 2023, https://www.reddit.com/r/Eritrea/comments/17nv0ka/why_tigrayans_will_always_be_at_odds_with/.

military or government service.[164] Political dissent of any kind and association outside the ruling PFDJ are prohibited. Additionally, only four religious groups are officially recognized. Unregistered religious groups lack the privileges of registered groups and their members risk arrest, mistreatment, and renunciation of their faith as a condition of their release.[165] No group larger than seven can meet without government permission, and no public protests are tolerated. New prisons have emerged in major cities and remote areas, with reports of „ghost houses" in Asmara, where parents of Absent-Without-Leave conscripts are detained.[166]

Due to the oppressive regime and mandatory military service, many Eritrean youth have fled abroad. However, the PFDJ still relies heavily on the diaspora for political and financial support. An estimated one-third of President Isaias's funds come from exiles.[167] Despite UN Security Council Resolutions, the Presidential administration taxes Eritreans abroad based on ethnicity, even if they renounce Eritrean citizenship. Refusing the tax results in collective punishment of family members.[168] This extraterritorial control underscores the regime's far-reaching influence and its dependence on the diaspora to sustain its authoritarian rule.

Historical Context and Present Challenges

Eritrea's relationship with the international community has been severely strained due to years of colonial oppression and subjugation. President

---

[164] Joe Cash, "XI: Strong China-Eritrea Ties Part of Keeping Peace in Horn of Africa | Reuters," Reuters, May 15, 2023, https://www.reuters.com/world/china-eritrea-should-enrich-strategic-partnership-premier-li-2023-05-15/.

[165] U.S. Department of State, accessed June 28, 2024, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/eritrea/.

[166] Dan Connell, "He Didn't Do It For Them," Middle East Report 238 (Spring 2006).

[167] Martin Plaut, "Eritrea's Active Opposition: The Rise of Brigade n'hamedu." Martin Plaut, January 1, 2024. https://martinplaut.com/2023/12/19/eritreas-active-opposition-the-rise-of-brigade-nhamedu/.

[168] Michael Rubin, "Eritrea Is a State Sponsor of Terror | American Enterprise Institute – AEI," American Enterprise Institute, September 12, 2023, https://www.aei.org/op-eds/eritrea-is-a-state-sponsor-of-terror/.

Isaias Afwerki's disdain for multilateral forums such as the African Union and his strained relations with neighboring governments have contributed to Eritrea being caricatured as the "North Korea of Africa."[169] Continuous tensions with its neighbors, including the Badme war (1998-2000) and the Tigray war (2020-2022), have further isolated and militarized Eritrea and provided an excuse for the extent of Isaias's oppressive regime. In response to the international community's failure to enforce the boundary commission with Ethiopia in 2000, the Isaias regime turned its back on diplomacy, blaming the outside world for their lack of principle and threatening renewed war. In 2005, Eritrea restricted UN flights along the tense frontier and expelled Western peacekeeping force members. In 2006, Asmara mounted a major mobilization and rounded up dozens of Eritreans serving with the UN, accusing them of avoiding obligatory military service.

As of 2023, Eritrea's median age was 18.7 years old.[170] This young generation has become increasingly dissatisfied with the totalitarian regime. Many have fled the country to avoid indefinite military conscription and political oppression.[171] There were over 580,000 Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers abroad as of the end of 2021 and according to the May 2022 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, "the overwhelming majority cited the indefinite national service as the principal reason they fled the country."[172] The large numbers of Eritrean migrants have created issues within host countries due to tensions among the diaspora, which is split between pro-PFDJ supporters and

---

[169] Harry Verhoeven, "Amid Red Sea Rivalries, Eritrea Plays for Independence," United States Institute of Peace, March 11, 2020, https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/03/amid-red-sea-rivalries-eritrea-plays-independence.

[170] "Eritrea Demographics," Worldometer, accessed July 1, 2024, https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/eritrea-demographics/.

[171] Lors Heit, "Why Are so Many People Fleeing Eritrea? – Choose Love," Choose Love – Help for refugees where it's needed most., April 4, 2023, https://chooselove.org/news/why-are-so-many-people-fleeing-eritrea/.

[172] "World Report 2023: Rights Trends in Eritrea," Human Rights Watch, January 20, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/eritrea#:~:text=There%20were%20over%20580%2C000%20Eritrean,of%20human%20rights%20in%20Eritrea.

those who wish to see the Isaias regime overthrown.[173] Many youth in the diaspora feel that the Eritrean government has committed numerous crimes against its people. Efforts to negotiate with the government have been ineffective, leading to a desperate emotional response marked by anger and resentment towards the regime. Under these conditions, a revolutionary movement has taken shape.

Internet forums like Reddit and X have become platforms for Eritrean revolutionaries to express uncensored feelings. Brigade N'Hamedu (BhN)[174], a revolutionary group comprised of Eritrean youth from the international diaspora, aims to overthrow the Isaias regime and install a transitional government to democracy. In an early response to emerging opposition, the PFDJ set up a militant youth wing for the diaspora called the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice (YPFDJ) in 2005, to counter what it saw as the lies spread by Eritrea's enemies.[175] These online militant groups represent a new wave of conflict between competing factions, with BhN reportedly being filled with TPLF supporters.[176] On Reddit, the YPFDJ and BhN supporters cite alternative facts to contradict each other's arguments, showing to what extent each group has been radicalized. The Tigray war further split views in the diaspora regarding the Eritrean government, the TPLF, and Ethiopia. Eritrea fought alongside the Ethiopian army against the TPLF, blaming the latter for the deadly 1998-2000 border war. Some diaspora members who had previously spoken out against the government found their patriotic fervor revived during the conflict due to traumatic memories of TPLF aggression.[177] Conversely, the majority of Blue Revolution/BhN supporters, many of whom fled conscription, opposed Eritrea's

---

[173] Tigrinya service, and BBC News. "Eritrean Independence Day: Why the Diaspora Is at War with Itself." BBC News, May 23, 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw884l2wld8o.

[174] BhN is also referred to as the Blue Revolution as the group uses an older version of the Eritrean flag that is blue.

[175] Tigrinya service, and BBC News. "Eritrean Independence Day: Why the Diaspora Is at War with Itself." BBC News, May 23, 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw884l2wld8o.

[176] q3bb, R/eritrea on reddit: The blue revolution, November 2023, https://www.reddit.com/r/Eritrea/comments/17j2s8u/the_blue_revolution/.

[177] Tigrinya service, and BBC News. "Eritrean Independence Day: Why the Diaspora Is at War with Itself."

involvement in the Tigray war.[178] The division in the diaspora presents a clear picture of a conflict that cannot be decided peacefully within itself. Non-biased mediation is needed to address the growing animosity between groups that have historically, culturally, and geographically been so close. To solve these dynamic issues the international community should look into aspects of the problems that can be solved objectively including economic failure, climate disaster, and humanitarian crisis.

Eritrea's Geopolitical Importance

Eritrea's strategic importance to the global community is underscored by its location at the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. This chokepoint is crucial for global trade, with 15% of international commerce and 30% of global container traffic passing through it.[179] The potential for Eritrea, particularly in partnership with China, to control this passageway poses a significant threat to global trade and security. China has invested heavily in Eritrea's infrastructure, including building up port infrastructure and a half-billion-dollar mining project that began in 2022. China's financial investments in Eritrea and other countries in the Horn of Africa enhance its influence in the region. The international community's best method to counterbalance this influence, without disturbing necessary infrastructural progress, is through diplomatic efforts and strategic investments.

Eritrea's economy is largely controlled by the state and the PFDJ, which jointly own the main financial and commercial institutions, utilities, communications infrastructure, and transportation companies. They also maintain significant shares in joint ventures with foreign investors for major projects.[180] Since Eritrea's independence, China has been its largest investor, contractor, and trade partner. Chinese companies have built some

---

[178] Ibid.

[179] Holly Krambeck et al., "Navigating Troubled Waters: The Red Sea Shipping Crisis and Its Global Repercussions," World Bank Blogs, May 16, 2024, https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/developmenttalk/navigating-troubled-waters--the-red-sea-shipping-crisis-and-its-.

[180] Dan Connell, "He Didn't Do It For Them," Middle East Report 238 (Spring 2006). https://merip.org/2006/03/he-didnt-do-it-for-them/

of the country's most important infrastructure, including the primary port of Massawa and a road linking Massawa to the port of Assab.[181] This historical and economic relationship with China, dating back to President Isaias's military training in Beijing during the late 1960s,[182] has been crucial for Eritrea. For example, China was the only country to abstain from the 2009 UN vote to sanction Eritrea for its military presence in Djibouti.[183] In 2021, Eritrea signed a deal with China to become part of the Belt and Road initiative, and in 2022, China broke ground on a copper, zinc, and ore mine in Eritrea.[184] These infrastructural investments directly benefit the PDFJ which holds controlling stakes in joint ventures with foreign investors for other large-scale undertakings, such as mining.[185] While China's investment in Eritrea is overall beneficial to the development of the nation, non-Western actors should not be the only entities contributing to such progress.

International Relations and Climate Challenges

The international community can influence the region positively, especially in addressing the existential threats posed by climate change. As of 2011, Eritrea is considered one of the world's least developed countries and is additionally one of the most food-insecure countries in sub-Saharan Africa with one of the highest rates of malnutrition.[186] Climate change serves to

---

[181] Hudson Institute, "Eritrea's Growing Ties with China and Russia Highlight America's Inadequate Approach in East Africa – Analysis," Eurasia Review, July 19, 2023, https://www.eurasiareview.com/19072023-eritreas-growing-ties-with-china-and-russia-highlight-americas-inadequate-approach-in-east-africa-analysis/.

[182] Connell, "He Didn't Do It For Them."

[183] "Security Council Imposes Sanctions on Eritrea over Its Role in Somalia, Refusal to Withdraw Troops Following Conflict with Djibouti | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," United Nations, accessed July 11, 2024, https://press.un.org/en/2009/sc9833.doc.htm.

[184] Salem Solomon, "In State Visit, Eritrea and China Signal Deeper Partnership," Voice of America, May 22, 2023, https://www.voanews.com/a/in-state-visit-eritrea-and-china-signal-deeper-partnership-/7104234.html.

[185] Connell, "He Didn't Do It For Them."

[186] "Eritrea," Eritrea | Climate Change Adaptation, accessed July 11, 2024, https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/africa/eritrea#:~:text=Climatic%20risks%20pose%20a%20serious,protection%20and%20safeguarding%20public%20health.

exacerbate the already difficult situation of sustaining agricultural stability and food production. One-third of Eritrea's economy is highly dependent on the predominantly rain-fed agriculture sector.[187] Over 70% of Eritrea's population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, and due to reduced rainfall resulting from climate change,[188] as well as poor resource distribution, a large portion of the population remains food insecure for most of the year. Even in good years, domestic food production remains well below the requirements, forcing Eritrea to rely on commercial imports.[189]

One way the international community could aid in de-escalating tensions in the Horn of Africa would be to assist in countering the effects of climate change in the region. Addressing the underlying existential threats to the health of the population is an important first step for the Eritrean people to instigate regime change. In answer to the question of how political change could be initiated in Eritrea, one anonymous response on the Eritrean Reddit summed up the issue perfectly; it is "difficult to implement democracy in impoverished society. (If my kids have nothing to eat tonight and someone gives me a sack of grain for a vote – I will vote for them)."[190] Addressing climate change and supporting sustainable development are essential for any positive regime change in Eritrea.

Policy Recommendations and Conclusions

The research suggests that to ensure stability in the Red Sea region, the international community should improve diplomatic relations with Eritrea. Failure to do so could lead to Eritrea, potentially in partnership with China,

---

[187] "World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal," Summary | Climate Change Knowledge Portal, 2021, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/eritrea.

[188] "Climate Change / Eritrea: Interactive Country Fiches." Climate change / Eritrea | Interactive Country Fiches. Accessed June 26, 2024. https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/eritrea/climate-change#section-drivers.

[189] "Climate Change / Eritrea: Interactive Country Fiches," Climate change / Eritrea | Interactive Country Fiches, accessed June 29, 2024, https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/eritrea/climate-change.

[190] Spirited_Wheel_3072, "R/Eritrea on Reddit: The Blue Revolution," Reddit, December 2023, https://www.reddit.com/r/Eritrea/comments/17j2s8u/the_blue_revolution/.

cutting off access to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal, crucial maritime routes for global trade. Eritrea's level of openness and militarization is closely tied to its relationship with Ethiopia. The Isaias regime has historically used the threat from its neighbors to maintain its oppressive systems and closed governance. If Ethiopia becomes an ally rather than a threat, the regime loses its justification for such stringent measures. The international community can help build a lasting amicable relationship between Eritrea and Ethiopia through three main strategies:

- Financial Support- Provide resources to rebuild both economies, contingent on maintaining peace between the countries;
- Expert Assistance- Send climate and agricultural experts to counter the detrimental effects of climate change;
- Mediation- Assist in creating long-term, transparent, and unbiased mediation incorporated into the institutional framework of their relations.

Stable relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea would enable direct international intervention instead of just sending money or supplies. Reducing tensions could prevent conflict escalation involving external actors like China. Historical cooperation, such as during the Tigray War when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed accepted the 2002 boundary decision, shows that partnership is possible. However, tensions persist due to historical animosities from previous conflicts. The animosity between Eritrea and Ethiopia, fueled by historical conflicts and the Tigray War (2020-2022), remains a critical issue. The 2018 peace agreement between Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed initially raised hopes for improved relations. However, Abiy's recent assertions of Ethiopia's need for Red Sea access and the survival of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) post-Tigray War have strained these relations. Eritrea's support for Ethiopia during the Tigray War and the subsequent peace deal further complicated the dynamics, with lingering tensions threatening regional stability. Acknowledging the atrocities committed by all parties prior to, during, and after the Tigray War is crucial for peace. Furthermore, facilitating Ethiopia's access to Eritrean ports without altering sovereign borders could reduce tensions and foster economic cooperation.

The international community should send climate and agricultural experts to assist in mitigating the effects of climate change. Improving agricultural productivity and food security would reduce the country's dependence on imports and enhance its stability. Eritrea's totalitarian regime under President Isaias Afwerki has resulted in widespread human rights abuses and economic stagnation. The international community should provide substantial economic aid and diplomatic assistance to support Eritrea's transition to democracy. This aid needs to be contingent on demilitarization and significant political reforms, ensuring that the funds are used to improve the lives of Eritrean citizens rather than bolstering the regime's oppressive apparatus. Additionally, the international community should play a proactive role in mediating conflicts between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Establishing transparent and unbiased mediation mechanisms would help build lasting peace between the two nations.

To secure the continuous use of the Red Sea and ensure regional stability, the international community should enhance diplomatic efforts and provide substantial aid to both: Eritrea and Ethiopia. Investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and climate resilience, coupled with improved diplomatic relations, could contribute to mitigating the risk of any single nation dominating the Red Sea. This approach will not only secure global trade routes but also promote peace and prosperity in the Horn of Africa. By supporting Eritrea's transition to democracy and fostering positive relations with Ethiopia, the international community can contribute to a stable and prosperous future for the region.

PART 2

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND GEOPOLITICAL STRATEGIES

1

Sanctions and Sovereignty: Russia's Response to Economic Coercion and the Efficacy of Sanctions in Global Politics

Harris FRANZ

Abstract: This article analyzes the efficacy of economic sanctions imposed on Russia following its unlawful invasion of Ukraine by the U.S. and its allies. The article examines the broad range of sanctions imposed on Russia with aim of targeting the country's financial sector, oil and gas revenue, and military-industry complex. It then explores how Russia has managed to circumvent their impact by weaponizing Europe's energy industry and through the use of transshipment hubs to import highly needed goods and to export oil and gas. This article draws attention to the newer multi-polar world order realities that help explain why sanctions are no longer an effective tool to coerce targeted entities to change their behavior and instead negatively impact the poor and most vulnerable. Despite the apparent ineffectiveness of sanctions, this article examines why they are still used and concludes by offering policy recommendations.

Keywords: U.S. led economic sanctions, Russo-Ukrainian war, transshipment hubs, multipolar world order

Introduction

Economic sanctions are restrictive measures imposed by states or international bodies to change the behavior of a targeted individual, organization or nation. Restrictive measures include trade embargoes, travel bans, asset blockages and financial restrictions.[191] Sanctions have been used extensively since the creation of the League of Nations, and furthermore by the United States and Western coalitions in the 20th century.[192] Economic sanctions have been regarded as an important asset for "peaceful" conflict resolution and international diplomacy, with its purpose to deter an opposing state's actions without regressing to military intervention.[193] They have been used to enforce international laws and regulations on human rights and place pressure on rogue states.[194]

However, with the rise of globalization, economies have become increasingly interdependent and are causing scholars and policymakers to question the efficacy of sanctions.[195] Do sanctions, for example, bring about regime change or succeed in diverting the military course of a country? Or do they breed aggression between parties and arguably lead states closer to violent conflict?[196] Also there is a greater awareness about the unintended spillover effects of sanctions that negatively impact the lives of citizens living in the targeted country.[197]

---

[191] Benjamin Coates, "A Century of Sanctions," Origins, December 2019, https://origins.osu.edu/article/economic-sanctions-history-trump-global.

[192] David A. Baldwin, "The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice," *International Security* 24, no. 3 (January 2000): 80–107, https://doi.org/10.1162/016228899560248.

[193] Ibid.

[194] Brent Lawniczak, "Substitute to War: Questioning the Efficacy of Sanctions on Russia." *Journal of Advanced Military Studies* 14, no. 2 (August 31, 2023): 227–45. https://doi.org/10.21140/mcuj.20231402011.

[195] Ibid.

[196] https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2023/09/impact-sanctions.

[197] Paddy Hirsch, "Why Sanctions Don't Work – but Could If Done Right." NPR, April 11, 2023. https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/04/11/1169072190/why-sanctions-dont-work-but-could-if-done-right.

In some cases, sanctions have reinforced the power hold of political elite over regimes, while stifling the general population. U.S. led sanctions on Iran, for example, inadvertently strengthened the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' control over the economy.[198] Sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports, manufacturing, and banking sectors unintentionally drained the Iranian people of many resources and goods, and instead enabled aspiring elites to elevate their standing and wealth at the detriment of the population.[199]

The case of Cuba serves as another stark example of the inefficiency of sanctions. In reaction to Castro's nationalization of a few oil refineries, President Eisenhower in 1958 imposed an embargo that remains in place to this day.[200] The embargo not only failed to bring about regime change, but pushed Cuba to closely align itself with the Soviet Union and dangerously lead to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Six decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, the embargo remains in place and continues to affect millions of Cuban citizens.

In the most recent case of Russia, the U.S. and its allies have applied a broad range of sanctions following the country's unlawful invasion of Ukraine in 2022 with the aim of targeting the country's financial sector, oil and gas revenue, and military-industry complex. However, as with the other previously cited examples of Iran and Cuba, sanctions have once again proven ineffective in averting military aggression and tarnishing Vladamir Putin's credibility. Rather, for the past two years Russia has managed to circumvent the impact of sanctions.

After undertaking desk research and scrutinizing secondary sources – both qualitative and quantitative data, this article shares how Russia succeeded in bypassing sanctions by weaponizing Europe's energy industry and through the use of transshipment hubs to import highly needed goods and

---

[198] Islam Abdelbary and Rasha ELshawa, "Economic sanctions as a foreign policy tool: A case study of the Iran-West conflict," April 27, 2023, PREPRINT (Version 1) available at Research Square [https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2854425/v1]https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2854425/v1.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Hirsch, "Why Sanctions Don't Work."

to export oil and gas. The article also considers, why despite the apparent ineffectiveness of sanctions, the U.S. and its allies still resort to them. Finally, the article concludes by providing policy alternatives to sanctions.

The Economic Measures against Russia

Russia received massive condemnation following its invasion of Ukraine February 24, 2022, and was expelled from important international organizations such as the UN Security Council, G7 and UN Human Rights Council. The U.S. along with its allies also enacted a series of sanctions with the aim of crippling Russia's ability to wage war and curb its capacity to sustain the violent conflict. They also sought to isolate Russia from global markets, targeting individuals and entities and destabilizing the Russian ruble.[201] The sanctions and freezing of assets targeted Russia's banking system, and it was expelled from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), which is a Belgium-based interbank messaging service critical to processing international payments.[202] An estimated 300 billion euro in Central Bank reserves have been frozen.[203] Over 80% of the Russian banking assets are under sanctions which also includes the top 10 Russian-owned banks.[204] Russia was also economically pressured by "smart" sanctions which target specific entities that contribute to the Russian war effort or wealthy individuals who were affiliated with the Kremlin. This includes travel bans and asset blockage of over 2,500 Russian

---

[201] "Sanctions and Russia's War: Limiting Putin's Capabilities." U.S. Department of the Treasury, December 14, 2023. https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/sanctions-and-russias-war-limiting-putins-capabilities.

[202] Noah Berman, "Two Years of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions against Russia Making a Difference?," Council on Foreign Relations, February 23, 2024, https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/two-years-war-ukraine-are-sanctions-against-russia-making-difference.

[203] Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy – Concilium, October 12, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/.

[204] "Fact Sheet: Disrupting and Degrading – One Year of U.S. Sanctions on Russia and Its Enablers," U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 25, 2023, https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1298#:~:text=Treasury's%20Office%20of%20Foreign%20Assets,115%20vessels%2C%20and%2019%20aircraft.

entities and individuals only one year after the invasion.[205] A price cap was also placed on Russian oil exports[206] with the aim of limiting one of Russia's primary profits to finance of its defense industry, while at the same time maintaining stability of global prices of oil.[207] When this price cap came into effect in 2022, oil tax revenues from Russia officially fell by 40% within the first nine months.[208] During this period, seaborne exports of oil remained stable, reinforcing the two-pronged goal of giving as much energy to consumers on the global market while minimizing Putin's profits.[209]

The measures that have been enacted on Russia since then have been lengthy and represent an unprecedented level of economic warfare in response to a military conflict. Despite the high number of frozen assets and restriction of trade, Russia has been able to prolong their engagement in Ukraine and survive economically. As later sections of this paper will discuss, Russia's valuable energy reserves have been sufficient enough to keep their economy afloat by using European dependence and other clients to pay for the unprovoked invasion.[210] The war in Ukraine has forced Russia to introduce capital controls which stabilized the financial markets along with an interest rate hike of 20%.[211] This recovery was also boosted by the shift of Russia's economy to a wartime economy and a heavy increase in public spending into construction and military procurement industries.[212] Russia's GDP contracted by only 2% in 2022 which was

---

[205] Ibid.

[206] "Sanctions and Russia's War: Limiting Putin's Capabilities."

[207] Eric Van Nostrand, "Phase Two of the Price Cap on Russian Oil: Two Years after Putin's Invasion," U.S. Department of the Treasury, February 23, 2024, https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/phase-two-of-the-price-cap-on-russian-oil-two-years-after-putins-invasion.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Maria Demertzis and Ben McWilliams, "How Much Will the EU Pay Russia for Fossil Fuels over the next 12 Months?," Bruegel, March 23, 2023, https://www.bruegel.org/analysis/how-much-will-eu-pay-russia-fossil-fuels-over-next-12-months#footnote1_3mjn3cl.

[211] Yuriy Gorodnichenko, Likka Korhonen, and Elina Ribakova, "The Russian Economy on a War Footing: A New Reality Financed by Commodity Exports | CEPR," Centre for Economic Policy Research, May 24, 2024, https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/russian-economy-war-footing-new-reality-financed-commodity-exports.

[212] Ibid.

lower than forecasts predicted under the heavy packages of sanctions.[213] The International Monetary Fund reports that the Russian GDP has grown by 3.6% in 2023 and forecasts that Russia's economy will grow up to 2.6% in 2024.[214] As demonstrated, sanctions have so far failed to cripple the Russian economy and thwart Russia's military engagement in Ukraine.

The Weaponization of Energy from Russia

Over the past century, oil has grown to become the most crucial commodity in the world, fundamentally changing global political and economic landscapes. Prior to the Russo-Ukrainian war, the EU almost exclusively depended on Russia for its energy, particularly oil and gas. Russia, in turn, has remained heavily reliant on its own oil and gas, representing 40% of the government's expenditures.[215] A large part of Germany's energy program in recent years has been trying to shift from atomic energy to solar backed by cheap Russian oil and gas. This tethering placed the German government and energy security in a particularly precarious situation leading up to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU has rapidly sought to find different avenues of energy and lessen their dependence on Russian energy. This move however has proven costly, as the EU has spent 83 billion euro in oil and 53 billion for natural gas respectively in 2023 alone.[216] This represents a significant increase when compared to previous years. In 2019, for example, the EU paid 112 billion euro in fossil fuels, 68 billion in 2020,

---

[213] Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy – consilium, October 12, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/.

[214] Alexandra Prokopenko, "Is the Kremlin Overconfident about Russia's Economic Stability?," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 10, 2024, https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/03/is-the-kremlin-overconfident-about-russias-economic-stability?lang=en#_edn4.

[215] Vladimir Milov, "Oil, Gas, and War: The Effect of Sanctions on the Russian Energy Industry." Atlantic Council, May 22, 2024. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/russia-tomorrow/oil-gas-and-war/.

[216] Maria Demertzis and Ben McWilliams, "How Much Will the EU Pay Russia for Fossil Fuels over the next 12 Months?," Bruegel, March 23, 2023, https://www.bruegel.org/analysis/how-much-will-eu-pay-russia-fossil-fuels-over-next-12-months#footnote1_3mjn3cl.

and 123 billion in 2021.[217] European Countries are now investing heavily in energy security and diversifying energy reserves after acknowledging the dangers in the EU's dependence on Russia. The European Commission implemented the "REpowerEU '' plan which has been funded by 300 billion Euro for the purpose of diversifying energy imports and digging itself out of dependence on Russian fossil fuels.[218] Officially, the EU reports imports dropped from over 45% in 2021 to about 15% in 2023.[219] The US and other EU countries such as Norway have been able to fulfill gas needs albeit at a more expensive rate.

In the case of Poland, for example, 50% percent of its energy demands were fulfilled by imports from Russian gas pipelines in 2021. To offset Poland's dependence on Russia, efforts have been underway to develop a new gas route across the Baltic Sea – the Baltic Pipe project that runs from Poland to Norway.[220] 2023 was the first full year of zero Russian gas in Poland. While these options are much more expensive than previous Russian oil and gas, the positives of having energy security outweigh the cheap prices.[221]

How Russia used Central Asia to work around sanctions

After gaining independence in 1991 from the USSR, Central Asian countries have continued to keep close military, economic and political ties with Russia. However, in recent years, they have sought to balance relations between Russia and other powers such as China and the U.S. in recent years.[222]

---

[217] Demertzis and McWilliams, "How Much Will the EU Pay."

[218] "RePowerEU," European Commission. Accessed July 6, 2024. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en.

[219] Milov, "Oil, Gas, and War: The Effect of Sanctions on the Russian Energy Industry."

[220] Frank Labunski, Energy without Russia: The consequences of the Ukraine War and the EU sanctions on the energy sector in Europe, Budapest: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2023.

[221] Labunski, Energy without Russia: The consequences of the Ukraine War and the EU sanctions on the energy sector in Europe.

[222] "Central Asia: Implications of Russia's War in Ukraine." Congressional Research Service, June 9, 2023. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R47591.pdf.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Central Asian states (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) found themselves in a predicament – not in favor of Russia's illegal land grab on the one hand, but still in need of Russia's economic support on the other. To the dismay of Putin, for example, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have outwardly supported Ukraine's sovereignty and provided aid to Ukrainian citizens[223] However, as the U.S. Department of Commerce, notes, countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, serve as transshipment hub points to control or completely restrict goods from sanctions that later ultimately pass on to Belarus or Russia.[224] These hubs are used to not only trade raw materials and goods from countries such as China or India, but also offer an opportunity for EU countries to lessen the impact of sanctions by exporting goods to Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan.[225] In 2022, for example, the EU increased exports to Central Asia by 77% and imports by 67%.[226] The U.S. Congressional Service found that there was "a significant increase in consumer electronic imports to Kazakhstan from the European Union in the first half of 2022, coinciding with an increase in shipments of such products from Kazakhstan to Russia".[227]

Central Asian transshipment hubs, in sum, have played a large role in enabling Russia to work around sanctions.[228] Despite attempts to Russia has managed to stay afloat by finding alternative buyers of its oil and gas as well as acquiring strategic technological components, including vi-

---

[223] "Central Asia: Implications of Russia's War in Ukraine."

[224] Joanna Lillis, "Washington Flags Central Asian States over Potential Sanctions-Dodging," Eurasianet, July 12, 2022. https://eurasianet.org/washington-flags-central-asian-states-over-potential-sanctions-dodging.

[225] Hirsch, "Why Sanctions Don't Work – but Could If Done Right." https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/04/11/1169072190/why-sanctions-dont-work-but-could-if-done-right.

[226] "EU Trade Relations with Central Asia." Trade. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/central-asia_en.

[227] "Central Asia: Implications of Russia's War in Ukraine." Congressional Research Service, June 9, 2023. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R47591.pdf.

[228] Dr. Andrei Kazantsev-Vaisman, "How Russia Tries to Use the Central Asian States after the Invasion of Ukraine." Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, August 27, 2023. https://besacenter.org/how-russia-tries-to-use-the-central-asian-states-after-the-invasion-of-ukraine/.

tal semiconductor chips for drones, missiles, radios and other important equipment.[229]

Aware of the increasing importance of the Central Asian region as trans-shipment hubs for Russia, the U.S. and its allies have stepped up their efforts to build closer ties with leaders from the region. In September 2023, for example, the U.S. government held a summit with presidents from all five Central Asian countries to strengthen their relationship.[230] However, more attention and engagement is still needed in working with these countries and understanding how Russia uses them to work around sanctions.

Multipolarity and Sanctions

With the steady decline of the U.S. led liberal world order and the rise of multiple powers to influence global affairs,[231]sanctions have lost their potential power to place pressure on targeted countries. Now sanctioned countries have the possibility to find a wide range of alternative markets. In the case of Russia, for example, it has offset the impact of sanctions by increasing trade with Türkiye, India, China and the UAE.[232]

Additionally, as this paper previously discussed, sanctions have often had adverse effects on civilians within the targeted country.[233] This in turn has contributed to feelings of alienation and distain for the senders of sanctions,

---

[229] "Why Russia Has Been so Resilient to Western Export Controls." Carnegie China. Accessed July 2, 2024. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/03/why-russia-has-been-so-resilient-to-western-export-controls?lang=en&center=china.

[230] Gavin Helf. "New Central Asian Leaders Look to Balance Relations with Major Powers." United States Institute of Peace, September 28, 2023. https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/09/new-central-asian-leaders-look-balance-relations-major-powers.

[231] Peter A.G. van Bergeijk, "Sanctions and the Russian-Ukraine Conflict: A Critical Appraisal." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, March 2022. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4058559.

[232] Hirsch, "Why Sanctions Don't Work – but Could If Done Right." https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/04/11/1169072190/why-sanctions-dont-work-but-could-if-done-right.

[233] Hanania, Richard. "Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenient: America's Overreliance on Economic Sanctions and What to Do about It." Cato.org, February 18, 2020. https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/ineffective-immoral-politically-convenient-americas-overreliance-economic-sanctions#sanctions-political-act.

while boosting the image of alternative powers, such as China, who has come to be regarded as the "savior" for "bailing" out the country.[234]

Alternative growing economic infrastructure also poses a large threat to the current form of sanctions. The formation of the Belt and Road initiative led by China and the Russian led Eurasian Economic Union conjures a new potential form of economic independence in institutions that are less dependent on trade deals involving Western capital.[235] These organizations in turn have the potential to change the global surplus and supplies away from the West.[236] The colossal rise of China has also given sanctioned states a different non-western source of investment opportunities to subvert sanctions and keep their authoritarian regime or military course.

Why Sanctions are still used today

Looking at the various shortcomings of sanctions displayed previously, the question remains why they continue to be used if positive results are elusive to find. Sanctions, while difficult to carry out well, offer policymakers certain benefits that lie deeper than the surface level objectives that the public sees. There is a symbolic value behind the use of sanctions, as they show resolve to both the domestic and international community.[237] They have also become the preferred alternative to military intervention albeit often, as previously discussed in this paper, at an economic and human cost. This central idea that drives sanctions is the desire to change the targeted state without irreparable damage to one's own population and infrastructure.

---

[234] Ibid.

[235] "What Would a Proactive Western Strategy on Belarus Look Like?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 8, 2019. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/04/the-belt-and-road-initiative-views-from-washington-moscow-and-beijing?lang=en.

[236] Farwa Sial, "Sanctions and the Changing World Order: Some Views from the Global South," Developing Economics, August 31, 2022. https://developingeconomics.org/2022/09/01/sanctions-and-the-changing-world-order-some-views-from-the-global-south/.

[237] Eland Ivan, "Economic Sanctions as Tools of Foreign Policy: 3 : Economic Sanctions." Taylor & Francis, March 5, 2018. Pages 29-42 https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429493935-3/economic-sanctions-tools-foreign-policy-ivan-eland.

Sanctions are viewed as a tool in the policymakers' tool belt to negotiate desired outcomes "peacefully".[238] On the domestic side, there can often be domestic pressure for states to "do something" to address unjust military or social actions. Sanctions also provide the public appearance of doing the right thing and combating "evil" acts by states around the world.[239] A leader's image can be decimated with unpopular foreign policy interventions. Lyndon B. Johnson, for example, decided not to run for reelection after experiencing an extreme backlash for his policies regarding Vietnam. In 2004, George W. Bush barely won his reelection campaign after experiencing a hefty drop in his approval rating in his second term due to the invasion of Iraq and the ripple effects that came with this conflict.[240]

Sanctions effects appear to the population as "easier" or more manageable because the destruction and calamity that occur is highly unlikely to cause large domestic strife.[241] There is also a psychological barrier that helps impede the ability to fully appreciate the damages caused by sanctions as the problems of them are more difficult to see than a mosque burning or people displaced because their village is too unsafe to live in.[242] Although sanctions have a low success rate, as demonstrated in this paper, their strength is in their symbolic value and presentation to the public that "something is being done" to address the ills of the given country.

Policy Recommendations

As analysts attempt to forecast the future of global politics, sanctions do not seem to be leaving the arsenal of large countries, especially the U.S. who have proliferated the political landscape with sanctions in the past hundred years. Potential victims of these sanctions recognize the

---

[238] Sial, "Sanctions and the Changing World Order: Some Views from the Global South."

[239] Hanania, "Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenient."

[240] Ibid.

[241] George Tsouloufas and Matthew Rochat. "Revisiting the Effectiveness of Economic Sanctions in the Context of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine." *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29, no. 3 (May 17, 2023): 285–300. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2198247.

[242] Hanania, "Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenient."

enthusiasm in which U.S. intuitions like to enact them and work to generate preemptive measures such as stocking ruble and gold reserves in order to curb the harsh repercussions before engaging in war or a policy decision that could warrant sanctions.[243]There are key actions and policies that could have better effects than economy-wide sanctions that appear uncoordinated and often hurt innocent populations.

While the U.S. and UN can look to avoid the same mistakes in dealing with Russia economically, the current war can be used to show how effective military and humanitarian aid was and is currently being used for the people of Ukraine. Military aid has been a cornerstone for the defense of Ukraine, with the U.S. Department of State reporting "$54 billion in military assistance since Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014."[244] The provision of tools such as advanced weaponry or logistical support have significantly enhanced Ukraine's ability to defend itself and give itself a fighting chance against a much larger adversary in Russia.[245] The importation of air defense systems and weapons such as the javelin helped repel the Russian forces that were inching towards Kyiv, and foreign assistance was largely attributed by Ukrainian officials such as President Zelensky as the tipping point that declared the battle of Kyiv a victory in Spring 2022.[246] The defense of numerous Russian offensives and the ability to prolong this conflict has only been possible with sheer Ukrainian spirit and endurance, along with necessary military and humanitarian investment in order for a minuscule Ukrainian force to face the behemoth of the Russian military. With more continual military and financial support from the international community, they can continue to defend their homeland.

A policy or tactic that could be deployed are extraterritorial sanctions, used specifically for states that work and trade with non-cooperating

---

[243] Javier Bianchi and César Sosa-Padilla, *On Wars, Sanctions and Sovereign Default*, April 2022, https://doi.org/10.3386/w29989.

[244] U.S. Department of State. Accessed July 6, 2024. https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/.

[245] Júlia Szőke, and Kolos Kusica, "Military Assistance to Ukraine and Its Significance in the Russo-Ukrainian War," *Social Sciences* 12, no. 5 (May 9, 2023): 294. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12050294.

[246] Szőke, and Kusica, "Military Assistance to Ukraine."

countries. This tactic was deployed by the Trump administration when the US invoked extraterritorial sanctions on Iran in 2018 and decided to leave the JCPOA. The original agreement, which was signed in 2015, lifted trading sanctions in return for dismantling of nuclear developments in Iran. Iran, along with five permanent members that make up the UN Security Council originally agreed to this proposal. [247] However, this was put into jeopardy when President Trump implemented a new policy that threatened non-cooperating firms in third-party states. While this decision in itself was very controversial, he effectively did this by threatening to cut off their ongoing deals and relationships with American firms or to close and block their current assets with the U.S. and their firms. When faced with this decision, European countries chose to side with the lucrative American markets with whom they have more profitable ties with.[248] This tactic could be used with Central Asian and European countries who continue their economic dealings with Russia. Forcing these countries to choose between either American markets or Russia could help shorten the collusion of trade that has been transpiring by firms and individuals to evade these unilateral sanctions.

Before taking the path of invoking sanctions, leaders must impose measures that are coupled with a detailed road map that ends with an eventual termination when their terms are met. Regular assessment of all senders' political utility and unity must be ensured with review provisions that keep the states honest and on track.[249] Sanctions have the highest chances for success when they are implemented transparently, clearly articulated from the onset, and made attainable.

---

[247] Eckhard Janeba, "Extraterritorial Trade Sanctions: Theory and Application to the US–Iran–EU Conflict," *Review of International Economics* 32, no. 1 (June 28, 2023): 49–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/roie.12682.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Julia Grauvogel and Hana Attia, "Easier In Than Out: The Protracted Process of Ending Sanctions," GIGA Focus Global, 5 (2019). Hamburg: German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA), https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-65205-3.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the economic measures enacted by policymakers as a response to the invasion of Ukraine. It specifically looked at the sectors targeted by sanctions and how Russia has mitigated their effects by increasing ties with states in Central Asia as transshipment hubs to import necessary goods and export their own oil and gas. The weaponization of energy from Russia and Western European dependence on that energy is another key factor that lessened the impact of sanctions. This particular case study shows the difficulty in implementing sanctions, especially as we find ourselves in an interlinked and modernized global economy. They often harm the poor sections of the population while strengthening the decision makers and elites of autocratic societies as shown in Iran and Cuba. The shift from a U.S. led unilateral order to the emergence of a multipolar world order has also further diluted the effectiveness of traditional sanctions. As previously established, economic measures such as sanctions offer policymakers a way to condemn a nation's actions without sacrificing their constituents' lives. Limitations of this research include the fact that this paper focuses on an issue that is currently ongoing, therefore findings may evolve over time and the effects of sanctions invoked in 2022 are truly yet to be fully felt or seen in the Russian economy. Economic statistics and exact oil exportation numbers that come out of Russia are also difficult to find such as the illegal exportation of energy and importation of goods like semiconductor chips through Central Asia or China. This analysis also focuses on a Western-based perspective and it is important to incorporate strategies and views of sanctions from non-Western perspectives.

The regime "change" or policy change that heavy sanctions were trying to achieve has failed thus far, and future research is needed to examine the effectiveness of other options such as aid or traditional protective measures. Future research is also required in determining how to invoke sanctions without affecting the population of a country and the role of emerging powers such as China or India in the context of global sanctions. In the case of the U.S., the American population has become war-weary from the conflicts in the Middle East over the last three decades. Despite growing

discontentment of American tax dollars going to help fight a war that is very distant and outside the American "public eye," attention and support towards military and humanitarian aid must continue to strengthen Ukraine. The current archaic state of sanctions show glaring pitfalls as demonstrated in not only the most recently sanctioned Russia, but in past historical cases as well. Policymakers will continue to retain sanctions as a popular tool to condemn states, however their efficacy is questionable, as the findings of this paper has found in the ongoing war in Ukraine and other cases. The evolving global order has prompted the need for continued research and study for tweaking sanctions and shows a need for innovation in international economic policy.

2

Salami Slicing and Settlements: China's Encroachment into Bhutan

Duncan KINDOPP

Abstract: This paper seeks to demonstrate the strategic importance of Bhutan's Doklam and Pasamlung regions to its neighbors, India and China. It then examines the change in relations between Bhutan and China since the Doklam Crisis and the Galwan Valley Incident, the strategies China is implementing to take contested land from Bhutan; specifically, the Salami Slicing and Talk and Take strategies, and finally the negotiations in 2018 and 2019 between Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping concerning India, China, and Bhutan's border disputes. The results from this research showed that China desires Doklam to gain a strategic advantage over India by giving it the positioning necessary to blockade the Siliguri Corridor and Pasamlung to ensure stability in Tibet. China is taking this contested land by implementing the so called "Salami Slicing" strategy by using infrastructure and settlements in contested areas to legitimize their land claims in Bhutan. The research suggests that the negotiations with Xi Jinping and Modi in 2018 and 2019 were part of China's Talk and Take strategy and, in fact, were not of any significance other than to secure more time for China to build infrastructure up to India and Bhutan's border. Bhutan has the choice of conceding Pasamlung and Doklam to China to try and secure the other contested regions or ally more closely with India to deny China's infrastructure push and develop infrastructure of their own in Bhutan's uninhabited regions.

Keywords: Salami Slicing Strategy, Doklam, Bhutan, China, Siliguri Corridor

Introduction

Nestled between two of the largest and most populous countries in the world, India and China, lies a small country known as Bhutan. Bhutan has a landmass of approximately 38,000 square kilometers, a little smaller than Switzerland, and a population of only 780,000 people. Its terrain consists of large mountainous regions, as it is in the Himalayas, which has led to a dispersed population. Bhutan was established four or five centuries ago by a Lama from Tibet. Since then, its predominant religion has been Buddhism.[250] Bhutan is currently a constitutional democracy but has been taking major steps toward becoming a consolidated democracy as it has had legitimate elections within the last decade as well as a successful transition of power to an opposition party.[251] Bhutan in December of 2023 was removed from the United Nations list of least developed countries, which Bhutan's neighbors Nepal and Bangladesh are still on.[252] It was able to accomplish this by leveraging its abundant water resources in the valleys of the Himalayas which allowed Bhutan to tap into hydroelectric energy and sell the surplus to its neighbor, India, and spur its almost 8.5% GDP growth over the last two decades. Despite this growth, it is still a lower-middle income country, with a GDP per capita of 3,560 USD. Its main economic and strategic ties lie with India, who Bhutan sends 93.7% of its exports to and receives 78.8% of its imports from.[253] Since the pandemic, Bhutan has seen its debt increase from its various public relief efforts as well as youth unemployment skyrocket to 29% in 2022, which has led to large numbers of its citizens to emigrate. Bhutan is also the first country

[250] "Bhutan," United States Department of State, 2022, https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/bhutan#:~:text=Religious%20Demography&text=The%20National%20Statistics%20Bureau%20of.

[251] "Bhutan," Freedom House, 2020, https://freedomhouse.org/country/bhutan/freedom-world/2020.

[252] "Bhutan Exits UN List of Least Developed Countries," unctad.org (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, December 13, 2023), https://unctad.org/news/bhutan-exits-un-list-least-developed-countries.

[253] "Bhutan Trade | WITS Data," Worldbank.org (World Bank, 2012), https://wits.worldbank.org/countrysnapshot/en/BTN.

to adopt gross national happiness as its primary development indicator instead of gross domestic product.[254]

Within the last decade, China has posed as a serious threat to the very existence of Bhutan. As of 2022, 12% of Bhutan's territory has been claimed by China. Many of these land disputes are as old as 1930 and were argued to be part of China by Mao Zedong himself.[255]

Without help, Bhutan may continue to lose land until it ceases to exist. To better understand the circumstances in Bhutan, this paper will examine the history of border disputes between Bhutan and China, the Doklam Crisis and the Galwan Valley Incident that marked a turning point in their relations. It also analyzes Chinese Communist Party (CC) documents in order to better understand their intentions in the region and strategies they are using to take the contested territory – specifically the Salami Slicing and Talk and Take strategies, explained later in the paper. Then, the paper examines the negotiations between Xi Jinping and Narendra Modi in 2018 and 2019. Finally, this paper provides recommendations for Bhutan to move forward.

Bhutan's Strategic Importance to China and India

Despite Bhutan's small geographic and economic size, it still holds major strategic importance in South Asia. This is due to the Doklam region in the Southwest of Bhutan, an area that remains disputed by China because of a border agreement made in 1890 between the Qing Dynasty and the British Empire. This region has the Doka La mountain pass that connects China's Chumbi Valley to the Siliguri Corridor also known as the Chicken's Neck in India.[256] The Siliguri Corridor of India is of geopolitical importance

---

[254] World Bank, "Overview," World Bank, October 3, 2023, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bhutan/overview.

[255] "Border Dispute between China and Bhutan," *PACOM (.Mil),* (Hawai'i.: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, March 11, 2024), https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/Legal/J06%20TACAID%20-%20PRC-BHUTAN%20BORDER%20DISPUTE%20(FINAL).pdf?ver=ofbfrNNgIqZr7nFqm60lbw%3D%3D.

[256] Steven Lee Myers, Ellen Barry, and Max Fisher, "How India and China Have Come to the Brink over a Remote Mountain Pass," *The New York Times*, July 26, 2017, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/dolam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html.

to South Asia because it is a 21-22-kilometer-wide corridor that connects India to its Seven Sisters provinces, shown in *Figure 14*. The Seven Sisters region of India held an estimated population of 45 million people in 2014 and is home to the Arunachal Pradesh region.[257]

Figure 14. The Chicken's Neck (Siliguri Corridor) and the Doklam Crisis
         (Standoff Location)

Source: IAS Parliament

If China could send troops through the Doka La pass and take control of the Siliguri Corridor, India could find itself cut off from the Seven Sisters region, allowing China to integrate Arunachal Pradesh into China more easily. Because of this, the Doklam region, specifically the Doklam Plateau, is India's primary way to deter China from sending its military through this small mountain pass since India has a military base in Bhutan on the Doklam Plateau. If China could annex the Doklam region it would force India to remove its troops from the Plateau and threaten India's national security. This would limit India's future options to deter and prevent China from blockading the Siliguri Corridor and possibly annexing the Arunachal Pradesh region.

Arunachal Pradesh as well as Jakarlung and Pasamlung hold historical and cultural significance to both the Bhutanese and Tibetans, as these regions

---

[257] K. R. Dikshit and Jutta K. Dikshit, *North-East India: Land, People and Economy* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2014), 421–456.

are home to many ancient sites of Buddhist reverence. Tibet, under the jurisdiction of China, has had its Buddhist monasteries, temples, and other institutions under strict supervision of the PRC. China fears that the 14th Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of both Tibetan and Bhutanese Buddhism, may return to either Jakarlung, Pasamlung, or Arunachal Pradesh and try to rouse Tibetan independence. This has led China to become hyper fixated on the Tibetan independence movement and to control every aspect of Tibetans private and public life. Freedom House gave Tibet a score of 0/100 on their Freedom in the World report, down from 1/100 in 2023, as millions of children are being forcefully assimilated into Han culture through the public school system as well as China, without consent, collecting over a third of Tibetan citizens DNA samples to further their surveillance systems as they had done to the Uyghurs prior.[258]

The History of Sino-Bhutan Border Disputes prior to 2017

A few months after the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, they claimed the Pasamlung, Jakarlung, and Doklam regions located in Bhutan as a part of the PRC. 9 Years later, the 1959 Tibetan uprising took place. Tibet's government and social structures were dissolved, the Dalai Lama fled to India and finally, the Chinese annexed Tibet. This made the Bhutanese fearful for their small country's future leading them to ban all trade with China in 1960 and to develop close ties with India, which is a core reason why Bhutan still does not have official diplomatic relations established with China in 2024.[259]

The first round of Sino-Bhutan boundary talks began in 1984 in Beijing. There would be 24 more rounds of talks switching locations between

---

[258] "Tibet: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report," Freedom House, 2024, https://freedomhouse.org/country/tibet/freedom-world/2024.

[259] Shreya Mamgain, "Bhutan-China Border Dispute: Regional Security Concerns – CENJOWS," CENJOWS (Center for Joint Warfare Studies, June 20, 2023), https://cenjows.in/bhutan-china-border-dispute-regional-security-concerns/#_edn2.

Thimphu and Beijing, continuing in this manner until 2016. In 1996, however, there was a slight hiccup when a survey of Bhutan found that the PRC had been building roads and logging in some of these disputed regions, an issue raised at the 11th round of talks in Beijing that same year.[260] These issues remain unresolved in the 11th rounds of talks because the Bhutanese side was not given the authority to sign any official documents. During the 12th round of talks, the two governments were able to sign the "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Sino-Bhutanese Border Areas''. The agreement stated that until a final solution on the boundary issue was reached, "the status quo of the boundary prior to March 1959 should be upheld"[261] and that China, "completely respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bhutan. Both sides stand ready to develop their good neighborly and friendly co-operative relations on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence."[262] This agreement would mark the status quo for Bhutan and China's relationship until the Doklam Crisis in 2017.[263]

A Change in Relations: The Doklam Crisis and Galwan Valley Incident

In 2007, the India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty was signed, tying both India and Bhutan closer together allowing India to export arms into Bhutan to help in the event that its national interests were under threat.[264] This Treaty was put to test in June, 2017, when China began building a road in the

---

[260] Thierry Mathou, *The Spider and the Piglet: Proceedings of the First International Seminar on Bhutan Studies*, ed. Karma Ura (Thimphu: Centre For Bhutan Studies, 2004), 400.

[261] "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Sino-Bhutanese Border Areas," www.fmprc.gov.cn (Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs), accessed June 24, 2024, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/gjhdq_665435/2675_665437/2686_663376/2687_663378/200111/t20011106_510118.html.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Thierry Mathou, *The Spider and the Piglet: Proceedings of the First International Seminar on Bhutan Studies*, ed. Karma Ura (Thimphu: Centre For Bhutan Studies, 2004), 400–413.

[264] India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty. India, Bhutan. Articles 2 and 4. Feb. 8, 2007. Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

disputed Doklam region, whereby India was obliged to enter the Doklam region and stop China's advance into the contested territory on behalf of Bhutan. India sent in 270 troops and two bulldozers and destroyed the road China was building in Doklam. This demonstrated India's willingness to uphold its treaty with Bhutan and to maintain the status quo in Bhutan's contested regions with China. Many people within the Indian government worried that the Doklam Crisis was just the beginning of escalating border disputes to come between Bhutan, India, and China. A renowned Indian political scientist, Bharat Karnad, echoed these beliefs by warning that, "Doklam was just a foretaste of territorial aggrandizement to come if India does not wake up."[265] These beliefs would be proven to have been true with the Galwan Valley Incident in 2020.[266]

The catalyst for the Galwan Valley Incident was when India began building the Darbuk–Shyok–Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road in the Galwan Valley in 2020, on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) of the Sino-Indian border. This was interpreted by China as India attempting to create a backdoor to Aksai Chin. China, to stop India from building infrastructure on its border, sent troops to occupy the Galwan Valley and stop the construction of the DSDBO. In the process, 20 Indian soldiers died and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers. The Galwan Valley Incident has fundamentally changed how India, Bhutan, and China's approach to future border disputes and relations between these three countries, making the future of Southern Asian foreign relations unclear.[267]

China's Intentions on its Western Border

In 2017, China's approach to its western border and other contested regions that the PRC deems a part of China began to change drastically. This shift was first demonstrated by its actions during the Doklam Crisis in June with its aggressive push into Bhutan. China then threatened Vietnam

---

[265] Bharat Kharnad, "THE WEEK," The Week, February 23, 2019, https://www.theweek.in/.

[266] Vinay Kaura, "India's Relations with China from the Doklam Crisis to the Galwan Tragedy," *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 76, no. 4 (October 29, 2020): 097492842096176, https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928420961768.

[267] Kaura, "India's Relations with China from the Doklam Crisis to the Galwan Tragedy."

if it continued oil exploration in Vietnam's own Exclusive Economic Zone in July.[268] In November, China began sending Chinese Coast Guard ships into the contiguous zone of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, a contested region between China and Japan.[269] These provocative actions by the PRC were then followed by government officials and the CCP's Central Committee releasing statements espousing its commitment to unifying China.

Two months after the Doklam Crisis, the PRC's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Hua Chunying, stated that "China will continue with its exercise of sovereign rights to protect territorial sovereignty in accordance with the stipulations of the border-related historical treaty."[270] This statement exemplifies the PRC's intentions for contested regions on its border. Unification is now one of CCP's top priorities and China has demonstrated its willingness to use force to regain control of disputed areas that it regards as part of its territorial boundaries. This was demonstrated in the *Resolution of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on the Report of the 18th Central Committee,* whereby it divulged, "We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China."[271] The language used is drastically more aggressive and inflammatory than that in the 18th National Congress led by Hu Jintao, which previously, when referring to China's reunification stated, "Working hand in hand, we, the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, will surely accomplish the great cause of China's reunification in the course of our common endeavor to achieve the great renewal of the Chinese nation."[272] The former dialogue of cooperation and engagement has now drastically shifted to

---

[268] Thayer, Carl. "Alarming Escalation in the South China Sea: China Threatens Force If Vietnam Continues Oil Exploration in Spratlys." *The Diplomat*, 24 July 2017.

[269] Mochizuki, Mike, and Jiaxiu Han. "Is China Escalating Tensions with Japan in the East China Sea?" *The Diplomat*, 16 Sept. 2020.

[270] "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on August 28, 2017." *Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco*, 2017, Accessed 26 June 2024.

[271] Yamei, ed., "Full Text of Resolution on CPC Central Committee Report – Xinhua | English. news.cn," www.xinhuanet.com, October 24, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/c_136702625.htm.

[272] "International Department Central Committee of CPC," www.idcpc.gov.cn, November 8, 2012, https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/english/cpcbrief/18thParty/index.html#10.

that of a perceived threat of any country attempting to stand in the way of Chinese unification efforts, inclusing those countries sharing land claims with Bhutan.

Salami Slicing and Settlements

In the East and South China Sea, United States, Indian, South Korean, and Japanese military and government officials have used the term "Salami Slicing" when referring to the Chinese strategy implemented to legitimize their maritime claims of the contested Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) in the region. A specialist in Naval Affairs, Ronald O' Rourke, defines Salami Slicing in the East and South China Sea as a strategy "that employs a series of incremental actions, none of which by itself is a casus belli, to gradually change the status quo in China's favor."[273] This tactic has also been referred to as a "creeping invasion"[274] or "Talk and Take Strategy"[275] since China will go into diplomatic discussions with the afflicted countries and world powers, such as the United States and India, and then proceed to expand their claims and ignore any of the resolutions in these meetings. In the South and East China Sea, China uses fishing vessels to harass local coast guard ships and military vessels and then uses the China Coast Guard (CCG) to protect their fishing vessels in case any countries' coast guards or military vessels try to remove them from contested maritime locations. The last layer of defense is the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLA Navy) on standby just behind the CCG if the Chinese fishing vessels or Coast Guards are attacked, which has been referred to as the "cabbage strategy" by at least one Chinese Official.[276] This is because each layer of the formation (Chinese

---

[273] Ronald O' Rourke, "China's Actions in South and East China Seas: Implications for U.S. Interests-Background and Issues for Congress Ronald O'Rourke Specialist in Naval Affairs" (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, August 1, 2018), https://china.usc.edu/sites/default/files/article/attachments/crs-2018-china-in-south-china-sea.pdf.

[274] Hugh White, "What the US Would Need to Deter China," Lowy Institute Interpreter, August 22, 2017.

[275] Koh Swee Lean Collin, "America: China Doesn't Care About Your Rules-Based Order," National Interest, August 17, 2017.

[276] Dale Rielage, "Coast Guard" Wrong Tool for the South China Sea," U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, September 2017.

fishing vessel, CCG, then the PLA Navy) are like the layers of a cabbage; peel one layer and there is another waiting. These strategies are not exclusive to the South and East China Sea. China has been using these tactics against Bhutan and India since 1996, when they illegally built infrastructure and logged in a contested region of Bhutan, and they have only continued to escalate since the Doklam Crisis and Galwan Valley Incident.[277]

Unlike the South and East China Seas, China has been using a different strategy to legitimize their claims over Jakalung, Pasamlung, and Doklam. Instead of fishing boats and coast guard ships they have been using roads and settlements. In 2017, China attempted to build a road into the Sikkim-China Bhutan Tri Junction which led to the Doklam Crisis mentioned earlier. During the Doklam Crisis, India counteracted China's Salami Slicing attempt with military force.[278] China learned its lesson from the incident and has been targeting areas of Bhutan that were not of immediate strategic importance to India to avoid another Doklam-like crisis. The regions affected in northern Doklam included Dramana and Shakhatoe. Now, just two years later, these settlements have hundreds of miles of roads connecting them to mainland China, around a hundred or more residents, police stations with frequent military activity in proximity of the settlement.[279] A total of 7 settlements have been spotted in the contested Doklam region as of 2022, with a settlement outside of the contested region in Bhutan just North of Doklam. There are also 6 Settlements in the contested region of Pasamlung.[280]

---

[277] Ronald O' Rourke, "China's Actions in South and East China Seas: Implications for U.S. Interests-Background and Issues for Congress Ronald O'Rourke Specialist in Naval Affairs" (Washington D.C..: Congressional Research Service, August 1, 2018), https://china.usc.edu/sites/default/files/article/attachments/crs-2018-china-in-south-china-sea.pdf.

[278] "Border Dispute between China and Bhutan," *PACOM (.Mil),* (Hawai'i.: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, March 11, 2024), https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/Legal/J06%20TACAID%20-%20PRC-BHUTAN%20BORDER%20DISPUTE%20(FINAL).pdf?ver=ofbfrNNgIqZr7nFqm60lbw%3D%3D.

[279] To view images of these settlements see John Pollock and Damien Symon's article, "China's High-Stakes Incursion in the Heights of Bhutan," Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank, September 29, 2022, https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2022-10/chinas-high-stakes-incursion-heights-bhutan.

[280] Ibid.

These settlements have acted as a way for China to slowly move the border inward into Bhutan. They have prevented access into these regions from local Bhutanese and Bhutan's government vehicles. This is a salami slicing strategy of slowly building roads and settlements in areas where India will not be incentivized to interfere. By avoiding Indian interference China has been able to slowly take land in the Doklam and Pasamlung region with no interference as these areas are mostly uninhabited and have no Bhutanese infrastructure connecting them to the rest of Bhutan. Bhutan, without India's help, will be powerless to stop this slow invasion of their territory. Bhutan either needs India to help them counter this infrastructure with infrastructure or they will have to cede some of China's territorial claims to keep some of the contested territory. Most likely China will rescind its claims over Jakalung to take Pasamlung and Doklam where it has built most of its settlements and roads that hold the most strategic value. In the end, if these disputed areas are connected to mainland China and not connected to the rest of Bhutan; functionally, they will be considered part of Chinese territory.[281]

Talk and Take: Failed Negotiations

When the bilateral relationship between Bhutan and China ended after the Doklam Crisis. India's prime minister, Narendra Modi, attempted to normalize relations between the three countries by having an informal meeting between himself and Xi Jinping in Wuhan, China at the 2018 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. The SCO was established, according to the Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "in order to build mutual trust among Member States, to disarm the border regions and to encourage regional cooperation."[282] While Xi Jinping agreed that China would allow more Bollywood films into the country, no joint

---

[281] Anchal Vohra, "China Is Quietly Expanding Its Land Grabs in the Himalayas," Foreign Policy, February 12, 2024, https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/01/china-is-quietly-expanding-its-land-grabs-in-the-himalayas/.

[282] "Shanghai Cooperation Organization" (The Republic of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs), accessed July 9, 2024, https://www.mfa.gov.tr/shanghai-cooperation-organization.en.mfa.

agreement was signed by either country at the summit. India later participated in the SCO's military exercises in August of 2018 as well as the 7th India–China joint Hand-in-Hand joint training exercises held in China's Chengdu Province in December of that same year. The next informal meeting held between the two leaders was in June of 2019 during the SCO summit in Bishkek. This "leadership-centric"[283] approach to relations was able to temporarily calm tensions between the two countries but was unable to prevent the Galwan Valley Incident one year later.[284]

Diplomatic strategies used against both India and Bhutan are very similar to China's "Talk and Take Strategy" used in the South and East China Seas. They hold important informal summits with the leaders of the affected countries, but refuse to sign any joint agreements and change their strategic interests and behavior in the affected regions. Despite holding high level meetings with Modi, they did not prevent China from occupying the Galwan Valley that resulted in the killing of 20 Indian soldiers, building settlements within in contested Bhutanese territory in both Pasamlung and Doklam, and expanding its claims over the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary, after declaring that it was part of China. During the Global Environment Facility Council in June 2020, China refused to discuss funding for the wildlife sanctuary since it claimed that it was part of the "disputed territory." This surprised the international community; especially Bhutan, because the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary has never been a part of any of the rounds of talks over the Sino-Bhutan border disputes as well as any other areas in Southeastern Bhutan.[285]

Talks between Modi and Jinping are now viewed as a delay tactic that enabled China to quickly build the necessary infrastructure in Bhutan and settlements in Pasamlung and Doklam. Additionally, the declaration that

---

[283] Vinay Kaura, "India's Relations with China from the Doklam Crisis to the Galwan Tragedy," *India Quarterly: A Journal of International Affairs* 76, no. 4 (October 29, 2020): 097492842096176, https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928420961768.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Amit Ranjan, "China's New Claim in Eastern Bhutan: Pressure Tactic or Message to India?," Institute of South Asian Studies (National University of Singapore, 2021), https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/chinas-new-claim-in-eastern-bhutan-pressure-tactic-or-message-to-india/.

Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary has been viewed as a pressure tactic to get Bhutan to cede China's claims to Pasamlung and Doklam. These recent events will make future negotiations and border agreements extremely more difficult, as Bhutan and India now understand China's true ambitions.

Recommendation for Bhutan

Bhutan will most likely not be able to handle the advancement of China in its Bhutanese territory without India's help. Pasamlung is only of strategic importance because India is housing the 14th Dalai Lama, and the Chinese fear of a Tibetan rebellion if he were to return to Pasamlung. Doklam is only desired by China to gain a strategic advantage over India by being able to blockade the Siliguri Corridor and take the Arunachal Pradesh region. Bhutan could use these facts to leverage India's help against China and if India does not help, then Bhutan will most likely be forced to cede Pasamlung and Doklam to ensure that it may be able to retain the Jakarlung and Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary. This paper recommends that India counter China's salami slicing strategy to assist Bhutan with the same force and conviction it had during the Doklam Crisis. India should dispute any further infrastructure pushes in Bhutan, even if they are not strategic locations for India. The Indian government should seek to counteract Chinese infrastructure ambitions by funding their own, as well as housing projects in the contested and uninhabited regions of Bhutan to legitimize Bhutan's claims over the land and make Chinese encroachment into Bhutan much more difficult. It is also inadvisable for Bhutan to work solely on a bilateral agreement with China since the PRC is likely to ignore terms of agreement, as it did in the 1998 bilateral agreement between the two states, when it no longer served China's national interest. By failing to strategically respond to China's advances, Bhutan may lose over 10% of its territory and India will be placed in a disadvantaged position.

Conclusion

In 2017, Bhutan and China's relationship underwent significant changes after the Doklam Crisis. Yearly border talks that had lasted over two decades no longer cease to exist. Since 2017, China has demonstrated its intentions over disputed territorial claims as viewed during the Doklam Crisis and Galwan Valley Incident. CCG has now increased its presence in the South and East China Seas in disputed Exclusive Economic Zones and near the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. The CCPs desire for unification was also expressed with the inflammatory remarks by the 19th National Congress' Central Committee, when they declared, "We will never allow anyone, any organization, or any political party, at any time or in any form, to separate any part of Chinese territory from China."[286] China's intentions in the region, combined with their salami slicing and talk and take strategies, have put Bhutan in a tight spot. China has been able to take and legitimize large portions of the disputed territories in the Pasamlung and Doklam regions without India's interference. It has also established new land claims never previously discussed over the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in order to pressure Bhutan to cede Pasamlung and Doklam despite this being against Bhutan's greatest ally, India's, best wishes. Bhutan should not pursue further bilateral negotiations with China because they have been shown to ignore treaties over contested land such as when they ignored the "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Sino-Bhutanese Border Areas'' that stated that resources could not be taken from and roads could not be built on land that was disputed between Bhutan and China but continued to do so anyways. Instead, Bhutan should pursue further negotiations with China through different channels, such as a summit with Bhutan, India, and China and working through their border disputes together or possibly through the United Nations to ensure any agreement between the two nations has more

---

[286] Yamei, ed., "Full Text of Resolution on CPC Central Committee Report – Xinhua | English. news.cn," www.xinhuanet.com, October 24, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/ c_136702625.htm.

legitimacy than a bilateral agreement, as shown with the 1998 agreement between Bhutan and China. Bhutan could respond to China's encroachment into its territory by allying closely with India and building infrastructure in these remote, uninhabited regions, to legitimize Bhutan's claims over the land and make further Chinese advancement more difficult. Although this action would enable Bhutan to retain full territorial integrity, it also could antagonize China and lead to an escalation of border disputes and possibly a full territorial conflict that would result in Bhutan's loss of land and citizens lives. Alternatively, if Bhutan orientates itself towards China, it runs the risk of losing the Pasamlung and Doklam regions, while possibly retaining the Jakarlung and the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary. Either way, Bhutan needs to tread cautiously to avoid a similar fate to that of Tibet, who now remains an autonomous region of China whose politics and social dynamics are controlled by the Chinese Communist Party.

<div style="text-align:right">

3

</div>

Weaponizing non-state actors: A comparative analysis of proxy warfare in Xinjiang and Myanmar

Minseo CHUNG

Abstract: This paper examines the phenomenon of state-level intervention through the weaponization of non-state actors, focusing on how state entities utilize these groups to secure their interests in global conflicts. It explores the direct and indirect connections between state-level agendas—such as U.S. neo-conservative policies, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and India's Act East Policy—and this form of proxy warfare. Through a comparative analysis of two case studies—the Uyghur independence movement in Xinjiang and ethnic rebel groups in Myanmar—this research investigates the mechanisms of state involvement in proxy conflicts and assesses the benefits and risks associated with utilizing non-state actors. By examining the nature of these non-state entities and their relationships with state sponsors, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of contemporary proxy warfare dynamics and their implications for regional stability and international relations.

Keywords: Proxy warfare, Interventionism, Non-state armed groups, Non-state actors

Introduction

Throughout world history, conflicts between various entities—individuals, communities, and states—have shaped the modern world structure. Traditionally, global conflicts were characterized by wars between sovereign

states, instrumentalizing their political agendas through military actions.[287] In the book "On War," Clausewitz expands on the nature of war, asserting that its ultimate goal is to render the enemy powerless to impose its will. He substantiates this claim by noting, "The invention of gunpowder and the constant improvement of firearms are enough in themselves to show that the advance of civilization has done nothing practical to alter or deflect the impulse to destroy the enemy, which is central to the very idea of war."[288] Within this context of warfare, this paper will examine a different form of weapon: "non-state actors" that states have utilized to destabilize enemies and secure interests.

The concept of weaponizing non-state actors encompasses the strategy of proxy warfare or proxy intervention, allowing state actors to covertly conduct operations and secure their interests in global conflicts while concealing their involvement—thus avoiding potential diplomatic problems and further conflict escalation.[289] To illustrate the implementation of this strategy, this paper will delve into two case studies. The first is the Uyghur independence movement in Xinjiang, Western China, also known as Eastern Turkestan or Uyghuristan. While this issue has a long historical context predating the establishment of the People's Republic of China, this study will focus on the period from 1990 to 2020 to emphasize the weaponization of the independence movement and non-state actors in the conflict.[290]

The main actors in this case include the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM), the World Uyghur Congress(WUC), other affiliated organizations, and the United States with the National Endowment for

---

[287] INEGMA and Jahangir Arasli, "States Vs Non-state Actors: Asymmetric Conflict And Challenges To Military Transformation," *Eurasia Review*, 2011, https://www.eurasiareview.com/13032011-states-vs-non-state-actors-asymmetric-conflict-and-challenges-to-military-transformation/

[288] Carl v. Clausewitz, "On war", ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton University Press, 1976), 76. https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/EWS%20On%20War%20Reading%20Book%201%20Ch%201%20Ch%202.pdf.

[289] Mumford Andrew, "Proxy Warfare", Polity Press, 2013.

[290] James Millward, "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment," *East-West Center Washington*, 2004, 2-9.

Democracy.[291] The second case study examines active Myanmar rebel groups, including the United Wa State Army, Kachin Independence Army, and Arakan Army. Given the ongoing nature of this conflict and its roots in Myanmar's prolonged ethnic strife, this study will concentrate on the period from 2005 to 2020, preceding the 2021 military coup. To explain the dynamics of proxy warfare and state intervention, the analysis will focus on these ethnic rebel groups' direct and indirect connections with China, including their receipt of funds, military training and weapons.[292] Furthermore, to gain a deeper understanding of proxy warfare conducted through non-state actors, this study will compare these two cases of states utilizing non-state actors in conflicts to maximize their interests.

This comparative analysis aims to address the following questions: Under what circumstances and through what methods do states weaponize non-state actors? How do state-level agendas—such as US neoconservative policies, China's Belt and Road Initiative, and potentially India's Act East policy—relate to the norm of proxy warfare? By examining these questions, this study seeks to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the complex dynamics of proxy warfare in contemporary global politics. Correspondingly, in the context of confrontation of different state-level global agendas, states are more likely to weaponize non-state actors as strategic proxies to secure their interests, leading to a proliferation of hybrid conflicts and a transformation of traditional power dynamic in the international system.

Lastly, it is important to clarify the purpose of this study. The intent is not to criticize or condemn specific states and their actions, but rather to recognize patterns in this emerging norm. By doing so, this research aims to equip policymakers with the knowledge to either prevent or implement the strategy of weaponizing non-state actors more effectively and responsibly. This understanding is crucial for navigating the complex landscape of modern international relations and conflict management.

---

[291] Mark Pinkstone, "NED funds Xinjiang disinformation push", ChinaDaily, June 4, 2021, https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/176552

[292] Abhijnan Rej, "China Aiding Rebel Groups in India's Northeast: Report", The Diplomat, December 9, 2020, https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/china-aiding-rebel-groups-in-indias-northeast-report/

Nature of non-state actors and proxy warfare

To understand the phenomenon of proxy warfare and intervention, it is crucial to consider the nature of non-state actors, including business groups, religious entities, criminal organizations, and paramilitary groups. Although the role of non-state actors has gained prominence recently, especially after the September 11 incident when the Bush administration declared the war on terror, these actors are not new but rather rapidly evolving, multi-dimensional entities. The role of non-state actors has become increasingly significant alongside the internationalization of financial markets, also known as neo-liberalism. This shift has allowed private sectors to participate in an open market economy and, consequently, weakened the function of states. As a result of this globalization of economy and politics, non-state actors' roles have expanded to include both soft and hard power dimensions, such as economic, cultural, ethnic, and military aspects.[293] Furthermore, these actors can serve as leverage in policy and decision-making processes. This is particularly evident in the transformation of the traditional idea of state sovereignty, which has evolved alongside the growing influence of inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. While IGOs comprise various states, they often appear to have a predominant role in spreading the agenda of dominant states. For instance, the United States used such organizations to propagate the idea of capitalist liberal democracy, effectively standardizing economies around the globe by influencing states previously ruled by communist regimes or those with different political and economic structures.[294] These organizations influence global affairs in economic, political, and social spheres under the auspices of legitimate international laws and policies. In other words, the emergence of international organizations has ushered in a new form of governance. For example, NATO, the UN, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) were established to counter common threats

---

[293] Andreas Bieler, Richard Higgott, and Geoffrey Underhill, *Non-State Actors and Authority in the Global System* (Taylor & Francis, 2004), 2.

[294] Rainer Baumann and Frank A Stengal, "Foreign Policy Analysis, Globalization and Non-State Actors: State-Centric After All?," *Journal of International Relations and Development* (2014): 494; Bieler, Higgott, and Underhill, "Non-state actors in the Global System", 3.

through collective power and intergovernmental coalitions. The United Nations aimed to balance power after World War II to prevent future conflicts and protect human rights. Similarly, NATO was formed as a military coalition to counterbalance Soviet military hegemony in Europe. The SCO, established in 2001, sought to create a collective power against what China termed the "three evils" – separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism – in the Central Asian region. There remains an ongoing debate regarding the classification of IGOs as non-state or state actors. Those who argue that these intergovernmental organizations are not part of the non-state actor category emphasize that the organizations are structured with different states, essentially making IGOs large state entities. However, many scholars consider IGOs to be non-state actors because they have independent laws and policies. Consequently, member states, especially the member states that have less power than others, must adhere to the organization's governance and agendas. Furthermore, international organizations facilitate other non-states actors such as NGOs, religious groups, media companies, multinational corporations within the process of representing and implementing their agendas along with state actors.[295]

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

In this context of diminishing borderlines and the rising power of IGOs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as significant tools for intervening in other states' affairs. These entities represent diverse agendas and interests that do not formally align with state entities. More importantly, their nature allows them to conventionally link with both IGOs and states, thus allowing states to avoid direct state-to-state confrontation in global politics. The creation of NGOs originated from civil society, also known as the third sector or the nonprofit sector, when individuals or groups sought collective power to represent common ideas and interests in democratic societies. While NGOs are a more organized and developed

---

[295] Daniela Irrera, "The Power and Impact of Institutions on International Relations: From Intergovernmental to Non-Governmental Organisations," in *Mapping Non-State Actors in International Relations*, ed. Marianna Charountaki and Daniela Irrera (Springer, 2022), 24.

version of civil society, they are distinguishable from civil society organizations.[296] Formally, NGOs implement their agendas through non-economic, non-military, and non-violent means, primarily utilizing cultural, political, moral, and ideational powers.[297] As new types of conflicts emerged, shifting from state-to-state military engagements to civilians opposing the state or fighting among themselves (such as rebellions and civil wars), the international community required a new security strategy. These emerging civilian-level conflicts not only necessitated various state-level military actions but also demanded civilian engagement, which introduced the concept of non-state actors intervening to mediate and resolve problems. Furthermore, this approach provided an opportunity to rebuild conflict zones after crises ended, allowing for long-term intervention by various entities, particularly transnational humanitarian organizations. This shift in conflict resolution strategies has significantly expanded the role and influence of NGOs in international affairs, positioning them as key players in addressing complex global challenges that extend beyond traditional state capabilities.[298]

Non-state armed Groups

Conversely, certain non-state actors engage in forceful activities, including paramilitary forces, terrorist organizations, insurgent groups, gangs, and rebel factions. These entities often indirectly align with state actors and IGOs as well due to their key characteristic: ambiguous association. This nature of non-state armed actors provides states with the advantage of minimizing risks associated with direct state-to-state confrontations and potential losses of regular military forces by deploying them in conflict zones. A significant distinction between formal military forces and non-state armed groups lies in the latter's ability to operate during peacetime, allowing involvement in a wide range of situations. In fact, militant organizations typically emerge when political and non-violent means fail

---

[296] Michael Yaziji and Jonathan Doh, "Classifying NGOs: definitions typologies and networks. In *NGOs and Corporations: Conflict and Collaborations* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

[297] Irrera, "The Power and Impact of Institutions", 25.

[298] Daniela Irrera, "The Power and Impact of Institutions", 28.

to achieve objectives, mirroring conventional warfare where force becomes a last resort.[299] Although less structured than regular state militaries, these groups tend to maintain an organized hierarchy, commonly featuring top-down leadership with fighters at the lower levels. However, their lack of legitimate governance often results in individuals representing the group to the public, as evidenced by media focus on prominent figures mentioned by state officials rather than the group itself. Furthermore, these organizations typically fund their training and activities through underground economies, such as drug trafficking, arms sales, and money laundering, as well as external support from both non-state and state actors. Scholars have attempted to categorize non-state armed groups based on variables such as attack methods, organizational structure, objectives, and targets. Common classifications in global politics include terrorist groups, insurgent factions, and guerrilla forces. However, the boundaries between these categories often blur due to overlapping tactics and characteristics, making comparative analysis of variables crucial for differentiation. To effectively compare these actors, it's essential to consider the nature of their entities. This section will briefly elaborate on the theoretical definitions of different non-state armed variables, focusing particularly on two influential entities in global politics: terrorism and insurgency, as well as guerrilla warfare. Many scholars approach the study of terrorism as a tactic rather than political terrorism, viewing it as a form of one of the strategies in warfare.[300] However, the politicization of the concept following the declaration of the "war on terror" has shaped the modern understanding of terrorism.

For instance, while insurgent groups challenge regimes and governments through direct military actions against authority—making violence an end goal—terrorist tactics are typically more indirect. Terrorists often exploit fear and the backlash from violence to achieve their objectives, targeting

---

[299] Sterling Jensen and Waleed Al-Rawi, "Irregular Militaries and Militias in International Relations: The Case of Iraqi Shiite Militias," in *Mapping Non-State Actors in International Relations*, ed. Marianna Charountaki and Daniela Irrera (Springer, 2022), 36.

[300] Ariel Merari, "Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurgency," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 5, no. 4 (1993): 213-251; Mustafa Coşar Ünal, "Terrorism versus insurgency: a conceptual analysis" *Crime Law Soc Change* 66, no.1 (2016): 21-57; Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism (Colombia University 2017).

symbolic buildings and civilians.[301] Also, it is crucial to note that terrorism does not necessarily require mass popular support, unlike insurgency actions which heavily depend on popular support. This distinction allows terrorism to operate more flexibly across various contexts and battlegrounds.[302] As mentioned, the connotations associated with these terms have diverged significantly, especially since the emergence of the "war on terror" when the United States framed terrorism as an "axis of evil." The word "terrorism" often evokes negative associations such as animosity, illegitimacy, and fear, while insurgency and guerrilla forces have positive narratives like freedom fighters, justice seekers, and liberation forces.[303] This characteristic of non-state armed groups enables them to operate in gray areas of international law and politics, making them both challenging to combat and attractive to various actors seeking proxy forces. As such, although there are marked distinctions between the terminological approaches to these non-state armed groups and their methods of employing violence to achieve goals, their shared ambiguity grants them a unique position in global conflicts and power dynamics.

Proxy warfare and intervention

Examining the nature of non-state actors provides a better understanding of the fundamental concept of non-state entities, that is ambiguity and complexity. These traits enable such entities to engage in what is termed proxy warfare and proxy intervention. Proxy warfare involves conflicts utilizing third-party manpower, resources, and territories aligned with external benefactors—both state and non-state actors—who seek advantageous outcomes while minimizing the risk of direct confrontation with adversaries. In the book Proxy War: The least Bad Option by Tyrone, he describes proxy warfare as "directing the use of force by a politically motivated, local actor to indirectly influence political affairs in the target state."[304]

---

[301] Ünal, "Terrorism versus insurgency: a conceptual analysis", 27.

[302] Ibid., 29–30.

[303] Ibid., 25.

[304] Tyrone L Groh, *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option* (Stanford University Press, 2019), 29.

External support primarily manifests as funding and training, constituting a form of intervention. This paradigm, particularly foreign state intervention, has evolved alongside global conflicts such as the World Wars. In earlier stages, when states were directly embroiled in wars and conflicts, superpowers leveraged both domestic and international third parties to wage battles in distant locations. For instance, U.S. involvement during the Vietnam War and Soviet military assistance to Afghanistan in the 1970s exemplify direct superpower intervention.[305] However, contemporary forms of intervention have become increasingly indirect and clandestine, giving rise to the tactic of proxy warfare.[306] Conceptually, direct intervention in conflict necessitates states deploying their agents or military assets to another country for immediate operations. In contrast, proxy warfare—an indirect intervention—typically avoids involving state-level power directly in the conflict. Although proxy warfare may still require the participation of state-level intelligence agencies and military forces, their role is constrained to training and advisory capacities.[307] This evolution in intervention strategies reflects the changing nature of global politics, where states seek to exert influence while maintaining plausible deniability and minimizing the potential for escalation into full-scale international conflicts.

To comprehend the shift towards indirect intervention by state entities, it's crucial to examine the evolution of proxy warfare and intervention norms. The emergence of proxy warfare can be traced back to the Cold War era, when tensions between two global superpowers reached their peak. Both sides sought to expand their influence by propagating their respective political ideologies: liberal democracy and communism. In this context, they began to focus on third-world countries, not only to gain the upper hand in spreading their political doctrines but also to shape the global order. Even after the Cold War's conclusion, proxy warfare continued to operate worldwide, particularly in conjunction with U.S. neoconservatism and its efforts to disseminate its agendas and values.[308] However, the approach

---

[305] Mumford, "Proxy Warfare," 19–20.

[306] Ibid., 14.

[307] Ibid., 25.

[308] Groh, "The Proxy War", 49.

underwent subtle changes. Under the banner of democracy, there was a greater emphasis on containment, negotiation, and legitimate alliances, rather than preemption, regime change, and unofficial coalitions.[309] In essence, the nature of proxy warfare underscores its heavy reliance on state-level agendas. This means that proxy forces not only serve their own interests but also advance those of their backing states. This dual-purpose functionality highlights the complex interplay between local actors and their state sponsors in shaping regional and global political landscapes.

A comparative analysis of two case studies

Considering the nature of proxy warfare and non-state actors, this section will examine case studies of non-state actors involved in proxy warfare and intervention. The selection of Myanmar and Xinjiang as case studies is rooted in the contemporary global political landscape, where the United States and China compete across various domains to secure their interests. The United States has implemented neoconservative policies, particularly after the September 11 incident, declaring the "War on Terror." This stance has enabled the U.S. to expand its influence both directly and indirectly worldwide. Similarly, China officially announced the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013, which likely planned much earlier, signaling a new foreign policy paradigm.[310] A common thread in these strategic shifts is the necessity to engage with third-world countries or other sovereign states, implying a greater likelihood of intervention in target states' affairs. This raises the question: What occurs when the interests of superpowers clash in other countries? While history suggests conflict as a simple answer, a more important question is "how" these superpowers navigate the new paradigm of global politics—a question directly tied to this study's main focus: proxy warfare and indirect intervention. Therefore, the aim of this comparative analysis is to identify the relationship between state-level agendas and regional issues and to examine how the conflict under superpowers' rela-

---

[309] Ibid., 37.

[310] "What is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?" Chatham House, 2021, https://www.chatham-house.org/2021/09/what-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri

tionship is operationalized in practice By exploring these case studies, we can gain insights into the complex dynamics of modern proxy warfare, the role of non-state actors, and the strategies employed by major powers in pursuit of their geopolitical objectives. This analysis will shed light on the evolving nature of global conflicts and the relationships between state and non-state actors in shaping regional and international politics.

Case Study 1: Xinjiang Independence Movement

The "East Turkistan" issue in China's Xinjiang region has its roots in complex historical and geopolitical factors. Originally a vague geographical term, "East Turkestan" was politicized in the 19th century amid British and Russian colonial competition in Central Asia. This concept was further shaped by pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism ideologies, which spread in the region and provided inspiration for separatist movements. These movements, influenced by external powers and ideologies, began to view Xinjiang as a distinct political entity separate from China. They constructed a separatist theoretical system based on religious and ethnic identity, aiming to establish an independent "East Turkestan" state. This background sets the stage for potential proxy warfare, where state actors might exploit these separatist sentiments and non-state actors to further their geopolitical interests in the region, challenging China's territorial integrity and regional stability. The "East Turkistan" separatist movement in Xinjiang's complex history dates back to the 1930s and 1940s. During this period, two short-lived separatist regimes were established with foreign support: the "East Turkestan Islamic Republic" in 1933 and the "East Turkestan Republic" in 1944.[311] These attempts at "state-building" were ultimately unsuccessful. Following these failures, separatist elements continued to spread their ideology through publications, educational institutions, and political activities, both within China and abroad. The movement was particularly active in the 1950s and 1960s, instigating several violent incidents in both southern and northern Xinjiang. The nature of the "East Turkistan" issue evolved

---

[311] Graham E. Fuller, "The Xinjiang Problem", Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2003, 28.

significantly after the 1990s. The separatist movement increasingly turned to terrorism as a means of achieving its goals, influenced by Islamic revival movements and religious extremism from outside China. This transformation was marked by the 1990 "Baren Township Incident." The movement's activities can be divided into three stages: the "traditional stage" (1990-2001), characterized by the establishment of various separatist organizations and violent attacks; the "transition stage" (2001-2008), which saw a reduction in domestic organizations but increased international networking; and the "ideological stage" (2008-present), marked by the spread of extremist ideologies. Throughout these stages, the movement has become increasingly intertwined with international terrorist networks, posing challenges not only to Xinjiang's security but also to the broader region. Particularly, the United States has increased their focus on Xinjiang-related studies, often addressing sensitive issues and sometimes aligning with "East Turkestan" narratives. Projects like the US "Xinjiang Project" have attempted to shape international discourse on the issue. Additionally, international non-governmental organizations, such as Amnesty International, have become involved, often criticizing Chinese policies in Xinjiang from human rights perspectives. These mark the efforts to internationalize the "East Turkestan" issue by the Western countries, utilizing it as a tool for Western countries to intervene in Xinjiang affairs and potentially contain China's influence.[312]

Non-State Actors

The Uyghur independence movement involves various East Turkestan Independence organizations and their affiliates, including the East Turkestan Independence Movement/Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP), East Turkestan Information Center (ETIC), the Uyghur Youth Congress, and the World Uyghur Congress (WUC). Several of these groups, notably ETIM/TIP, ETIC, ETLO, and the Uyghur Youth Congress, have been implicated in

---

[312] Jian-ying, "Review in History and Current Situation of East Turkestan Issue," (Institute of Research in China's Borderland, China Academy of Social Science, 2010), 1-6.

organizing and conducting terrorist activities in Xinjiang and Central Asia, prompting the Chinese government to designate them as terrorist organizations threatening national security.[313] Interestingly, the international community, particularly the United States and the United Nations, only classified ETIM as a terrorist organization after the US uncovered ETIM's plan to attack the U.S. consulate in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on May 22, 2002.[314] These organizations employ both violent and non-violent means to propagate their separatist ideology. The biggest and active group is the ETIM. It was officially established in December 1990 when 40 representatives of East Turkestan Independence groups were gathered in Istanbul, setting the goal of ETIM as founding a state in Xinjiang through violin and armed struggle.[315] The ETIM is active not only in China but also in the Middle East and Central Asia including Pakistan and Afghanistan. This was confirmed in 2010 when the US military forces killed 15 Uyghur terrorists in northwestern Afghanistan, which was also confirmed by the Afghan police commander, showing that the organization is a transboundary group.[316] It is worth noting that the organizational structure of these groups is often ambiguous, with some experts pointing out that even their names are not clearly defined.[317]

In contrast, the WUC stands out as a non-violent, human rights-focused non-governmental organization. It has played a significant role in internationalizing the Xinjiang issue through collaborations with Western media outlets and academic institutions. Founded in 2004 in Berlin, Germany, with U.S. support, the WUC aims to bolster the Uyghur independence movement beyond China's borders. While the WUC was officially established in 2004,

[313] James Millward, "Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment", *Policy Studies* 6, (2004): 27.

[314] US Department of the Treasury, (Press Statement on the UN Designation of The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement, 2002), https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/po3415

[315] Degang Sun, "Fighting With No Military Bases Abroad: Global Jihad Network and China's Anti-Terror Strategy", (Research Institution for European and American Studies, 2010), 8.

[316] Degang Sun, "China and the Global Jihad Network", *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* (October, 2010), 198, https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2010.517036open_in_new

[317] Reed J. Todd and Diana Raschke, "The ETIM: China's Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat, (Bloomsbury Academy, 2010), 3.

various undocumented Uyghur independence organizations have existed globally since the 1990s. The WUC acts as a unifying entity for these groups, encompassing approximately 32 organizations across 18 different countries under its umbrella.[318] Notably, the WUC maintains close ties with Western countries, particularly the U.S. government, aligning with their liberal perspectives and human rights agendas concerning the Uyghur people. This relationship underscores the intricate interplay between non-state actors and state interests within this complex geopolitical landscape.[319]

WUC and NED

The WUC and other Uyghur human right organizations' influence extends to high-level political circles, evidenced by its president meeting with the US President and holding its general assembly meeting at the US Capitol building.[320] Unlike typical NGOs that highly rely on donations and philanthropy events, the WUC receives substantial external funding. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is its primary financial backer.[321] The NED, a non-profit organization established in 1983 under the Ronald Reagan administration, serves as an indirect route for implementing neoconservative policies. Its mission involves strengthening democratic institutions that align with and propagate U.S. agendas globally. According to NED documents, its objectives include opening political space in authoritarian countries, aiding democratic processes in semi-authoritarian nations, supporting fledgling democracies, building post-conflict democratic systems, and promoting democracy in the Muslim world.[322]

---

[318] Radka Havlová, "The World Uyghur Congress as an Actor of Foreign Policy", in Non State Actors and Foreign Policy Agency: Insights from Area Studies, edited by Marianna Charoutaki, Christos Kourtelis, and Daniela Irrera (Springer 2024), 134.

[319] Ibid., 132.

[320] Unpresented Nation & Peoples Organization, "Uyghur Open Third General Assembly in Washington D.C." (May 26, 2009).

[321] Havlová, "The World Uyghur Congress as an Actor of Foreign Policy", 135.

[322] US Department of State, "The Asia Foundation: Related Appropriations", 824, https://2009-2017. state.gov/documents/organization/123640.pdfhttps://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/123640.pdf

The NED's roots trace back to the Cold War era when the U.S. engaged in ideological warfare against the Soviet Union. A 1991 Washington Post article explains the NED's nature, describing "democracy aid" as a new weapon against communism. The article drew parallels between CIA covert operations during the Cold War and the NED's activities, suggesting that the NED had supplanted the CIA's clandestine approach by organizing a global democracy network and supporting private democratic institutions to infiltrate communist or authoritarian states.[323] This shift in strategy addressed the limitations of covert operations, which struggled to effectively showcase democratic values due to their secretive nature and the high risk of exposing state officials' involvement in adversarial territories—a scenario that could potentially escalate conflicts. The NED's more overt approach to promoting democracy thus represents a strategic evolution in US foreign policy implementation, overt in its operation but covert in its agenda.[324] Due to this origin of the NED, China strongly condemned their activity, especially around China, calling them a "Second CIA". According to the official statement of the Chinese consulate in Penang, it mentions the fact that NED organized the anti-China narrative by spreading misinformation, internationalizing the human right issues, and funding related groups. The statement also accused the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) in funding Xinjiang-related projects, allocating approximately $8.5 million in grants between 2004 and 2020, primarily to independence organizations such as the World Uyghur Congress (WUC).[325] In fact, the official website of the NED announced that they funded around $8.5 million to the Uyghur related projects, $1.8 million to WUC between 2017 and 2021.[326]

---

[323] David Ignatius, "Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyless Coup", The Washington Post (September 21, 1991), https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1991/09/22/innocence-abroad-the-new-world-of-spyless-coups/92bb989a-de6e-4bb8-99b9-462c76b59a16/

[324] Kate Geoghegan, "A Policy in Tension: The National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Response to the Collapse of the Soviet Union", *Diplomatic History* (2018), 773.

[325] Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Penang, (Fact Sheet on the National Endowment for Democracy, 2022), http://penang.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zt_19/zgwj/202205/t20220511_10684485.htm

[326] National Endowment for Democracy, Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act Builds on Work of NED Grantees (2020), https://www.ned.org/uyghur-human-rights-policy-act-builds-on-work-of-ned-grantees/

As previously noted, the WUC is a non-governmental organization advocating for human rights and the independence of "East Turkestan." Their strategy to challenge China primarily involves non-violent means, as declared on their official website.[327] However, their tactics have proven to be even more effective than violent approaches. The WUC collaborates closely with major news media companies, including the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, BBC, CNN, Al-Jazeera, Radio Free Asia, and Reuters. Their aim is to disseminate information and raise international awareness about Xinjiang issues. This strategy of "winning hearts" by focusing on human rights concerns is implemented through lobbying news media companies and creating Uyghur human rights projects funded by the NED. Since 2004, they have released over 80 reports and 400 statements.[328] Moreover, according to the statement of the Chinese consulate in Toronto, it mentions that the CIA suggested that the US should prepare for the future confrontation with China using the "Uyghur card" as a means of exercising their will. Under this idea, the statement argues that the US, Britain, and their allies established intelligence and anti-China projects that spread misinformation and internationalize the oppression of Uyhgur Muslims in Xinjiang.[329]

ETIM

However, the East Turkestan Independence Movement/Turkestan Islamic Party (ETIM/TIP) and other affiliated East Turkestan independence organizations employ violent tactics. Their attack strategies include assassination, arson, and bombing. Their targets are typically Chinese officials in Xinjiang and abroad, police, Han ethnic groups, and infrastructure such as railroads.[330] The main objective is to generate panic and fear in society.

---

[327] World Uyghur Congress, https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/.

[328] Uyghur Human Rights Project, Who We Are, https://uhrp.org/about/; Havlová, "The World Uyghur Congress as an Actor of Foreign Policy", 136.

[329] Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Toronto, "Things to Know about All the Lies on Xinjiang: How Have They Come About," http://toronto.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zxdt/202105/t20210508_8989347.htm

[330] Global Terrorism Database, Terrorism in China 1990-2020, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=3&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&country=44&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GTDID&od=desc#results-table

Furthermore, the ETIM allegedly maintains close ties with Al-Qaeda and the Taliban, receiving training, weapons, and sanctuary in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The connection between these non-state armed groups came to light when the first president of ETIM, Hasan Mahsum, was killed during a joint Pakistani and U.S. anti-terrorism operation.[331] Specifically, Hasan Muhsum had personal connection with Osama bin Laden, allowing the Uyghur fighters to train and stay in Afghanistan. In collaboration with global jihad organizations, ETIM escalated its violent activities. One of the most significant events involving East Turkestan separatist organizations was the Urumqi riot on July 5, 2009. This devastating incident resulted in the destruction of approximately 331 shops and 1,325 vehicles. The human toll was severe, with 197 people losing their lives and around 1,700 sustaining injuries. The Chinese government accused ETIM, the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), and various activists of instigating and motivating the riot.[332]

Connection between Individuals and groups

In summary, two major entities play significant roles in the Uyghur Independence movement: the East Turkestan Independence Movement (ETIM) and the World Uyghur Congress (WUC). ETIM employs violent tactics and collaborates with global jihad organizations such as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Conversely, WUC officially maintains that its activities are strictly non-violent and peaceful, focusing on internationalizing the issue by aligning with Western liberal agendas and receiving support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). To frame these entities and the Uyghur independence movement as elements in a proxy war between China and the United States, it is crucial to examine the connections between each group. However, gathering information about illegitimate organizations like ETIM and its affiliated violent groups presents significant challenges. Consequently, research on these connections relies primarily on news

---

[331] Maria A. Soloshcheva, "The Uyghur Terrorism: Phenomenon and Genesis", *Iran & the Caucasus* 21, no. 4 (2017): 419. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26548912.

[332] Degang Sun, "China and the Global Jihad Network", The Journal of the Middle East and Africa 1, no. 2 (2010): 196-207. DOI:10.1080/21520844.2010.517036.

articles, academic papers, official statements, documents, and databases. The aim is not to definitively confirm relationships between these entities but rather to provide evidence suggesting that the non-violent and violent organizations are not entirely separate, potentially leading to the conclusion that the Uyghur independence movement serves as a tool for Western powers to destabilize China.

The establishment of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) marked the consolidation of the Uyghur diaspora under a single umbrella organization. Two significant entities behind this consolidation were the East Turkestan National Congress and the Uyghur Youth Congress. While the East Turkestan National Congress was recognized as a legitimate organization with global political influence, the World Uyghur Youth Congress was designated as a terrorist organization by Chinese authorities, suspected of involvement in aggressive activities in Xinjiang. A prominent figure in the Uyghur independence movement is Rebiya Kadeer, who served as the president of WUC from 2006 to 2017 and led the Uyghur American Association until 2011. Kadeer's background is noteworthy: she was formerly a member of the National People's Congress but was imprisoned in China for leaking state secrets. Her release in 2005 came as part of a deal with the Bush administration, after which she relocated to the United States and assumed the WUC presidency in 2006. The 2009 Urumqi riots brought Kadeer and the organizations she led into the spotlight. Chinese authorities accused ETIM, WUC, and Kadeer personally of organizing and instigating the riots. Nuer Baikeli, Chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Government, alleged that Kadeer had been associated with terrorism and separatist movements, implicating her in various violent activities including explosions, arson, assassinations, and mass protests in 2008. These accusations effectively charged Kadeer and her organization with escalating violence in the region.[333] Additionally, the current president of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC), Dolkun Isa, was previously the vice president of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement

---

[333] Yongnian Zheng and Tai Wei Lim, "China's New Battle with Terrorism in Xinjiang", EAI Background Brief No. 446 (April 8, 2009), 4.

(ETIM) before it was designated as a terrorist group by both the United States and China.[334] More significantly, he was accused of training armed separatists at a secret base in Nepal and held responsible for the killing of Wang Jianping, a diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in Kyrgyzstan, according to a report from the Chinese anti-terrorism office sent to Germany and a written document of an EU parliamentary question. The German counter-espionage office expressed concern about potential assassinations of Uyghur separatists in Germany by Chinese secret services.[335]Abudujelili Kalakash, also was in a leadership position in the WUC, was the founder and former president of the East Turkestan Information Center (ETIC), which is listed as a terrorist organization in China. He left the ETIC when it was designated as a terrorist group and became the vice president of the World Uyghur Youth Congress, which is still affiliated with the terrorist group. An EU parliamentary question document also mentioned him as a person who trained guerrilla fighters for Xinjiang.[336] Accordingly, this suggests that the connection between non-violent organizations and violent organizations is fluid, indicating that these are not entirely separate structures but have interconnections. Furthermore, there is an organizational-level connection between terrorist groups and the WUC. Two organizations listed as terrorist groups by China, the East Turkestan Information Center and the World Uyghur Youth Center, have joined the World Uyghur Congress, a human rights organization closely associated with the United States.[337] Thus, the complex dynamics surrounding Uyghur organizations provide a compelling example of state intervention using non-state actors to influence affairs in other countries, making distinction between state and non-state actors increasingly ambiguous. However, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) funding, individuals' connections with the US, and the interchangeable structure of various Uyghur organizations—including

---

[334] Sun, "China and Global Jihad Network", 202.

[335] Maurizio Turco, Marco Pannella, Banedetto Della Vedova, and Olivier Dupuis, "Action by the Chinese secret services against Uyghur dissidents resident in Germany", EU Parliamentary question (March 25, 2004), https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-5-2004-1049_EN.html?redirect

[336] Ibid.

[337] Degang Sun, "Fighting with No Military Base", 12.

both terrorist groups and human rights organizations—suggest indirect US intervention using non-state actors to destabilize China.

China's Response

China's response to the Uyghur independence movement has drawn international criticism, largely fueled by information disseminated through media outlets influenced by World Uyghur Congress (WUC) lobbying efforts. China has implemented a "strike hard" policy targeting what it terms the "three evils": terrorism, separatism, and religious extremism. This strategy aims to strengthen regional defense forces to suppress violence associated with the Uyghur independence movement. Following the U.S. declaration of the War on Terror, China also adopted an anti-terrorism stance, reframing these organizations as terrorists rather than freedom fighters, thereby legitimizing its "strike hard" approach. On the surface, this conflict is portrayed as a struggle against terrorism and human rights abuses in Xinjiang, with the Uyghur ethnic group fighting for minority rights and potentially seeking an independent state called East Turkestan, while China responds to internal violence. However, a deeper analysis suggests this may be a strategic proxy war between U.S.-backed entities and China, aimed at destabilizing western China without escalating into direct state-to-state conflict or deploying state-level assets such as weapons and personnel.

Strategic Approach to Xinjiang

Under this possible agenda, now it is the question of why Xinjiang. Although the funding of the separatist movement and possible involvement of the US might provide negative connotation, the paper aims to have a strategic approach to this topic. The region, Xinjiang, holds more than half of China's energy resources, including oil and gas. Moreover, it is crucial to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), officially announced in 2013 by the president Xi Jinping, and the "Develop the West Campaign" begun in 2001, as part of China's shift from concealing its power

to asserting it globally.[338] Xinjiang serves as the starting point for this massive infrastructure project, connecting Central Asia, the Middle East, and potentially Europe. Therefore, China put many security forces and attention not only because of the ongoing terrorism but also to secure and manage the BRI project.[339] Contrary to prevalent media narratives about life in Xinjiang, the Chinese government has invested heavily in developing western China and implemented various social welfare programs. They recognize that poverty and low social welfare are key factors driving participation in political movements.[340] For instance, China plans to build an economic corridor connecting the wealthy east to the west, integrating citizens and economies.[341]

China is not alone in its expansionist ambitions; the United States has long demonstrated similar aspirations. For instance, anti-terrorism operations in the Middle East have allowed the U.S. to establish a military presence in close proximity to China. Furthermore, the "New Silk Road" initiative proposed by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2011 exemplifies American ambitions to participate in international economic projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline.[342] The TAPI project, initially conceptualized in the 1990s between Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, began to materialize in 2003 with financial backing from the Asian Development Bank. India joined the venture in 2008.[343] The U.S. envisioned not only participating in the pipeline construction, particularly the Afghan segment, but also developing highways, railroads, and electricity networks in Afghanistan. Although this initiative faded due to insufficient funding and support, it serves as a prime example

---

[338] "China's Western Development Campaign – EveryCRSReport.com." 2001. Every CRS Report. https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31104.html

[339] Colin Mackerras, "Xinjiang in China's Foreign Relations: Part of a New Silk Road or Central Asian Zone of Conflict?", *East Asia* (September 2014), 27.

[340] Ibid., 28.

[341] Matthew D Moneyhon, "China's Great Western Development Project in Xinjiang: Economic Palliative, or Political Trojan Horse," *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy (*January 2003), 498.

[342] US Department of State, "Remarks at the New Silk Road Ministerial Meeting" (September 22, 2011), https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/09/173807.htm

[343] Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, TAPI Project, https://momp.gov.af/tapi-project https://momp.gov.af/tapi-project

of U.S. efforts to exert influence across Central Asia, the Middle East, and South Asia in various sectors.

Consequently, China's Belt and Road Initiative and the U.S.'s expansionist policies have fostered a competition for geopolitical and economic advantages. In this context, supporting and operationalizing the Uyghur independence movement as a weapon could potentially result in a win-win scenario for both the Uyghur people and the United States. Conversely, for China, Xinjiang represents a critical region where stability must be maintained to ensure the success of BRI projects and to facilitate further cooperation with Central Asian and Middle Eastern nations. This geopolitical landscape underscores the complex interplay between regional development initiatives, global power dynamics, and the strategic importance of Xinjiang in the broader context of U.S.-China relations. It highlights how local movements, such as the Uyghur independence campaign, can become focal points in larger international power struggles.

Case Study 2: Myanmar Rebel Group

Myanmar's history is marked by complex ethnic and religious dynamics, making it one of the world's most diverse and conflict-prone states. Since gaining independence from Britain in 1948, the country has experienced ongoing insurgencies and armed conflicts, with various ethnic-based groups seeking autonomy from the central government. This fragmentation stems from the pivotal role ethnicity played in post-independence politics, with communities mobilizing to secure resources and political influence. Myanmar officially recognizes 135 ethnic groups, with eight main national ethnicities: Bamar, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Rakhine, and Shan, underscoring the complexity of its ethno-religious landscape. The immediate post-independence period saw the emergence of significant armed factions. The Communist Party of Burma (CPB) became a crucial entity in shaping Myanmar's political landscape, while the Karen National Defense Organization initiated insurrections in Karen-inhabited areas in 1949. Mon and Karenni groups joined the uprising, establishing control over northern Burma and interacting with nationalist Chinese Kuomintang

soldiers who had retreated to the northern Shan State following their de-
feat in the Chinese Civil War. By the 1950s, China exerted considerable
influence over northern Myanmar, particularly along their shared border.
A pivotal shift occurred in 1962 when General Ne Win led a military coup,
banning all political parties. This development altered regional dynamics,
with China playing a significant role in supporting communist insurgencies.
In northern Myanmar, the CPB engaged in conflicts with both the Burmese
army and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).[344] However, Chinese intel-
ligence successfully influenced the KIA to cooperate with the CPB rather
than the Burmese army, resulting in a division of power where the CPB
wielded political influence while the KIA exercised military control. Conse-
quently, the CPB splintered into several Ethnic Armed groups such as the
United Wa State Party. The rise of ethnic armed groups seeking self-deter-
mination, and more recently, the desire to establish a federal system with-
in a multi-ethnic union, has further escalated tensions between the Myan-
mar army (Tatmadaw) and diverse ethnic groups.[345] The concept of having
a muti-ethnic union has become a rallying point for many ethnic minorities
who view it as a means to protect their cultural identities, manage their
natural resources, and gain a measure of political autonomy. However, the
Tatmadaw has historically viewed such demands as threats to national
unity, leading to protracted conflicts in various parts of the country, par-
ticularly in border regions. These conflicts have resulted in significant hu-
manitarian consequences, including large-scale internal displacement and
refugee crises. The persistence of these armed struggles has also impeded
economic development in affected areas and complicated Myanmar's
political stability. Compounding the ethnic dimension of conflict in Myan-
mar is the religious factor, which has added another layer of complexity
to the country's socio-political dynamics. While Buddhism is the majority
religion, Myanmar is home to various religious minorities, including Mus-

---

[344] Bertil Lintner, "Why Burma's Peace efforts Have Failed to end Its Internal Wars," United
States Institute of Peace, October 2020, https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/20201002-
pw_169-why_burmas_peace_efforts_have_failed_to_end_its_internal_wars-pw.pdf

[345] Ashely South and Christopher M. Joll, "From Rebels to Rulers: The Challenges of Transition
for Non-state Armed Groups in Mindanao and Myanmar," *Critical Asian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2016): 180.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2016.1161963.

lims, Christians, and Hindus. The treatment of these religious minorities, particularly the Muslim Rohingya population, has been a source of both internal strife and international concern. The denial of citizenship and subsequent marginalization have led to severe human rights abuses against the Rohingya population. This has resulted in multiple waves of mass immigrants to neighboring Bangladesh, with the most recent and largest occurring in 2017. The Rohingya crisis has not only created a humanitarian emergency but has also strained Myanmar's relations with the international community and neighboring countries.[346] The intersection of ethnic and religious factors in the Rohingya issue exemplifies the complex history of conflict in Myanmar. It highlights how three factors are intertwined in Myanmar that distract the stabilization of the country: politics, religion, and ethnicity.

United Wa State Party/Army

Based on the historical context provided, ethnic groups in Myanmar function as significant non-state actors, wielding considerable influence over the country due to their high level of organization. A prime example is the United Wa State Army (UWSA), which operates under the United Wa State Party (UWSP). The UWSP manages political affairs related to their insurgency, while the UWSA handles military operations. Formed in 1989 following the dissolution of the Communist Party of Burma (CPB), the UWSA swiftly assumed control of the Wa region and unilaterally declared the establishment of the Wa Self-Administered Division. The UWSA boasts a formidable force of approximately 20,000 fighters, equipped with modern weaponry including armored vehicles, tanks, portable anti-aircraft missiles, and weapon manufacturing facilities. It has played a pivotal role in arming allied ethnic groups, distributing military assets throughout the region.[347] The organization is also deeply involved in both domestic and cross-border drug trade within the "Golden Triangle," primarily to finance its

---

[346] "Rohingya emergency." UNHCR, accessed July 5, 2024, https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/rohingya-emergency

[347] Andrew Ong, "Producing Intransigence: (Mis) understanding the United Wa State Army in Myanmar." *Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute* 40, no. 3 (2018): 457.

activities.[348] The UWSA maintains close ties with China, a relationship rooted in the historical shift of power from the CPB to the UWSP and reinforced by geographical proximity to both China and Thailand. This close integration has resulted in the Wa region becoming one of the most pro-China areas in Myanmar, with many Wa people speaking Chinese, using China's yuan as their primary currency, and hosting a significant population of ethnic Han Chinese. The high level of organization among Myanmar's Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs) is evident in their governance structures. The UWSA, for instance, operates its own de facto government system within a federal framework, a demand first articulated around 1993. It comprises seven departments covering various administrative functions from finance to political affairs. However, political analysts and the Myanmar government contend that there is no legitimate agreement recognizing the statehood of the Wa region, suggesting that while it possesses state-like capabilities, it lacks international and regional governmental recognition.[349] Efforts to consolidate power among EAGs against the central government are apparent, as exemplified by the organization of summits among these groups. In 2015, two such summits were held in Pangkham, the capital of the Wa region, with major groups attending the meeting such as the KIO, Shan State Army North, and Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army. Notably, these meetings were conducted without the involvement of Myanmar authorities, underscoring the EAGs' aspirations for self-determination.[350]

Kachin Independence Organization/Army

The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), established in 1961 in Myanmar's far north, is another prominent ethnic armed group relevant to the discussion of proxy warfare. The KIO swiftly gained control over most of

---

[348] Bertil Lintner, "The United Wa State Army and Burma's Peace Process," United States Institute of Peace, April 29, 2019, https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/04/united-wa-state-army-and-burmas-peace-process

[349] Ong, "Producing Intransigence," 445.

[350] "Ethnic Militias Decide Not to Sign Myanmar Government's Cease-fire Agreement," Radio Free Asia, February 24, 2017, https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/ethnic-militias-decide-not-to-sign-myanmar-governments-ceasefire-agreement-02242017145929.html

the Kachin State and northeastern parts of Shan State, areas bordering China, Thailand, and Laos.[351] Formed as a broad coalition of Kachin university students, intellectuals from the Kachin capital Myitkyina, and World War II veterans, the KIO emerged to oppose discriminatory policies targeting minority ethnic groups. Some analysts have considered the KIO to be among the strongest rebel groups in Myanmar.[352] Similar to the United Wa State Party (UWSP), the KIO maintains its own military wing, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), underscoring its status as a highly organized non-state armed group with significant non-military capabilities. The KIO has aligned itself with China, facilitating border-based trade for Chinese merchants and various businessmen. Despite its well-structured organization, which includes functional departments for health, education, agriculture, and women's affairs, the Myanmar government has denied the KIO legitimacy as a political entity, citing its origins as a guerrilla organization and its status as an interim administration.[353] Consequently, the KIO has sought to legitimize its existence through economic development, working closely with Chinese businessmen. A notable joint venture between the KIO and Chinese interests was the construction of a casino in Laiza, the KIO's headquarters, which reportedly serves as an KIO's office referred to as "KIO's Pentagon" or "the War Room."[354] In addition to its economic development efforts, the KIO has implemented a strategy to recruit young people from high schools and colleges through its Education and Economic Development for Youth (EEDY) program. This initiative not only educates youth about Kachin history and ideology but also provides training in basic guerrilla warfare tactics, effectively embedding rebel culture among youth groups and mobilizing them for insurgent activities.[355] Underlying these political and economic dynamics is the significant factor of Kachin's vast natural resources, particularly

---

[351] Colin Mackerras, *Ethnicity in Asia* (Taylor & Francis 2004),182. https://doi-org.proxy.binghamton.edu/10.4324/9780203380468

[352] David Brenner, *Rebel Politics: A Political Sociology of Armed Struggle in Myanmar's Borderlands* (Cornell University Press 2019).

[353] Ibid.

[354] Ibid.

[355] Hannah Beech, "Inside the Kachin War Against Burma," *Time*, November 21, 2014, https://time.com/3598969/kachin-independence-army-kia-burma-myanmar-laiza/.

gold. The international community often characterizes the conflict between the Kachin and Myanmar's central government as a "resource war," rather than solely a struggle rooted in political and ethnic factors.[356] This complex interplay of economic interests, political aspirations, and resource control illustrates the multifaceted nature of the conflict in Kachin State and highlights the challenges in achieving a lasting resolution between ethnic armed groups and Myanmar's central government.

Arakan Army

The Arakan Army (AA) is a prominent ethnic armed group primarily active in Rakhine State, Myanmar. Like other ethnic armed organizations, the AA's primary objective is to secure self-determination for the Rakhine ethnic minority. Bolstered by substantial civilian support, the AA has significantly expanded its military capabilities, thereby increasing its regional influence. Founded in 2009 in Laiza, the headquarters of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), the AA initially operated far from Rakhine State, assisting the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) in its conflict with the Myanmar Army (Tatmadaw). Around 2014, the AA began shifting its operations towards Rakhine State, following its exclusion from nationwide negotiations between ethnic armed groups and the central government. Government officials justified this exclusion by asserting that the AA, being primarily based in Rakhine rather than Kachin or Shan State, had no legitimate claim to participate in territorial and ethnic rights arrangements regarding northern Myanmar. Upon relocating its primary area of operations to Rakhine, the AA rapidly emerged as one of the most militarily active and violent ethnic armed groups, frequently targeting government officials and infrastructure. The organization maintains training camps in both Kachin and Rakhine states and utilizes public transportation networks to deploy forces to central Myanmar for operational purposes. The AA's Kachin origins coupled with its Rakhine ethnic identity provide a significant tactical advantage. Rakhine State is notably homogeneous, with its inhabitants often displaying distinct physical

---

[356] Eugene Mark, "The 'Resource War' in Kachin State," *The Diplomat*, March 16, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/the-resource-war-in-kachin-state/.

features compared to citizens from other parts of Myanmar. This allows AA members to integrate seamlessly into local communities, facilitating their operations against government forces. Thus, the AA was again established in the Rakhine State in 2014, further increasing their capability to operate against the government. Their strategy of attack is quite notable. The AA's reestablishment in Rakhine State in 2014 further enhanced its operational capabilities against the government. Their strategic approach is noteworthy, focusing on controlling key transportation routes including highways, rivers, and waterways, thereby influencing both domestic and international traffic flows. The AA's operational strategy appears to encompass three main elements: guerrilla warfare, conventional warfare, and civilian intimidation.[357] Moreover, the AA has adeptly leveraged internet technologies to counter government propaganda and maintain control over its narrative. The organization operates its own website, disseminating information about its goals, operational reports, and official statements, thus engaging in a form of digital insurgency alongside its physical operations.[358] The central government responded to the AA's violence activity by designating them as a terrorist organization in 2019.[359] However, in March, 2021, after the change of leadership with the February 1 coup, the military government removed them from the list of terrorist groups.[360]

China – Myanmar Ethnic Groups / Proxy warfare

By focusing on the non-state actors in the case of Myanmar, there are few common factors among the actors:, contains historical ethnic issues, ties with China, and mainly active in the borderline. First of all, the all three

---

[357] David S. Mathieson, *The Arakan Army in Myanmar: Deadly Conflict Rises in Rakhine State*. (United States Institute of Peace 2020): 7-14.

[358] "About Us," ArakanAarmy, accessed July 4, 2024, https://www.arakanarmy.net/about-us

[359] Prashanth Parameswaran, "What Does Myanmar's New Arakan Army Terrorist Designation Mean for the Country's Security?," *The Diplomat*, March 25, 2020, https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/what-does-myanmars-new-arakan-army-terrorist-designation-mean-for-the-countrys-security/

[360] *Al Jazeera*, "Myanmar military removes rebel Arakan Army from 'terrorist' list," March 11, 2021, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/myanmar-junta-removes-rakhine-rebels-from-terrorist-list.

groups are motivated by the discrimination of the central government that originated from the independence of Myanmar in 1948. This indicates that the groups have a common enemy, which is the central government. As it was mentioned in the beginning of this paper, proxy warfare can be defined as operationalising the ongoing issue to intervene in the third affairs. Applying this idea to the case of Myanmar rebel groups, the ongoing ethnic tension in the nation is the thing that the state entities are looking to pick up for a long-term intervention. In this case the state actor that is weaponizing the ethnic armed group is China. China has been working closely with both historical non-state actors: KIA and UWSA. They have been conducting business along the borderline and funding the armed group to have modernized weapons. In northern Myanmar, Kalay, there are weapon manufacturing factories discovered that create chinese-oriented weapons, and later revealed that the weapons are sent to the rebel groups to fight against the central government such as the KIA.[361] Not only the manufacturing companies that are equipping the armed groups, but there is a huge weapon flow from Yunnan, China to Myanmar, allegedly conducted by the UWSA and Chinese companies. The weapons include pistols, rifles, air missiles, and beyond.[362] Moreover, China state-owned company name Norinco is in the center of this arm shipment to rebel groups in Myanmar.[363] Norinco, the China North Industries Corporation is a Beijing based company that deals with weapon manufacturing to infrastructure buildings. The company even signed a contract with Myanmar about copper mining cooperation while they were allegedly providing weapons to ethnic rebel groups.[364] Although the AA established their own revenue

---

[361] Rajeev Bhattacharyya, "An Inside Look at Myanmar Resistance Groups' Weapons Manufacturing Factories," *The Diplomat*, October 4, 2023, https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/an-inside-look-at-myanmar-resistance-groups-weapons-manufacturing-factories/.

[362] Namrata Goswami, "Tracking the source of 'Weapon Providers' for NE Rebels," Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, established on 2013, https://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TrackingthesourceofWeaponProvidersforNERebels_ngoswami_071113

[363] Anders Corr, "China's diplo-terrorism in Myanmar," SPOTLIGHT, 2020, https://spotlight.licas.news/china-s-diplo-terrorism-in-myanmar/index.html.

[364] Shanghai Metals Market, "China's Norinco Signs Myanmar Copper Mine Contract to Strengthen Reserves," *Metal News*, Jun 24, 2010, https://news.metal.com/newscontent/100010339/chinas-norinco-signs-myanmar-copper-mine-contract-to-strengthen-reserves

sources such as armed trading and drug trade, they are still under the influence of both KIA and UWSA along with China's intervention force. The pictures of AA group training from different news articles indicate that the AA also received weapons from the UWSA, having Chinese manufactured weapons such as the Norinco type 81 rifle guns.[365] In summary, China indirectly participated in Myanmar's ethnic conflict by supporting the old alliances, KIA and UWSA, and newly formed AA.

States agendas

China's involvement in Myanmar's internal conflicts is evident through its connections with various ethnic armed groups. To fully comprehend the motivations behind this intervention, it is crucial to examine the broader context and potential benefits for China. Primarily, China's engagement in Myanmar aligns with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Initially conceived as the "New Silk Road" traversing Central Asia and the Middle East, the BRI has expanded to include a "Maritime Silk Road," signaling China's intention to extend its influence into South and Southeast Asia. This expansion aims to secure maritime trading routes and access to oceanic resources. A tangible example of this strategy is the pipeline connecting China's Yunnan region to Myanmar's Rakhine State, agreed upon in 2009. According to the China Research Center, this pipeline transported 3.2 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Myanmar to China by 2018.[366] However, China is not the sole power seeking to capitalize on Myanmar's strategic location and resources. India, an emerging global power, has initiated its "Act East Policy," which serves a similar function to China's BRI. This policy encompasses various mega-projects designed to strengthen not only economic ties but also so-

---

[365] The Irrawaddy, "Why The Arakan Army Attended Myanmar Junta's Union Day Event." *StratNews Global*, February 16, 2022, https://stratnewsglobal.com/myanmar/why-the-arakan-army-attended-myanmar-juntas-union-day-event/; *The New Humanitarian*, "Women soldiers join Myanmar's Arakan Army conflict," November 18, 2020, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/11/18/myanmar-women-army-arakan-rakhine-female-soldiers-peace.

[366] Neslihan Topcu, "A Relationship on a Pipeline: China and Myanmar," *China Current* 19, no. 3 (2020), https://www.chinacenter.net/2020/china-currents/19-3/a-relationship-on-a-pipeline-china-and-myanmar/

cial and cultural relationships by improving the connectivity of neighboring countries. Key initiatives include the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with the port of Sittwe in Myanmar's Rakhine State, and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, aimed at improving both economic and social connectivity among these three nations.[367] Accordingly, these state-level agendas have significant implications for the regional conflict. Some analysts argue that Chinese-backed armed groups, particularly the Arakan Army (AA).[368] They frequently targeted Indian workers and infrastructure projects in Rakhine State. One tactic employed by the AA involves positioning forces near ports to intercept and occasionally attack or rob ships. In summary, two major ethnic armed groups, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and the United Wa State Army (UWSA), reportedly receive military and economic support from China, often through state-owned enterprises. The AA, which has received weapons and military training from both these ethnic armed groups, operates near Indian infrastructure projects, destabilizing India's development programs and leading to significant postponements.[369] China's strategy of indirect intervention through non-state actors, driven by state-level competition with India, appears to be effective. While India's projects in Myanmar face disruption, the ambiguity surrounding the funding of proxy forces and China's involvement limits India's ability to directly attribute these actions to China. Instead, India can only attribute these disruptions to "regional terrorist groups" like the Arakan Army.

The two case studies of state involvement in proxy warfare reveal patterns of support, potential benefits, and associated risks. The Xinjiang independence movement case prominently features both US and Uyghur involvement, utilizing prominent figures and human rights organizations

---

[367] Subir Bhaumik, "The India-Myanmar Kaladan Project: Vision and Reality," Torkel Opsahl Academic Epublisher, 2020, https://www.toaep.org/pbs-pdf/106-bhaumik/ ; Lian, T. T., "The Indian Trilateral Highway Project and Myanmar's Spring Revolution," *The Diplomat*, September 19, 2023, https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/the-indian-trilateral-highway-project-and-myanmars-spring-revolution/.

[368] Christopher D Booth, "China and the United Wa State Army in Myanmar," in *Warfare in Peacetime: Proxies and State Powers,* edited by Christopher C. Harmon (Marine Corps University Press 2023), 180.

[369] Sreeradha Datta, "Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project," *CUTS International Briefing Paper*, September 2020, 5.

to internationalize the issue and criticize the Chinese government's increased security measures in Xinjiang. The World Uyghur Congress (WUC), funded by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), promotes its cause alongside Western liberal agendas such as freedom and democracy. In contrast, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) and affiliated organizations have engaged in violent tactics, including terrorist attacks, bombings, assassinations of government officials, and riots to destabilize the Xinjiang region. The US involvement in this independence movement, primarily through NED funding, effectively conceals direct connections between organizations and prevents state-to-state confrontation. While the links between human rights organizations and terrorist groups are not immediately apparent, the backgrounds and connections of key individuals indicate the interconnectedness of the Uyghur diaspora. This ambiguity benefits the US by allowing it to impose its will through non-state actors, gaining options to destabilize adversaries and dominate interests in the Middle East and Central Asia. The Myanmar rebel groups case shares similarities with the Xinjiang movement in leveraging prolonged ethnic conflicts. This approach allows both state entities to present a narrative of supporting minorities, which can be viewed as legitimate support. However, China's involvement extends beyond financial support to include the provision of Chinese-made military assets. This makes China's involvement more easily recognizable and increases the potential for escalating violence. A notable difference in China's intervention in Myanmar is its dual role: investing in Myanmar's economic ventures (copper mining and gas pipelines) while simultaneously supplying weapons to aggressors within the state. This approach may offer benefits in terms of dominating multiple factors and exerting control, but it also carries significant risks of international scrutiny and diplomatic problems with neighboring countries if the proxy intervention is exposed. Crucially, both cases are closely tied to state-level agendas: the US neoconservative policy toward the Middle East, and China's land-based and maritime Belt and Road Initiative projects traversing Xinjiang and Myanmar, respectively. This demonstrates how conflicts between state-level agendas can manifest as proxy warfare involving third entities in global politics. These case studies highlight the complex dynamics of proxy warfare, illustrating how states can leverage

non-state actors to advance their interests while attempting to minimize direct confrontation and maintain plausible deniability.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the increasing state intervention in domestic issues underscores the importance of understanding the strategic aspects of proxy warfare through the weaponization of non-state actors. This approach allows state entities to avoid the risks associated with escalating state-to-state tensions and diplomatic problems. This growing trend, which has become more prevalent since liberal democracy began dominating global politics, has enabled non-state actors to more easily interfere in other countries' affairs. A prime example is the National Endowment for Democracy, which funds groups willing to spread democratic ideals in authoritarian or anti-democratic regimes. Some refer to this as a new weapon: "democracy aid."

The Xinjiang case demonstrates how the internationalization of issues and the tactic of "winning hearts and minds" can serve as alternatives to military force, highlighting how states utilize human rights organizations to gain support from the international community while covertly employing traditional tactics of terrorism to destabilize regions by spreading fear. Conversely, the Myanmar case involving ethnic rebel groups and China's intervention illustrates the tactic of weaponizing non-state armed groups to secure interests abroad. It further demonstrates how state-level agendas can be linked to regional conflicts, as exemplified by the Chinese-backed Arakan Army attacking Indian workers and infrastructure to disrupt India's mega infrastructure projects. Both cases demonstrate indirect state intervention through the use of non-state actors. The US utilizes non-state actors, the NED, to indirectly engage in the Uyghur independence movement. The NED funding to the Uyghur organizations empowers them to actively conduct separatist movements, such as lobbying news media companies to internationalize the issue, generate victim narratives, form extensive human right coalitions, and legitimize their arguments. The case of Myanmar rebel groups shows more direct support. China's state-owned company, NORINCO, supplies weapons to these groups and assists

in establishing their weapon manufacturing facilities. This enables the rebels to conduct armed disputes along the borderline and disrupt India's infrastructure projects. Using non-state actors as proxy soldiers allows state actors to exploit the inherent ambiguity on the connections between the entities. The commonality between these cases is that states are engaging in these issues not solely due to human rights concerns, democracy promotion, or humanitarian aid, but primarily to protect their interests under their global agendas.

These case studies indicate that states are more likely to employ non-state actors in regions where state-level agendas intersect. In Xinjiang, China's Belt and Road Initiative aims to expand power westward, while the US pursues a neoconservative approach in the global east. In Myanmar, China's Belt and Road Initiative seeks to extend maritime power to the Indian Ocean, conflicting with India's Act East Policy, which aims to enhance connectivity in South and Southeast Asia. The collision of state-level agendas motivates state actors to weaponize non-state actors to secure their interests. This strategy minimizes the risk of conflict and direct state confrontation. By leveraging non-state actors, states can pursue their geopolitical objectives while maintaining plausible deniability and avoiding direct military engagement. These advantages allowed states to implement the idea of weaponization of non-state actors more extensively, fundamentally transforming the dynamic of conflict in the international system.

However, due to the secretive nature of proxy warfare, there were limitations in acquiring more sources. This suggests that the norm of state-level proxy intervention requires further study, including additional case studies, to classify more patterns. Lastly, it is worth noting that the weaponization of non-state actors and proxy warfare may be inevitable. As warfare has evolved from tribal-scale conflicts with rudimentary weapons to the current nuclear age where a single attack can threaten human habitability, proxy wars might serve as an alternative to large-scale conflicts, minimizing damage while still achieving strategic objectives.

HYBRID WARFARE AND CYBER THREATS

1

From Russia with Love: GRU's sabotage and subversion campaign in Europe

Nash TUCKER

Abstract: Since 1654, Russia has perfected the art of wetwork, having dedicated special security services, most famously the KGB, to subvert enemies of the state abroad. Today, Vladimir Putin continues in his forefather's footsteps through the deployment of unit 29155, a top-secret organization within Russia's Military Intelligence Directorate, or GRU, charged with assassination and sabotage against any and all threats on foreign soil. Since the unit's founding in 2008, these shadowy operatives have utilized explosives, poisons, and microwave weaponry to neutralize enemies abroad, with victims usually being rival intelligence operatives or defectors. However, not all operations have stayed in the dark, as poor tradecraft or intentionally overt activities have brought this unit to the attention of Western agencies and independent investigators. Today, Unit 29155 takes up the mantle from its KGB predecessors of flashing Russia's fangs to the world, with black operations sure to continue as long as the state exists.

Keywords: wetwork, assassination, sabotage, Russia, KGB

Introduction: History of Russian Wetwork

Russia has the most storied and infamous history of subverting enemies of the state abroad, with 'mokroye delo' or wetwork being part of the state's identity. Charting back to 1654 with the Secret Prikaz, Tsars and

Premiers alike have utilized shadowy forces to covertly or loudly stamp the Russo footprint abroad.[370] This was most evident during the reign of the USSR, with the Cheka, NKDV, and KGB operating with virtually unrestrained power over the life and death of any perceived enemy. Famous examples of these shadowy organizations in play include the assassination of Leon Trotsky with an ice pick in Mexico City and the murder of BBC journalist Georgi Markov, who was stabbed by an umbrella containing ricin in London. Additionally, security services under Stalin failed more than 25 assassination attempts on former Yugoslavian President Josef Tito, who in response sent the famed letter to Stalin remarking, "Stop sending people to kill me. We've already captured five of them, one of them with a bomb and another with a rifle… If you don't stop sending killers I'll send one to Moscow, and I won't have to send another."[371]

Today, the GRU, or Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, assumes this responsibility, dedicating Unit 29155 to "find, fix, and finish all in support of Vladimir Putin's imperial dreams."[372] Within the organization there is a subunit with no name, sometimes referred to as K2 or K200, which is responsible for all international operations. Around one hundred members make up the organization, with most being veterans of wars in Afghanistan and Chechnya. However, due to poor tradecraft and blatant overt activity, many of the unit's operatives have been 'disabled,' with the organization currently in a twilight period between two generations of assassins. Rumors around the organization say that current fighters in the Ukrainian war will accept the responsibility in addition to civilian recruits in an effort to avoid exposure through previously leaked databases.[373] It should also be noted that

---

[370] Daniel Tarschys, "Secret Institutions in Russian Government: A Note on Rosenfeldt's Knowledge and Power." *Soviet Studies* 37, no. 4 (1985): 525–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668138508411608.

[371] "The 13th Department: The KGB's Top-Secret Assassination Unit," Spyscape, n.d., https://spyscape.com/article/the-13th-directorate-the-kgbs-top-secret-1960s-assassination-unit.

[372] Roman Dobrokhotov, Christo Grozev, and Michael Weiss, "Unraveling Havana Syndrome: New Evidence Links the GRU's Assassination Unit 29155 to Mysterious Attacks on U.S. Officials and Their Families," *The Insider*, March 31, 2024, https://theins.ru/en/politics/270425.

[373] Simon Ostrovsky, "Unmasking GRU Unit 29155: Christo Grozev Explains How He Helped Expose the Russian Spies Creating Chaos in the West," *The Insider*, January 22, 2024, https://theins.ru/en/politics/268521.

Russia's internal security service, the FSB, has been outed by Bellingcat as being behind the 2019 murder of Zelimkhan Khangoshvili in Berlin, however it can be inferred that this is because the assassin, Vadim Krasikov, had been indicted for two previous contract killings and was on Interpol's Red Notice, inferring that the former FSB Spetsnaz operator was deployed in an effort to mask the state-sanctioned activity as a criminal affair.[374]

This paper seeks to unravel the enigma of Russia's foreign security service by identifying the methods used in its campaign of sabotage and subversion in Europe and understand why shadowy and morally questionable means deployed. It is hypothesized that these methods are used for two distinct reasons: to send a message to perceived adversaries and to cause internal instability in foreign nations to deter them from interfering in Russia's own affairs.

Specific Methods Used: Sabotage

Not all practices within the Russian dark arts deal in liquidation. Sometimes a message can be sent or work against an adversary deemed effective through non-lethal and indirect means. Beginning in 2014 in what is publicly known as the first operation by Unit 29155, was a series of explosions at EMCO warehouses in Bulgaria and Czechia. EMCO, which is headed by arms dealer Emilian Gebrev, supplied ammunition to Ukraine in 2014 during their conflict with Russia and was the only foreign company that specialized in manufacturing munitions compatible with their Soviet-era weaponry.[375] Blueprints show the operatives used car alarms as the detonator, which were chosen due to their ability to be easily procured abroad. These alarms were then hidden in WiFi routers and planted in Czechia in

---

[374] "'V' for 'Vympel': FSB's Secretive Department 'V' behind Assassination of Georgian Asylum Seeker in Germany," *Bellingcat*, February 17, 2020, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2020/02/17/v-like-vympel-fsbs-secretive-department-v-behind-assassination-of-zelimkhan-khangoshvili/.

[375] "How GRU Sabotage and Assassination Operations in Czechia and Bulgaria Sought to Undermine Ukraine," *Bellingcat*, April 26, 2021, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2021/04/26/how-gru-sabotage-and-assassination-operations-in-czechia-and-bulgaria-sought-to-undermine-ukraine/.

anticipation of their movement into Bulgaria. Once they reached their destination, operatives didn't need to be at the target location to detonate a bomb, but would simply set off the car alarm which would trigger an explosion that would trigger a larger explosion, effectively masking their involvement.[376]

Since 2014, four additional explosions have struck inventories of Gebrev, most recently in 2022 in what Gebrev says were shipments intended for Africa. Much speculation presides over whether these recent explosions have targeted arms actually intended for Ukraine following Russia's invasion in February after Gebrev emailed the New York Times acknowledging his company's involvement. Today, Gebrev has again pleaded that he has not sent any weapons to Ukraine since the Minsk agreements in 2014, leading to further speculation.[377] It should additionally be noted that Moscow shifted attacks away from arms to personnel, when a year later Gebrev and his son, the production manager of EMCO, were poisoned by a chemical agent that prosecutors classify as the infamous Novichok.[378] During this time, unit 29155 was still unknown to intelligence agencies and prosecutors, who then claimed that Gebrev's 'illness' was due to arugula poisoning, however, Gebrev firmly denied this conclusion saying, "I hate arugula! I never, I would never try it!."[379] Credit card transaction history in addition to flight, rental car, and hotel booking details (in which GRU operatives were found requesting a room with a view of the parking garage where Gebrev was poisoned) traced back to a small group of operatives who, as will be evident later, were complicit in other sabotage and assassination operations.[380] This is in addi-

---

[376] Ostrovsky, "Unmasking GRU Unit 29155: Christo Grozev Explains How He Helped Expose the Russian Spies Creating Chaos in the West."

[377] "Arms Dealer '100% Sure' Russian Agents behind Blast at Bulgarian Depot," *The Guardian*, August 1, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/arms-dealer-100-sure-russian-agents-blast-bulgarian-depot.

[378] "Post-Mortem of a Triple Poisoning: New Details Emerge in GRU's Failed Murder Attempts in Bulgaria," *Bellingcat*, September 4, 2020. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2020/09/04/gebrev-survives-poisonings-post-mortem/.

[379] Ostrovsky, "Unmasking GRU Unit 29155: Christo Grozev Explains How He Helped Expose the Russian Spies Creating Chaos in the West."

[380] "Post-Mortem of a Triple Poisoning: New Details Emerge in GRU's Failed Murder Attempts in Bulgaria."

tion to family wedding photos of the GRU commander, in which the same perpetrators were present, leading to the conclusion that the subunit K2 with unit 29155 is a close and tight-knitted group whose few members are present in a decades worth of operations abroad.[381] Due to the recent exposure of around 70 members of the group, it also makes sense why investigators determine that a new generation of assassins are currently being procured.

More recent operations that can be traced back to K2 is the anomaly of Havana Syndrome. Anomalous Health Incidents, or AHI as it is officially known, first got its nickname from the impairment of more than twenty State- Department and CIA officers in Havana, Cuba in 2016-17. The illness which is officially a mystery to the US government has impaired victims with chronic headaches, tinnitus, psychophysiological impairment, blinding, hearing loss, and a plethora of additional psychological and physical effects. Many victims are subject matter experts in Russian affairs or were moved to focus on the area after the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea. A DIA investigation concluded that the illness had affected the top 5% of their performing officers assigned to Russia. Additional victims include at least 5 CIA officers who worked out of the Kyiv Station (The CIA headquarters in Ukraine) and were tracked down and hit in postings in Uzbekistan, Vienna, London, and Vietnam. Marc Polymeropoulos, whose was the Chief of Operation for the agency's Europe and Eurasia Mission Center, was even hit while on an official liaison trip to Moscow to cooperate on counterterrorism efforts. Despite all these seemingly intentional attacks, the ODNI officially released a report saying it was "very unlikely" that AHIs were caused by a foreign adversary, leaving victims feeling betrayed by their nation. Such victims have spoken out and have two hypotheses to explain this conclusion. Firstly, releasing a report on gathered intelligence of the full extent of AHI may raise questions to the American public that Moscow has committed an act of war against the US, heightening tensions and demanding an exacting response. The next conclusion is that

---

[381] "Skripal Poisoner Attended GRU Commander Family Wedding," *Bellingcat*, October 14, 2019, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/10/14/averyanov-chepiga/.

acknowledging that these lifelong impairments are caused by a foreign adversary may deter potential recruits from joining intelligence services, especially those interested in Russian affairs.[382]

Sins of the Father

Despite the official findings by the US government, independent investigators have concluded differently. In one particular case, the wife of a U.S. embassy official named "Joy" was struck with AHI in Tbilisi, Georgia. While doing her laundry she was hit with "an acute ringing sound" that reminded her of what someone in the movies experiences after a bomb has gone off. She quickly checked the front door where she saw a black Mercedes parked directly across from her laundry room and a tall thin man. 3 years later she was shown a picture of Albert Averyanov, which caused a "visceral reaction" by Joy who said that he looked like the man across the street. Albert Averyanov is the son of Unit 29155 founder Andrey Averyanov. Andrey was the recipient of the blueprints for the bombs used in Czechia and Bulgaria (flight data also puts him in Czechia with Sergei Skripal's assassins as part of the advanced recon team) and is now Yevgeny Prigozhin's replacement for handling Russian foreign policy in Africa. 8 days before Joy was hit by the acute ringing, the father-son duo left Moscow for Tashkent, Uzbekistan. While Andrey turned his phone off upon leaving Moscow, Albert kept his on until he arrived in Tashkent. 36 minutes after their plan landed was another flight to Tbilisi, however, because both phones were off, metadata was not able to be tracked for the next 10 days. It is known though that upon the eve of their return flight from Tashkent to Moscow, Albert received a notification from his service provider Beeline welcoming him to Uzbekistan, which indicates that he had been out of the country and only reentered the day before his departure, only a day after Joy was hit.[383] The metadata procured in addition to Joy's identification of the "tall thin young man," which was abnormal in her upscale resident community,

---

[382] Dobrokhotov, Grozev, and Weiss,"Unraveling Havana Syndrome: New Evidence Links the GRU's Assassination Unit 29155 to Mysterious Attacks on U.S. Officials and Their Families."

[383] Ibid.

leads independent investigators to conclude that the AHI or Havana Syndrome that hit "Joy" was intentionally perpetrated by the Kremlin through members of GRU unit 29155. Deputy of unit 29155, Ivan Terentyev, a military scientist who was another operative staying in a hotel across from the EMCO warehouse, was given an award by the Kremlin for the "potential capabilities of non-lethal acoustic weapons in combat activities in urban settings." Lastly, as if Moscow was even trying to boast about their accomplishments, Secretary of Russia's Security Council and a former KGB officer Nikolai Patrushev wrote in the Russian SVR in-house magazine that "In recent years, hundreds of employees of foreign intelligence services, as well as other persons involved in organizing intelligence and subversive activities against our country and our strategic partners, have been identified and neutralized."[384]

Specific Methods Used: Assassination

From James Bond to Die Hard, what Russian spies are best known for is their accomplished work in extermination. Based on recent occurrences, one can conclude that life imitates art due to the handiwork of Unit 29155. The first known and most infamous operation, which exposed unit 29155's identity to authorities was the assassination attempt on Sergei Skripal.[385] Skripal was a former Russian military intelligence officer who became a double agent for Mi-6 during the 1990s and early 2000s. It is believed that in his 9 years of informing, Skripal exposed over 300 Russian agents thanks to his role as acting director of the GRU personnel department.[386] Skripal was caught and sentenced to 13 years in 2006 but was traded in

---

[384] Dobrokhotov, Grozev, and Weiss, "Unraveling Havana Syndrome: New Evidence Links the GRU's Assassination Unit 29155 to Mysterious Attacks on U.S. Officials and Their Families."

[385] Simon Ostrovsky, "Unmasking GRU Unit 29155: Christo Grozev Explains How He Helped Expose the Russian Spies Creating Chaos in the West." *The Insider,* January 22, 2024, https://theins.ru/en/politics/268521.

[386] Owen Matthews, "Has Vladimir Putin Lost Control of Russia's Assassins? The Kremlin may have ordered a hit on an ex-Russian spy in the U.K. But some point to a scarier prospect--that Moscow's death squads did it on their own," *Newsweek*, March 23, 2018, Gale Academic OneFile (accessed July 2, 2024). https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/apps/doc/A531258960/AONE?u=txshracd2598&sid=googleScholar&xid=2a8c3e5e.

2010 in a spy swap between Russia and the United States, where he contin-
ued to assist Western intelligence agencies on Russian spying techniques.
On March 4, 2018, Skripal and his daughter Yulia were found unconscious,
with foam coming out of Yulia's mouth, on a park bench in Salisbury,
England.[387] Investigations by Bellingcat and British authorities conclude
that Anatoly Chepiga and Alexander Mishkin, members of GRU unit 29155
who were present in the explosions in Bulgaria and Czechia, were perpe-
trators of the attack.[388] Mishkin and Chepiga sprayed the Russian chemical
nerve agent dubbed "Novichok" on Skripal's front door and a pub where he
frequented. The perfume bottle which contained the poison was dumped
in a container for donations for the needy where British citizen Charlie
Rowley found the bottle and gifted it to his partner Dawn Sturgess, who
died shortly after spraying the perfume on her wrists. Police officers who
investigated the crime scene also were admitted to the hospital despite
wearing a full protective suit.[389] According to the perpetrators, they were
touring Salisbury to visit the churches in the area. However, evidence links
the self-proclaimed Russian "tourists" to state security services. Chepiga
and Mishkin's passports were only 3 numbers separate from each other,
which would be highly coincidental if the documents were not intentional-
ly manufactured. Additionally, the passport of the two shows an ominous
"do not provide information stamp," which under Russian issuing authority
unit 770001, is exclusively used for state VIPs and intelligence officers. In an
interview with the Russian state-sponsored TV company RT, the pair claim
that they have been planning the trip for a while, however, the two booked
their flight to London the night before their departure and returned to
Moscow the same day as Skripal and his daughter were poisoned.[390]

---

[387] Zuzanna Brunka, Jan Ryl, Piotr Brushtulli, Daria Gromala, et al., "Selected Political Criminal Poisonings in the Years 1978–2020: Detection and Treatment," *Toxics* 10, no.8 (2022): 468, https://doi. org/10.3390/toxics10080468.

[388] "Skripal Suspects Confirmed as GRU Operatives: Prior European Operations Disclosed," *Bellingcat*, September 20, 2018, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/09/20/skripal-suspects-confirmed-gru-operatives-prior-european-operations-disclosed/.

[389] Brunka, Ryl, Brushtulli, Gromala, et al, "Selected Political Criminal Poisonings in the Years 1978–2020: Detection and Treatment."

[390] "Skripal Poisoning Suspect's Passport Data Shows Link to Security Services," Bellingcat, September 14, 2018, https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/09/14/skripal-poisoning-suspects-passport-data-shows-link-security-services/.

The final excerpt regarding assassination by Russian intelligence services comes from the recent death of Russian defector Maksim Kuzminov. Because of the recent nature of this operation, there is minimal confirmed open-source intelligence surrounding the attack, but rather, this case seeks to serve as a demonstration that Russia's hidden hand is still at work today. Maksim Kuzimov was a Russian helicopter pilot who, along with Ukraine's defense intelligence service HUR, orchestrated a plan to defect from Russia, bringing along with him his Mi-8 military helicopter and secret documents. On August 23, 2023, Kuzimov took off in his helicopter from an area in the Kursk region in Western Russia for what was supposed to be a routine cargo delivery to another base in country. Alongside him was technician Nikita Kiryanov and navigator Khushbakht Tursunov, who were unaware of Maksim's plans. Kuzimov turned off his radio communications and flew at an altitude of 20 feet to avoid radar detection, as he headed to a pre-arranged rendezvous point that he had agreed to with HUR. However, upon entering the airspace, Ukrainian soldiers fired at his helicopter seemingly unaware of Kuzimov's planned defection. Albeit shot in the leg, Kuzimov was able to safely land the helicopter and it became unaware at this point of what happened to the other passengers on board.[391] According to Russian State TV, who noted a medical examiner, Kuzimov shot and killed Kiryanov and Tursunov before landing the plane, as Russian officials claim that "otherwise they would have killed Kuzminov and could have escaped in that helicopter." Ukrainian officials have denied the conclusion, along with Maksim, who never explained how they died. The operation was hailed as a success by the HUR and Kuzimov went on a media tour across the country, denouncing Russia's invasion and encouraging others to follow in his footsteps. In October 2023, Ukraine paid Kuzminov $500,000 along with Ukrainian passports with a fake name and even offered him a position in their armed forces. However, the former pilot declined and drove to Villajoyosa, Spain, a small beach town off the coast of the Mediterranean.[392] Four months later on February 13, 2024, the Motherland seemingly

---

[391] Michael Schwirtz and Constant Méheut, "Russian Pilot Who Defected to Ukraine Is Believed Dead in Spain," *The New York Times*, February 20, 2024, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/world/europe/russian-pilot-maksim-kuzminov-spain.html.

[392] Schwirtz and Méheut, "Russian Pilot Who Defected to Ukraine Is Believed Dead in Spain."

settled old scores with their former pilot when Kuzimov's bullet-ridden body was found in the parking garage under his apartment. That morning a white Hyundai Tucson drove into the garage and parked between the exit and the elevator where residents entered. Around mid-afternoon, Kuzimov entered the parking garage, when two hooded figures called out his name and shot the defector six times. The killers then sped off, running over Maksim's body on the way out. The car was found a couple of miles away burned with what Spanish investigators identified as a rapid accelerant. Additionally, the amount of rounds used by the operatives became suspect to Villajoyosa police. Chief Pepe Alvarez claims that "It is not common here in Spain for someone to be shot with a lot of ammunition" and that "These are indications that point to organized crime, to a criminal organization, to professionals." Additionally, shell casings identified the bullets as 9-millimeter Makarov rounds, a signature delicacy of the former Soviet Bloc. Exactly how the assassins found him has not been established, however, two senior Ukrainian officials say that Kuzimov reached out to his ex-girlfriend, still in Russia, inviting her to Spain which was "a fatal mistake." Whether by Russian organized crime, which has established a well-known foothold in the region, or state-sponsored operatives, potentially from unit 29155, Spanish investigators conclude that all evidence points to the orchestration by the Kremlin, whose head of foreign intelligence stated: "This traitor and criminal became a moral corpse the moment he planned his dirty and terrible crime."[393]

Conclusion

From ice picks to acoustic weaponry, Russia continues its storied legacy of neutralizing enemies abroad. As evident in this paper, there is no sign of stopping, with future generations of assassins and armaments sure to wreak terror across the world. Regarding the paper's two hypotheses as to why draconian measures are used – sending a message to perceived adversaries and causing internal instability in foreign governments, it concludes that the former is true and the latter deterred by the affected governments.

---

[393] Ibid.

The blatant absence of sound tradecraft in Skripal's assassination attempt, the targeting of specifically Russian specialists with Havana Syndrome, and the (literal) overkill in the death of Maksim Kuzimov all point to Russian intelligence agencies wanting their wetwork to be acknowledged.

These operations demonstrate that the character of Motherland is synonymous with fear, who like many other authoritarian regimes, forgo any moral relevance in favor of deterrence and power projection. As to the second theory, that the use of 'mokroye delo' causes internal instability in governmental affairs and public perception, this paper asserts that in some cases, such as the explosions at EMCO warehouses, the plans of governments (in this case Ukraine) are indeed subverted in the short-term, however a lack of identification and response at the time can be attributed to the ignorance of intelligence services. In the case of Havana Syndrome, the ODNI's deliberate denial that AHIs are being caused by a foreign adversary counters any internal destabilization operations that Russia seeks to project. However, this decision also has downsides, as while the opinions of the public and potential recruits might be satisfied, those who are already affected with lifelong brain injuries feel neglected by the nation that they swore to defend.

A further conclusion drawn, is that not all of Russia's lapse in tradecraft and recent exposure should be classified as intentional. As Robert. J. Hanlon's famously stated, "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by stupidity." Many errors, such as all GRU illegals operating with passports mere numbers apart, have exposed future operations or those that brought unwanted attention to the Russian government. In addition, the Muscovite state is notoriously corrupt, having one of the most transparent databases in the world, which has worked against state interests for operations that they wish to keep secret. Therefore, while some bloodshed was struck with the Russian signature, not all the glory should be handed to a state that does not deserve it.

2

Hospitals in Jeopardy: Protecting Critical Infrastructure from Cyber Attack

Wyatt KRIEG

Abstract: This paper seeks to bring attention to the rise in cyber-attacks against hospitals, and the importance of protecting critical infrastructure from a social, logistical, and economic standpoint. The paper will conduct a case study on several past breaches such as the HCA Healthcare attack in 2023, the Regal Medical Group in 2022, and Change Healthcare in 2024. It will identify the severity of these breaches and how they were allowed to occur. The paper will then suggest potential solutions, cited by experts, on how hospitals can better protect themselves, and their patients, from future attacks. Finally, it will make the argument that cyber-attacks against hospitals are a form of hybrid warfare, further stressing the importance of finding a solution to a proven weakness in the United States' critical infrastructure.

Keywords: Hybrid Warfare, Critical Infrastructure, Ransomware, Cyber Security

Introduction

On July 10th, 2023 HCA Healthcare experienced a cyber attack that affected up to 11 million patients across 170 hospitals, marking it as one of the largest breaches against a hospital in history. Still, it is merely a part of a larger trend in the rise of cyber-attacks against medical industries worldwide. Recent history has shown a rise in hospital breaches, and

a clear lack of security measures being mobilized in response. Until better security measures can be implemented, it is reasonable to foresee a continued increase in hospital cyber attacks. This research paper aims to bring awareness to this security crisis and suggest possible defensive mechanisms. It will identify how attacks are conducted, and what hackers gain from accessing patient data. Several case studies of specific hospital cyber attacks will be discussed, backed with data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the HIPAA Journal. These case studies were specifically selected to highlight the strategies employed by hacking groups, their common origins, and the sheer significant scale of danger they possessed. They will also identify weaknesses and strengths of previous attacks, that will help hospitals better understand possible solutions.

This research paper will stress the importance of institutionalizing stronger network databases and executing offensive cyber attacks. Offense is sometimes the best defense, and contemporary cyber security measures have shown to be ineffective, as evident in the record high 357 and counting, cyber-attacks against the Healthcare industry in 2024.[394] Lastly, this paper will explain how attacks possess various social, geopolitical, and financial implications, and how hospitals can better defend themselves from this danger.

Cyberthreats to the Healthcare Sector

According to the World Health Organization, a cyber-attack is "an attempt to deliberately harm a person(s) or organization by attacking their digital systems (e.g. computers) to steal, tamper with, disrupt access to, or destroy the data or applications they consider confidential and dependent on." Hospitals are perfect targets for hackers that deploy ransomware, or parasitic software that infiltrates digital systems and encrypts key information.[395] Medical professionals need access to this data to treat their

---

[394] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, "U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – Office for Civil Rights," Hhs.gov, 2024, https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/breach/breach_report.jsf.

[395] "Cyber-Attacks on Critical Health Infrastructure," World Health Organization (WHO), accessed June 30, 2024, https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cyber-attacks-on-critical-health-infrastructure#:~:text=Cyber%2Dattack%20can%20have%20a.

patients and to operate their equipment, and therefore cannot wait for authorities to fix the problem for them. There is an inherent urgency to get the data back online as soon as possible. This is why hospitals are particularly targeted because of their high likelihood of paying the ransom the perpetrators demand in exchange for relinquishing the data they hold hostage.[396] The healthcare industry has the highest average first ransom demand than any other industry, with an average paid ransom of around $876,000.[397] All money that the hospital could be used to treat their patients and drive down medical bills. However, even if the hospital chooses to pay the ransom, no guarantee will solve the problem. According to Coveware, a cybersecurity company that handles ransomware attacks, victims who have paid ransoms will sometimes get re-extorted weeks later to release the same stolen data.[398] Hacking groups have also failed to keep their promises by publishing victim's personal information even after receiving the ransom or showing fake evidence of data deletion.[399] In some extreme cases, cyber-attacks that crippled the hospital's network for an extended amount of time, have directly resulted in patient deaths from the lack of proper medical attention.[400]

Ransomware is used against all forms of critical infrastructure in the US and has proven to be profitable. The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), a subdivision of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), states that out of 880,418 reports in 2023, 12.5 billion dollars was estimated to be lost due to ransomware and other cyber-attack strategies.[401] The FBI goes on

---

[396] Anson Antony, "Ransomware Attacks on Healthcare Systems: Case Studies and Mitigation Strategies," Research Gate, December 2023, www.researchgate.net/publication/376514138_Ransomware_Attacks_on_Healthcare_Systems_Case_Studies_and_Mitigation_Strategies.

[397] Ibid.

[398] Lucian Constantin, "REvil Ransomware Explained: A Widespread Extortion Operation," CSO Online, November 12, 2021, https://www.csoonline.com/article/570101/revil-ransomware-explained-a-widespread-extortion-operation.html.

[399] Ibid.

[400] Kate Wells, "Cyberattack Led to Harrowing Lapses at Ascension Hospitals, Clinicians Say," NPR, June 19, 2024, https://www.npr.org/2024/06/19/nx-s1-5010219/ascension-hospital-ransomware-attack-care-lapses.

[401] Timothy Langan, "Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Report 2023" (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2023).

to claim that out of the US' 16 critical infrastructure sectors, healthcare is the most vulnerable to ransomware attacks.

Fig. 15: Ransomware Against Critical Infrastructure
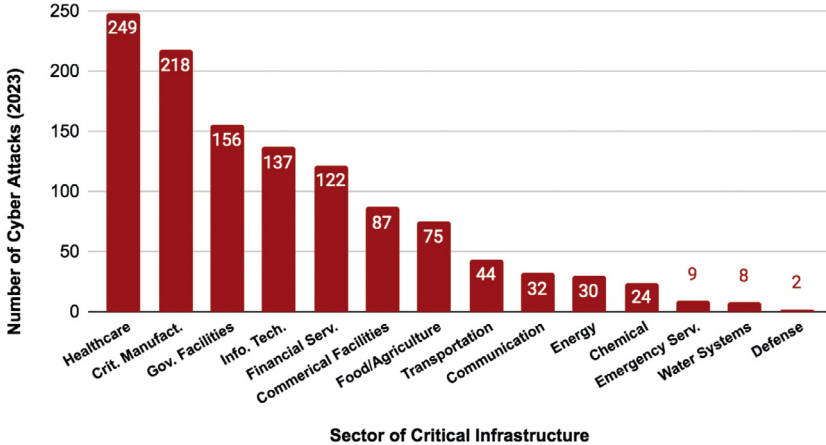
Source: FBI, 2023

One of the most common ways that hospitals get breached is through phishing, a social engineering strategy that attempts to trick hospital staff members into opening an email and clicking on a link that appears to be trustworthy. If the attachment or link is clicked on, the attacker gains access to the staff member's computer and can install ransomware into the rest of the hospital. In many cases, access to one hospital may also extend to others in the system as well.[402]

Once inside a hospital's network, there is a multitude of valuable information the intruder could attempt to steal, sell, or encrypt in exchange for a ransom. Patient identities such as name, birthday, social security number, medical history, home address, and Medicare numbers are all in jeopardy. Although less common in hospital attacks, financial/bank information can be stolen as well.

---

[402] Seema Verma, "America's Healthcare Networks Are under Attack," Healthcare Dive, May 13, 2024, https://www.healthcaredive.com/spons/americas-healthcare-networks-are-under-attack/715747/.

Criminals employ sophisticated measures to prevent authorities from tracing attacks back to themselves.[403] Hackers generally demand that ransoms be paid in cryptocurrency which is harder to link to an individual.[404] Statistics show that around 5% of hackers get caught, thus incenting them to continue their illegal behavior.[405] Even worse, US News reports that hacking groups can be traced to the US' biggest adversaries: Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.[406] This elevates the stakes of the issue. These attacks have the potential to be a part of larger geopolitical campaigns, in addition to being financial liabilities.

Other than patient data being exploited, American hospitals house the most advanced and expensive medical equipment, medicine, and vaccines, that can all be stolen, reproduced, and sold at the expense of the US economy. In addition, the sheer ability to cripple a hospital's functionality for an extended amount of time is reason in itself to severely sharpen cyber defenses, especially when these attacks are reportedly being sourced from the US's most hostile adversaries.[407] Since attacks are being funded and conducted by foreign governments, the US government must take a more active role in protecting its critical medical sector.

Case Study: Change Healthcare

The severity of cyber-attacks has proven to be exponential. In February 2024, the medical industry was shocked when Change Healthcare was hacked by the ALPV/BlackCat ransomware group. Against the FBI's advice,

---

[403] James MacKay, "How Do Hackers Normally Get Caught?," MetaCompliance, February 4, 2019, https://www.metacompliance.com/blog/phishing-and-ransomware/how-do-hackers-normally-get-caught.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid.

[406] Associated Press, "Cyberattacks on Hospitals Are Likely to Increase, Putting Lives at Risk, Experts Warn," U.S. News and World Report, February 14, 2024, https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2024-02-14/cyberattacks-on-hospitals-are-likely-to-increase-putting-lives-at-risk-experts-warn.

[407] John Riggi, "Ransomware Attacks on Hospitals Have Changed | Cybersecurity | Center | AHA," American Hospital Association, 2020, https://www.aha.org/center/cybersecurity-and-risk-advisory-services/ransomware-attacks-hospitals-have-changed.

the company decided to pay the $22,000,000 ransom to get their data back.[408] UnitedHealth Group, a parent company of Change Healthcare stated that the overall data breach will surmount to over 1 billion dollars in damages, marking the costliest attack in history.[409] ALPV/Blackcat stole 4 terabytes of patient personal data and insurance records and caused the shutdown of key hospital operations within their network. [410] According to the Chief Financial Officer of UnitedHealth Group, the cyber impacts estimated to the loss of "870 million, [where] about $595 million were direct costs due to the clearinghouse platform restoration and other response efforts, including medical expenses directly relating to the temporary suspension of some care management activities." [411] The attack on Change Healthcare is having a massive ripple effect. A survey conducted by the American Medical Association (AMA) interviewed practitioners who were victims of the attack. Responses included comments such as: "This cyberattack is leading me to bankruptcy, and I am just about out of cash." While others said that "This crippled our brand-new practice. I am keeping the lights on using personal funds."[412] For Change Healthcare, the harm did not stop there. The medical group was again attacked by an affiliate of ALPHV, RansomHub who attempted to collect a ransom as well, although it is unconfirmed whether or not it was successful. The Change Healthcare attack proves that hacking groups are growing in breaching capabilities and the audacity to demand massive ransoms. As long as attacks such as this one are allowed to go unpunished, there is little reason to believe that the healthcare industry won't continue to be heavily targeted.

---

[408] Andy Greenberg, "Hackers behind the Change Healthcare Ransomware Attack Just Received a $22 Million Payment," Wired, March 4, 2024, https://www.wired.com/story/alphv-change-health-care-ransomware-payment/.

[409] Jonathon Reed, "Change Healthcare Attack Expected to Exceed $1 Billion in Costs," Security Intelligence, May 8, 2024, https://securityintelligence.com/news/change-healthcare-cyberattack-exceeds-1-billion-costs/.

[410] Ibid.

[411] Ibid.

[412] Ibid.

Case Study: Regal Medical Group

In December of 2022, Regal Medical Group fell victim to a cyber-attack that resulted in the theft of protected health information (PHI) of up to 3 million patients. Regal reported that information such as "names, addresses, birth dates, phone numbers, Social Security numbers, diagnosis and treatment information, health plan member numbers, laboratory test results, prescription details, and radiology reports" were stolen. Regal never revealed whether it was given a ransom, but did say it collaborated with outside cybersecurity vendors to get the systems back online.[413] This was most likely done through the use of an information backup system to retrieve previously made copies of the encrypted patient data.[414] The use of a data backup system is integral to getting the hospital's operationality as soon as the attack occurs. Instead of a paying a large ransom to get the information back, hospitals need to invest in a real-time data backup system that constantly updates with patient information.

Case Study: HCA Healthcare

As referenced in the introduction, HCA Healthcare experienced a massive cyber-attack in 2023.[415]Although HCA Healthcare was attacked, their response once the breach was detected saved the operation of their hospitals and prevented more sensitive patient data from being stolen. As soon as the attack started, HCA Healthcare's cyber security measures were activated by severing their connection to the Private Healthcare

---

[413] Steve Alder, "Multiple Lawsuits Filed against Regal Medical Group over 3.3 Million-Record Ransomware Attack," HIPAA Journal, February 23, 2023, https://www.hipaajournal.com/multiple-lawsuits-regal-medical-group-ransomware/.

[414] Ionut Arghire, "3.3 Million Impacted by Ransomware Attack at California Healthcare Provider," SecurityWeek, February 13, 2023, https://www.securityweek.com/3-3-million-impacted-by-ransomware-attack-at-california-healthcare-provider/.

[415] Arctic Wolf, "Biggest Healthcare Industry Cyberattacks," Arctic Wolf, June 16, 2021, https://arcticwolf.com/resources/blog/top-healthcare-industry-cyberattacks/.

Information Network (PHIN), a UK-based patient database center.[416] HCA then proceeded to notify the police, and outside cybersecurity and digital forensics specialists.[417] To this day, HCA claims that information such as social security numbers, financial information, and clinical information were not stolen.[418] However, legal names, dates of birth, email addresses, phone numbers, and next appointment dates were.[419] Although the attack was allowed to occur, HCA Healthcare's ability to stop the breach from spreading between the hospital network and stored patient data should be incorporated in a hospital's refined cyber security protocol to prevent future breaches from obtaining sensitive patient data.

Hybrid Warfare

So who exactly is behind these cyber attacks on the US healthcare system? Tracing cyber criminals is a very difficult task, however, significant evidence has been found that the hacking group BlackCat, who was behind the ChangeHealthcare breach, is made up of former members of the Russian cybercriminal hacking group DarkSide/BlackMatter.[420] In addition, BlackBasta and REvil, two of the largest ransomware hacking groups, also allegedly operate out of Russia.[421] There have also been reports of large

---

[416] Anson Antony, "Ransomware Attacks on Healthcare Systems: Case Studies and Mitigation Strategies," Research Gate, December 2023, www.researchgate.net/publication/376514138_Ransomware_Attacks_on_Healthcare_Systems_Case_Studies_and_Mitigation_Strategies.

[417] Anson Antony, "Ransomware Attacks on Healthcare Systems: Case Studies and Mitigation Strategies," Research Gate, December 2023, www.researchgate.net/publication/376514138_Ransomware_Attacks_on_Healthcare_Systems_Case_Studies_and_Mitigation_Strategies.

[418] Steve Alder, "Multiple Lawsuits Filed against Regal Medical Group over 3.3 Million-Record Ransomware Attack," HIPAA Journal, February 23, 2023, https://www.hipaajournal.com/multiple-lawsuits-regal-medical-group-ransomware/.

[419] Ibid.

[420] Bill Whitaker et al., "Criminal Exploits of Scattered Spider Earn Respect of Russian Ransomware Hackers – CBS News," www.cbsnews.com, April 14, 2024, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/scattered-spider-blackcat-hackers-ransomware-team-up-60-minutes/.

[421] Elliptic Research, "Black Basta Ransomware Victims Have Paid over $100 Million," www.elliptic.co, November 29, 2023, https://www.elliptic.co/blog/black-basta-ransomware-victims-have-paid-over-100-million#:~:text=Joint%20research%20by%20Elliptic%20and.

ransomware groups from Iran, China, and North Korea as well.[422] Since these hacking groups originate from the US' biggest adversaries, and largely only attack members of Five Eyes, one can argue there is a geopolitical motive in these attacks as well.[423] [424] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) classifies hybrid warfare as attacks that intend to disrupt another state's economy either through a combination of military and non-military and/or cyber.[425] It is exceedingly difficult to trace a cyber-attack to an individual, and even more so to a foreign government. However, in this instance, the fact that these attacks are repetitive, target American critical infrastructure, and are sourced from dangerous peer adversaries, suggests that one could reasonably consider the rise in cyber-attacks against the US as a form of hybrid warfare.

It is also important to note that breaches against a hospital allow saboteurs to test and condition hospital security measures. This enables groups to assess and identify weaknesses for future exploitation. As a geopolitical tool, these groups have the potential to launch large, coordinated assaults on US infrastructure to obtain favorable international concessions as they see fit.

Alongside financial and political damage, it is imperative to recognize the social consequences of cyber-attacks against the medical industry. Hospitals are supposed to represent safe and secure establishments in society that can be trusted to serve and protect their people's medical needs. The ability to thwart the safety of hospitals through these attacks diminishes the social trust that society can place in its medical institutions. It also puts an immense amount of stress upon the hospital workers who

---

[422] John Riggi, "Ransomware Attacks on Hospitals Have Changed | Cybersecurity | Center | AHA," American Hospital Association, 2020, https://www.aha.org/center/cybersecurity-and-risk-advisory-services/ransomware-attacks-hospitals-have-changed.

[423] Seema Verma, "America's Healthcare Networks Are under Attack," Healthcare Dive, May 13, 2024, https://www.healthcaredive.com/spons/americas-healthcare-networks-are-under-attack/715747/.

[424] Lucian Constantin, "REvil Ransomware Explained: A Widespread Extortion Operation," CSO Online, November 12, 2021, https://www.csoonline.com/article/570101/revil-ransomware-explained-a-widespread-extortion-operation.html.

[425] NATO, "NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats," NATO, May 7, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm#:~:text=Hybrid%20threats%20combine%20military%20and.

have to adapt to long stints of downed networks, and on patients who have to wait for medical procedures that might be time-sensitive and life-threatening.[426]

Lessons Learned

Looking upon the HCA Healthcare case study, there is significant evidence that hospitals should adopt a 'kill switch' mechanism between their computers and their central data storage network. A successful phishing attack targets an individual staff member's computer and works its way into the rest of the network. A kill switch could sever the connection between the staff member's computer, thus attempting to prevent the breach before it can spread. For this to be feasible, hospitals would also need real-time monitoring. Continuous surveillance of system behavior and network traffic to provide early detection of ransomware attacks. It would also require the hospital to repetitively backup data to a separate secure network that it could reference in the event of an attack.

Another possible solution is to decentralize and compartmentalize individual hospital networks. A lot of the time a breach against a single computer can spread across dozens of other hospitals because they all operate on the same system. Although this makes sharing patient data harder between healthcare professionals, it is simply not worth the abundantly evident risk to cyber security. If each hospital had its own network that all shared the ability to transfer data in a secure and encrypted manner, this could minimize the cost and scale of the breach, and therefore the intruder's leverage. Finally, the most important solution is to better educate hospital staff on the dangers of phishing attacks. Phishing is the number one way that hospitals are breached, therefore the first line of defense is a vigilant workforce.

Cyber security measures should go beyond the hospital's capabilities. Further assistance from the government is also necessary. Under US law,

---

426   Hailey Mensik, "Healthcare Cyberattacks Led to Worse Patient Care, Increased Mortality, Study Finds," Healthcare Dive, September 8, 2022, https://www.healthcaredive.com/news/cyberattacks-hospitals-disrupt-operations-patient-care-Ponemon/631439/.

the government can execute USC Title 10, 31, and 50 to combat against hacking groups.[427] Title 31 enforces economic sanctions upon foreign entities that have conducted cyber-attacks against the US. Titles 10 and 50 authorize the mobilization of the military and the intelligence community to combat against cyber threats.[428] These three laws allow the United States to play offense against cyber criminals. A strong offense, or preemptive strike, enables the US to establish deterrence against these groups. The United States must make it clear that punishment will be administered if cyber-attacks against American critical infrastructure are pursued. Hospitals cannot be a low-risk, high-reward target or it will only motivate cyber criminals to continue their behavior.

Conclusion

In the past four years, the United States has seen its healthcare sector fall under attack from foreign cyber-threats. Billions of dollars in damage, increasingly larger ransoms, and more frequent breaches have put America's critical infrastructure in jeopardy. 2024 has already seen several large cyber-attacks like Ascension and Change Healthcare, and more attacks are highly probable. It is very likely the US will endure at least one more large-scale cyber-attack against its healthcare industry before the year is over. Nevertheless, the United States must not be discouraged. The US still possesses the most sophisticated military and intelligence community in the world, which has the authorization and capabilities to bring these cyber-criminals to justice. In the meantime, it is imperative that hospitals and other medical practices better protect themselves with backup databases, real-time continuous server monitoring, and a decentralized network with killswitch technology.

---

[427] John Riggi, "Ransomware Attacks on Hospitals Have Changed | Cybersecurity | Center | AHA," American Hospital Association, 2020, https://www.aha.org/center/cybersecurity-and-risk-advisory-services/ransomware-attacks-hospitals-have-changed.

[428] Ibid.

The Hidden Hand: Russia's Active Measures and Their Impact on the Political Polarization in the U.S.

Maximilian IVCHENKO

Abstract: This paper aims to illustrate the influence of Russian covert cyber-operations, specifically surrounding disinformation societal division, and the increasing political polarization in the United States. Particular attention is paid to the 2016 and 2020 election cycles and the level of manipulation and efficacy Russia had on voters from the 2016 and 2020 election cycles through social media manipulation through platforms such as Twitter (X), TikTok, and Facebook (Meta). This paper draws attention to the cracks in American solidarity and susceptibility to mass media manipulation due to low digital literacy rates and already existing tensions between conservative and liberal political ideologies. The paper concludes by providing policy proposals that would enable not only policymakers but also corporations to counter Russian interference.

Keywords: Russian disinformation, U.S. 2016 election, U.S. 2020 election, Cyber Warfare, political polarization, digital literacy

Introduction

The 2016 and 2020 elections represent tumultuous events in American history and have raised questions and concerns about U.S. election integrity, foreign policy, and national security. This paper examines how Russia succeeded in carrying out covert operations in the U.S., specifically through

disinformation and hybrid warfare to intentionally propagate misleading information released by the Russian state or Russian state-backed actors to sway American public opinion. Through cyber warfare, this paper demonstrates how Russia contributed to political polarization

in the 2016 and 2020 U.S. presidential elections. This paper also identifies Russia's patterns in disseminating propaganda and disinformation and explains how they correlate with periods of increased political polarization and social unrest in the United States.

To understand how Russia succeeded in tampering with the U.S. elections in 2016 and 2020, this paper scrutinizes a variety of sources ranging from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence reports[429] to Russian independent media[430] to enable readers to understand the full extent to which Russian Active Measures have influenced the 2016 and 2020 U.S. elections. As acknowledged by the U.S. Intelligence Community, for example, the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency (IRA) "Used targeted advertisements, intentionally falsified news articles, self-generated content, and social media platform tools to interact with and attempt to deceive tens of millions of social media users in the United States", especially when it came to exacerbating racial tensions and the overwhelming targeting of African Americans.[431] Later, in the 2020 U.S. elections, the intelligence community[432] confirmed that Russia again strategically used major social

---

[429] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views," 116th Congress, 1st Session, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf.

[430] "Financial Times: западные страны в поисках ответа на серию российских диверсий обращаются к тактике борьбы с КГБ."(Western countries, in search of a response to a series of Russian sabotage, are turning to tactics to combat the KGB) n.d. Meduza. Accessed June 18, 2024. https://meduza.io/news/2024/06/04/financial-times-zapadnye-strany-v-poiskah-otveta-na-seriyu-rossiyskih-diversiy obraschayutsya-k-taktike-borby-s-kgb.

[431] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views," 116th Congress, 1st Session, https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf.

[432] Ibid.

media platforms such as Twitter (X), Tik Tok, and Facebook to 'bait' users and expose them to disinformation.[433]

Additionally, this paper examines how the U.S. has responded to Russia's meddling, arguing that it is using soviet era tactics. This paper maintains this is in part because Russia's disinformation campaign tactics are not new, but rather decades old. To illustrate this, this paper refers to previous historical examples, such as Russian disinformation campaigns in Ukraine,[434] to further development of social media.

The paper draws to a close with a discussion about the susceptibility of Americans to Russia's mass media manipulation. In particular, the paper points out how Russia exploits low levels of digital literacy rates and already existing tensions between conservative and liberal political ideologies. Then the paper concludes by providing policy proposals to enable not only policymakers but also corporations to counter Russian interference.

2016 Election

The 2016 election remains one of the turning points in American history. This is both because of a revolutionized way of campaigning and advertising and a sharp political divide and radicalization within the political parties among the American people. However, this paper asserts that it was the Russian intelligence agency in particular that gave Donal Trump and his 2016 presidential campaign a leading edge, by enabling him to gain extensive coverage by independent media sources to the point where his opponent Hillary Clinton had to spend nearly ten times more on advertising.[435] As demonstrated in the Figure 16, there has been a slow and steady

---

[433] Ben Smith. 2021. "How TikTok Reads Your Mind." *The New York Times*, December 5, 2021, sec. Business. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/business/media/tiktok-algorithm.html.

[434] "Fog of Falsehood," FIIA – Finnish Institute of International Affairs, May 10, 2016, https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/fog-of-falsehood.

[435] Jake, Miller. 2016. "2016 by the Numbers: Hillary Clinton Dwarfs Donald Trump in TV Ad Spending – CBS News." www.cbsnews.com. August 24, 2016. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2016-election-numbers-hillary-clinton-donald-trump-tv-advertisement-spending/.

rise of political polarization – both the general public and the politically active voters. However, it is apparent that there has been a stark following the 2016 election.[436]

Figure 16: The Steady Rise of American Political Polarization, 1994-2017
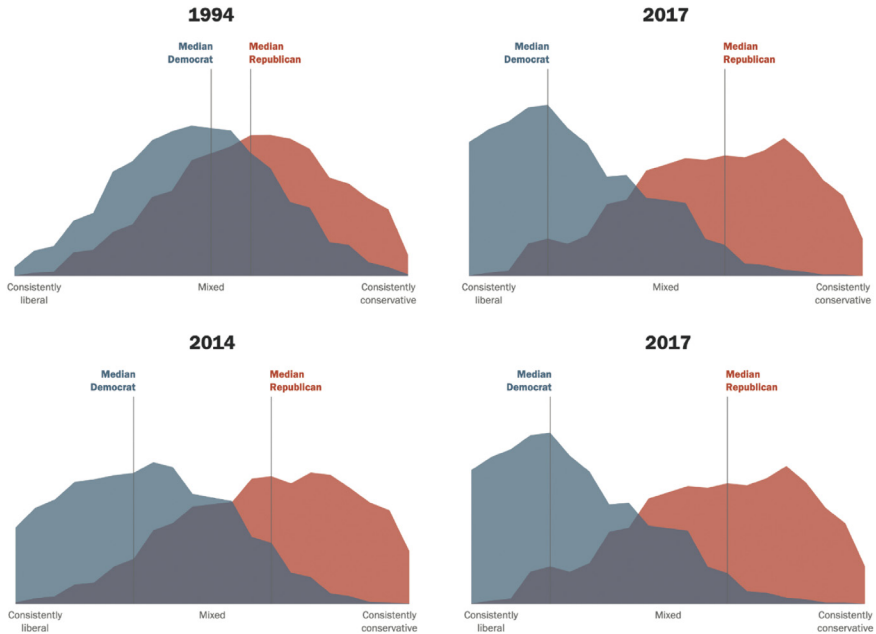
Source: Reprinted from"The Shift in the American Public's Political Values," Pew Research Center, October 20, 2017. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/feature/political-polarization-1994-2017/.

This paper maintains political polarization was fueled and amplified in the 2016 and 2020 U.S. elections with the introduction and massive popularity of social media platforms Twitter, Tik Tok, and Facebook, which had little to no control or moderation when it came to discerning free speech. Through the use of these social media platforms, disinformation campaigns were used to sway, divide, and radicalize American voters. Social media platforms such as Facebook served as a host for the disinformation campaigns,

---

[436] "The Shift in the American Public's Political Values." 2017. Pew Research Center. October 20, 2017. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/feature/political-polarization-1994-2017/.

where algorithms were developed to surround users with their preferred content and in some cases confirmed their political beliefs rather than challenging them. Once users interacted with posts from a disinformation campaign account, their feed will be flooded with similar content. To illustrate one example, the New York Times described how a fraudulent social media account claiming to represent conservative ideology was in fact a Russian Disinformation Operation.[437] As shown in Figure 17, fraudulent social media accounts such as these generated thousands of likes from conservative voters, often radicalizing and misleading them.

Figure 17: Example of Russian disinformation account post on popular social media platform Facebook

Source: Alicia Parlapiano and Jasmine C. Lee, "The Propaganda Tools Used by Russians to Influence the 2016 Election," February 17, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/16/us/politics/russia-propaganda--election-2016.html.

To understand how Russia succeeded in spreading disinformation on social media, a Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report shares how, [I]n 2015, the Russia Internet Research Agency (IRA) had an estimated 400 employees who worked 12-hour shifts, divided between numerous departments, filling nearly 40 rooms. The trolls would create content on nearly

---

[437] Alicia Parlapiano and Jasmine C. Lee. "The Propaganda Tools Used by Russians to Influence the 2016 Election," *New York Times*, February 17, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/16/us/politics/russia-propaganda-election-2016.html.

every social media network including LiveJournal, VKontakte (a Russia-based social media platform modeled after Facebook), Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.[438]

Russian intelligence services' disinformation campaign not only succeeded in swaying voter support for Donald Trump in the 2016 election but also in propelling an ideological divide of the American people across the political spectrum. This paper illustrates the idea that the disinformation campaign did not just polarize conservative and liberal moderates, but also radicalized the already existing conservatives/liberals (republicans/democrats). It is also important to note that low digital literacy rates significantly contributed to Russia's disinformation success.

2020 Election

After evidence of Russia's involvement and meddling in the 2016 elections emerged, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence (SSCI) took swift action to investigate and determine the perpetrator of disinformation. As a result, U.S. authorities sought to find ways to moderate social media for disinformation without limiting free speech on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.[439] Nevertheless, Russia's disinformation campaign served its purpose in sowing distrust and radicalizing conservatives and liberals since the 2016 election cycle while also generally widening the ideological divide between the two political parties.

After exposing Russia's involvement, the 2020 elections had some of the highest voter turnout in the history of the United States.[440] Although

---

[438] Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views," 116th Congress, 1st Session. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf.

[439] Pew Research Center, "The Shift in the American Public's Political Values, " October 20, 2017. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/feature/political-polarization-1994-2017/.

[440] Jacob Fabina, "Record High Turnout in 2020 General Election." The United States Census Bureau. April 29, 2021. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/record-high-turnout-in-2020-general-election.html.

Russia no longer sought to interfere in the U.S. election infrastructure directly, it still sought to sway voter opinions towards support for Donald Trump. This is further confirmed by a declassified U.S. Intelligence Report published by the New York Times:

Russian President Putin authorized, and a range of Russian government organizations conducted, influence operations aimed at denigrating President Biden's candidacy and the Democratic Party, supporting former President Trump, undermining public confidence in the electoral process, and exacerbating sociopolitical divisions in the US. Unlike in 2016, we did not see persistent Russian interference to gain access to election infrastructure.[441]

This intelligence report illustrates and confirms the idea the Russian government still actively monitors campaigns in countries of interest such as in the case of Ukraine. The underlying goal is to divide the people of the targeted state and let its citizens fight each other rather than give them a reason to unite by fighting against the targeted state. The results of this can be demonstrated by looking at Ukrainian modern history with the Euromaidan protests in 2014 and even the Orange Revolution. The only difference is that the Ukrainian people saw Russia's attempts to sway the Ukrainian government into supporting Russia.[442]

In the case of Ukraine, a similar strategy was employed and Russia succeeded in annexing Crimea in 2014 with relative ease. However, citizens and the government of Ukraine did not passively wait for Russia's further entanglements with its disinformation campaigns and propaganda. Within four years, Ukraine developed a modern army that has successfully countered the Russian military offensive since 2022.

As this section has sought to illustrate, Russian disinformation campaigns/ active measures not only succeeded in polarizing U.S. voters, but has also had varied success in other states—outlining the fact that the main reasons

---

[441] Greg Myre, "Intelligence Report: Russia Tried to Help Trump in 2020 Election." NPR, March 16, 2021. https://www.npr.org/2021/03/16/977958302/intelligence-report-russia-tried-to-help-trump-in-2020-election.

[442] Cathy Young, "What Really Happened in Ukraine in 2014—and Since Then," *The Bulwark* (blog), April 13, 2022, https://www.thebulwark.com/p/what-really-happened-in-ukraine-in-2014-and-since-then.

for the political polarization are due to the cyber disinformation campaigns by both the Russian state and Russian state-backed actors. Additionally, another important factor to consider when analyzing the success/failure of these campaigns is the idea of believing Russian disinformation, in other words, the rates of digital literacy, and their age/generational patterns about the general age of the voter population.

Media Literacy Rates and Social Media Manipulation Campaigns

The immense success of Russian disinformation campaigns and covert operations is in part due to the widespread acceptance of the notion of free speech in the United States Constitution, including that posted on the internet and social media. The U.S. government prides itself in free speech and its nearly limitless possibilities in terms of capitalism and the American dream. When it comes to the telecommunications industry, there are limited regulations when it comes to social media and the spread of stories and news.[443] Reputable media outlets need to not only ensure their sources and reporting are based on fact but also that what they publish is not a threat national security.

This paper maintains Russia succeeded not only because of its strategic disinformation, manipulation, and cyber skills of Russian state/state-backed actors, but also because of the nearly non-existent social media literacy and moderation rates in the U.S. This is especially the case with older generations, who are statistically more likely to vote[444] but at the same time are the most technologically inept and thereby more susceptible to Russian propaganda. Nevertheless, the problem of digital media literacy is a colossal problem across all generations not just the technologically challenged.

---

[443] Federal Communications Commission, "Telecommunications Act of 1996," Last updated June 20, 2013. https://www.fcc.gov/general/telecommunications-act-1996.

[444] John Gramlich, "What the 2020 Electorate Looks like by Party, Race and Ethnicity, Age, Education and Religion." Pew Research Center, October 26, 2020. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/.

With the widespread use of social media platforms across all generations, Russia no longer has to focus on meddling with the U.S. election's infrastructure integrity as it did in the 2016 election. Through the use of social media posts, Russia is able to paint false narratives from conservatives and/or liberals, and in some cases radicalize both idealogues. Russian Covert Operations have played a pivotal role in polarizing the American voter population in the 2016 and 2020 elections. As this paper has discussed, Russia's strategies have undergone significant changes to combat scrutiny from conscientious Americans who see through the smoke of Russian Covert operations by strategically targeting platforms utilized by older generations (Facebook) who are more prone to their (Russia's) disinformation campaigns.

Policy Recommendations

To mitigate the effects of Russian propaganda and misinformation and restore American solidarity, this paper first suggests the United States government and its citizens tackle the problem of disinformation head-on by enhancing digital literacy. This can be done, for example, by implementing comprehensive digital literacy programs, particularly targeting older generations like "The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens" the E.U. has.[445] This in turn will significantly reduce citizens' vulnerability to online disinformation. These programs should focus on critical thinking skills, fact-checking techniques, and understanding the mechanics of social media algorithms.

Secondly, the U.S. government needs to strengthen social media regulation while respecting freedom of speech. There is a need for more robust content moderation policies on social media platforms. This could involve developing more sophisticated AI tools to detect and flag potential disinformation, as well as increasing transparency in political advertising.

---

[445]   Hasan Tinmaz, Yoo-Taek Lee, Mina Fanea-Ivanovici, et al., "A systematic review on digital literacy," *Smart Learning Environments* 9, no. 21 (June 2022). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-022-00204-y.

A third more difficult option would be to foster bipartisan cooperation on cybersecurity similar to intelligence/national security by encouraging cross-party collaboration on issues of national cybersecurity to help create a united front against foreign interference.

Finally, the U.S. government needs to invest in counter-disinformation capabilities by requiring companies to develop and fund joint private/government specialized units dedicated to identifying and countering foreign disinformation campaigns to provide a proactive defense against future interference attempts.

Conclusion

This paper set out to examine how Russian Active Measures, specifically disinformation and cyber warfare, have contributed to political polarization in the United States since the 2016 presidential election. Additionally, it aimed to expose the effects of the dissemination of Russian propaganda and misinformation on the American public, and how these patterns correlate with periods of increased political polarization and social unrest in the United States. Through an analysis of various sources, including government reports, and media articles, this research demonstrated that Russian Active Measures have indeed played a significant role in exacerbating political tensions within the United States. The methodology employed in this research involved a thorough examination of key documents, such as the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence's report on Russia's involvement in the 2016 elections, as well as a comparative analysis with at least one historical example of Russian disinformation campaigns in another country, notably in Ukraine. This approach allowed for the exposure of Russian Active Measures designed to meddle with the integrity of elections in Western democracies, revealing a strategic and adaptable methodology aimed at exploiting existing societal tensions and weaknesses in digital literacy.

The findings of my research indicate that Russian interference has been a key factor in the intensification of political polarization in the United States. A crucial aspect of the success of these campaigns was the

exploitation of low digital literacy rates, particularly among older generations who are statistically more likely to vote. The algorithms employed by social media platforms, which tend to create echo chambers of like-minded content, further amplified the effect of these disinformation efforts. The combination of factors created a perfect storm for the rapid spread of divisive narratives and the radicalization of political ideologues on both ends of the spectrum. This research also revealed a notable shift in Russian tactics between the 2016 and 2020 elections. While the 2016 campaign involved more overt attempts to influence election infrastructure, the 2020 efforts focused more on exacerbating existing societal divisions as a result of the 2016 Russian Active Measures/disinformation campaign(s) and undermining public confidence in the electoral process. This evolution in tactics demonstrates the adaptability and long-term strategic thinking behind Russian Active Measures.

To adequately address these challenges, a diverse strategy is needed, one incorporating government action, corporate sector cooperation, and individual accountability as geopolitical tensions remain and technology continues to grow. The United States should strive toward lessening the effects of these polarizing factors and bolstering its democratic institutions by putting the suggested remedies into practice and remaining vigilant against foreign meddling in election integrity and American solidarity. Future research remains extremely important and necessary in examining how disinformation campaigns have been used in other countries. Because it will help maintain election integrity and democracy across the world. More research is also needed to identify ways to prevent the swaying of public opinion and false narratives without limiting free speech and the free market.

PART 4

RADICALIZATION AND SOCIETAL SECURITY

1

Reimagining Resilience: An Approach to Deradicalization and Reintegration of Western Balkan Foreign Fighters

Barbara UZUN

Abstract: This paper examines the challenge of returning foreign fighters in the Western Balkans and proposes methods for de-radicalization and reintegration. Drawing on several theoretical frameworks, including social movement theory, identity fusion theory, strain theory, and social network theory, this paper analyzes several factors contributing to radicalization in the region. Such factors include historical conflicts, identity crises, socioeconomic challenges, digital radicalization, and foreign religious influences. The paper argues for a shift from punitive approaches to holistic, proactive strategies that address root causes of extremism. Proposed strategies include improved governance, economic empowerment, psychological support, and education initiatives. The study also considers potential challenges in implementation and the need for international support. By addressing underlying societal issues and building community resilience, the Western Balkans can transform this security challenge into an opportunity for positive change and serve as a model for other post-conflict regions facing similar issues.

Keywords: foreign fighters, deradicalization, Western Balkans, reintegration, post-conflict societies

Introduction

The Western Balkans have struggled with the return of foreign fighters from conflicts in Syria and Iraq for most of the 21st century. This phenomenon has the potential to destabilize an already shaky landscape, deeply rooted in the region's history of ethnic conflict and political instability. As Western Balkan nations, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, and Serbia, deal with returning radicalized citizens, there is a pressing need for effective de-radicalization and reintegration efforts.

Around 1,070 citizens of the Western Balkans traveled to Syria and Iraq to join extremist groups between 2012 and 2015. This is one of the highest rates of foreign fighters in Europe, highlighting how vulnerable the region is to extremist ideologies and radicalization. Around 485 children and adults have either voluntarily returned to the Western Balkans in the last several years. The outsized prevalence of returnee foreign fighters presents a slew of legal, social, and security challenges for the region, increasing the importance of an effective and nuanced response.

Returnee foreign fighters are not a monolith – some are traditional fighters; others, disenfranchised people seeking a savior. Many still are children born in conflict zones, brought by their parents with little say in the matter. Each category requires careful study and a personalized approach to rehabilitation and reintegration. The impact of returnees extends beyond immediate security concerns, affecting social dynamics, community cohesion, and the region's efforts at post-conflict reconciliation.

This is a vital effort for all of Europe, not solely the Western Balkans. The Western Balkans are in close proximity to the European Union (EU), and aspire to European integration. This makes handling such an issue particularly critical for Europe's regional security and stability. The strategies developed in this region could be utilized in many other regions facing similar challenges, including Central Asia, North Africa, and parts of Western Europe.

To address and mitigate the underlying causes of radicalization, this paper argues that the Western Balkans must shift from a reactive and punitive

approach to a more proactive and rehabilitative one. First, this paper will explore several theoretical frameworks to better understand radicalization in post-conflict societies. Then, it will evaluate the leading causes of radicalization in the Western Balkans. Finally, the paper will propose and argue for strategies to deradicalize and reintegrate returnee foreign fighters. In order to do so, the paper will argue that it is necessary to rebuild trust in government structures, foster economic resilience, and develop psychosocial support systems. If it is able to achieve these goals, the Western Balkans can do more than mitigate the risks posed by returnee foreign fighters – they can prevent future waves of extremism.

Theoretical Frameworks: Understanding Radicalization in Post-Conflict Societies

This paper employs several theoretical frameworks to contextualize factors of radicalization in the Western Balkans. Each one offers a unique perspective regarding the complex rise of extremism in nations afflicted with conflict.

A. Social Movement Theory

Social movement theory, applied in the context of radicalization, helps explain how grievances, resources, and political opportunities interact to facilitate extremist mobilization in the Balkans. This theory effectively showcases how the perceived marginalization of Muslim groups, and the exploitation of such grievances by extremist groups contributes to radicalization. For example, in Kosovo, perceived international abandonment and failed EU integration efforts have been used to foster anti-Western beliefs and recruit foreign fighters. The theory also shows the effectiveness of counter-narratives in preventing radicalization. Grassroots movements in Bosnia and Herzegovina focused on youth, for example, offer alternatives for socialization and identity formation.

However, this theory is limited by its oversimplification of individual motivations, and may fail to account for alternative factors that make some

individuals more susceptible to radicalization than others, particularly within the post-conflict environment of the Balkans.

B. Identity Fusion Theory

The concept of identity fusion provides insights into the psychological processes that attach individuals to extremist groups. This is particularly relevant in the context of the Balkans, where national and ethnic identities are widely contested. This theory argues that when group and personal identities become fused, individuals are more likely to engage in extreme behaviors on behalf of the group.

In the Western Balkans, where religious and national identities have been contested and politicized, this theory offers an explanation regarding why certain people may fall victim to extremist ideologies if they offer a sense of purpose and belonging. In North Macedonia, for example, where ethnic Albanian Muslims have felt historically marginalized, the promise of a global Muslim community may be appealing to those seeking a greater sense of belonging and identity.

This theory would suggest that efforts to de-radicalize must focus on both individual and group identities. Programs that have already proven to be successful, such as those in Albania, have emphasized the understanding of multiple identities-- religious, national, and personal-- as a method of resisting the absolutist narratives of extremist groups. However, a limit of this theory is that it fails to account for the changing identities in a region such as the Balkans, which has a history of ever-shifting borders and loyalties. In order for this theory to be applicable in the Balkan context, there must be a very nuanced understanding.

C. Strain Theory

General strain theory is an approach within Social Movement Theory. It offers a perspective on how social pressures, economic discrepancies, and perceived injustices lead individuals towards extremism. This theory posits that excessive "strain" (or stress) leads to negative emotion, which can lead to deviant behavior, including (in its most extreme form) terrorism.

In the Western Balkan context, the region is rife with strain. Economic hardships, political disenfranchisement, and discrimination against minority groups can effectively contribute to radicalization. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, its convoluted political system has led to government inefficiency and corruption, creating great disillusionment and strain, especially among youth.

In order to prevent extremism, it is critical to understand the factors contributing to excessive strain among individuals. The most successful programs, including vocational training initiatives in Kosovo, have focused on lessening economic strain to decrease susceptibility to extremism and recruitment.

However, the theory focuses solely on the individual-level factors, which fails to account for salient group dynamics and the historical context of the Balkans. It also may fail to account for instances of individuals from privileged backgrounds becoming radicalized.

D. Social Network Theory

Social network theory can provide insight regarding the spread of extremist ideology via personal connections and networks in the Balkans. This theory explains why radicalization most often occurs in groups, and emphasizes the relevance of peer influence and pressure, both in the radicalization and de-radicalization process.

This theory is particularly relevant in the Balkan context, considering the ethnic, religious, and familial ties that extend beyond national borders. Studies in Kosovo, for example, have shown that foreign fighter recruiters follow family and friendship network, as individuals are more likely to join if they have a personal connection to someone who is already involved.

This theory also highlights the potential benefit of peer-to-peer interventions in de-radicalization efforts. Already, programs highlighting the experiences of former extremists to prevent others from radicalizing have proven effective in countries like Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, the theory fails to account for the important role of online radicalization, which occurs outside of a traditional in-person social network. As digital platforms become a larger source of extremist recruitment, this presents a challenge to non-digital network-based Social network theory may also not fully account for the role of online interventions.

E. Synthesis of Theoretical Frameworks

When considered as a whole, these theories provide a strong foundation to better understand the factors leading to radicalization in the Western Balkan context. Social movement theory presents a broader perspective on the mechanism involved in extremist ideologies gaining traction in society. Identity fusion theory and strain theory, on the other hand, offer insights behind individual motivations and vulnerabilities. Social network theory proves a connecting thread between the two sets of frameworks, highlighting how radicalization spreads through communities.

Effective de-radicalization efforts must integrate the various findings of these theories. They must address societal complaints and grievances, provide alternative paths and understandings of identity. Additionally, they must focus on lifting individual strains and corroding extremist networks, replacing them with positive social communities. This comprehensive approach is particularly important in the convoluted post-conflict environment of the Western Balkans, where historical, economic, and psychological factors create many paths towards radicalization.

The Western Balkans: An Analysis of Radicalization Factors

A. Historical Context and Identity Crisis

The dissolution of Yugoslavia created an environment rich with ethnic tensions and identity crises. The Dayton Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while accomplishing its goal of ending the war, inadvertently fostered

an environment in which extremist ideologies promising belonging and purpose could thrive.

This dissolution still continues to shape the political and social dynamics in the region to this day. The long history of violence and conflict has led to an entire generation desensitized to constant violence and trauma, arguably lowering barriers to accepting radical ideology. Physically, the influx of foreign mujahideen during the Bosnian War created networks and support that influence extremist movements to this day.

Due to the difficulty of creating strong national identities following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, many citizens, particularly younger people, are left vulnerable to extremist narratives that offer alternative identities, as well as a strong sense of belonging. For example, in Kosovo, due to its multiethnic population, as well as its struggle to be recognized internationally, the state struggles to combat radical ideologies that promise simple solutions to complex problems.

B. Socioeconomic Factors and Youth Disillusionment

Among the younger generation, high unemployment rates have led to a sense of despair and hopelessness. In places such as Kosovo, where youth unemployment was nearly 50% in 2020, the promise of financial security and purpose becomes incredibly alluring. There is a proven correlation between economic marginalization and increased susceptibility to radicalization.

The phenomenon of brain drain further exacerbates such issues. It deprives the region of critical human capital, and creates a narrative of abandonment that extremists utilize to their advantage. In Kosovo, research on the reintegration of returnee foreign fighters once again emphasizes the importance of addressing the underlying socioeconomic factors in any effective de-radicalization strategy.

High rates of corruption and nepotism in many Balkan nations have also caused their citizens to question legitimate institutions, creating a sense

of systemic injustice. Such lack of faith in government institutions make alternative ones, no matter how extreme, more appealing to certain individuals.

C. The Digital Dimension

The importance of social media in radicalization recruitment cannot be overstated. Groups such as ISIS use sophisticated online recruitment tactics, meant to resonate with vulnerable individuals in the Balkans. These recruitment efforts mix narratives of religion, adventure, and offer a sense of purpose and belonging, creating echo chambers that isolate individuals from alternate perspectives and reinforce their extremist beliefs. Recent studies emphasize the need for digital and media literacy programs as well as digital counter-narrative strategies specific to the Balkan context to combat this worrying trend.

The transnational nature of digital extremist networks is particularly dangerous in the Balkan context, as borders are shaky and ethnic and familial communities often cross nations and borders. Such a digital landscape fosters the rapid spread of extremist rhetoric transnationally, further complicating efforts at de-radicalization.

D. Religious Identity and Foreign Influence

Even though the vast majority of Muslims in the Western Balkans practice a moderate form of Islam, outside influences have introduced more conservative and even extremist forms. Analyzing the impact of religion on ethnic identity formation in Kosovo helps illuminate this dynamic. Gulf states have increased funding for mosques and religious education, facilitating the spread of Salafist ideologies that are at odds with local Islamic traditions.

Such an ideological shift has created tensions within Muslim communities, and has given extremists the opportunity to challenge or defy traditional religious authorities. It has also exacerbated a larger identity crisis, felt most strongly by younger generations attempting to reconcile their religious heritage with more current European values.

The interplay between religion, ethnicity, and national identity in the Western Balkans further convolutes the issue. In certain instances, embracing a more radical form of Islam has become an attempt to assert a differentiated identity, in opposition to the dominant ethnic or national narratives.

Innovative Strategies for a Resilient Future

In order to prevent radicalization and effectively rehabilitate returnee foreign fighters, this paper suggests several solutions:

A. Governance and Trust-Building

In order to restore public trust in institutions and combat corruption, it is vital to create transparency initiatives via digital platforms for government transactions and public procurement processes. Doing so would foster a sense of accountability in government decision-making and spending, addressing a major cause of disillusionment which can lead to radicalization.

Another method to foster government transparency and accountability is by creating a platform to propose, discuss, and vote on local policies and projects, rebuilding trust in the democratic process. Such an approach is based on successful models in cities such as Reykjavik and Madrid, providing citizens with a legitimate stake in the development of their communities, mitigating feelings of isolation and alienation that contribute to radicalization.

B. Economic Empowerment

Another essential step is to create a system matching individual skill sets with emerging job markets. This can be achieved by partnering with local businesses, educational institutions, and employment agencies. Ideally, such a system could analyze local labor market trends and individual skills. It could then provide recommendations for training and future employment, which could improve the economy on the macro and the individual level. This would help mitigate the impact of economic marginalization on radicalization.

C. Psychological Support

Another crucial step is creating a comprehensive, culturally informed program for trauma treatment. This may include cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness practice, expressive arts therapy, and more, tailored to the specific experiences of returnee foreign fighters as well as their families.

Establishing spaces (both in-person and online) to share personal stories of former extremists and community members can help create understanding, empathy, and collective healing. These circles, facilitated by trained professionals, can provide a space for empathetic dialogue and reconciliation, contributing to community resilience against extremist ideologies.

D. Education for Deradicalization

It is also essential to create a curriculum teaching young students media literacy and critical thinking skills. Such a curriculum should be locally targeted to address narratives and common recruitment tactics by extremist groups and broadly integrated into the school curriculum. By doing so, young people can become less susceptible to extremist propaganda.

Creating educational environments and experiences promoting tolerance and understanding of different religious and cultural practices can also make young people more resilient against radicalization. Fostering immersive educational experiences that promote understanding of different religious and cultural practices can help build coexistence and tolerance.

E. International Support

In order to enact these strategies, international support is crucial. The European Union (EU) must be willing to provide funding for such initiatives to strengthen Western Balkan regional stability, as well as European reputation abroad. However, these funds must be targeted and closely monitored to ensure their proper use and allocation.

Comparative Analysis

The previously proposed strategies are based on successful approaches in other regions, while considering the specific context of the Western Balkans. The Danish Aarhus Model, emphasizing mentorship and psychological support, provides insight regarding community-based interventions. Indonesia's efforts to involve families and communities in rehabilitation programs highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in interventions. The UAE's Hedayah Center showcases the potential of creative approaches in deradicalization efforts.

However, it is important to adapt these approaches to the specific context of the Western Balkans. The region's complicated ethnic and religious tensions, post-conflict status, and efforts towards European integration create a unique environment requiring targeted strategies.

VI. Analysis and Potential Challenges

While the proposed strategies offer great potential, the main difficulty lies in implementation. It is important to consider the ethics regarding governance, monitoring, and digital technology to balance security requirements with individual rights. Another major challenge is in securing the appropriate funding to implement these policies, requiring immense international support, likely from the European Union.

There also may be a lack of political will in certain areas given the fragmented political landscape in many Western Balkan nations. It may also be quite difficult to assess the effectiveness of such deradicalization programs, requiring the development of comprehensive, long-term evaluation frameworks. Adapting globally-studied best practices to local contexts also requires careful implementation and deep cultural respect and understanding.

In order to overcome the community resistance and stigma regarding reintegration efforts for former returnee fighters requires long-term engagement and extreme sensitivity. Finally, broader regional cooperation

may be difficult due to historical tensions and competing national inter-
ests, requiring a solution in order to address the transnational threat
of extremism.

Conclusion

The prevalence of returnee foreign fighters in the Western Balkans must
be viewed as a sign of historical trauma and failure of governmental in-
stitutions, rather than simply a security issue. By implementing a more
holistic and innovative approach to address such a complex and en-
trenched challenge, the Western Balkans can experience incredible posi-
tive transformation.

The proposals described in this paper address the pressing security con-
cerns of returning foreign fighters, but also offer a solution to prevent
future extremism. As the region continues its path towards European in-
tegration and stability, these strategies may also be used as a model for
other nations facing similar challenges.

The Western Balkan region has been torn apart by conflict and violence for
much of the 21st century. However, rather than being a story of tragedy,
it has the opportunity to become a model of transformation, proving the
possibility of building a future of peace and healing its historical wounds.
By addressing the root causes of radicalization, fostering economic growth,
and building strong communities, Western Balkan nations can do more
than reintegrate foreign fighters – they can build a peaceful and prosper-
ous future and nations.

2

Changing Landscapes: Impacts of Cultural Spread on Radicalization through the Lens of Life Attachment

Carol MASSEY

Abstract: When examining why certain individuals become radicalized many explanations exist, but one such examination that has not faced much scrutiny is the impact of attachment on an individual's propensity to become radicalized. Additionally, as globalization has become a large force in the world it should be considered as another factor in individual's radicalization. Individuals who are insecurely attached face many difficulties in feeling connected and secure in various aspects of their life. This paper hypothesizes that it places them at risk of becoming radicalized in their drive to create a secure connection. Additionally, this paper posits that globalization can destabilize an individual's feelings of connection to their culture—which for insecurely attached individuals can push them into radicalized thinking. This paper seeks to contribute to research in this area to uncover effective deradicalization techniques by considering those used for insecurely attached individuals.

Keywords: Insecure Attachment, Globalization, Radicalization, Group Membership

Introduction

There currently exists a vast range of research on the topic of terrorism and violent extremism, ranging from preventative measures, explanations, and rhetorical analysis of the various groups.[446] However, this paper asserts that limited attention has been given to the impact of globalization on radicalization. Through the use of attachment theory, this paper posits that globalization provides an additional motivation to become radicalized. By attachment, it is understood in this paper as the established and secure feelings an individual has in their sociocultural context – in society, religion, community, family, etc.[447] This paper explores the idea of globalization creating a greater threat in the perception of those who are insecurely attached. While cultural mixing has always existed due to migration, as well as travel, there has still been an element of isolationism, with migrants carving out their own areas within bigger cities. However, with the increases in internet use and subsequent propaganda, hyperbolic clickbait, and general acceptance of radicalized ideas on all sides of the spectrum, people's ability to trust the continuity of their sociocultural landscape has decreased. Since those who are insecurely attached face difficulty in feeling truly connected — as insecure attachment arises from "insufficient sociocultural embeddedness" for individuals, leading to anxiety about their placement in their community[448] — this paper seeks to understand if the changing landscape of the world by globalization may threaten those who have insecurely attached bonds with their sociocultural landscape.

---

[446] *See for example* Michelle Sydes, Lorelei Hine, Angela Higginson, James McEwan, and Lorraine Mazerolle. "Criminal Justice Interventions for Preventing Radicalisation, Violent Extremism and Terrorism: An Evidence and Gap Map," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 19, no. 4 (Dec 2023). doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1366; Anna Clesle, Jonas Knäble, and Martin Rettenberger, "Risk and Threat Assessment Instruments for Violent Extremism: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* (Jul 11, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000223; Cécile Rousseau, Janique Johnson-Lafleur, Cindy Ngov, Xavier La Rochelle, et al., "Risk Assessment Challenges in a Specialized Clinic for Individuals Referred for Violent Extremism," *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 11, no. 2 (June 2024): 67-82. https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000214.

[447] Simon Ozer, Milan Obaidi, and Gulnaz Anjum, "Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* (April 29, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231167694.

[448] Ibid.

This paper hypothesizes that those with insecure attachments perceive globalization a threat and at the extreme, can lead individuals to become radicalized.[449]

Attachment

The idea of life attachment utilized in this paper evolved from the work of John Bowlby.[450] Bowlby postulated that children and their mother should not be separated for a significant amount of time as their relationship with the mother is developmentally important. His ideas revolved around the fact that the mother-child relationship (which in contemporary research has been changed to the caregiver-child relationship) allows the child to situate themselves within their world, forming their self-identity through the secure attachment and the safe exploration allowed by it. Through this caregiver-child relationship, the child can form an internal working model— a formula for how they fit into the world; not only how they perceive the world but also how they believe the world perceives them.[451]

Over the years, Bowlby's theory has continued to evolve, notably through the work of Mary Ainsworth in the 1960s.[452] Ainsworth worked with Bowlby's theory first in Uganda and later in Baltimore, Maryland—eventually developing a tool to differentiate the types of attachment called The Strange Situation.[453] In the Strange Situation the child is left alone in a room by the caregiver. A securely attached child will cry but eventually

---

[449] Radicalization is a process that pushes people into a willingness to or acceptance of committing acts of violence towards members of their out-group or symbolic targets.

[450] John Bowlby, *Attachment and loss* (Random House, 1969).

[451] Peter Choate and Christina Tortorelli, "Attachment Theory: A Barrier for Indigenous Children Involved with Child Protection," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 14 (July 19, 2022). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148754.

[452] Mary Dinsmore Saslter Ainsworth, Barbara A. Wittig, and B. M. Foss, "Determinants of infant behavior," (1969): 113-136.

[453] Heidi Keller, "Universality Claim of Attachment Theory: Children's Socioemotional Development across Cultures," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 45 (November 5, 2018): 11414–11419, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1720325115.

be soothed by another presence, then when the mother comes back, they will express excitement and be soothed by their mother. An insecure-ambivalent (also called insecure-anxious) child will be unsoothable by the secondary person and will express great anxiety until the mother comes back. An insecure-avoidant child will not cry when the caregiver is out of the room and will avoid the parent when they come back, as if to punish them.[454]

Adult Attachment

Attachment theory remained relatively unchanged until 1991, when Bartholomew and Horowitz applied attachment to adults creating Adult Attachment Theory.[455] Their theory applied the same concepts of the caregiver-child relationship concerning security and insecurity, but suggested that it exists throughout the lifespan. They claimed that the relationship between the caregiver and the child in infancy/development impacted the child in many aspects of their adult life.[456] Hazar and Shaver further elaborated on their theory, and divided adults into the three categories—secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant. These categories mirrored those used by Mary Ainsworth's earlier study of children. Using similar percentages, Hazar and Shaver had 56 percent secure adults (to 62 percent of infants), 25 percent avoidant (to 23 percent), and anxious-ambivalent 19 percent (to 15 percent of infants).[457]

---

[454] Lenny Van Rosmalen, René Van der Veer, and Frank Van der Horst, "Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure: The Origin of an Instrument," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 51, no. 3 (May 19, 2015): 261–84, https://doi.org/10.1002/jhbs.21729.

[455] Kim Bartholomew and Leonard M. Horowitz, "Attachment Styles among Young Adults: A Test of a Four-Category Model," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 61, no. (1991): 226–44, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.61.2.226.

[456] Fatma ATEŞ and Ramazan ERDEM, "Yetişkin Bağlanma Stilinin Örgütsel Açıdan Değerlendirilmesi," Pamukkale Üniversitesi İşletme Araştırmaları Dergisi 7, no. 2 (December 28, 2020): 431–47, https://doi.org/10.47097/piar.834871. This source was translated utilizing artificial intelligence resources.

[457] Naser Abdulhafeeth Alareqe, Samsilah Roslan, Sahar Mohammed Taresh, and Mohamad Sahari Nordin, "Universality and Normativity of the Attachment Theory in Non-Western Psychiatric and Non-Psychiatric Samples: Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 11 (May 27, 2021): 5770, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115770.

Studies have since examined how childhood experiences affect adult attachment. Just as Bowlby originally theorized, research has found that while life experiences may affect an individuals' attachment style, it is that which is formed in their childhood that they tend to maintain as an adult.[458]

Effects of Adult Attachment

Adult attachment covers how individuals interact with their social environment, maintaining relationships and their attempts to gain physical and psychological security for themselves. As discussed in the previous section, Ainsworth in the 1960s postulated that there were three categories of attachment— secure, insecure-avoidant (sometimes simply avoidant), and insecure-ambivalent (sometimes insecure-anxious or anxious-ambivalent).[459] When it comes to adult attachment, this can apply to relationships, their sociocultural context, business, and many more. In each of these situations, individuals have shown aspects of their early childhood attachment. Securely attached individuals, for example, display confidence and comfort in their situation, trusting their romantic partner, feeling secure in their job, and can comfortably navigate their community. Those who are insecurely attached (a blanket term for those both anxious-ambivalently attached and avoidantly attached), typically demonstrate an inability to feel comfortable and confident in their relationships, they struggle to trust their partners and friends, and although anxiously and avoidantly attached individuals show it in different ways, they struggle to allow people to become emotionally close.[5]

Is Attachment too WEIRD?

Since attachment theory was formed on the WEIRD (western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic) principles of a nuclear family, it has been hailed as the "WEIRDest Theory in the World." There are concerns

---

458 Chris R. Fraley, "Attachment Stability from Infancy to Adulthood: Meta-Analysis and Dynamic Modeling of Developmental Mechanisms," *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 6, no. 2 (May 2002): 123–51, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0602_03.

459 Phillip R. Shaver and Kelly A. Brennan, "Attachment Styles and the 'Big Five' Personality Traits: Their Connections with Each Other and with Romantic Relationship Outcomes," *Personality and Social Psychology* 18, no. 5 (October 1992): 536–45, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167292185003.

about the cross-cultural validity of the attachment theory.[460] Through studies like those of Alarege et al., the universality of attachment theory has been confirmed, despite concerns to the contrary.[461] This allows for attachment theory to continue to explain how humans connect and find their place in the world from birth to death.

Attachment and Intolerance

Insecure Attachment and Diversity

Experiencing diversity has become an everyday experience in our increasingly connected world. However, in our evolutionary past, it was useful to categorize by in-group and out-group—to decide that those who are different were dangerous for the survival of the group. Therefore, evolutionarily brains adapted toward close mindedness rather than diversity.[462]

However, as noted by the high volume of people who express a love of traveling and exploring new cultures, or those who accept new cultures as an opportunity to learn, there are individual differences in how diversity is treated. One explanation for this may come from attachment theory. In research done by Suejung Han in 2014, researchers hypothesized that those who experience insecure attachment exhibit negative reactions to diversity because they are not securely attached to their sociocultural context.[463] Therefore, they do not feel comfortable amidst the introduction of new cultures. These individuals feel that this new diversity will interrupt

[460] Heidi Keller, "Universality Claim of Attachment Theory: Children's Socioemotional Development across Cultures," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 45 (November 5, 2018): 11414–19, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1720325115.

[461] Alareqe, Naser Abdulhafeeth, Samsilah Roslan, Sahar Mohammed Taresh, and Mohamad Sahari Nordin. "Universality and Normativity of the Attachment Theory in Non-Western Psychiatric and Non-Psychiatric Samples: Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)." International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 18, no. 11 (May 27, 2021): 5770, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115770.

[462] Suejung Han, "Attachment Insecurity and Openness to Diversity: The Roles of Self-Esteem and Trust," *Personality and Individual Differences* 111 (June 2017): 291–96, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.02.033.

[463] Han, "Attachment Insecurity and Openness to Diversity: The Roles of Self-Esteem and Trust."

their group connectedness—something that someone who is insecurely attached will greatly fear.

In this study, Han explored the reactions of secure and insecure attachment to diversity through the universal-diverse orientation (UDO). Han found that those who experienced insecure attachment correlated with both components of UDO (both cognitive and emotional) via low trust, purporting that those who insecurely attach cannot trust the good intentions of those different than them. This results in individuals continually seeing the detriments to diversity, rather than the benefits. Additionally, although it requires further research and testing, both insecure attachment styles correlated negatively to UDO. This suggests that insecure attachment may disrupt those individuals' exploratory functioning, and may find exploring new cultures to be either uncomfortable or unnecessary.[464]

Ultimately, those who are insecurely attached may struggle to accept and explore diversity, finding it threatening to their way of life—especially as those who are insecurely attached already feel disconnected from their sociocultural context. However, those securely attached can integrate diversity into their worldview without a significant threat. Like a child who feels safe to crawl over a visual cliff as their caretaker encourages them, individuals are open to diversity because they are secure in their own culture and community– leaving them less threatened by diverse experiences. Rejection of differences comes from an evolutionary protective mechanism as those who behaved differently meant danger, creating the human mechanism of forming in-groups and out-groups. However, when an individual experiences secure attachment (to their sociocultural context, family, community etc.) they display an openness to diversity, rather than a rejection.

Insecure Attachment and Radicalization

In concert with insecure attachment correlating with a decreased openness to diversity, it may impact the radicalization process. Radicalization is a process that pushes people into a willingness to or acceptance of committing acts of violence towards members of their out-group or symbolic

---

[464] Ibid.

targets.[465] From the correlation between discomfort with diversity and insecure attachment, it draws to question if insecure attachment may prove a link between radicalization and radicalization.

Those who experience secure attachment to their sociocultural context perceive their community, family, relationships, and general life experience to be stable. In contrast those who insecurely attach doubt to the stability of their life, perceiving it as tremulous, unfair, or without the ability to provide for themselves. This provides a breeding ground for radicalized thinking.

When those who have an insecure life attachment face adversity, rather than trusting in their situation to return to the status quo they may attempt to forcibly return to normalcy. In a study by Simon Ozer and Preben Bertelsen in 2019, they found insecure life attachment to be a positive predictor of an extremist attitude in college age students in both Denmark and the United States.[466] Furthermore, they explored acceptance of violent means of extremism—finding that once again insecure attitudes were a significantly positive predictor.[467] Through this study, the association between insecure attachment and radicalization becomes clear, allowing researchers to uncover one facet of radicalization, perhaps leading to better deradicalization strategies in the future.

Globalization

Often globalization is blamed for all that is wrong in the world and used as a convenient excuse for why the world has become a scarier place in the 21st century. However, this paper considers whether there may be some truth to this and partially be responsible for the increases in extremist

---

[465] Julie Emmelkamp, Jessica J. Asscher, Inge B. Wissink, and Geert Jan Stams, "Risk Factors for (Violent) Radicalization in Juveniles: A Multilevel Meta-Analysis," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 55 (November 2020), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101489.

[466] Simon Ozer and Preben Bertelsen, "Countering Radicalization: An Empirical Examination from a Life Psychological Perspective," *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 25, no. 3 (August 2019): 211–25, https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000394; b=.30, 95% CI [.23, 37].

[467] b=.28, 95% CI [.14, .30].

groups, terrorism, and political radicalization. Although not responsible for all of the world's woes, it may contribute to them. In truth globalization has proven beneficial, inspiring technological advancement, allowing humans to connect with other cultures and people, and sparking incredible revolutions. However, globalization, like anything else, has a detrimental side and may even play a role in the increasing radicalization of the outskirts of the political spectrums.[468]

The cultural spread caused by globalization has "transformed local contexts into a globally shared social space."[469] As cultures continue to spread—amalgamating and evolving as groups see what others are doing—it destabilizes traditional systems, detrimentally affecting youth's abilities to gain stable social identities.[470] As globalization continues, it simultaneously allows individuals to share in the beauty of other cultures, while also stripping groups of their unique culture as our global society becomes more homogenous.

Insecure Attachment and Globalization

Those who are insecurely attached can struggle with this cultural spread for the same reasons that insecurely attached individuals have lower openness to diversity. Their "insufficient cultural embeddedness," leads to anxiety about their placement in their community.[471] Their general insecurity about their placement in society, their culture's resilience, and anxiety about losing their place in society all causes them to lash out. They may commit to essentialist thinking, viewing the world and their ideologies in

---

[468] Ozer, Simon, and Milan Obaidi, "Globalization and Radicalization: The Rise of Extreme Reactions to Intercultural Contact, Sociocultural Disruption, and Identity Threat," *Globalized Identities* (July 21, 2022): 107–30, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04644-5_5.

[469] Simon Ozer, Milan Obaidi, and Gulnaz Anjum, "Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus," *Personality and Social Psychology* (April 29, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231167694. Accessed 19 June 2024.

[470] Cécile Rousseau, Neil K. Aggarwal, and Laurence J. Kirmayer, "Radicalization to Violence: A View from Cultural Psychiatry," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 58, no. 5 (October 2021): 603–15, https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615211048010.

[471] Ozer, Obaidi, and Anjum, "Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus."

a static way, incapable of imagining their culture as malleable, capable of withstanding an influx of new ideas. Oftentimes this causes them to push toward an idealized version of the past, which is called restorative nostalgia.[472]

Contrastingly, individuals who experience secure attachment trust in their community and sociocultural context, allowing them to take the risks to their self-identity that is exposing themselves to the new globalized world. This is why understanding the different attachment styles proves vitally important. Individuals who have always felt safe to explore knowing their caregiver and later their close relationships will continue, feel secure in their cultural identity and community to experience new things—without seeing it as an immediate threat to their way of life. Individuals who struggle to secure their identity may be motivated by this struggle to commit to radicalized thinking in an attempt to find that secure attachment by trying to fit into their in-group.[473]

Radicalization and Globalization

When it comes to radicalization driven by globalization in individuals with insecure attachment, it derives from a misguided attempt to secure themselves a place in society that they feel secure in. Individuals with insecure attachment strive for the feeling of security in their sociocultural context as they perceive their way of life as disrupted by globalization.[474] Furthermore, those who are in the midst of uncertainty surrounding their context will more often emphasize their own in group (ethnicity, community, religion, etc.).[475]

---

[472] Simon Ozer, "Globalization and Radicalization: A Cross-National Study of Local Embeddedness and Reactions to Cultural Globalization in Regard to Violent Extremism," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 76 (March 6, 2020): 26–36, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.02.007.

[473] Ozer, Obaidi, and Anjum. "Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus."

[474] Nelli Ferenczi,,Tara C. Marshall, Katharina Lefringhausen, and Kathrine Bejanyan, "Associations of Insecure Attachment with Extreme Pro-Group Actions: The Mediating Role of Perceived Marginalisation," *Personality and Individual Differences* 91 (March 2016): 84–88, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.11.057.

[475] Ozer and Obaidi, "Globalization and Radicalization: The Rise of Extreme Reactions to Intercultural Contact, Sociocultural Disruption, and Identity Threat."

In a 2023 study by Simon Ozer and colleagues, they found that there was correlational support that reactionary ethnic protection from globalization can increase likelihood of extremist attitudes. In the same study, they found that although globalization was not directly connected to extremist attitudes, the perception of globalization as a threat was. Both results came from American samples.[476] However, these results were not experimental and further research should be completed on the topic. These results highlight that globalization itself cannot solely predict extremist attitudes, it's the varying reactions to globalization that hold the key. Those who react to globalization with accepting curious attitudes, finding globalization a positive force in the continuation of humankind, generally do not hold extremist attitudes. However, those who struggle in accepting globalization, perceiving it as a threat to their security and well-being, are more likely to hold an extremist attitude.

Group Membership

Every individual inherently sorts themselves into a multitude of in-groups and out-groups. Their in-group being who they perceive that they fit in with and their out-group being who they do not. A person's group provides their identity and who they believe they are as a person.[477] Social Identity Theory claims that individuals need to create a secure social identity for themselves, achieving this by using the groups they categorize themselves into. When someone feels insecure in their culture, way of life, family, etc. they find more of their identity in their group membership.[478] When insecurely attached individuals' social embeddedness is challenged, group membership offers a chance to reestablish a secure attachment and create stronger bonds. While this may work in favor of some preventative meth-

---

[476] Ozer, Obaidi and Anjum, "Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus."

[477] Daan Scheepers and Naomi Ellemers, "Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology in Action* (July 2, 2019):129–43, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13788-5_9.

[478] Simon Ozer, Milan Obaidi, and Stefan Pfattheicher, "Group Membership and Radicalization: A Cross-National Investigation of Collective Self-Esteem Underlying Extremism," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 23, no. 8 (December 2020): 1230–48, https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220922901.

ods for radicalization, it also put individuals into a place to be scooped up by extremist groups as they search security in their identity.

Individuals who are insecurely attached exhibit greater frequency of perceived rejection were found to have increased feelings of intragroup marginalization— when an individual or group distances themselves from others who they feel do not fit into their patterns of behavior, values, and beliefs.[479] This leads these individuals to more often endorse extreme pro-group actions.[480] Much in the same way that individuals can become radicalized by the threat of globalization on their culture, insecurely attached individuals can fear the disconnection from and rejection of their friends and family, which ultimately may drive them into extremism as they seek the approval of the group that they feel insecurely connected to. When individuals experiencing insecure attachments perceive rejections from friends and family based on their sociocultural context, they more often endorse extreme pro-group actions to feel connected and secure in their in-group.

In a study published in 2020, it was found that social identity moderated the relationship between insecure attachment and extremism among a Danish sample of college aged students.[481] Similar results were found amongst an Indian sample.[482] This study postulated that insecure life attachment had a greater effect on extremist attitudes among those who gain their identity from group membership. However, this emphasis on group membership by those who are insecurely attached can be both helpful and harmful: if an individual finds a self-identity with those who do not exhibit radicalized views they more likely will not exhibit radicalized views; however, if an insecurely attached individual gains their

---

[479] Linda G. Castillo, Collie W. Conoley, Daniel F. Brossart, and Alexander E. Quiros, "Construction and Validation of the Intragroup Marginalization Inventory," *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology* 13, no. 3 (July 2007): 232–40, https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.13.3.232.

[480] Nelli Ferenczi, Tara C. Marshall, Katharina Lefringhausen, and Kathrine Bejanyan, "Associations of Insecure Attachment with Extreme Pro-Group Actions: The Mediating Role of Perceived Marginalisation," *Personality and Individual Differences* 91 (March 2016): 84–88, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.11.057.

[481] Ozer, Obaidi, and Pfattheicher, "Group Membership and Radicalization: A Cross-National Investigation of Collective Self-Esteem Underlying Extremism."

[482] Ibid.

self-identity from a radicalized group they will more likely exhibit radicalized views themselves, oftentimes leading to violent extremist behavior as they attempt to find security within this group. In fact, in the study referenced above, group membership was not a risk factor for radicalization, but the interaction of life attachment was.[483]

Applications

By studying attachment theory, it offers insight on why insecurely attached individuals, who feel threatened by globalization and rejection, may be driven to radicalism. It helps us understand the mindset of those individuals who commit violent acts in the name of saving their culture. If we consider, for example, the Proud Boys,[484] much of their rhetoric surrounds being the "last of the real men," with expressed feelings of marginalization due to the perceived threats posed by globalization and a yearning for a secure attachment to their sociocultural context.[485] In reality, groups of this kind are practicing 'restorative nostalgia,' a term coined by Svetlana Boym—describing an imagination of an idealized past that the individual has decided should be returned to.[486] Members of groups like the Proud Boys may exhibit insecure attachment, leading them to feel disconnected from their sociocultural context. This disconnection drives them into groups where they attempt to find their self-identity and security in their group—leading to acceptance of extremist ideals. As they feel insecure in their culture, especially as globalization spreads, they most often subscribe to radicalized beliefs seeking the approval of their in-group and lashing out against the out-group as a way of creating a more secure feeling attachment.

---

[483] Ibid.

[484] The Proud Boys are a US far-right extremist group comprised of all males. They have a history of violently opposing government action and played a role in the January 6th incident at the Capitol Building in Washington DC.

[485] Margo Kitts, "Proud Boys, Nationalism, and Religion," *Journal of Religion and Violence* 9, no. 1 (2021): 12–32, https://doi.org/10.5840/jrv2020102778.

[486] Candice K Travis, "Nostalgia, Hypermasculinity, and the American Far Right: What Ever Happened to Being Proud of Your Boy?," *New Political Science* 45, no. 4 (October 2, 2023): 591–612, https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2023.2272537.

In a case study done of an ex-member of a far-right extremist group,[487] the individual (Tom) notes that he felt out of place in his social context as one of the only white members of a community. He felt that he shouldered a lot of race accountability, disconnecting him from the friends he had grown up with. As Tom became insecure in his community, he was drawn into this group, noting the feeling of security from identifying with this group. However, Tom's attachment to his nuclear family was able to tone down his radicalized thinking—pointing to a valid strategy in deradicalizing individuals—because they asked, and he wanted the security of their bond.[488]

This suggests that a valid strategy of disconnecting individuals from radicalization, is to draw upon past attachments or create a new stronger attachment bond with individuals. One such method is group therapy, whereby introducing a group of individuals can aide individuals who experience insecure attachment in forming healthy attachments—which may go a long way in reshaping their in-group and out-group perceptions away from the radicalized views.[489] In any case, therapeutic relationships remain important to replace the individuals' attachment to their group that insecurely attached individuals created in attempt to reconcile their sociocultural context with the changes from the globalized world.

Conclusion

Connection has long been an evolutionary must. As evolution progressed, humans were given a brain wired to sort individuals into in-groups and

---

[487] The case study was done on an individual who voluntarily exited a far-right extremist group. This individual, who is referred to by the pseudonym Tom, was interviewed about his experiences prior to, during, and leading to his exit from the extremist group. Tom was interviewed for 120 minutes by researchers in the neutral location.

[488] Amy Fisher Smith, and Charles R. Sullivan, "Exiting Far-Right Extremism: A Case Study in Applying the Developmental Core Need Framework," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 16, no. 3 (June 13, 2022): 289–309, https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2022.2076718. Accessed 20 June 2024.

[489] Black, Aaron E. "Treating Insecure Attachment in Group Therapy: Attachment Theory Meets Modern Psychoanalytic Technique." International Journal of Group Psychotherapy 69, no. 3 (April 11, 2019): 259–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207284.2019.1588073. Accessed 3 July 2024.

out-groups, chasing secure attachment to their groups. While this allows humans to work together and live in close proximity to each other, it can also create issues when someone faces difficulty in perceiving those connections as secure. Individuals with insecure attachment face a cognitive bias that in differing ways for the two types of insecure attachment (anxious-ambivalent and avoidant) disallows these individuals to create these secure bonds as easily as others. Since human brains constantly seek this connection, this causes maladaptive thinking patterns to form as these individuals do what they think is right to gain this secure attachment. In some cases, as shown in this paper, this insecure attachment can cause intolerance to diversity, disproportionate threat from globalization, increased instances of radicalized thinking, and seeking self-identity through group membership—leading to extremist group affiliations. Insecure attachment can cause individuals to strive so much for secure attachment that they become radicalized as they attempt to reconnect with their sociocultural context that they feel as moved past them, or to join radicalized group in a search for secure attachment through group membership. As those with insecure attachment experience the changing landscape of the world due to globalization, they perceive a greater threat to their self-identity and security, leading to radicalization.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation lies in the dearth of research into non-western populations, while one of the studies used did make an effort to utilize a non-western sample it is in the minority of research. Additionally, as most research is completed on youth from 18-22 who are university aged students, there is a shortage in research covering the true demographics of the world. In that vein, future research should focus on non-western samples, as well as strive to reflect the whole population—rather than the university aged students who cannot accurately reflect the opinions and behaviors of much of the population.

Another limitation of this paper lies in that it utilizes multiple papers by Simon Ozer of Aarhus University. While his research is likely well done,

research would benefit from the validation of his results, as well as continued studies and research into this area. At the time of writing, much of the research done into insecure attachment, radicalization, and globalization was by Dr. Ozer and as a result many papers referenced were his, something this author recognizes as a limitation of the conclusions drawn.

3

Examining the Red Army Faction: Patterns of Radicalization and the Potential Resurgence of Left-Wing Terrorism in Germany

Alison CRIST

Abstract: Left-wing terrorism is a historically familiar issue to the people of Germany. This paper delves into the history and evolution of the Red Army Faction (RAF) through its three distinct generational phases. By examining the ideological motivations, organizational structures, and violent tactics employed by the RAF from its conception in the 1970s to its disbandment in 1998, the study aims to identify patterns of radicalization that fueled the group's prolonged insurgency. With the recent arrest of Daniela Klette in February 2024, this paper demonstrates that the threat of left-wing terrorism is far from over and rather has resurfaced in Germany. This paper argues that factors contributing to the RAF's radicalization are still present and, if unaddressed, could precipitate a resurgence of left-wing terrorism. Through a critical assessment of historical and current sociopolitical dynamics, this study highlights the urgent need for effective counter-radicalization strategies to prevent the reemergence of violent left-wing extremism in Germany.

Introduction

Left-wing terrorism has left its mark on Germany's rich history, best exemplified by the actions of the Red Army Faction (RAF). Founded in 1970 by Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Horst Mahler, and Ulrike Meinhof, the Red Army Faction, also known as the Baader-Meinhof Group, was one of the most infamous and long lasting left-wing terrorist groups in all of Germany.[490] They set out to overthrow what they perceived to be a capitalist and imperialist system in West Germany.[491] Their tactics and ideologies were adapted in response to these shifting political landscapes. The recent arrest of Daniela Klette in February 2024, a key figure from the third generation of the RAF, has heightened anxieties that the threat of left-wing terrorism is far from over and rather resurfacing again in Germany.

This paper delves into the historical and ideological foundations of the RAF. It aims to analyze the events and conditions that led to the radicalization of the Red Army Faction through the three generations of the corporation. Additionally, it seeks to identify common factors that lead to radicalization and compares the RAF's radicalization process with those of contemporary extremist groups.

It is crucial to understand the historical context and ideological motivations that drove the Red Army Faction, in order to comprehend the ongoing threat of left-wing extremism in Germany. The sociopolitical conditions after World War II provided rich soil for the emergence of groups like the RAF. Although the group eventually disbanded in 1998, these underlying factors have never been effectively addressed, which highlights why it is important to develop both counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism strategies to prevent the potential reemergence of left-wing extremism in contemporary Germany.

---

[490] "Europe: Latest News & Updates," BBC News, January 16, 2016 https://www.bbc.com/news/world/europe.

[491] Phillip Jenkins, "Red Army Faction," Encyclopedia Britannica, May 2, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Army-Faction

Historical Context and Ideological Foundations

On May 8th, 1945, Germany surrendered to the Allied Forces, ending the second World War.[492] As defeat tore through the hearts of the German population, the concept of a "Divided Germany" was introduced.[493] Each of the Allied Forces obtained a piece of the now divided Germany, with the most prominent threat of terrorism stemming from the Soviet Union's newfound territory. Initially, Soviet Leader, Joseph Stalin, preferred to dismember a defeated Germany even further in hopes that it could no longer threaten European peace.[494] In 1949, Germany officially split into East Germany and West Germany, and the sociopolitical economy began to crumble. The East adopted the communist values of the Soviet Union, while West Germany adopted capitalist values of the Western-led states. This ideological divide brought tension between the East and West.

With the new concept of industrialization and the "economic miracle"[495], post-war Germany experienced rapid economic growth, as well as vast amounts of economic inequality. Social discontent spread as many were left homeless and unemployed. As many began to experience a feeling of alienation and disconnection, the popularity of radical ideologies increased.

It was not until the 1960s that the presence of social movements began to rip apart the German society. In particular, the 1968 student protest movement was a response to different social upheavals in industrialized nations.[496] The general public was dissatisfied with the political climate in

---

[492]   Allied forces included the U.S., France, UK, and the Soviet Union; Erin Blakemore, "Why Germany Surrendered Twice in World War II," National Geographic, May 6, 2020, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/germany-surrendered-twice-world-war-ii.

[493]   "The End of WWII and the Division of Europe," CES at UNC, Accessed July 2, 2024, https://europe.unc.edu/the-end-of-wwii-and-the-division-of-europe/#:~:text=A%20Divided%20Germany,divided%20into%20four%20occupied%20zones.

[494]   "Allied Occupation of Germany, 1945-52," U.S. State Department Archives, January 20, 2001, https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/cwr/107189.htm#:~:text=Having%20experienced%20great%20losses%20as,European%20peace%20and%20security%20again.

[495]   Wirtschaftswunder: The rapid reconstruction and development of the economy in West Germany after WWII.

[496]   "German Student Movement," Encyclopedia, November 3, 2022, https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/32698

West Germany and demanded educational reform. The student protest movement is also viewed as the "birth of the Red Army Faction", as many of the future leaders obtained leftist political concerns and were overwhelmed with issues regarding the conservative political power.

With the influence of the Marxist-Leninist theory[497], people of West Germany began to focus on the class struggle and the overthrow of capitalistic systems.[498] The Red Army Faction adopted an anti-imperialist stance, which criticized both American and West German governments. Domestic influences such as the German Socialist Student Union (SDS) and other extra-parliamentary opposition groups, resulting in the RAF slowly beginning to shape its ideological foundation.[499] As norms and authority were challenged, an external environment fostered radical thought and action, forming the skeleton of the Red Army Faction [500] that developed soon into the fully-fledged terrorist organization which is considered "one of the first modern terrorism organizations, and it can be regarded as the predecessor of many other terrorist groups, in a European as well as in a global dimension".[501]

The Three Generations of the RAF

The terrorist attacks committed by the Red Army Faction can be divided into three separate generations, each of which had their own leadership, members, and ideological foundations. The idea of a left-wing extremist group began to take shape shortly after the student protest movement in 1968.[502] However, in 1970, the first generation of the Red Army Faction was officially born. This group of individuals was founded by Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, Horst Mahler, and Ulrike Meinhof, and was originally

---

[497] The purpose of this theory is to turn a capitalistic state into a socialist state.

[498] "Leninism," Encyclopedia Britannica, June 6, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Leninism

[499] Karrin Hanshew, "'Sympathy for the Devil?' The West German Left and the Challenge of Terrorism," *Contemporary European History* 21, no. 4 (2012): 511–32, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23270683

[500] Jenkins, "Red Army Faction."

[501] Katarzyna Maniszewska, Sympathy for the… Baader. Regarding the media coverage of the Red Army Faction. In: T. Płudowski (editor), Terrorism, Media, Society, Adam Marszałek Publishing House, Toruń 2006.

[502] Ibid.

created to combat German imperialism.[503] As the leaders began to extend their influence, the first generation ended up with a core group of around twenty to thirty people. Their first programmatic statement made its way in June of 1970, which entailed Ensslin's call to arms, "Build up the Red Army!"[504] Outside of their terroristic acts, they obtained a support network of a couple hundred sympathizers that provided support to the new left-wing extremist group.

As previously stated, the RAF's main ideological foundation derives from Marxism-Leninism, which emphasizes the conflict between the working class and the capitalist class, with the belief that nothing but violence can overthrow the capitalist system.[505] The first-generation group was responsible for approximately thirty to forty significant attacks, the most notable being bank robberies from 1970-1971 to finance their activities, a bombing campaign in 1972 that included five separate attacks in the month of May[506], the assassination of Judge Gunter von Drenkmann (November 10, 1974), and the Stockholm Embassy Siege on April 24, 1975.[507]

In 1972, the RAF began to lose their force as key members were taken into custody. Five years later, on October 18, 1977, Baader, Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe were found dead in their prison cells – all of which were interpreted as suicides. Public sympathies remain short lived as the RAF's violent actions were not forgotten.[508]

---

[503] Ibid.

[504] "Image," GHDI, Accessed July 3, 2024, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2395

[505] Ibid.

[506] Bombings included: U.S. Army's V Corps headquarters in Frankfurt (May 11, 1972), Police headquarters in Augsburg and Munich (May 12, 1972), Springer Press building in Hamburg (May 19, 1972), Federal Prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe (May 24, 1972), and U.S. Army base in Heidelberg (May 24, 1972).

[507] Phill Gurski, *April 24, 1975 | Hostage Crisis in Sweden*, Borealis Threat & Risk Consulting, 24 Apr. 2020, http://borealisthreatandrisk.com/1975-hostage-crisis-in-sweden/. Accessed 22 July 2024.

[508] Paulina Pobocha, *Receding from View: History and Gerhard Richter's October 18, 1977*, The Museum of Modern Art, 15 Dec. 2020, www.moma.org/magazine/articles/468#:~:text=On%20 October%2018%2C%201977%2C%20Andreas,government%20since%20the%20late%201960s, Accessed 19 July 2024.

The second generation of the RAF emerged in 1975 and after a period of quiet and reorganization, the German Autumn struck in 1977.[509] Controlled by the overwhelming anger over the imprisonment and mistreatment of the first generation, the second generation was prepared to do whatever it took to carry on the legacy that had been created. The Socialist Patients' Collective (SPK) [510] helped formulate a second wave of radicalization for the Red Army Faction as some of the members of the SPK later joined the RAF.[511] There were two individuals in particular who represented the primary "ring leaders": Brigitte Mohnhaupt[512] and Christian Klar. The ideology behind this generation was fairly similar to that of its predecessors — violence was the only answer. This was proven to be true as the RAF notably succeeded with eight assassinations, one of them being the kidnapping and murder of Hanns Martin Schleyer[513], as well as one bombing.

The second wave of the Red Army Faction only lasted until around 1982, mainly because both of their ring leaders were caught and imprisoned.[514] However, there was also a change in intensive law enforcement and security measures that put the RAF back to rest. Many of the Red Army Factions supporters were blind to the damage that the organization was causing.

---

[509] Series of events in Germany in 1977 associated with the kidnapping and murder of Hanns Martin Schleyer M. Mayer; "The German October of 1977." *New German Critique*, no. 13 (1978): 155–63, https://doi.org/10.2307/3115192, Accessed June 19, 2024.

[510] Organization that believed that mental illness was caused by the oppressive structures of a capitalist society Helen Spandler, *To Make An Army Out of Illness: the history of the socialist patients' collective*, Asylum Magazine, 1992, asylummagazine.org/2018/06/to-make-an-army-out-of-illness-the-history-of-the-socialist-patients-collective-by-helen-spandler/, Accessed 19 July 2024.

[511] Jill Anderson, "To Make an Army out of Illness: The History of the Socialist Patients' Collective by Helen Spandler," Asylum Magazine, September 10, 2020, https://asylummagazine.org/2018/06/to-make-an-army-out-of-illness-the-history-of-the-socialist-patients-collective-by-helen-spandler/

[512] She was imprisoned during the first generation, but later released in 1980 to take a leadership role in the second generation.

[513] Prominent businessman, head of the Confederation of German Employers' Association, and former SS officer Schleyer was held hostage for about a month in demands to release imprisoned RAF members; Christoph Strack, "Germany's RAF Terrorism – an Unresolved Story," DW, March 11, 2024, https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-raf-terrorism-an-unresolved-story/a-68474099 Former SS officer Schleyer was held hostage for about a month in demands to release imprisoned RAF members.

[514] Ibid.

As their violent tactics became more noticeable, their support system began to decrease in numbers.

As time went by, the need to continue the RAF's legacy began to overwhelm supporting members of the disassembled group. Soon enough a third generation would form and set out to capture the imprisoned core of the second RAF generation.[515] Wolfgang Grams and Birgit Hogefeld were the key faces during this final generation. A woman named Daniela Klette was also a part of the third generation. As mentioned earlier, Klette was found and taken to prison in February of 2024.

As they still targeted prominent figures and symbols of the state, their violent activities were much less impactful compared to the first two generations. Two notable assassinations took place between the years 1989 and 1991, as well as a failed attack on Jurgen Trittin and other known attacks on military and corporate targets.[516]

The group witnessed its final days in 1998 when they officially announced their disbandment. As their support and relevance declined and their internal weaknesses became overbearing, it was time to finally put the Red Army Faction to rest after nearly twenty-eight years of terror.[517]

Factors Contributing to Radicalization

The Oxford dictionary defines radicalization as, "The action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues."[518] Typically this change is gradual, however, with the right motivation, or an increasing threat, can spur the speed of radicalization. Although the speed of the process is not the same for everyone, there are typically several common factors that contribute to rate of change: socioeconomic, political, social and cultural, and psychological factors, as well as group

---

[515] Jenkins, "Red Army Faction."

[516] Ibid.

[517] Ibid.

[518] https://www.oed.com/dictionary/radicalization_n?tab=meaning_and_use

dynamics, media and communication.[519] Socioeconomic factors in particular tend to play a vital role in the contribution to radicalization.[520] Poverty is also viewed as one of the main contributing factors, as there is a link found between poorer countries and the risks of terrorism.[521] Socioeconomic factors also include aspects of educational inequality, that is individuals with limited access to education, are often found to be more susceptible to a lack of critical thinking skills, and more vulnerable to extremist propaganda.[522]

The second contributing factor has to do with differences in political opinions. This was clearly evident in the radicalization of the Red Army Faction, where left-wing extremism emerged as a reaction against the conservative, capitalist central government. Repressive government policies and political exclusion tend to increase the likelihood that individuals on the brink of radicalization may turn to groups promising change.[523]

Social and political factors often intertwine with these political elements, including feelings of alienation and mental health issues. When individuals feel as though they do not belong, they may seek acceptance in more radical groups. Mental health problems, trauma, sense of loss, and grievances, also play a significant role in determining whether individuals are more prone to radicalization.[524]

Younger kids are particularly more prone to radicalization as they tend to be more susceptible to peer influences that tend to peak around age fifteen.[525] Media and social communication networks have proven effective

---

[519] Ibid.

[520] Ibid.

[521] Alberto Abadie "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," NBER, October 25, 2004, https://www.nber.org/papers/w10859

[522] Ibid.

[523] Christina Mattei and Sara Zeiger. "Factors Contributing to Radicalization." Hedayah, October 2021. https://hedayah.com/app/uploads/2021/10/Factors-Contributing-to-Radicalization.pdf

[524] Ibid.

[525] Colette Moran, "A Closer Look: Why Teens Are Prone to Peer Pressure," National Review, March 5, 2015, https://www.nationalreview.com/the-home-front/closer-look-why-teens-are-prone-peer-pressure-colette-moran/#:~:text=Peer%20influence%20during%20adolescence%20is,psychology%20professor%20at%20Temple%20University.

in recruiting individuals, especially youth. As radical ideologies spread, extremist groups are more likely to recruit members by appealing to their emotions as well as their personal grievances.[526]

Case Study: Daniela Klette

On February 26, 2024, one of Europe's most wanted figures was arrested in Germany after spending three decades on the run[527]. Now sixty-five years old, Daniela Klette, wanted for robbery and attempted murder, was one of the notorious Red Army Factions militants. Belonging to the third generation of the RAF, Klette was involved in, "at least 10 armed attacks and robberies, including a gun attack on the US embassy in Bonn in 1991 and the bombing of a prison in Weiterstadt in 1993".[528] Klette was thought to be a part of robberies worth millions of euros' as well as one attempted murder that took place after the disbandment of the Red Army Faction.[529]

Astoundingly, Klette was discovered by a podcast team in Berlin that sought to track her down by using a facial recognition tool. However, the police intend to deny the connection and continue to push that there was a tip left from a member of the outside world. The prosecutor on the case, Alexander Hege, stated that, "owing to our discretion over our investigatory tactics, we cannot reveal how we track people."[530]

Public perception on this arrest varies throughout the population. As some view it as justice that was long overdue for the victims of the RAF's crimes, others see it as a reminder that Germany's past still has many unresolved issues. If these conditions are not addressed, the potential for new leftist

---

[526] Alexander Ritzmann, "The Role of Propaganda in Violent Extremism and How to Counter It," IEMed, 2017, https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-role-of-propaganda-in-violent-extremism-and-how-to-counter-it/#:~:text=Ideology%20has%20two%20functions%20in,and%20of%20having%20a%20clear

[527] While on the run, she hid under the secret identity Heike Schmidt.

[528] Kate Connolly, "Daniela Klette: Dog Walker, Dancer – and Germany's Most-Wanted Woman," The Guardian, March 2, 2024, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/02/daniela-klette-germany-most-wanted-woman-neighbours

[529] Ibid.

[530] Connolly, "Daniela Klette: Dog Walker, Dancer – and Germany's Most-Wanted Woman."

radical movements remains. As stories and articles flood the news, there is also a concern that underground left-wing extremists may take this as a wakeup call. Whether Daniela's case represents a potential resurgence of left-wing terrorism in Germany remains unknown. What is certain, however, are the contributing factors of radicalization. Considering that there is widespread sociopolitical and economic discontent throughout Germany, should serve as a warning to policymakers the importance of addressing the root causes of radicalization to prevent future violence.[531]

Data Breakdown

The concern for the resurgence of left-wing terrorism in the European Union did not subside when the Red Army Faction, and many other left-wing extremist groups, dismembered. The 2023 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report (TE-SAT), as shown in *Figure 18*, demonstrates the trend in terrorist attacks between 2020 to 2022, suggesting that the threat is still prevalent in the European Union.[532]

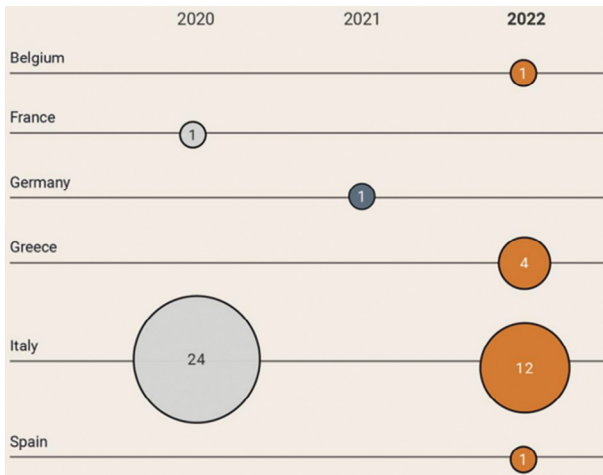**Figure 18:** Left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks in the EU, 2020-2022
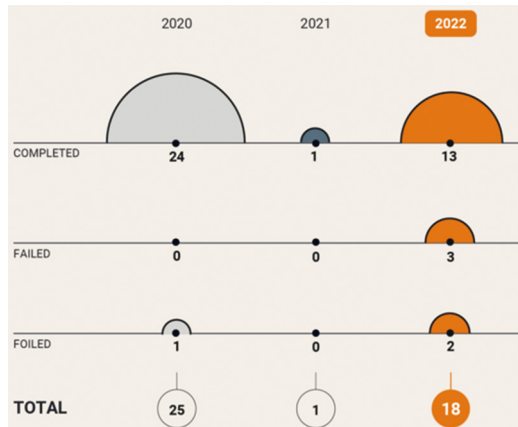
Source: Europol

---

[531] Connolly, "Daniela Klette: Dog Walker, Dancer – and Germany's Most-Wanted Woman."

[532] Europol, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report, October 2023. https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/European%20Union%20Terrorism%20Situation%20and%20Trend%20report%202023.pdf

As seen, there is a noticeable difference between 2021 to 2022. An important factor to consider is the COVID-19 epidemic that sparked in March of 2020. After the completion of twenty-four left-wing terrorist attacks in 2020, it is possible that the numbers dropped to one in 2021 due to a period of isolation and disconnect throughout the world. A year later, in 2022, the numbers rose to thirteen, highlighting the potential that left-wing extremism may rise again in European countries.[533]

Figure 19: Left-wing and anarchist terrorist attacks (completed, failed, foiled) in EU Member States 2020-2022

Source: Europol

Figure 19 shows the rate of left-wing and anarchist attacks in individual EU Member States.[534] As seen, Italy leads the EU in left-wing extremist acts. In both 2020 and 2022, Italy had the most attempted attacks making them one of the biggest potential hotspots in the upcoming years. Italy's history with left-wing terrorism is extremely close to Germany's.[535] Greece also saw a rise in numbers from zero in the previous years to four in 2022.

---

[533] Europol, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report.

[534] Europol, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report.

[535] The Red Brigades was a left-wing terrorist group that operated in Italy in the 70's and 80's; Philip J. Jenkins. "Red Brigades," Encyclopedia Britannica, February 12, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Brigades.

An in-depth report produced by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, includes additional information on attacks preceding 2023, stating, "[t]he left-wing extremist following rose by 1.4% to a total of 37,000 individuals in 2023. 11,200 of them can be classed as violence oriented."[536] As the numbers jump from 10,800 in 2022 to 11,200 in 2023, it is understood that the threat for left-wing extremism is still increasing. The report also includes data on the number of criminal offences that were motivated by left-wing extremism in 2023, highlighting that the numbers have increased by 10.4% (4,248) in this past year. The report concludes by suggesting that the potential threat posed by violent left-wing extremism remains high, and that there may be further radicalization (leading to more offenders in the future).

As the usage of social media increases, the fear of left-wing propaganda also becomes more prevalent. Access to social media such as streaming podcasts and YouTube channels gives radicalist's more places to publish content and spread ideas.[537] What is apparent is the need for greater radicalization prevention.

Future Trends and Recommendations

Increasing political polarization makes European countries more susceptible to extremism. A rise in far-right movements will create opportunities for counter-movements from those who veer more left in their views. Technological advances through the use of internet and social media provides leftist groups with tools to easily spread their ideologies online.[538] Extremist groups are also evolving their tactics and now incorporating cy-

---

[536] Nancy Faeser, *Brief summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends*, Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, 18 June 2024, www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/EN/reports-on-the-protection-of-the-constitution/2024-06-brief-summary-2023-report-on-the-protection-of-the-constitution.pdf?__blob=publicatio. Accessed 19 July 2024.

[537] Ibid.

[538] Alexander Ritzmann, "The Role of Propaganda in Violent Extremism and How to Counter It," IEMed, 2017, https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-role-of-propaganda-in-violent-extremism-and-how-to-counter-it/#:~:text=Ideology%20has%20two%20functions%20in,and%20of%20having%20a%20clear

berattacks to target violence. Without evolving counter-terrorism efforts, the potential of a resurgence of left-wing extremism remains high.

Studies have shown that countries, such as Germany, with previous experiences with left-wing extremism are more likely to make a comeback in the future.[539] Along with Germany, Italy and Greece also have the potential to be hotspots in the future with their past experiences with left-wing extremist groups. As shown in the TE-SAT data, eight of the thirteen left-wing attacks in 2022 were in Italy and three in Greece.[540]

To counter the potential rise of left-wing extremism, it is imperative that socioeconomic grievances are addressed, inclusive political dialogue promoted, and surveillance services enhanced. Research carried out by the European Council has found a strong correlation between the reduction of economic inequalities and the reduction of radicalization.[541] There also remains a critical need for more research on current counter-terrorism efforts and how to further develop and improve them.[542] Furthermore, greater attention should be given to public awareness programs.

Conclusion

After analyzing the events and conditions that led to the radicalization of the Red Army Faction, this paper demonstrated how the combination of socioeconomic grievances, political alienation, and intense ideological convictions played a critical role in the creation and execution of the organization's activities. This paper analyzed three generations of RAF, from its claim to power in the 1970s, various acts of terrorism committed,

---

[539] Kristina Hummel, "Is Left-Wing Terrorism Making a Comeback in Germany? Analyzing the 'Engel – Guntermann Network,'" Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, January 19, 2024, https://ctc.westpoint.edu/is-left-wing-terrorism-making-a-comeback-in-germany-analyzing-the-engel-guntermann-network/

[540] Ibid.

[541] "The EU's Work to Tackle Terrorism," European Council, August 3, 2022. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/the-eu-s-work-to-tackle-terrorism/

[542] "The EU's Work to Tackle Terrorism," European Council.

including bombings, assassinations, kidnappings, and robberies, to its disbandment in 1998.

The paper also discussed the implications of Daniela Klette's recent arrest and the prevalence of left-wing terrorism today, not only in Germany, but also in Italy and Greece. The paper also discussed the importance of adequately coming addressing radical ideologies through effective counter-extremism measures, and how, if left unaddressed, could provide the necessary political conditions to foster extremism. This paper suggested several ways to counteract radical ideologies such as effectively addressing social inequalities, providing more research to asses ways to improve counter-extremism strategies, and to provide greater community engagement education activities. In closing, the efforts learned from the Red Army Faction and other extremist groups underline the utter importance of proactive approaches that ensure long term security for not only Germany, but Europe as a whole.

PART 5

SOCIAL CHALLENGES
AND SECURITY IMPLICATIONS

How Social Isolation During the COVID-19 Pandemic Contributed to the Rise in Mass Shootings in the United States

Celestyn M. PAWLAK

Abstract: Multiple strategies were developed during the Coronovirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic to minimize its spread. This paper focuses on one of them – mandatory stay-at-home orders issued by states. The paper begins by discussing the disastrous effects long periods of social isolation can have on mental health and the increased likelihood of developing risk-taking behaviors. Then the paper explores the possible links between the long periods of social isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise of mass shootings since 2020. After examining the rates of mass shootings before (2000 to 2019), during (2020 to 2022), and after (2023), the paper concludes by confirming that there does appear to be a strong link between long periods of social isolation and the rise of mass shootings since the beginning of the pandemic outbreak in 2020.

Keywords: Mass Shootings, Isolation, Social Deprivation, COVID-19 pandemic, Risk-taking Behavior, Prevention

Introduction

On March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump declared COVID-19 a national emergency, causing an overall shock wave throughout the United States that has forever changed the country. The widespread isolation throughout the United States was specifically characterized by restricting social interaction and community engagement to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The effects have proven detrimental regarding the psychological and behavioral profiles of Americans. The lockdown tactic used during height of the COVID-19 surge between 2020 to 2022, deprived individuals of their usual face-to-face interaction thus forcing them to adapt to a world consisting of the absence of social connection also known as social isolation.[543] Social isolation is defined as a multi-dimensional construct that focuses on inadequate quality and/or quantity of interactions with other people.[544] Research suggests that social isolation, when taken to the extreme, can create a breeding ground for some individuals to be drawn to risk-taking behavior or radicalization in absence of opportunities to make positive connections and insufficient community support.[545] Maslow's theory on the Hierarchy of Needs, suggests that this is in part because individuals possess an innate drive to achieve a sense of belonging to an individual group or society.[546]

Research suggests that one of the negative consequences of longterm social isolation in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic was the surge in number of mass shootings.[547] Mass shooting is defined in

---

[543] Ruta Clair, Maya Gordon, Matthew Kroon, and Carolyn Reilly, "The Effects of Social Isolation on Well-being and Life Satisfaction during Pandemic," *Humanities and Social Science Communication* 8, no. 28 (2021), https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00710-3.

[544] "Understanding the Effects of Social Isolation on Mental Health," School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. Tulane University, December 8, 2020, https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/effects-of-social-isolation-on-mental-health/.

[545] Ibid.

[546] Willingham, AJ, "What Is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs? A Psychology Theory, Explained," CNN World, August 15, 2023, https://www.cnn.com/world/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-explained-wellness-cec/index.html.

[547] "Past Summary Ledgers," Gun Violence Archive, July 2, 2024. https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/past-tolls.

this paper as four or more victims shot, injured or killed by lone-wolf acts of violence,[548] a phenomena that has become a national epidemic within the United States. Mass shootings are distinct from terrorist attacts, as they are often carried out by long wolf attackers that are rarely motivated by politics alone, but rather are driven by personal grievances.[549]

For the remainder of this paper, it examines evidence supporting the hypothesis that social isolation increasly makes individuals more susceptible to committing lone-wolf acts of violence such as mass shootings. The paper concludes by offering strategies to prevent individuals from succumbing to the dangers of social isolation on mental health and shares indicators that serve as early warning signs of a potential mass shooter.

Characteristics of Mass Shootings and their Perpetrators

The Violence Prevention Project represents the first comprehensive database of mass shooters, with data on 172 mass public shooters between 1966 to 2019.[550] The database shows that there has been an increase in mass shootings after 2000, with 20% of mass shootings being within the last 5 years. In addition to the number of mass shootings, the database also provides insight on the profile of mass shooters, covering the psychosocial history of 150 individuals, noting their demographic details, trauma, and mental health history. Individuals who engaged in mass shootings were noted as typically suffering from trauma, and many of them were in a state of crisis during the time of the shooting. Often indivuals are said to display increased levels of agitation, abusive behavior, isolation, out of touch with reality, depressed, experience mood swings, and paranoia. In the case of adolescent mass shooters, 92% of the cases were found to

---

[548] Ibid.

[549] Kate worth, "Lone Wolf Attacks Are Becoming More Common – And More Deadly," PBS, 2016, http://www.pbs.org.wgbh/frontline/article/lone-wolf-attacks-are-becoming-more-common-and-more-deadly/#:~:text=Over%20the%20last%2075%20years.

[550] "New Database Compiles Common Traits of US Mass Shooters." JURISTnews. JURIST Legal News & Research Services, February 5, 2022. https://www.jurist.org/news/2022/02/new-database-compiles-common-traits-of-us-mass-shooters/.

be suicidal. Although, many of the shooters were able to obtain their firearms legally, over 80% of adolescent shooters stole their guns from family members. Although Project predominantly focuses on adolescents, the mean age of mass shooters was 34 years old, caucasian men, with a prior history of violence or a previous criminal record. Over 35% of these assailants, for example, had a history of domestic violence as well. Although the database is able identify common traits amongst mass shooters, their motives often vary and are complex. Regardless, the database provides us with a critical tool to understand more about the individuals behind mass shootings to prevent future occurances.

Social Isolation, Disconnection, and Risk-taking Behavior During the COVID-19 Lockdown

After the World Health Organization announced in 2020 that the COVID-19 virus represented a global health pandemic, governments around the world, including the United States, issued stay-at-home orders for citizens as an attempt to slow down its spread. This strategy sent a shockwave of stress throughout the U.S. as nothing quite like it had ever been experienced in the past –being restricted to one's home without face-to-face interactions. Social connection and social interaction are basic human needs, comparable to other needs such as rest, food consumption, and physical exercise.[551] When one feels as though their social connections with one another and their community are insufficient, it can lead to a variety of long-lasting, negative consequences on their socioemotional development and mental health for years to come, especially in the case of adolescents. According to one study, 30% of young adults between 18-34 years old report feeling lonely daily or several times a week during the pandemic. [552] Additionally, the study found that the reduction of so-

---

[551] Xiong, Ying, Huilin Hong, Cirong Liu, and Yong Q. Zhang, "Social Isolation and the Brain: Effects and Mechanisms," *Molecular Psychiatry* 28, no.1 (2022): 191–201, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-022-01835w.

[552] Amy Orben, Livia Tomova, and Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, "The Effects of Social Deprivation on Adolescent Development and Mental Health," *The Lancet. Child & Adolescent Health* 4, no. 8 (August 1, 2020): 634–40. https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-4642(20)30186-3.

cial interaction outside of the household during the COVID-19 pandemic caused increased anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.[553] Social isolation also reportedly led many individuals to feel a sense of hopelessness or lack of concern for their own safety, and at the extreme leading to risky behaviour that can cause physical or mental harm, exposure to violence, gambling, sexually risky behavior, alcohol abuse, and illicit substance abuse.[554]

Already before the pandemic, research pointed to the dangers of prolonged social deprivation and the impact it can have on an individual's mental health.[555] 20-year-old Adam Lanza, for example, carried out a mass shooting December 14, 2012 at the Sandy Hook Elementary School, killing 26 children and teachers, his mother, and then taking his own life. Evidence that emerged from his case suggest that periods of unwarranted isolation contributed to Lanza's development of severe depression and frustration with his current life at the time. Consequently, this directly contributed to his developing the motivation to engage in risk-taking behavior such as the violent crime he committed.

When considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, social isolation effected multitudes of individuals, who also experienced extensive bouts of depression and frustration. The following section explores how research now points to the link between the sense of social isolation and increase of mass shootings.

Mass Shooting Occurrences Pre- and Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

Typically, mass shootings take place in large public spaces including cinemas, schools, concerts, and shopping malls. During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to public spaces were severely restricted due to lockdowns

---

[553] Ibid.

[554] Ibid.

[555] Ibid.

between 2020 to 2022. With the absence of public spaces, one would assume that mass shootings would have declined. However, a study focusing on data from the Gun Violence Archive between April 2020 and July 2021 found in 2020 alone there were 610 mass shootings reported, 196 more than in 2019.[556] City police departments in the U.S. are reported an increase in gun violence during the pandemic. For example, in Chicago, shooting incidents were up 64% in September of 2021 in comparison with the same period two years prior.[557] Increases have also been reported throughout 822 other cities.[558] Based on evidence presented by the Gun Violence Archive, there undoubtedly has been a rise in the prevalence of mass shootings since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020 and a spike immediately proceeding it in 2023.[559]

Is There a Connection?

Data collected from researchers since the COVID-19 pandemic shows both an increase in social isolation that resulted from the lockdown and an increase in gun violence such as mass shootings. These two instances took place concurrently once the stress of minimizing the spread of the virus sent the country into a national panic. Research conducted at Virginia Commonwealth University analyzed the psychological crises exhibited by 177 mass shooters and actively identified social isolation as the most prominent external indicator leading up to attacks.[560] Although other factors can contribute to the decline in mental health such as being bullied at school, financial instability, homelessness, etc... social isolation has been identified as the leading cause of a mental health crisis.

---

556 Lauren Mascarenhas, "Mass Shootings in the US Increased during the Coronavirus Pandemic, Study Finds," CNN US. Cable News Network, September 16, 2021. https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/16/us/mass-shootings-increased-in-pandemic/index.html.

557 Ibid.

558 Ibid.

559 Ibid.

560 McNeill, Brian. "Addressing Social Isolation May Be Key in Preventing Mass Shootings, Study Finds." VCU News. Virginia Commonwealth University, February 17, 2023. https://news.vcu.edu/article/2023/02/addressing-social-isolation-may-be-key-in-preventing-mass-shootings-study-finds.

Taking this into account, individual's facing a mental health crisis raises their susceptibility of adopting riskier behavior or committing violent acts such as mass shootings. Findings confirm that the social deprivation that took place during 2020-2022 directly contributed to the rise in mass shootings during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Preventing Social Isolation and Mass Shootings

Although it is not possible to directly prevent a mass casualty virus from having a prolonged effect on its victims, there are ways to prevent the negative consequences enacted on their mental and physical health. The lockdown enforced during the COVID-19 pandemic negativily inmpacted the mental health of many citizens of the United States due to social isolation. With the likelihood that there will be future pandemics, it is necessary to develop strategies to offset the effects of social isolation can have on the mental health of individauls. These include:

1. *Maintaining social interactions through technology.* As technology has become more prevalent within society, it has completely altered the way that people connect with one another. Certain social media platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Skype allow for people to stay connected in a multitude of ways.[561]
2. *Schedule time each day to stay in touch with friends and family.* Talking with an individual you trust either in person, on social media, or on the phone can strengthen and nurture relationships.[562]
3. *Take care of your basic needs.* It is important to exercise, eat healthy, and get enough sleep during times of crisis or periods of isolation. This can actively prevent one from developing depression, anxiety, or acute stress.[563]

---

[561] Hwang, Tzung-Jeng, Kiran Rabheru, Carmelle Peisah, William Reichman, and Manabu I. "Loneliness and Social Isolation during the COVID-19 Pandemic." PubMed Central. National Library of Medicine, May 26, 2020. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1041610220000988.

[562] "Loneliness and Social Isolation – Tips for Staying Connected." National Institute on Aging. National Institutes of Health, July 5, 2024. https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation/loneliness-and-social-isolation-tips-staying-connected.

[563] Ibid.

Approaching an individual proactively who is experiencing the effects of social isolation may prevent them from developing risk-taking behavior that typically creates violent acts. Intervening with an individual experiencing social isolation is one of many tactics used to actively prevent potential mass shooters from committing violent crimes. The Violence Prevention Project has identified multiple ways to intervene prevent a mass shooter from engaging in violence.[564]

1. *Paying attention to the risk of suicide.* As previously stated, around 92% of young adults from 1966 to 2019 who committed mass shootings were suicidal. It is important to intervene in instances of an individual displaying suicidal thoughts to prevent them from harming themselves and others.[565]
2. *Pay attention to indications of personal crisis.* of the perpetrators who committed mass shootings as reported in The Violence Prevention Project, more than 80% of these individuals had reached a crisis point before engaging in their violent act. It is important to notice signs of crisis such as agitation, depression, or social withdrawal in order to prevent further disaster from forming by offering help or asking for help.[566]

Conclusion

After analyzing existing research about the COVID-19 pandemic, evidence suggests that the government-forced lockdown in the United States caused a significant increase in feelings of social isolation within the nation. The enforcement of the stay-at-home order had detrimental effects on the socioeconomic structure of the United States through the development of risk-taking behaviors and poor mental health. Furthermore, this paper has demonstrated a strong link between the stay-at-home imposed lockdown in 2020 and the sequential rise in mass shootings thereafter. Future

---

[564] "Psychology Research Is Informing New Strategies to Reach People at Risk of Committing a Violent Act." *Empowering Communities to Prevent Mass Shootings 53*, no. 1 (2022): 22. Accessed July 5, 2024. https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/feature-empowering-communities.

[565] Ibid.

[566] Ibid.

research remains needed to better understand the relationship between social isolation and mass shootings and to determine which strategies are most effective in countering lone-wolf shooters.

Heading Right off the Cliff: How the Rise of Far-Right Politics Could Lead to The Fall of Western Alliances

Connor Liam JENSEN

Abstract: Within the last decade, far-right political ideologies have been increasing in NATO countries. The trends can be explained due to the rising cases of immigration, economic problems, and populism. By defining what makes up far-right ideologies, we can see that these ideas hold many isolationist ideas. In a global system, the concept of isolationism is detrimental to international alliances. By analyzing the policies that came out of the far-right in Hungary and the United States, it is clear that far-right ideologies contain isolationist ideas and beliefs. As a result, adversarial states can benefit from the weakened NATO states which may pave the way for more Russian influence in Europe.

Keywords: Radical and Extreme Right, Isolationism, Nationalism, Conservativism, Globalization

Introduction

The Western world has entered a tumultuous time of uncertainty and un-easiness with the current war in Ukraine occupying the minds of Europe and the United States. The ongoing support of Ukraine in its efforts against Russian aggression is remains in jeopardy. Within the United States, the 2024 Republican candidate for the presidency, Donald Trump, has

criticized giving aid to Ukraine. Trump has gone so far as to criticize Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and to call him "the greatest salesman of all time" stating "I will have that settled prior to taking the White House as president-elect."[567] These words are echoed through much of the Republican party within the United States as Trump's campaign continues to spout the same rhetoric. The rising right in the United States is also being matched within other Western countries. France had its far-right party, the National Rally Party, win nearly 31% of its parliament and take overall control of the French government. Germany, with their Alternative for Germany party, also gained significant seats within the German parliament. Far-right parties are gaining popularity amidst a tumultuous time in international politics, with many holding core nationalistic views along with ideas of isolationism.[568]

Far-right ideologies pose a threat to democracies everywhere; however, there is much more behind these ideologies and why they have spread so prevalently through much of Europe and the United States. With far-right ideologies becoming more mainstream within Europe and the United States, it is not far off to assume that international defense, partnerships, trade, and support to allied countries under conflict will suffer or cease to exist. Nations holding these beliefs are expected to be open to more foreign influence from adversarial nations. This paper seeks to first address to what extent is the rise in far-right politics in Europe and the United States affecting the existing partnerships and institutions. Moreover, it considers whether the rise of far-right policies within these nations positively affect adversarial nations like Russia. Before addressing these questions, it is essential to first identify and understand what makes up the far-right beliefs, policies, ideas, and institutions to more readily identify where they exist within other states across Europe and northern America.

---

[567] Jones Hayden, "Trump Threatens to Cut Us Aid to Ukraine Quickly If Reelected," *POLITICO*, June 16, 2024, https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-ukraine-russia-war-threatens-cut-aid-election-2024/.

[568] Jonathan Chang and Meghna Chakrabarti, "How the Far-Right Gained Traction in This Year's EU Elections," *On Point*, June 17, 2024, https://www.wbur.org/onpoint/2024/06/17/far-right-eu-elections-france-germany.

Describing and Identifying the Far-Right

The term "far-right" tends to bring specific images to mind in contemporary conversations, often evoking images of nationalist fervor, populism, and extremism. Throughout history, the term far-right has been used as a buzzword to explain a wide array of complex beliefs that many would deem to be harmful. To a degree, it is crucial to gather a specific understanding of what it means to be "far-right." The political umbrella definition of "far-right" can be used to refer to the populist, radical, and extreme variants of right-wing politics.[569] These extreme viewpoints have changed several times throughout modern history, dating back to the aftermath of the French Revolution, where seating arrangements in the National Assembly categorized political factions based on their support for or opposition to the monarchy. Those who sat on the left tended to harbor more liberal ideals, such as loosening the strict codes of the time and advocating for a change of the status quo. Meanwhile, those who sat on the right held more conservative ideals – wishing to maintain the status quo and keep to more "traditional" ruling values. This would lay the groundwork for the terms "left" and "right" to explain liberal versus conservative viewpoints.[570]

As time passed and more democracies rose in the Western world, so did the polarization and spreading of political identities. With the end of World War I, much of Europe was in shambles. Both political identities began to polarize into extremist ideologies, accumulating into what can be identified as far-left and far-right. In nations that suffered the most, such as Germany and Italy, people began to desire a strict, centralized leader who held conservative beliefs. Thus, when people gained power within these nations, they formed a more extreme version of the original conservative beliefs. Movements led by figures such as Benito Mussolini

---

[569] Azani et all, "The Far Right — Ideology, Modus Operandi and Development Trends." *International Institute for Counter-Terrorism,* (September 1, 2020):13-36. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30906.6.

[570] N.A, "History of Right-Wing Extremism" *Gale.* https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/political-extremism-and-radicalism/collections/history-of-right-wing-extremism.

in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany espoused ultra-nationalism, authoritarianism, anti-liberal, and a call for a return to their respective states' "power."[571] These movements sought to overthrow democratic institutions and establish dictatorial regimes that promoted racial purity and militaristic expansionism. Scholars and historians began using the term "far-right" to distinguish these radical, authoritarian movements from more moderate conservative and liberal factions. This rose to standard identifiers associated with far-right policies: a desire for a strong centralized authoritarian power, hyper-nationalistic beliefs, and isolation from other foreign countries. Even with the collapse of these far-right dictatorships during World War II, their core beliefs lived on through the Cold War Period through fringe groups and anti-communist policies.

After the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the post-communist era for politics, far-right ideologies began to grow within the increasingly polarized governments of the United States and Europe. Without the common enemy of the Soviet Union, these ideologies began to spread within conservative politics and fringe groups within these states. This led to a division between the far right, splitting off into two separate groups. The first was labeled as the Extreme Right, which held strong anti-democratic views and openly paraded beliefs of an authoritarian/fascistic state. This Extreme Right held very xenophobic views, along with a desire for extreme conservatism and hyper-nationalism. These beliefs are held mainly by outlying extremist groups, focused on spreading aggression, and are rarely involved in politics. The second form of far-right extremism is the Radical Right (or Populist Right). Radical rights hold more moderate beliefs than the extreme rights, which mainly focus on illiberal democratic beliefs. This mainly concerns traditional conservatism, nationalism, and a strong desire for isolation among the international community. This belief is more "sound" to many, so this belief has been more prevalent in state politics across the Western world. Radical-right collective actors reject the established sociocultural and sociopolitical

---

[571] William Pelez, "Economic Collapse and the Rise of Fascism, 1920–33." In A People's History of Modern Europe." *Pluto Press*, (2016): 127-141. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c2crfj.14

order and challenge the liberal foundations of contemporary advanced democracies. The radical right does not directly participate in autocratic overthrowing, while the extreme right openly wishes it to come to pass.[572] Because of this separation, the term far-right can be used to describe both subsets, with one being an extreme version and the other being the broader and more moderate accepted ideology. Radical right policies offer their own set of potential problems, mainly leading to slower-growing authoritarian regimes and democratic backsliding.[573] However, the main concern with both far-right politics is the concern and intensity of isolationism.

Isolationism comes hand-in-hand with conservative politics, especially within farther right politics. The term Isolationism was coined in the United States and held the concept of limiting economic and political outside connections. This policy was widely accepted in the early 20th century. However, this rhetoric of "let them handle themselves" was readily challenged by both World Wars and the following Cold War. After the Cold War ended, isolationism was once again on the political table and was co-opted into many conservative movements in Europe and the United States.[574] With many far-right political groups on the rise in Europe and the United States, it is crucial to analyze two Western states that have experienced far-right policies and see how each has reacted and / or may react on an international scale. By analyzing two examples, one can determine the effects of far-right regime's on a state's national and international standing with its enemies and allies.

---

[572] Andrea L Pirro, "Far Right: The Significance of an Umbrella Concept," *Nations and Nationalism* 29, no. 1, (June 27, 2022): 101–12, https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12860.

[573] Nancy Bermio, "On Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 1 (January 2016): 5-19. https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/on-democratic-backsliding/.

[574] Joseph S. Nye, "Is America Reverting to Isolationism?" *Project Syndicate*, September 6, 2023, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-republicans-dangerous-isolationism-by-joseph-s-nye-2023-09.

Case Study: The Hungarian Fall To the Right

Hungary has been through the geopolitical wringer for the last 30 years. Suffering greatly under the guise of the Soviet Union and emerging out of the collapse free to pursue its own political path. The Hungarian political system was relatively stable until the financial crisis of 2008 struck much of the globalized world. It was then that the typically centrist population of Hungary began looking for alternative forms of governance akin to more traditional conservatism and isolationism. They also were in need of a scapegoat and a central leader to swaddle them. In 2010, this pariah came in the form of the Fidesz party with its central leader Viktor Orbán. He and his party began steering Hungary towards a nationalist and conservative agenda. Orbán's government began implementing policies that emphasized far-right ideologies, economic nationalism, and skepticism towards European Union integration, positioning Hungary as a staunch defender of national sovereignty and traditional values. One of the primary pillars of Orbán's political strategy has been the vilification of other European liberal democratic values and institutions, portraying them as threats to Hungarian identity and sovereignty. The far-right shift in Hungary is also evident in the rise of extremist groups such as Jobbik, an extreme right group that touts ideas of being fed up with mainstream political parties, wanting law and order, and spreading xenophobic views targeting Roma and Jewish people.[575] In collusion with Jobbik, Orbán's government released a ten-point action plan to "fix" Hungary. This plan consists of: zero tolerance for "political crime," tax cuts and more jobs, banks should have to pay a higher tax to avoid a negative economic downturn, nationalization of the emergency sector to cut utility prices, higher taxes on multinationals, cut political pensions, social benefits should be paid if the recipient did public work, stop selling land to foreign citizens, install a gendarmerie to back up police for law and order, and give Hungarian citizenship to all of those who used to live in the Hun-

---

[575] András Bozóki, "Mainstreaming the Far Right. Cultural Politics in Hungary," *Revue d'études Comparatives Est-Ouest* 47, no. 04 (December 2016): 87–116, https://doi.org/10.4074/s033805991 6004046.

garian Empire.[576] As of 2015, all of these points have been enacted by Orbán's government, except for the first and ninth. Orbán's consolidation of power has raised concerns about the erosion of democratic norms and institutions in Hungary. The government's control over media, judiciary, and civil society has been criticized both domestically and internationally for undermining checks and balances essential for a functioning democracy.[577]

Due to these criticisms and imposed sanctions, the strong isolationist beliefs that were already present in Orbán's government became exacerbated. Instead of looking to amend things with the rest of Europe, they began looking toward strengthening their alliance with Russia. Even now, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Hungary remains neutral in condemnation. They still exhibit trade with Russia and have conducted talks with Putin and his regime to strengthen ties. Also, due to Hungary's isolation and membership within NATO, they have slow-walked Western sanctions, obstructed financial and military aid deals, impeded Sweden's path into NATO, and cast doubt on Ukraine's ability to defeat Russia.[578] Even with Hungary and its far-right policies acting as a thorn in NATO's side, its contributions pale in comparison if the United States would ever fall into the right.

Case Study: The Teetering United States

The United States bolsters the strongest military and the strongest economy in the world today. On the international plain, the United States exerts the most force and influence globally. Especially in the case of NATO and Europe, as the United States has been the primary supporter against

---

[576] Bernard Rorke, "The Rise of the Far Right and Anti-Gypsyism in Hungary," Open Society Foundations, April 12, 2010. https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/rise-far-right-and-anti-gypsyism-hungary.

[577] András L. Pap, "Democratic U-Turn, the Chronology of Building an Illiberal Democracy," *Democratic Decline in Hungary*, August 3, 2017, 11–34, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315168005-2.

[578] Alexandra Brzozowski and Petr Kozlov, "Hungary's Ties to Russia Make Europeans 'Increasingly Uncomfortable,'" Euractiv, February 1, 2024. https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/hungarys-ties-to-russia-make-europeans-increasingly-uncomfortable/.

Russian aggression within its bordering European countries. This has been the case since the end of World War II and has persisted since the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. After the fall of the Soviet Union, bordering nations sought out American protection and alliances with their Western neighbors out of fear of the alternative option. The late 1990s and early 2000s were the peak of NATO / United States hegemony. With this defeat of the Soviet Union, there was a growing sentiment of isolationism growing within the conservative branches of the United States. This all culminated in the 2016 presidential election, where the Republican party rallied behind the brash-speaking Donald Trump and helped incorporate these ideas into his campaign.[579]

Like Orbán in Hungary, Trump and his team ran on several radical right talking points like targeting political elites, using xenophobia, promising tax cuts, increasing law and order, and a solid slant to nationalism. He also garnered support from extreme right organizations like the Ku Klux Klan and other far-right extremist groups. Through his four years as president, he passed legislation giving tax cuts to the wealthy, hired loyal members of his circle into high government positions, and developed a cult-like following on the extreme right.[580] In many ways, the United States was faltering toward the far right. This can especially be seen in Trump's international strategy. During the beginning of his presidency, Donald Trump's approach to international affairs rallied under the belief of "Americanism, not Globalism." His America First agenda would prioritize national interests over interstate cooperation, being held by the overarching belief that the United States should "back down" as a leader on the global stage. This policy was characterized by unpredictability, unilateralism, and a departure from traditional diplomatic norms for the United States. This has led to significant shifts in U.S. foreign policy and global relations.[581] At face

---

[579] N.A., "Donald Trump presidential campaign, 2016." *Ballotpedia*, 2017. https://ballotpedia. org/Donald_Trump_presidential_campaign,_2016#:~:text=Focal%20points%20of%20Trump's%20 campaign,repealing%20financial%20and%20environmental%20regulations.

[580] Oliver J. Eric and Wendy M. Rahn, "Rise of the 'Trumpenvolk': Populism in the 2016 Election." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 667 (2016): 189–206. http://www.jstor. org/stable/24756150.

[581] James Curran, "'Americanism, Not Globalism': President Trump and the American Mission." *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, 2018. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19793.

value, these sentiments do not directly correlate with the tenets of iso-lationism but act as a gateway into it. To add to the growing strain on the established relations the United States already had, Trump and his in-ternational affairs committee began working on dismantling several inter-national agreements. When he took office, Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Accord, the Iran nuclear deal, the U.N. Hu-man Rights Council, and several international trade agreements. He also directly threatened NATO allies for not meeting defense spending targets and questioning the alliance's relevance in the modern era. On top of that, Trump began initiating agreements with Russia despite the threat it posed to the rest of Europe. All this put a heavy strain on relations with Europe, as they remained committed to upholding these agreements despite threats of United States withdrawal.[582] Seeing NATO's prominent supporter against foreign aggression slowly lose interest in their defense while buddying up with their adversarial nations like Russia, allied nations could only look on in growing concern. When Trump lost his re-election campaign, nearly all of the past international decisions were reversed under the new non-far-right administration. Some of the very first legislation passed by this new administration was the re-joining of the Paris Climate Accord and the UN Human Rights Counsil.[583]

The slow descending spiral of the United States' far-right policies was stopped for a time, letting NATO and other allied nations know that the U.S. was here to stay. However, Trump's handling of international affairs left a legacy of disruptive policies, strained alliances, and a reorientation of American priorities toward nationalism. At the time of writing (July 2024), the threats from these far-right policies are not out of harm's way yet, as the 2024 election cycle within the United States once again poses a threat to the recovering international system. As Trump continues gar-nering support in his campaign, he is beginning to falter more towards

---

[582] Iskander Rehman, "Rise of the Reactionaries: The American Far Right and U.S. Foreign Policy," *The Washington Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (October 2, 2017): 29–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660x.2017.1406706.

[583] N.A., "Factbox: With Strokes of Pen, Biden Overturns Trump Policies and Fights Covid-19." *Reuters,* January 29, 2021. https://www.reuters.com/article/world/us/factbox-with-strokes-of-pen-biden-overturns-trump-policies-and-fights-covid-19-idUSKBN29Y2QM/.

that of the extreme right and calling for more xenophobic legislation, suggesting the strengthening of the executive power and a focus on stronger nationalistic and isolationistic policies. As the war in Ukraine continues and is now dependent on Western aid to fend off direct Russian aggression, Trump has stated many times that he will "end the conflict" as well as review NATO's "uselessness" if re-elected.[584] With nations such as Hungary and the United States accepting more isolationist policies, and much of Europe now leaning towards their own far-right controversial interstate policies while weakening their international alliances, other authoritarian nations are benefitting from this strife, in particular Russia.

Similarities Under the Great Benefactor

Hungary and the United States offer a warning for much of Europe at large. As Hungary continues to succumb to the far right and act as a thorn in NATO's side, and the United States teetering towards the far-right, the adversarial nation of Russia benefits directly and indirectly. In the case of Hungary, Orbán has directly worked with Putin and his authoritarian regime amidst NATO's pressure to stop. Together, Russia and Hungary share common far-right political ideologies. Both are hyper-nationalistic, conservative and have a centralized leader with a political party that receives support from the extreme right. They also share the desire to "re-unite" with the old historical land that was "stolen" from them.[585] Although Hungary maintains a status quo in NATO, many allied countries uneasily view the country as playing on "both sides." Hungary has gone to great lengths so as to not upset Russia and maintain their trade relations.

In the case of the United States and its far-right political leaders, it remains unknown if there are any connections between Donald Trump and Moscow. However, Trump has indirectly aided Russia in their expansion through Europe, especially in the case of Ukraine. Evidence from several testimonies,

---

[584] Thomas Pepinsky, "The Return of US Isolationism," East Asia Forum, January 21, 2024, https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/12/24/the-return-of-us-isolationism/.

[585] Alina Polyakova, "STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: Putin and Europe's Far Right." *World Affairs* 177, no. 3 (2014): 36-40. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43555253.

for example, has emerged, stating that Trump, through his Attorney General Bill Barr threatened to withhold Ukrainian aid unless they assisted in finding "dirt" on Joe Biden and his son.[586] This, along with Trump's previous threats to cut support from NATO and its allies, has not only undermined Ukraine's efforts to protect its territorial integrity, but also emboldened Russia's plans to regain influence in territories it once controlled.

Under the Soviet Union, Russia was able to keep its iron grip on its fellow communist countries in Europe and prevent Western ideas and influence from gaining a stronghold. However, immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, many countries from the communist bloc fled from Russian dominance in favor of security in the West. Through the leadership of Vladimir Putin and his use of far-right policies, he has enabled Russia to consolidate its power, focusing on the protection of its "borders" by any means necessary to curb Western expansion. Through the use of nationalistic and religious fervor, Putin and the Kremlin have sought to unify Russia with its lost territories. Initially, Russia engaged in an indirect strategy of funding and supporting insurgent groups within bordering nations like Ukraine and Georgia.

However, Russia's war in Ukraine has emboldened it to engage more directly with far-right governments in Europe and the U.S. to serve its strategic interest to undermine Western unity and weakening institutions like NATO.[587] The Russian disinformation campaign also aids in undermining NATO through the spreading of misinformation on the internet and through falsifying information. This also plays a massive part in weakening NATO and other Western countries, as it is easier to exert influence if the population is divided.[588]

---

[586] Caitlin Oprysko, "Trump Pressed Ukraine's President to Work with Barr for Dirt on Biden." Politico, September 25, 2019, https://www.politico.com/story/2019/09/25/white-house-releases-transcript-of-trumps-call-with-ukraines-president-1510767.

[587] Michael McFaul, "What Are Russian Foreign Policy Objectives?," *Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center*, n.d., https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/1999/05/what-are-russian-foreign-policy-objectives?lang=en&center=russia-eurasia.

[588] Gregory Asmolov, "The Disconnected Power of Disinformation Campaigns." *Journal of International Affairs* 71, no. 1.5 (2018): 69-76. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26508120.

Conclusions

In the realm of European geopolitics, the West is entering a period of great unease. The rise of the far-right within the West poses a significant threat, not only to Ukraine, but other nations who actively rely on Western aid to defend their way of life. Far-right ideologies, based on isolationist and nationalistic views, also pose as a direct threat to Western democracies. If the United States succumbs to the rising right, along with the rest of Europe, there is a certain chance that NATO and other defensive treaties will fall apart. Countries like Ukraine, Poland, Finland, and Georgia will be forced to fend for themselves against any unchecked aggression.

Far-right ideologies give a false sense of safety in seclusion, while at the same time undermine strong democratic institutions and their ability to offset threats of foreign encroachment. Only with strong alliances like NATO can nations prevail against these threats – both inside and out to fight off foreign aggression. As the United States founding Father John Dickenson said, "United we stand, divided we fall." Only by being united in the West can we persist into the future.

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME AND ORGANIZED THREATS

Lead, Blood and Drugs: Trafficking in Eastern Europe During The Ukrainian War

Timothy HAM

Abstract: This paper analyzes drug trafficking in the Eastern Europe region. Since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war, drug routes and production have had to change dramatically all over Europe. This paper examines seizures and drug usage in Eastern Europe before and after the start of the war to understand how it has effected the criminal trade. The paper finds that the war has caused a strain in local and state law enforcement agencies during the huge migrant push post-war.

Keywords: Ukrainian war, Drug trafficking, Drug routes, Eastern Europe, Balkan route

Introduction

Drug trafficking in Eastern Europe is not only considered a law enforcement issue, but one that weakens public health, increases organized crime, and destabilizes communities. The region's strategic location and political vulnerabilities has made it a key battleground in the global fight against narcotics.[589] Since its inception, drug trafficking in Eastern Europe has con-

---

[589] "The Illicit Drug Trade through South-Eastern Europe." UNODC, March 2014, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit_DT_through_SEE_REPORT_2014_web.pdf.

tinued to flourish with its steady flow of cash and products for the groups of organized crime. It remains a thorn in the European government's side, with addiction and deaths due to overdose on the rise despite the number of traffickers arrested by European drug enforcement agencies and products seized.

Since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war, drug traffickers to have been forced to move their products. In response, policies and procedures constantly changing because of the instability of the entire region. This paper shares research and data gathered on drug trafficking before and during the war, suggesting that despite disruptions in routes, there has actually been a drastic increase in the amount of drug trafficking in all of Eastern Europe. This paper first begins with an brief historical overview of drug trafficking in Eastern Europe – its old routes, criminal organizations, and drugs of choice to traffic. Then the paper transitions, and provides an analysis on how the Ukrainian war has impacted these routes and sheds light on what is currently happening with them. The paper concludes by sharing the overall impact the increase in drug trafficking has had on the European Union, and discusses what procedures the EU and drug enforcement agencies have in place to try to prevent the trafficking of illegal narcotics.

History of Drug Trafficking in Eastern Europe

Eastern Europe has an extensive and very bloody past with drug trafficking since the collapse of the soviet union in 1991, whereby heroine, cannabis, and cocaine began flooding into the Balkan route. The European Union Drug Agency (EUDA) describes the Balkan route, which begins in Afghanistan, goes through Iran, Türkiye, and other Balkan countries, as "the shortest and most direct route to European consumer markets" where "heroin usually enters the EU at land border crossing points in Bulgaria or Greece."[590] The Balkan route became critical following the Russo-Afghan

---

[590] "EU Drug Market: Heroin and Other Opioids – Trafficking and Supply," EUDA, accessed July 7, 2024, https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/eu-drug-markets/heroin-and-other-opioids/trafficking-and-supply_en#:~:text=the%20EU%20market.

War, when Afghan organizations producing heroin begin sending sent shipments through Türkiye to Eastern Europe. Even the Mexican and Colombian drug cartels began sending cocaine overseas to countries like Türkiye via the Balkan Route. During the Soviet era, Russia drug mafia, played a key role in the distribution of heroin, cocaine, and other narcotics.[591]

Following the fall of the Soviet Union, drug mafia took advantage of the power vacuum left, and found ways of strengthening their ties and embedding themselves within these countries to start making a profit through the drug trade. The same criminal organizations have been at play ever since. However, new players have also entered the scene, such as the Triad and the Circle Gang, who have developed synthetic drugs and precursors to methamphetamine that they send to criminal organizations in Eastern Europe that are then combined with their own sources and distributed.[592]

In the early 2000s, the largest push for drugs came from the Taliban in Afghanistan, who until recently, were the largest producers of opium. While engaging in guerrilla warfare against the United States, they used their monopoly in opium to fund themselves, making immense profit, producing over 18,000 tons at its peak in 2011.[593] This continued till 2021, when the United States finally pulled out of Afghanistan. For the sake of sending a message concerning its image change, the Taliban, while establishing their new formal government, banned all opium cultivation and burned all of their poppy fields while simultaneously killing the main booster of their economy.[594]

---

[591] Rensselaer W. Lee and Scott B MacDonald, "Drugs in the East," *Foreign Policy*, no. 90 (January 1993): 89–89, https://doi.org/10.2307/1148945.

[592] David Luckey, "China's Role in Synthetic Opioid Trafficking: Efforts to Reduce Supply of Precursor Chemicals at the Primary Source," April 16, 2024, https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CTA3334-1.html.

[593] "Latest Findings and Emerging Threats," accessed June 27, 2024, https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Afghanistan_brief_Nov_2021.pdf.

[594] William Byrd, "The Taliban's Successful Opium Ban Is Bad for Afghans and the World." United States Institute of Peace, June 8, 2023, https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/06/talibans-successful-opium-ban-bad-afghans-and-world; Triad is a secret organization that controls all of the drug trade and organized crime in China; Circle Gang is a notorious and violent gang known for jewelry store robberies and heroin trafficking out of Hong Kong.

Following the dramatic change in the Taliban's drug hierarchy, the Chinese mafia have attempted to replace the opium production void along with other synthetic drugs. This has also been the case with drug cartels in South America that continue to send tons of their products to criminal organizations in Eastern Europe. A report on seizures from the United Nations shows that in 2008, for example, 124 tons of cocaine were seized just before entering Europe. Nevertheless, drug trafficking remains a thriving and lucrative market for criminal organizations involved.[595]

war began on February 24th, 2022 with a Russian advance on.[596]

Drug Routes Disrupted During the Russo-Ukrainian War

Since Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, drug routes have been compromised and disrupted due to troop movements, fortifications, and borders; their networks were displaced entirely. Previously, criminal organizations used the Balkan Route and the Northern Route to ship and smuggle their heroin, cannabis, and opioid products.[597] The Russo-Ukrainian war, however, has caused a major disruption to these routes as well as ports, and in some cases have been completely shut off.[598] For example, cocaine shipments from South America that previously passed through the port in Odesa, Ukraine and was stopped and seized due to military intervention.[599]

---

[595] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Drug Trafficking," accessed July 2, 2024, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html.

[596] "Background: Russo-Ukrainian War," Harvard University, accessed June 25, 2024, https://war.huri.harvard.edu/background/.

[597] "382 Arrests during Joint Actions against Traffickers Using the Balkan Route." Europol, accessed July 12, 2024, https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/382-arrests-during-joint-actions-against-traffickers-using-balkan-route#:~:text=Drug%20traffickers%20still%20utilise%20the.

[598] "EU Response to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," Council of the European Union, 2023, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/.

[599] Ruggero Scaturro, "AN ALTERED STATE EVOLVING DRUG TRENDS in WARTIME UKRAINE," *Global Initiative*, February 2024, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Ruggero-Scaturro-An-altered-state-Evolving-drug-trends-in-wartime-Ukraine-GI-TOC-February-2024.pdf.

Therefore, drug traffickers have had to initially push most of their inventory through their southern routes around the caucuses through Georgia and Azerbaijan.[600] However, as the war drags on, drug traffickers have found ways to once again make the Balkan Route their primary route by camouflaging their products and their mules alongside the massive flows of migrants to breach through the European Union's borders.[601] Trafficking networks use the destabilization in the region to their advantage.

Recently, INTERPOL has identified drug trafficking as a "top concern" throughout all of Europe, with unprecedented numbers of organized crime groups in the area, including the Russian mafia and other eastern European gangs.[602] Currently, the Global Index against Transnational Organized crime reports that there has been a drastic increase in the synthetic drug market, and show how the market has grown by 4.5 points from 2021 to 2023.[603] Research suggests that this spike is in part because of the increased drug use by Russian and Ukrainian soldiers placed on the frontlines for extended periods of time and who may be struggling with PTSD and anxiety on a daily basis.[604] Another study by the European Union Drug Agency also found that due to security vacuums concerning traffickers, there has also been a significant increase in the use of synthetic opioids in Moldova, Belarus, and Ukraine that have come through both the Balkan Route and Northern Route.[605] These two studies confirm that the current changes in routes due to this war have opened up a whole new market for

---

[600] Ruggero Scaturro, "DISRUPTION or DISPLACEMENT? IMPACT of the UKRAINE WAR on DRUG MARKETS in SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE," *Global Initiative*, July 2023, https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ruggero-Scaturro-Disruption-or-displacement-Impact-of-the-Ukraine-war-on-drug-markets-in-SE-Europe-GI-TOC-17-July.pdf.

[601] Ibid.

[602] "Europe: Drug Trafficking, Organized Crime Increasing by 'an Order of Magnitude,'" *Interpol*, May 8, 2023, https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2023/Europe-Drug-trafficking-organized-crime-increasing-by-an-order-of-magnitude; Mule refers to a person who transports illegal drugs.

[603] "The War in Ukraine Is Fueling Drug Use among Soldiers, Particularly of Synthetic Substances." *Global Initiative*, January 22, 2024, https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ukraine-synthetic-drugs-ocindex/.

[604] "Drugs on the front line: The War in Ukraine Is Fueling Drug Use among Soldiers, Particularly of Synthetic Substances."

[605] "EMCDDA Releases New Findings on Drug Markets in the Eastern and Southern European Neighbourhood Policy Regions," EUDA, November 21, 2022, https://www.euda.europa.eu/news/2022/9/emcdda-releases-new-findings-drug-markets-eastern-and-southern-european-neighbourhood-policy-regions_en.

these organizations. Lastly, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) states in their 2023 world report, "While the war in Ukraine has displaced traditional cocaine and heroin routes, there are signs that the conflict could trigger an expansion of the manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs, given the existing know-how and the large markets for synthetic drugs developing in the region.[606]." Despite initial setbacks, this paper had demonstrated how criminal organizations have actually thrived and increased sales during the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Impact and Procedures

Not only have sales increased, but death tolls. A study carried out by the EUDA reported that in 2023 alone, there was an estimated 22.5 million deaths in the European Union between the ages of 15 to 64.[607] This represents a significant increase from their study carried out in 2021, where there was an estimated 18.3 million drug-related deaths in the European Union.[608] The 4.2 million death increase within two years demonstrates how drugs are more prevalent among the European populous. Two main driving factors, as previously mentioned, are mass migration and PTSD in the region of Eastern Europe in countries like Ukraine. where people to try to escape their reality with narcotics.[609] The enormous increase in the production and usage of synthetic drugs, combined with fentanyl and fused with other drugs has caused a surge in addictions and overdoses, causing a public health crisis.[610]

---

[606] "UNODC World Drug Report 2023 Warns of Converging Crises as Illicit Drug Markets Continue to Expand," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, June 2023, https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2023/June/unodc-world-drug-report-2023-warns-of-converging-crises-as-illicit-drug-markets-continue-to-expand.html.

[607] "Drug-Induced Deaths – the Current Situation in Europe," EUDA, last modified June 11, 2024, https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/european-drug-report/2024/drug-induced-deaths_en.

[608] "Drug-Induced Deaths – the Current Situation in Europe,"; PTSD stands for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

[609] "Drugs on the front line: The War in Ukraine Is Fuelling Drug Use among Soldiers, Particularly of Synthetic Substances."

[610] Sarah Weber, "Eastern Europe's Looming Health Crisis," *Think Global Health*, July 27, 2023, https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/eastern-europes-looming-health-crisis.

The European Union has established a multi-step strategy to combat the influx of drugs spewing into the region. The first part of this strategy is to reinforce their ports by promoting cooperation between law enforcement agencies, customs, public and private agencies that help secure ports. The second stage is attempting to dismantle high-level criminal organizations by financing and supporting their law enforcement and prosecution to the best of their ability. Their third point connects to their second – to put in measures to prevent organized crime from functioning and thriving in the first place. The fourth and final part of the overall strategy is to cooperate and work with a foreign power, whether that be foreign companies or foreign nations, to take on the global threat of drug trafficking and to disrupt and stop these routes from working.

Fighting drug traffickers is now an EU top priority.[611] A statement from European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson reinforces this sentiment: "The continued escalation of synthetic drug production within the EU shows us the relentless drive by organized crime groups to profit from the illegal drugs trade, placing public health and security at risk."[612] With the procedures that have been given regarding criminal organizations in the drug trade in all of Europe, the steps put into place will help slow down the progress and money these organizations, like the triad and Russian mafia, are making off the destabilization in the region. With there being an estimated number of about a million seizures conducted in all of Europe in the year 2022, there is hope that this rapid increase in drug usage and drug trafficking will start to stave off as the European Union keeps trying to stabilize the surrounding regions. Still, only time will tell if their actions set into place will tip the balance.

---

[611] "New EU Roadmap Steps up the Fight against Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime," European Commission, October 18, 2023, https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-eu-roadmap-steps-fight-against-drug-trafficking-and-organised-crime-2023-10-18_en.

[612] "European Drug Report 2022: Trends and Developments," EUDA, June 14, 2022, https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2022_en.

Conclusion

Drug trafficking has been a very lucrative and efficient way of producing money fast for criminal organizations and terrorist groups for nearly a century. Eastern Europe is currently in a very volatile situation when it comes to drug prevention. Diverting the Balkan Route and The Northern Route during the Russo-Ukrainian war has so far failed because these organizations have found ways of working around it. Drug trafficking in Eastern Europe is here to stay as long as criminal organizations continue to make money from it. With the founding of new routes and ways of pushing their new, more addictive synthetic drugs through a war-torn Ukraine, there is a lack of exact procedure from eastern European governments to take on this ever-increasing threat. An increase in drug trafficking remains likely in this region unless there is a stronger push for change in Western Europe by its people and by its governments.

<div style="text-align: right; font-size: 3em;">2</div>

Post-Prigozhin Prognosis

Theodore BRANDENBERGER

Abstract: This paper offers a contemporary analysis of the Wagner group and its remnants' activities and structure in the aftermath of Evgeniy Prigozhin's failed coup attempt on June 23, 2023. The paper provides a broad history of the Wagner Group's origins and subsequent activities in conflicts across the globe and examines its current state post-coup, with a particular focus on Wagner's role in expanding the Kremlin's influence in Africa up until May 2024. As this paper discusses, the Wagner Group has served as a multifaceted tool of Russian hybrid warfare efforts that combine political, military, and economic activity into a powerful tool for wielding foreign influence.

Keywords: Wagner Group, PMC, PSC, CAR, non-state actor, deniability

Introduction

The Wagner Group and its remnants, allows the Russian state to exert influence abroad under the guise of deniability. Its structure and murky legal status create challenges for the international community and expose the dangers of empowering Private Military Company's (PMCs). This paper seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the Wagner Group, its history, its leader, how they evolved, how and why the coup happened, and provide insight on where they are at now.

One of the difficulties that the international community faces in persecuting and monitoring PMCs is the legal gray zone that they often exist

in. Under Russian law, PMCs are not legally recognized. Article 359 of the Russian Criminal Code prohibits "mercenarism," which makes Wagner and other groups alike illegal.[613] This illegal status provides Wagner with a double layer of deniability, as well as avoiding paying taxes to the Russian state. The illegal status that the current regime allows them to exist in is in stark contrast to the legalization and oversight efforts taken on by a majority of great powers involved in the international system. Major actors like the United States, China, France, and the United Kingdom are all signatories of the 2008 International Committee of the Red Cross Montreux Document on international good practices for PMC employment in armed conflict.[614] The Montreux Document, which was created to address the lack of oversight the United States had over the infamous Blackwater PMC in Iraq, sets expectations, monitoring, and oversight responsibilities for the use of these groups in order to prevent civilian atrocities and reputational damage to the states that employ them. Wagner, and by proxy, the Russian Federation, are not signatories of this international agreement and are not a legally recognized entity within the state either. This legal status allows the Kremlin to wash their hands clean of any Wagner atrocities abroad whilst enjoying all of the benefits of hiring a private military company that technically does not exist under their legal system.

The greatest of these benefits is the effectiveness of Wagner as a tool of Russian hybrid-warfare efforts, most notably within Africa, in the countries of Central African Republic, Sudan, Libya, Mali, and more recently Burkina Faso, where the Wagner Group/its remnants, is used in not only in military operations but also highly effective influence operations, troop training, arms and financial transfer, cyber operations, logistical support, and company security.[615] This multifaceted approach had enriched the late Evgeniy Prigohzhin and the Kremlin whilst preserving the rule of African despots and autocrats alike. Even after the coup attempt,

---

[613] Kimberly Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces: the case of the Wagner Group," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 35:3 (2019), 184.

[614] Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces," 185.

[615] Aleksander Olech, "The Wagner Group in Africa. The sham battle of Russian mercenaries against terrorism," *Przegląd Konstytucyjny*; *Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention*, no. 5 (2024), 277.

while the Wagner Group's role in Ukraine was immediately changed, the group remained prominent in Africa, with Prigozhin being seen at the Russia-Africa summit just shortly after the failed attempt.[616] The Wagner Group has been instrumental in directing the government and security forces of several African countries in a pro-Russian direction, shrugging off support from traditional "western" liberal intervention institutions. These trends continue even after Prigohzin's coup attempt, with new Russian non-state actors and PMCs, under tighter oversight and Russian state control, filling in the role that Wagner left behind.

Context/History of Wagner

The Wagner Group has existed under various iterations and did not truly come into formal existence until its use in Donbass in 2014-15. The earliest iteration of the PMC is a group known as Antiterror-Orel. Anti-Terror Orel, a private security firm registered in the city of Orel in 2005, began contracting for Russian business in Iraq, providing security for them. This was done legally, unlike the Wagner group, because Anti-Terror Orel was registered as a private security company, which, unlike private military companies, are legal under Russian law. This group drew on many former Russian special forces and military members who had experience and training. The formation of this group, along with others like it, was directly linked to the proliferation of PMCs and PSCs used by the United States in Iraq.[617]

Moran Security Group, an offshoot of the Anti-Terror Orel group, would break off from the PSC and begin locking in lucrative multi-million dollar anti-piracy contracts with Russian oil tankers, port facilities, and off-shore rigs. Some of their clients would include state-owned giants like Somkomflot, which is Russia's largest shipper of petroleum products. At the time, two Moran Security Groups existed, with one registered in Moscow and the other in Baghdad. The registering of a PMC/PSC in a foreign country was to

---

[616] Katja Lindskov Jacobsen and Karen Philippa Larsen, "Wagner Group Flows: A Two-Fold Challenge to Liberal Intervention and Liberal Order," *Politics and Governance*, vol. 12 (2024), 2.

[617] Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces," 182.

be exploited by other iterations of the Wagner Group. As the then Deputy General Director Boris Chikin explained, this allowed the PSC to operate in Iraq alongside the United States and its Coalition forces, who had been barred from doing business with Russian-owned companies. Moran first entered the public spotlight, and importantly the Russian news media in 2012, when nine of its security personnel were arrested in Nigeria, under charges of gun-running. The Russian foreign ministry would in turn negotiate a deal with the Nigerian government for Moran guards to be released on bail into the "custody and guarantee of the Russian embassy in Nigeria."[618] This is noteworthy because the Russian foreign ministry was directly involved in the release negotiations of private security company contractors protecting Russian state-owned interests abroad. This instance of connection between state and private company marked the beginning of a growing interdependence between the Kremlin and the mercenaries it employs, as well as an unraveling of the plausible deniability these groups originally provided.[619]

In 2013, Moran Security Group began recruiting Russian military veterans to a new group, called the Slavonic Corps. The Slavonic Corps, headquartered in Hong Kong rather than Russia, were established to maintain control of oil facilities in eastern Syria, which at the time were under attack from Islamic State militants. The group's performance was lackluster, and after several contractors were wounded when their convoy was attacked, a contingent of this force were sent back to Moscow. There they were met by the FSB, who interrogated and released the contractors, but arrested and sentenced Vadim Gusev and Yevgenii Sidorov under article 359 for mercenary behavior. Gusev and Sidorov were owners/operators of Slavonic Corps/Moran. To this day, it is unclear why the FSB persecuted these two men, especially since their contract was with a Russian state ally (Al Bashar Syria); an "FSB reserve officer was the official point of contact and he was not arrested, and the Slavonic Corps had apparently landed at the Russian military airfield in Latakia upon their arrival in Syria."[620] This peculiarity

---

[618] Ibid., 190.

[619] Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces," 190.

[620] Ibid., 191.

serves an important purpose: it demonstrates that the Russian state can and will persecute PMCs or PSCs as mercenaries, and is able to define what a mercenary is under its own legal framework.

In 2014, the origins of the Wagner Group morphed one final time into the infamous PMC it is known as today. With no evidence of the group being officially registered in Russia, or anywhere else for that matter, this PMC was clearly established for doing more than protecting oil infrastructure or shipping lanes. A former member of Moran Security Group and the Slavonic Corps, Lt. Colonel of the Reserves Dimitri Utkin, became the commander of the newly created Wagner Group in the Donbas. Utkin, a veteran of the GRU, earned Wagner its namesake, as he was described to be a "follower of the aesthetics and ideology of the Third Reich'' who, while fighting in Eastern Ukraine, would wear a "Wehrmacht-style steel" helmet. This presents another small, but not insignificant contradiction to Putin's "we are fighting Nazis" narrative. Contradictions aside, the Wagner Group would prove to be instrumental in securing Crimea and Eastern Ukrainian territories in the years before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Russian state, which at the time claimed no involvement in the separatists movements in Eastern Ukraine, needed a mercenary force to quell the infighting amongst the various rebel commanders in the region. At its origins, the Wagner Group gave the Russian state plausible deniability while helping to establish a pro-Kremlin order abroad.[621]

Evolution

In the same year that the Wagner group was created and dispatched in Eastern Ukraine, its forces reared their ugly heads in Syria once again; then Sudan, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Libya, Mozambique, Mali, and most recently Ukraine. Since its creation, the contracting group has served an integral role in strengthening Russian influence abroad, through a variety of military and security roles. Wagner has always been strongly intertwined with the Russian military and intelligence apparatus, by the

---

[621] Marten, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces," 192.

objective it aims to achieve, its funding sources, origins of its command structure, and the personal relationships, all emblematic of Putin's Russia that allowed the technically illegal group to survive. Prigozhin, the group's former leader, a convicted felon turned hotdog seller, restaurateur, caterer, turned military contractor, climbed the success ladder of the Russian oligarchy with a swiftness reserved only for the *siloviki* of Putin's inner circle. Prigohzhin and Putin became intertwined in the early 1990s, a time when post-collapse Russia was wrecked economically and organized crime proliferated, while coincidentally, Putin was deputy minister of St. Petersburg. This close-knit relationship between Putin and Prigohzin is indicative of the "semi-state" nature of this supposedly non-state actor. Additionally, by remaining illegal and unconstitutional under Russian law and by not being legitimized or prosecuted by Putin or the Duma (and attempts have been made), Wagner and its larger than life former leader were entirely reliant on the good grace and protection of Putin and his regime.[622]

Throughout its history and evolution towards the Wagner of today, the group has taken on a variety of roles. Most commonly, the group is employed as a relatively unskilled infantry tasked with supporting regular Russian or the foreign military forces they contract for. In the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian War, this expendable and unskilled infantry proved instrumental in the 2023 seizures of Soledar and Bakhmut, in particular due to the staggering troop losses Wagner was willing to sustain. These Wagner troops, many of whom were freshly recruited convicts, allowed the Russian state to utilize the undesirable elements of their population in pursuit of their war aims, all facilitated by Prigohzhin. These undesirables also serve a role in intimidating and committing extrajudicial acts of violence, interrogation, and coercion against local leaders and, as seen in the massacres in Bucha, innocent civilians. In whatever part of the world they are deployed to, Wagner leaves behind a trail of atrocities and human rights violations with scores of civilians tortured, killed, and raped.[623] This thuggish behav-

---

[622] Kimberly Marten, Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Carisa Nietsche, Nicholas Lokker and Kristen Taylor, "Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia," *Center for a New American Security,* December (2023), 4.

[623] Kimberly Marten et al., "Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia," 4.

ior is an intentional tool that the Kremlin uses to reinforce its aims abroad. By utilizing non-state actors like the Wagner Group to carry out acts of violence and intimidation the Kremlin is/was able to circumvent international law and distance themselves from these acts.

In almost every country but Ukraine, the Wagner Group becomes an instrumental component of the contracting country's military leadership and security infrastructure. From providing training to local forces and participating in command structure, instructing on the operation of Pantsir S-1 air defense systems, to providing palace guards for local leaders, the Wagner Group became deeply embedded in the security and military ecosystems of these countries.[624] The Russian ex-special forces that the group draws its members from, are not the most elite in the world, but are certainly combat-tested and effective in the regions they now fight in. Russian military doctrine, as has recently been proven, is also not the best in the world, but is more than capable everywhere but Ukraine, especially when it comes to fighting small-scale insurgents and rebel groups. More than anything, it is not Wagner weapons being sold or a Wagner doctrine being spread, but a Russian one. As the countries in Africa and the Middle East choose a development future under Russian/Chinese authoritarianism and reject "Western" liberal intervention, groups like Wagner facilitate this transition towards Russia by proxy.

Wagner, however, is not only a tool for achieving military aims. In the foreign countries that Wagner enters, in particular its African theater, the group has orchestrated everything from influence campaigns to political negotiations. In the Central African Republic (CAR), for example, ex-GRU representatives facilitated negotiations between the Central African government and the rebel forces vying for control of the country. Elsewhere, Prigohzhin and his fighters seized valuable gas and mineral extraction sites, often through lucrative state-sanctioned mining and petroleum protection contracts or as payment for their services. While not all such sites have proven to be profitable, gold mines in Sudan and the Central African Republic have provided the Wagner Group and Prigozhin with considerable

---

[624] Ibid., 4.

funds, many of which were funneled into Kremlin coffers, bypassing US sanctions on Russian participation in the gold market. While some of these seizures did provide a valuable avenue for enrichment, many of them served a greater geopolitical purpose for Russia, a country that is not exactly starved of natural resources. For example, the oil and gas assets owned and protected by Wagner and a Prigozhin subsidiary in Syria were a drop in the bucket compared to the output of Russia's petrochemical capacity; however, they provided the Kremlin with a long-term foothold on Syrian territory and served as a bargaining chip against Iranian ambitions in the region.[625]

Social media influence campaigns have also been a component of the Russian state's use of Wagner's multifaceted capabilities. Following the same model utilized by the employees of Prigozhin's Internet Research Agency (IRA), influence campaigns are disseminated to the often low-media literacy populations of the countries it occupies. The St. Petersburg based organization has been indicted by the U.S. Justice Department for its use of social media influence campaigns in the 2016 American presidential elections.[626] These campaigns employ a variety of misinformation and disinformation tactics to sway a nation's citizenry towards a pro-Russian direction. Oftentimes, and much to the concern of Western governments and international observers, they target the West through narratives that emphasize Russia's historical involvement in national liberation and decolonization movements in Africa. And so far, this has been working. In countries like Libya, Mali, as well as the Central African Republic, Wagner and its subsidiaries wield their influence to get loyal politicians and bureaucrats into office. In fact, the pro-Russian sentiment that is drummed up in these campaigns is so strong that at times French security forces and business interests are driven out in favor of Wagner/Russian alternatives.[627]

Wagner has evolved through various iterations of its history from a mostly legitimate small-scale private security firm to a multifaceted, half-state,

---

[625] Marten et al., "Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia", 4.

[626] Ibid., 7.

[627] Ibid., 4.

half-non-state actor, proxy force of the Russian state. While always inter-twined with the military and intelligence services that so many of its members are drawn from, Wagner has transitioned to a direct extension of the Russian state/foreign policy apparatus. They are able to combine military, economic, and political power to create desirable incomes for the Kremlin abroad. Unlike in Ukraine, where Wagner mostly filled in the gaps of the Russian military, in Africa they play an entirely different role.

June 2023 Coup Attempt

On June 23, 2023 Evgeniy Prigohzhin and his men initiated a "march for justice" that saw thousands of Wagner soldiers in military vehicles and tanks leaving their bases in Eastern Ukraine and heading towards Moscow. As the group of Prigozhin-led mutineers exited Ukraine, they took posses-sion of government buildings in recently occupied territories in Eastern Ukraine, most notably the headquarters of Russia's Southern Military Dis-trict in Rostov-on-Don, where they were met with no resistance, prompt-ing speculation of highly probable support from within the Russian mili-tary. Social media footage of the incident showed some people cheering in the streets and taking pictures of the fighters, while posters online ex-pressed real or ironic support for Prigozhin, a major blow for the Kremlin's otherwise astute internal policing. The Wagner convoy was able to make it within 200km of Moscow, along the way killing 13 military aviators and shooting down several helicopters and command aircraft along the way. Yet, the convoy decided to stop and, despite betting all of his proverbial chips, Prigohzhin was seemingly granted another chance. Within hours of the attempted mutiny Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko an-nounced the brokering of a settlement allowing Wagner to retreat back to Eastern Ukraine and relocate to Belarus.

The coup attempt marked the culmination of a months-long public bat-tle between Prigohzhin and the Russian Ministry of Defense, whose ongo-ing disputes began as early as 2017, with earlier incidents related to the withholding of weaponry and logistical support or the public disavowing

of Wagner by the Ministry of Defense.[628] Throughout 2022 and leading into 2023, Prigohzhin's relationship with the Ministry of Defense soured, particularly with former Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov, while his greatest ally and interlocutor within the ministry was Sergei Surovikin, former Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Aerospace Forces. After mediation attempts between the parties failed following Prigohzhin's criticism of the Ministry of Defense's war efforts, Shoigu ordered Wagner forces to sign contracts with the Ministry of Defense or disband, prompting the "march for justice." When publicly announcing this march, Prigozhin, through various affiliated media channels, would demand the removal of Shoigu and Gerasimov while disavowing Putin's narrative for the war. Prigozhin categorically denied the Kremlin's rationale for the full-scale invasion, dispelling ideas of Ukraine planning an attack on Russia with US/NATO support, or that NATO enlargement threatens Russia, and importantly denied the notion that Ukraine needed deNazification. In fact, besides dispelling the foundational narratives of his country's war effort, he would go so far as to say that Putin had been deceived by his inner circle/Ministry of Defense, starting the war under false pretenses.[629]

Post-Coup

In the two months following Prigohzhin's failed march on Moscow, the world looked on in hushed anticipation, as the mutineer appeared to travel freely in and out of Russia. A few weeks after the fact, Russian state TV aired a video of Prigozhin and Utkin encouraging Wagner troops relocated to Belarus to cooperate with their new hosts. Approximately a month after the attempt, he was seen in St. Petersburg, meeting with African diplomats at the Russia-Africa summit, while cell phone video of the late leader saw him reassuring Wagner troops of coming deployments to Africa. Yet, as many scholars of Russia already understood, Prigohzhin's fate had already

---

[628] Marten et al., "Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia", 7.

[629] Marten et al., "Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia", 7.

been sealed. In Putin's first public address following the coup, an emergency television broadcast no less, he appeared shaken and condemned Prigozhin and company's actions, drawing parallels to the Russian Revolution, when the Russian Empire was forced into withdrawing from World War I due to the internal instability within the state. Putin, went so far as to label Prigohzin a traitor. It is hard to understate the significance of being labeled a "traitor" under Putin's regime. The lifeblood of the regime, and the inner circle of *siloviki* dependent on its survival, requires only unwavering loyalty to the man at the top, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin. Although occasionally corruption or poor performance is punished, the current war in Ukraine has shown, addressing these inefficiencies is not a top priority for the Ministry of Defense. It was irrelevant that Prigozhin, a convicted felon with no military experience, was commanding critical offensives in a major war or that his forces had committed scores of atrocities and filmed themselves executing POWs with sledgehammers. [630] Putin was able to overlook these, as long as Prigozhin fulfilled his need for a (technically) non-state private actor who could deliver the results he was looking for, no matter the body count. However, publicly turning against the state, to take up arms against it and publicly disavow the leadership of the armed forces and the official narrative they fought under proved utterly unforgivable in Putin's Russia.

For Putin, who has publicly indulged in many convoluted historizations and disconnected narratives, one thing remains consistent – a desire to keep Russia whole and regain the territories it had lost, to not let it splinter off due to internal struggle, as had been seen following the Bolshevik Revolution or the dissolution of the USSR. For Putin, the preservation of the regime and the state it controls is imperative to his and Russia's survival. The attempted coup dealt a staggering blow to Putin, and in the national address given to the Russian people following the event, Putin appeared shaken and unable to retain the unbothered, steely composure he is known for. The relatively young Russian Federation, after all, had not experienced

---

[630] Felip Daza Sierra, Carlos Diaz Bodoque, Anhelina Hrytsei and Mathilde Veronique Machteld Romeo, *Wagner Group Unchained in Ukraine: Military, Political and Human Rights Impact of the Wagner Group Since the Large-Scale Invasion in 2022* (Novact, 2023), 47.

an armed rebellion of this level since the 1993 Constitutional crisis and the more recent Chechen Wars of the 1990s and 2000s.[631] Two months after the attempted mutiny, Prigohzin would face his fate, after his private plane crashed on a flight between Moscow and St. Petersburg. Reportedly there were no survivors, with Prigozhin, Utkin, and key Wagner figures on board.

What started as a small, mostly legitimate firm, that, while inexplicably intertwined with the Russian military/intelligence apparatus, guarded corporate interests abroad soon evolved into a beast its master could no longer control. Wagner, and by proxy the Russian State, enjoyed operating in the shadows, until 2018 when public scrutiny from international observers began to undo the plausible deniability the group had maintained. Following the disastrous Battle of Khasham, which saw a large force of Wagner and Syrian fighters attack a much smaller force of United States military in Kurdish controlled Syria, the Wagner Group entered the spotlight. This international incident, in which hundreds of Wagner fighters were killed by US airstrikes, forced the Duma and Putin to publicly address these events. In official statements Russia would deny any involvement in the incident, and during the Battle of Khasham the Russian military, using their deconfliction line with the United States would confirm that there were no Russian soldiers present. However, the damage had already been done for the Kremlin: as the West, international governing organizations, and investigative journalists, aided by open source intelligence, turned their focus toward Wagner, the plausible deniability the group had fostered was now much less plausible.

With the loss of most of its plausible deniability and an increase in international attention, Wagner began moving towards a more public persona. Starting in 2018, the group began openly recruiting on Russian social media platforms. This would also begin the group's building of Wagner affiliated social media channels, used to disseminate pro-Wagner/Russian narratives, recruit fighters, and report on battlefield achievements. After the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, Wagner's recruiting billboards

---

[631] Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, "Moving Out of the Shadows Shifts in Wagner Group Operations Around the World" (2 August 2023), 17.

began cropping up in Russian cities and towns. When filming his infamous prison recruitment video, Evgeniy Prigohzin, who up until that point ostensibly denied having any involvement in the Wagner Group, going so far as to pursue legal action against those who accused him of it, revealed himself publicly as the group's commander in chief. Wagner also began openly pulling recruits from abroad, in countries sympathetic to Russian narratives, like Serbia, or from destitute Central Asian labor migrants seeking a living in Russia. Foreign nationals from the Middle Eastern and African countries which Wagner operates in can also be seen on the battlefields of Ukraine, or rotated to WG's other foreign engagements.

Conclusion

To what extent the Wagner group still exists and operates in activities around the globe remains unclear. Formally, the group no longer exists, as it has ostensibly been absorbed into the Russian Ministry of Defense. With that being said, the Kremlin is not relinquishing the valuable influence Wagner built for it in Africa, nor can it afford to quit using small non-state actors with its regular uniformed forces under such constraint in the face of the full-scale war in Ukraine. The very structure of Wagner and Prigozhin affiliated shell companies were intentionally designed to create a complex web of entities that would leave the group hard to track and difficult to blame. The non-state actors stepping in to replace Wagner's role and the Russian military intelligence apparatus that supports them are intentionally designed to be secretive and unknown to the public. In the African countries where Wagner has seen its greatest success as a multi-pronged tool of Russian hybrid warfare, rather than the more simplistic supplementation of regular Russian uniformed troops it provided in Ukraine (post full-scale invasion) and Syria, the activities of the group or its remnants are especially murky.

The African countries Wagner/its remnants remain in are undeveloped, with little to no protections on freedom of speech for anyone speaking out. Investigative journalists are unable to or unwilling to risk their lives

reporting on Wagner/its remnants. In 2018 three Russian investigative journalists were shot and killed while trying to make a documentary about Wagner's presence in the Central African Republic[632], while other journalists reporting on the group experienced the now familiar fate of "falling out of a window." Foreign agent laws, targeting of Western journalists within Russia, and the 2018 decree signed by Putin that classified as secret all information about those "cooperating with the foreign intelligence [services] of the Russian Federation who are not employees"[633] creates even further challenges for finding reliable corroborated sources or peer reviewed academic writing on the group's activities following the coup. There are no official statements from the Russian state on what Wagner is or has become nor have any other PMC's speculated of filling in the gap left behind by Wagner, publicly announcing their involvement in doing so. No real information exists besides from speculation, uncorroborated primary sources, and unverified social media postings.

What is apparent, however, is remnants of the Wagner group and the services it provided are here to stay. This was indicated by an ACLED report on Wagner operations in Africa, which demonstrated an increase in violent events involving the Wagner group in Mali and the Central African Republic from the averages of the previous year, even after the June 2023 mutiny.[634] As stated previously, the African theater is the most successful of Prigohzin's ventures, and the Russian state will be sure to supplement Wagner with the more than twenty lesser-known semi-state private security/military companies residing in Russia. Already, competitor groups like Redut, Convoy, and Russian commercial giants like Roscosmos and Gazprom are investing heavily in their own PMC organizations, while the semi-official and unofficially confirmed rebrand of Wagner to Africa Corps has supposedly taken place, marked by the groups Telegram posting of images from a deployment in Burkina Faso on January 24, 2024. This alleged

---

632 Martin, "Russia's use of semi-state security forces," 187.

633 Ibid.," 184.

634 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, "Moving Out of the Shadows Shifts in Wagner Group Operations Around the World" (2 August 2023), 3.

rebrand is another small but not insignificant contradiction to Putin's "we are fighting Nazis" narrative; as African Corps plays on the name of the Nazi expeditionary force used in the North African campaign of WWII, the Afrika Korps. Despite the weakness of the Russian state that the June 2023 coup attempt exposed, there has been no indication of reluctance to continue working with Wagner/other Russian PMCs by Russia's African partners. In the CAR for example, where new Wagnerites came into the country a month after the coup attempt to secure the power of its president amongst a controversial referendum, Fidele Gouandjika, a senior advisor in CAR's presidential administration, would famously say: 'If it's not Wagner anymore and they send Beethoven or Mozart, it doesn't matter, we'll take them."[635]

Prigohzin may be gone but the model created by Wagner is not going anywhere. As evidence grows of newly formed or already established semi-state actors, with a non-state actor facade, replacing Wagner in its operations abroad, it is clear that only the name will change. Russia as a state, does not have the economic output to compete in Africa with other world powers like the EU, America, and China. Because of these limitations, and in lieu of the competitive advantage gained by utilizing technically non-state actors by Russia, the usage of PMCs by Russia will likely increase. This worrisome trend will create future challenges for international governing bodies, especially within the UN where Russia holds a permanent seat. The biggest difference between Wagner and the emerging actors of today is the public persona that Evgeniy Prigohzin was allowed to cultivate. A public figure of his caliber will not be allowed to emerge again in Putin's Russia and future PMCs will face much tighter control and oversight by their overseers in the Kremlin. While the character of Evgeniy Prigohzin, with his wild transformation from convict to oligarch to leader of a mutiny against the state that created him, will be hard to forget, it most certainly will not be allowed to happen again. The legend of Prigozhin and his Wagner group offer a cautionary tale to regimes across the globe on the dangers

---

[635] Kimberly Marten, "Whither Wagner? The Consequences of Prigozhin's Mutiny and Demise," *Survival* 65: 5 (2023), 53.

of over-empowering proxy groups, who with their own agendas can wreak havoc on the internal politics of the employing state, while showing just how effective a group of its caliber can be in exerting influence through a multidimensional political, military, and economic approach.

POLICY, TECHNOLOGY, AND LINGUISTICS

Language Policy to LLMs

Michael STEWART

Abstract: Historically, language policies have been tailored to the dominant power, i.e., Russian in Ukraine and French in Vietnam. However, in today's new age of globalization, the AI space has allowed this type of linguistic imperialism to occur in cyberspace. This paper explores why states developing their LLMs based on their respective national languages is critical and becoming more AI-dependent.

Keywords: Eastern Europe, LLMs, language policies, artificial intelligence

Introduction:

If states want to become less dependent on governmental organizations, stand on their own, be competitive in the scientific space, and eventually lessen the current bipolarity between the United States and China in both military prowess and scientific innovation, they must enter the AI space, which calls into question the usage of LLMs.[636] While it is possible to develop a universal LLM, capable of processing data in every language, it would require the establishment of a universal consensus, something for the time being remains unrealistic. For the time being, states must take matters into their own hands and develop models based on their official languages.

---

[636] Mara Karlin. "The Implications of Artificial Intelligence for National Security Strategy." *Brookings Institution*, November 1, 2018, www.brookings.edu/articles/the-implications-of-artificial-intelligence-for-national-security-strategy/.

This paper uses the cases of Poland and Latvia to show two different circumstances in similar proximity to one another regarding how language policies evolve and their current LLM development projects. Although other countries, such as Kazakhstan[637] could have been used, this paper focuses on Poland and Latvia since they are in the same geographical area. However, this paper asserts that the findings could apply to all states vying for influence in the digital space: the primary point of analysis is the bridge between language policy and how that shapes current efforts or lack thereof for developing LLMs in their national languages.

Soviet-era Language Policies And Their Aftermath

Language policies refer to the collection of "Official government decisions regarding the use of language in the public domain, including courts, schools, government offices, and health services".[638] In the case of the Soviet Union, its language policies were dominated by Russian. Despite the tremendous ethnic and linguistic diversity that existed within the Soviet Union, Moscow created a system of affirmative action within the empire that allocated more resources to areas where it deemed its inhabitants "backward" to promote Russification. A feedback loop between public opinion and governmental policy promoted this minority ranking system, feeding off of one another.[639] Attempts, nevertheless, were made by certain ethnic groups to preserve their culture and hold, for example, courses in their local language instead or alongside of Russian.

However, this policy was not fairly carried out throughout the entire USSR. Latvians, for example, were perceived as more civilized than Kazakhs, and were therefore allowed more leeway in terms of the preservation of their

---

[637] "Elevating Kazakhstan's AI Capabilities: Issai's Transformation and Ambitious Kazakh Large Language Model Project." *ISSAI*, 31 May 2024, http://issai.nu.edu.kz/2024/05/31/elevating-kazakhstans-ai-capabilities-issais-transformation-and-ambitious-kazakh-large-language-model-project/.

[638] UNESCO, *Education for all: literacy for life* (UNESCO 2006).

[639] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Cornell University Press, 2017).

culture, including language.[640] Kazakhs underwent many reforms to its orthography and vocabulary. Many Turkic languages adopted the Cyrillic alphabet and drew words from Russian, i.e., *кошмар (koshmar)* means "nightmare" in both Russian and Kazakh, but most borrowings from Russian in various languages were those politically correct phrases of the time produced by Moscow that dealt with promoting socialism and demonizing capitalism.[641] After some republics gained national independence in 1991 post-dissolution of the USSR, there have been several governmentally-led counter policies that breathed new life into national cultural consciousness in these new states, such as the proposal in Kazakhstan to change the Kazakh alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin. This was fueled in part by the diminishing ethnic Russian majority population in many post-Soviet states that were replaced by the majority local ethnic groups.[642] Central Asian and Eastern European post-Soviet states have vastly different relationships with the Russian language, the latter having a better connection with the West primarily due to the geographic positioning and preexisting aversion towards the Soviet regime.

Latvian Language Policies

Nationalism played a large part in the breaking away from the Soviet Union and helped these former republics in the process of becoming independent; Latvia was no exception. Nationalism serves as a helpful tool, especially when dealing with the trials and tribulations that came with the events of the 1990s.[643] The new Latvian State Language Law of 1999 was a product of this sense of nationalism. Apart from Russian, the new instated Law came at the expense of other minority languages, such as Livonian, since only Latvian was recognized as the national language in public life.

---

[640] "Soviet Policy on Nationalities, 1920s-1930s," *UChicago Library*, accessed on July 2, 2024, www.lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/soviet-imaginary/socialism-nations/soviet-policy-nationalities-1920s-1930s/.

[641] Alex Krouglov, "Language planning and policies in Russia through a historical perspective," *Current Issues in Language Planning* 23, no.4 (2022): 412-434, DOI: 10.1080/14664208.2021.2005384

[642] Krouglov, "Language planning and policies in Russia through a historical perspective."

[643] Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

The newly instated language policy included the respelling of names, such as foreign surnames that were forced to change to fit to the local alphabet's orthography, i.e., "Mentzen" became "Mencena" after a Latvian citizen married a German. This phenomenon, however, is not unique to Latvia, as many immigrants, especially those coming from Asia, in the past and even in some cases still today, when migrating to the United States, have adopted "Western"-sounding names to fit in better.[644] This has also been apparent throughout Russian history, starting with the Russian Empire, where the practice of name change has been and continues to be commonplace, i.e., most non-Russian surnames end in -v/-va (male/female), and many have adopted the patronymic middle name custom.[645] However, these norms have been in place for decades and, in many areas, have diminished, whereas, in Latvia, this is a relatively new practice.

To illustrate one example, where the Latvian policy was taken to the extreme, a school teacher by the name of Ms. Antonina Ignatane – a Latvian citizen but Russian native speaker, decided to run for office in her community in Latvia. The State Language Board (SLB) decided to remove her name from the candidate list due to her not speaking Latvian well enough, even though she met the official standards: a level three proficiency score, which she could prove through the certificate she received from the SLB. She appealed and was subject to an examination, which was unexpectedly carried out while teaching her German class. This was one of the cases that caused the Latvian parliament (Saeima) in 2002 to revoke the language proficiency requirement and replace it with an oath elected officials must say that promises to promote the Latvian language.[646]

In 2012, The National Alliance petitioned to establish Latvian as the only language used in schools. However, this was widely unpopular and did

[644] Mary Chao,"What's in a Name? For Asian Immigrants, a Chance to 'Assimilate or Vanish,'" *North Jersey Media Group*, NorthJersey.com, 28 May 2021, eu.northjersey.com/story/news/2021/05/27/hidden-history-behind-asian-americans-anglicized-names/4892915001/.

[645] Aleksandra V. Superanskaja, "Eastern Slavic Names". *1. Halbband: Ein internationales Handbuch zur Onomastik*, edited by Ernst Eichler, Gerold Hilty, Heinrich Löffler, Hugo Steger and Ladislav Zgusta, New York: (De Gruyter Mouton,1995):812-816. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110114263.1.8.812

[646] Giovanni Poggeschi, *Language Policy in Latvia*. Noves SL.: Revista de sociolingüística (2004): 1695-3711, http://www.gencat.cat/llengua/noves/noves/hemeroteca/tardor04.htm.

not reach a referendum. Opposingly, pro-Russian language impassioned parties put together their petition to make Russian the second official language of Latvia. Although it made it to the referendum, it was heavily opposed.[647]

Polish Language Policies

Though Latvia and Poland have similar histories, Latvia had much more Russian influence than Poland because, for many years, the totality of the Latvian territory was under Russian rule. In contrast, Poland only had a fraction of its land belonging to Russians and experienced a more extended period of independence. Going back to the year 966, Poland was first under the linguistic control of Latin due to the Catholic influence introduced by the Czechs. Later, after Poland lost its independence, foreign powers reigned over the different regions for over a 100 years, including Prussia, Austria, and Russia. The status of the Polish language depended on the decision of the regional leader. Borders as well as language preferences dramatically shifted throughout this period. Krakow, which had previously served as the center of Polish education, became completely Germanized. The restrictiveness in all regions came from varying degrees of eradication of Polish within the education system. Many German, Russian, and English words have seeped into the Polish language, which occurred at the disdain of Polish linguistic purists. As the Polish nation-state cultivated its language, it came at the expense of the minority languages of the peoples that inhabit Poland with the now-majority Polish population.

In both the Austro-controlled and Russo-controlled areas, Polish was treated as a minority language. This meant that it was allowed to be spoken at home. For a while, the respective controlling of a foreign nation's language was not mandated to be taught in Polish-conducted schools. It saw the opening of Polish libraries, such as the Ossoliński Library in Lwów. However,

---

[647] Romuald J. Misiunas, James H. Bater, Aivars Stranga, Peteris V Gulyans, Arnold Spekke, and Kazimierz Maciej Smogorzewski, "Latvia", Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed 26 June 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia.

few higher education institutions, such as Jagiellonian University and the University of Vilnius, conducted curricula in Polish.[648]

When Poland became independent after World War I, there was a governmental push for Polish linguistic dominance via the Act of January 24, 1924, which stated that Polish would be used in domestic and foreign affairs. This came at the expense of not only the minority populations, including the Ukrainians, Belarussians, Lithuanians, Germans, etc. but also those who speak the Silesian dialect, which is almost unintelligible to Polish speakers. Essentially, while trying to promote Polish as the official language of the new Polish nation-state, it is discrediting and demoting regional minority languages, repeating the cycle of what Germans did to the Polish language, and this process has only gained traction over the last hundred years.

Starting in the Soviet era, there was a strong sense of nationalism that was only exacerbated and egged on by the Kremlin, which remains influential today. Although many Poles learned Russian in school as a foreign language, the impact of Russian on the Polish people was not nearly as influential as it was under the Russian partition before independence.

In 1996, the Polish Language Council was created, which can be perceived as a response to the rise in Poland becoming more multicultural to preserve the Polish language.[649] This Council and the broader Polish government understood that a mono-ethnic state, especially in Europe, was unrealistic. As Poland's economy has grown, it has become more attractive to migrants. The idea of multiculturalism has been the subject of debate and used as a talking point for decades, as it goes against the sense, as mentioned earlier, of nationalism that persisted during the Soviet era. The Polish Language Act of 1999 solidified this sentiment. It was not until 2009 that Poland ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Lan-

---

[648] Marek Kuźniak and Elżbieta Mańczak-Wohlfeld, "Language Planning Activities and policy – the case of Poland," *Glottodidactica. An International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 43, no. 2, (2017): 63, https://doi.org/10.14746/gl.2016.43.2.03.

[649] "Basic Information About the Council for the Polish Language," *Rada Języka Polskiego*, accessed 27 June, http://rjp.pan.pl/english?id=118:basic-information-about-the-council-for-the-polish-language.

guages, and Poland showed openness to sharing Poland's linguistic landscape with non-Polish speakers.[650]

English as the global lingua franca and what it means for AI development

How did English become a global language? Anglophone countries are some of the only monolingual societies in the world, with most children growing up speaking only English at home. Spanish has been gaining ground in the US for many years, but this pales in comparison to English as the subsequent descendants of first-generation Hispanic immigrants speak English natively, which is usually encouraged by parents as a means to integrate quicker into American society. Even if there is no official language in the United States, English remains the unofficial societal language.

During the British Empire, the English spread broadly. As the United States gained global hegemony, it picked up the reins of the British Empire, but instead of conquest in the traditional sense, it did so through the diffusion of culture. This can be mirrored today in the spread of Korean as more people learn it as a second language because of K-Pop and the other outputs of the Hallyu Wave.[651] As English started being practiced as the global lingua franca, i.e., when people began speaking it as a common language between two non-English native parties, it became the default for scientific discovery as most people working on innovations were not from the exact linguistic origin. This is in part why the names of such advancements take on an English origin.[652]

---

[650]   Tadeusz Wallas and Bartosz Hordecki, "Members of the Polish Language Council on the Problems of Linguistic Diversity and Linguistic Inclusion in Poland," *Social Inclusion* 9 (2021): 63-74, http://researchgate.net/publication/348478868_Members_of_the_Polish_Language_Council_on_the_Problems_of_Linguistic_Diversity_and_Linguistic_Inclusion_in_Poland.

[651]   Jessie Yeung, "K-Pop and K-Dramas Have Gone Global. the Korean Language Could Be Next," *CNN*, January 18, 2023, http://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/17/asia/korean-language-learning-rise-hallyu-intl-hnk-dst/index.html.

[652]   Crystal, David. *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

The English-speaking phenomenon has further been cemented through the invention of the internet. Government officials and international business people are now required to use English regularly. More people than ever before interact online, often coming into contact with an English speaker without needing to leave their homes. Even if someone chooses not to learn English, their native language is vulnerable to English loan words, many of which were transmitted via the internet into everyday slang by the younger generations growing up with the internet. English has prevailed in the new online globalized world.

Consequently, most content on the internet is in English. People speaking minority languages worldwide often are faced with the arduous task of competing with the amount of English content online. As the amount of English content increases, and the rise of national identity becomes digitalized, it is more crucial than ever that Large Language Models (LLMs) are able to process minority language materials to maintain online cultural relevance and the ability to combat the English-dominated spread of online linguistic imperialism.[653]

LLMs

The concept of LLM, refers to a collection of "Deep-learning algorithms that use massive amounts of parameters and training data to understand and predict text. This generative artificial intelligence-based model can perform natural language processing tasks outside simple text generation, including revising and translating content."[654] They represent a recent innovation to the field of artificial intelligence (AI). They are prevalent in many different areas, and many people use them every day, sometimes without even realizing it. For example, SMS applications and web browsers

---

[653] Wong, Matteo. "The AI Revolution Is Crushing Thousands of Languages." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 24 Apr. 2024, www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/04/generative-ai-low-resource-languages/678042/.

[654] Michael McDonough, "Large language model," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed June 24, 2024, http://www.britannica.com/topic/large-language-model

have autocomplete features that predict your following words, and Google Translate provides a convenient translation service in many different languages. Although these are small-scale applications and do not appear to have any potential to be delegated to national security, governments see the potential of such technology and have begun pouring funding into their development.

How LLMs can be used in national security

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence sponsored the Mayflower Project, conducted through Carnegie Mellon University's Software Engineering Institute. This program aimed to determine: "How might the [Intelligence Community] set up a baseline, stand-alone LLM? How might the IC customize LLMs for specific intelligence use cases? How might the IC evaluate the trustworthiness of LLMs across use cases?."[655] Based on the findings and recommendations provided in the project report summary, they are becoming more relevant to national security for the following reasons:

1. Intelligence Analysis: LLMs can analyze vast amounts of text data, including intelligence reports, news, and social media, to identify trends, threats, and patterns relevant to national security.
2. Cybersecurity: They assist in detecting and responding to cyber threats by analyzing communication patterns and identifying malicious activities or vulnerabilities in systems.
3. Disinformation Detection: LLMs can help identify and counteract disinformation campaigns by analyzing content for inconsistencies and detecting coordinated information manipulation.
4. Operational Support: They support military operations by processing and interpreting diverse data sources, enhancing decision-making and operational planning.

---

[655] "A Retrospective in Engineering Large Language Models for National Security," (Carnegie Mellon University, 2023), http://insights.sei.cmu.edu/documents/5752/6125_Retrospective_in_Engineering_Large_Language_Models_for_National_Security__vzeyF95.pdf.

5. Natural Language Processing: LLMs enable efficient translation and analysis of foreign languages, which are critical for understanding global threats and intelligence.
6. Predictive Analysis: They provide predictive capabilities to foresee potential security threats and mitigate risks by analyzing historical and real-time data.[656]

Some states currently rely on models based on languages that do not have official status; most use English-based models that offer many different languages or multilingual LLMs.

Problems associated with LLMs

Though these models are much more inclusive than the insular mono-language versions, they have some limitations. These include large amounts of data quantity compromising quality, costly hardware to handle operating power, and the current lack of ability to develop sound systems to account for variations in linguistic complexities between languages. Also, the current methods for running tests for any type of LLM utilize benchmarks that assume an English-based model.[657] No matter if the LLM is mono or multi-lingual, used in an official capacity or not, there are plenty of pre-existing ethical issues that would need to be addressed even before the higher development costs associated with upscaling: incorrect responses, commonly referred to as "hallucinations," lack of information protection if improperly managed, few people know how to use them, the potential of overreliance on their output in critical situations, the difficulty of parsing through cultural biases, the necessity of constant supervision not to allow them to outpace their intended usages, infringement of intellectual property rights, and susceptibility to countermeasures either by domestic

---

[656] "A Retrospective in Engineering Large Language Models for National Security."

[657] Sajid, Haziqa, "The State of Multilingual Llms: Moving beyond English," *Unite.AI*, 10 Feb. 2024, www.unite.ai/the-state-of-multilingual-llms-moving-beyond-english/#:~:text=Challenges%20 of%20Multilingual%20LLMs&text=Multilingual%20models%20require%20a%20larger,to%20train%20 these%20models%20effectively.

or international cyber attacks in the form of adversarial machine learning systems or others.[658]

The Institute of Technology at the University of Rochester released a tool concept designed to help combat the ethical concerns listed above (see *Figure 20*). Although their article focused on smaller-scale models, the same techniques could be applied at the state level. In their article in which they presented this model, they discussed what were deemed five significant threats, which they inputted into the diagram, "Prompt injection, Jailbreak, PII [personal information], Sexual [exploitative material], Hateful [content]," but these threats can be changed depending on the particular LLM's desired function.[659]

Figure 20: University of Rochester's LLM preemptive security risk mitigator tool model diagram
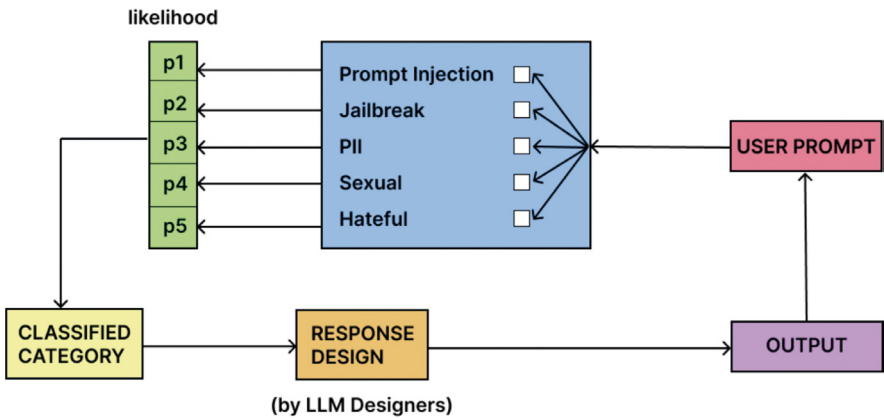
Source: Ashutosh Kumar, Shive Vignesh Murthy, Sagarika Signh, and Swathy Ragupathy, "The Ethics of Interaction: Mitigating Security Threats in LLMs," *arXiv.Org*, last revised July 10, 2024, http://arxiv.org/abs/2401.12273

---

[658] John E Robert and Douglas Schmidt, "10 Benefits and 10 Challenges of Applying Large Language Models to DoD Software Acquisition," Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute's Insights (blog), Accessed June 26, 2024, https://doi.org/10.58012/ygk8-kf82.

[659] Ashutosh Kumar, Shive Vignesh Murthy, Sagarika Signh, and Swathy Ragupathy, "The Ethics of Interaction: Mitigating Security Threats in LLMs," *arXiv.Org*, last revised July 10, 2024, http://arxiv.org/abs/2401.12273.

Polish and Latvian LLM projects and their importance as examples for other states

The first Polish LLM project is underway and is led by "...[the] Wrocław University of Science and Technology (the consortium leader), the National Information Processing Institute (OPI), the NASK National Research Institute, the Institute of Computer Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the University of Łódź, and the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences – joined forces to establish the Polish Large Language Universal Model consortium."[660] The eventual goal is to develop a virtual system, such as Siri or Amazon Alexa, that will provide Polish speakers with a wealth of information to better serve Polish speakers and those who would benefit from readily available source material in the Polish language.

The University of Latvia in Riga, Latvia, published a study that outlined the conclusions of an LLM project in which the program was only trained on a few sentences posted on social media. Despite the small amount of data being more accurate and usable in the Latvian context than any multilingual LLM, "...The GPT-3.5-turbo model (the latest model at the time of writing) using zero-shot prompting demonstrates a notable enhancement in sentiment analysis of three classes, achieving an 82% accuracy in the Latvian-tweet-sentiment-corpus dataset. This surpasses the 76% accuracy obtained by a previous study[661] for binary analysis and the accuracy of 35.5% for three-class sentiment analysis."[662] As more Latvian information is uploaded and able to be analyzed, the potential for future development in the field of Latvian AI will continue to grow. The next step for Latvia should be to follow in Poland's footsteps to establish a virtual system that hosts a vault of Latvian information that could be readily and easily accessed.

---

[660] OPIPIB, "The Launch of the First Polish Open Large Language Model: PLLuM," *National Information Processing Institute – National Research Institute*, December 12, 2023, http://opi.org.pl/en/the-launch-of-the-first-polish-open-large-language-model-pllum/.

[661] Pauls Purvins, Evalds Urtans, and Vairis Caune, "Using large language models to improve sentiment analysis in Latvian language," *Baltic Journal of Modern Computing* 12, no. 2 (2024): 165-175, https://doi.org/10.22364/bjmc.2024.12.2.03

[662] Ibid.

Conclusion

Poland's project started earlier partly because of the importance of the Polish language in Polish society and to Polish identity. Latvia did not have this same history due to the heavy hand of the Soviet Union on the territory of modern-day Latvia. The language policies were stronger there than in Poland. These two countries have been caught in the middle of Eastern and Western influences, i.e., during the Soviet era versus their current NATO membership statuses, which puts them in a unique situation in which many other states could find themselves soon regardless of geographical positioning due to the gradual growing trend of cyber politics. If states want to create more poles of influence worldwide, they must own and maintain their respective cyberspace identity. A critical aspect is an LLM system based on their national languages.

Bibliography

@ Jonpy. (2024, June 29). X (Formerly Twitter). https://x.com/Jonpy99/status/180 6994126799319336?t=MZs1GXsogZY3piP9tsu5nw

@HighMarsed. (2024, February 10). X (Formerly Twitter). https://x.com/High-Marsed/status/1756376656543912023

@UAcontrolmap. (2022, February 24). X (Formerly Twitter). https://x.com/ UAControlMap?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr% 5Eauthor

@waffentraeger. (2024, June 11). X (Formerly Twitter). https://x.com/waffentrae-ger/status/1800507969135931786

A humanitarian disaster is under way in Nagorno-Karabakh. (2023, September 28). The Economist. https://www.economist.com/leaders/2023/09/28/a-humani-tarian-disaster-is-under-way-in-nagorno-karabakh

A Retrospective in Engineering Large Language Models For National Security. (2023). In *https://insights.sei.cmu.edu/documents/5752/6125_Retrospec-tive_in_Engineering_Large_Language_Models_for_National_Security__ vzeyF95.pdf*. Carnegie Mellon University.

Abadie, A. (2004, October 25). *Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terror-ism*. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series. https:// www.nber.org/papers/w10859

Abdelbary, I., & Elshawa, R. H. (2023). Economic Sanctions as a Foreign Policy Tool: A Case Study of the Iran-West Conflict. *Research Square (Research Square)*, 1–32. https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-2854425/v1

Abhijnan Rej. (2020). China Aiding Rebel Groups in India's Northeast: Report. In *Thediplomat.com*. The Diplomat. https://thediplomat.com/2020/12/chi-na-aiding-rebel-groups-in-indias-northeast-report/

Aboueldahab, N. (2023, April 3). *Track II Diplomacy: How Can It Be More Effec-tive?* Middle East Council on Global Affairs. https://mecouncil.org/publica-tion/trackii-diplomacy-how-can-it-be-more-effective

About. (2012, February 15). Hizbawi Mekete. https://mekete.wordpress.com/about/

About Us. (n.d.). ARAKAN ARMY. https://www.arakanarmy.net/about-us

Agreement between the Government of the people's Republic of China and the Government of the Kingdom of Bhutan on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Along the Sino-Bhutanese Border Areas. (n.d.). Www.fmprc.gov.cn. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/gjhdq_665435/2675_665437/2686_663376/2687_663378/200111/t20011106_510118.html

Alareqe, N.A., Roslan, S., Taresh, S.M., & Nordin, M.S. (2021). Universality and Normativity of the Attachment Theory in Non-Western Psychiatric and Non-Psychiatric Samples: Multiple Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(11), 5770. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18115770

Alder, S. (2023). Multiple Lawsuits Filed Against Regal Medical Group Over 3.3 Million-Record Ransomware Attack. *HIPAA Journal*. https://www.hipaajournal.com/multiple-lawsuits-regal-medical-group-ransomware/

Anand, M. (2024, June 30). *Fast and furious: Russia using bikes to stir chaos in Ukraine*. The Times of India; Times of India. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/fast-and-furious-russia-using-bikes-to-stir-chaos-in-ukraine/articleshow/111387320.cms

Anderson, J. (2018, June 22). *To Make An Army Out of Illness: the history of the socialist patients' collective by Helen Spandler – Asylum Magazine*. Asylum Magazine. https://asylummagazine.org/2018/06/to-make-an-army-out-of-illness-the-history-of-the-socialist-patients-collective-by-helen-spandler/

Anson, A. (2023). Ransomware Attacks on Healthcare Systems: Case Studies and Mitigation Strategies. *ResearchGate*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34192.17928

Arasli, J. (2011, March 13). *States Vs. Non-State Actors: Asymmetric Conflict And Challenges To Military Transformation*. Eurasia Review. https://www.eurasiareview.com/13032011-states-vs-non-state-actors-asymmetric-conflict-and-challenges-to-military-transformation/

Arghire, I. (2023, February 13). *3.3 Million Impacted by Ransomware Attack at California Healthcare Provider*. SecurityWeek. https://www.securityweek.com/3-3-million-impacted-by-ransomware-attack-at-california-healthcare-provider/

Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. (2023, August 2). *Moving Out of the Shadows Shifts in Wagner Group Operations Around the World*. JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep52618

Armenia and Azerbaijan peace deal "closer than ever" as countries start fixing common border. (2024, April 23). France 24. https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240423-armenia-azerbaijan-begin-fixing-common-border-after-decades-long-conflict

Armenia FM comments on Russian border guards' presence on Turkey border. (2024, July 3). News.am. https://news.am/eng/news/811212.html

Arms dealer "100% sure" Russian agents behind blast at Bulgarian depot. (2022, August 1). The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/01/arms-dealer-100-sure-russian-agents-blast-bulgarian-depot

Asmolov, G. (2018). The Disconnective Power of Disinformation Campaigns. *Journal of International Affairs*, *71*(1.5), 69–76. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26508120

Atasuntsev, A. (2023). *Long-Standing Ties Between Armenia and Russia Are Fraying Fast*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2023/10/long-standing-ties-between-armenia-and-russia-are-fraying-fast?lang=en.

Axe, D. (2022, December 17). Ukraine Deradicalized Its Extremist Troops. Now They Might Be Preparing A Counteroffensive. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/12/16/ukraine-deradicalized-its-extremist-troops-now-they-might-be-preparing-a-counteroffensive/

Axe, D. (2023, October 24). Ukraine's Territorials Need Tanks. They're Getting Them... From Russia. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2023/10/24/ukraines-territorials-need-tanks-theyre-getting-them--from-russia/?sh=121e5c476452

Axe, D. (2024, January 10). The Russians Could Run Out of Infantry Fighting Vehicles In Two Or Three Years. *Forbes*. https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2024/01/09/the-russians-could-run-out-of-infantry-fighting-vehicles-in-two-or-three-years/

Ayunts, A. (2022). *Armenian Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Current State of Affairs and Prospects of Peace over Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: View from Armenia*. https://iccn.ge/files/policy_paper_armenia_gppac_july_2022.pdf

Azani, E., Koblenz-Stenzler, L., Atiyas-Lvovsky, L., Ganor, D., Ben-Am, A., & Meshulam, D. (2020). *The Development and Characterization of Far-Right Ideologies*. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep30906.6

AzeMedia. (2021, November 12). *Azerbaijani–Russian Relations: Transactional Diplomacy in Action*. Aze.Media. https://aze.media/azerbaijani-russian-relations-transactional-diplomacy-in-action/

AZERTAC. (2020). *President Ilham Aliyev: As a result of our army's successful counter-offensive several settlements have been liberated VIDEO*. Https://Azertag.az/En/Xeber/President_ilham_aliyev_as_a_result_of_our_army_039s_successful_counter_offensive_several_settlements_have_been_liberated_video-1596557. https://azertag.az/en/xeber/President_Ilham_Aliyev_As_a_result_of_our_army_039s_successful_counter_offensive_several_settlements_have_been_liberated-1596557

Azinović, V. (2018). *Regional Report: Understanding Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans*. British Council. https://www.britishcouncil.me/sites/default/files/erf_report_western_balkans_2018.pdf

Azinović, V., & Jusić, M. (2016). *The Lure of the Syrian War: The Foreign Fighters' Bosnian Contingent*. Atlantic Initiative.

Balci, B. (2014, June 18). *Strengths and Constraints of Turkish Policy in the South Caucasus*. Carnegieendowment.org. https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2014/06/strengths-and-constraints-of-turkish-policy-in-the-south-caucasus?lang=en

Baldwin, D. A. (2000). The Sanctions Debate and the Logic of Choice. *International Security*, *24*(3), 80–107. https://doi.org/10.1162/016228899560248

Basic Information about the Council for the Polish Language. (2019). Rjp.pan.pl. http://rjp.pan.pl/english?id=118:basic-information-about-the-council-for-the-polish-language

Bater, J. H., & Smogorzewski, K. M. (2019). Latvia | history – geography. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/place/Latvia

Baumann, R., & Stengel, F. A. (2013). Foreign policy analysis, globalisation and non-state actors: state-centric after all? *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *17*(4), 489–521. https://doi.org/10.1057/jird.2013.12

BBC News. (2016, January 16). *Europe | Latest News & Updates*. BBC News; BBC News. https://www.bbc.com/news/world/europe

BBC News. (2021, June 29). Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: The long, medium, and short story. *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54964378

Bećirević, E. (2018). *Extremism Research Forum: Bosnia and Herzegovina Report*. British Council.

Beech, H. (2014, November 21). *Inside the Kachin War Against Burma*. Time; Time. https://time.com/3598969/kachin-independence-army-kia-burma-myanmar-laiza/

Bellamy, D. (2024, June 12). *Armenia to leave Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation*. Euronews. https://www.euronews.com/2024/06/12/armenia-to-leave-russian-led-collective-security-treaty-organisation

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2018a, September 14). *Skripal Poisoning Suspect's Passport Data Shows Link to Security Services*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/09/14/skripal-poisoning-suspects-passport-data-shows-link-security-services/

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2018b, September 20). *Skripal Suspects Confirmed as GRU Operatives: Prior European Operations Disclosed*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2018/09/20/skripal-suspects-confirmed-gru-operatives-prior-european-operations-disclosed/

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2019, October 14). *Skripal Poisoner Attended GRU Commander Family Wedding*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2019/10/14/averyanov-chepiga/

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2020a, February 17). *"V" For "Vympel": FSB's Secretive Department "V" Behind Assassination of Georgian Asylum Seeker In Germany*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2020/02/17/v-like-vympel-fsbs-secretive-department-v-behind-assassination-of-zelimkhan-khangoshvili/

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2020b, September 4). *Post-Mortem of a Triple Poisoning: New Details Emerge in GRU's Failed Murder Attempts in Bulgaria*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2020/09/04/gebrev-survives-poisonings-post-mortem/

Bellingcat Investigation Team. (2021, April 26). *How GRU Sabotage and Assassination Operations in Czechia and Bulgaria Sought to Undermine Ukraine*. Bellingcat. https://www.bellingcat.com/news/uk-and-europe/2021/04/26/how-gru-sabotage-and-assassination-operations-in-czechia-and-bulgaria-sought-to-undermine-ukraine/

Bergeijk van, P. A. G. (2022). Sanctions and the Russian-Ukraine Conflict: A Critical Appraisal. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4058559

Berman, N. (2024, February 23). *Two Years of War in Ukraine: Are Sanctions Against Russia Making a Difference?* Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/two-years-war-ukraine-are-sanctions-against-russia-making-difference

Bermeo, N. (2016, January). *On Democratic Backsliding*. Journal of Democracy. https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/on-democratic-backsliding/

Bertelsen, P. (2015). Danish Preventive Measures and De-radicalization Strategies: The Aarhus Model. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 7*(2), 112–136.

Bhattacharyya, R. (2023, October 4). *An Inside Look at Myanmar Resistance Groups' Weapons Manufacturing Factories*. Thediplomat.com; The Diplomat. https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/an-inside-look-at-myanmar-resistance-groups-weapons-manufacturing-factories/

Bhaumik, S. (2020). *The India-Myanmar Kaladan Project: Vision and Reality*. Torkel Opsahl Academic Epublisher. https://www.toaep.org/pbs-pdf/106-bhaumik/

Bhutan. (n.d.). Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/country/bhutan/freedom-world/2020

Bhutan. (2022). United States Department of State. https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/bhutan

Bhutan exits UN list of least developed countries | UNCTAD. (2023, December 13). Unctad.org. https://unctad.org/news/bhutan-exits-un-list-least-developed-countries

Bhutan Trade | WITS Data. (2012). Worldbank.org. https://wits.worldbank.org/countrysnapshot/en/BTN

Biden, J. (2023, September 23). *Letter* [Https://www.primeminister.am/u_files/file/documents/Biden-letter.pdf to Nikol Pashinyan].

Bieler, A., Higgott, R., & Underhill, G. (2004). *Non-State Actors and Authority in the Global System*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203165041

Bielieskov, M. (2023, May 11). *Ukraine's Territorial Defence Forces: The War So Far and Future Prospects*. Www.rusi.orghttps. https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/ukraines-territorial-defence-forces-war-so-far-and-future-prospects

Black, A. E. (2019). Treating Insecure Attachment in Group Therapy: Attachment Theory Meets Modern Psychoanalytic Technique. *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy*, *69*(3), 259–286. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207284.2019.1588073

Blakemore, E. (2020, May 6). *Why Germany surrendered twice in World War II*. History. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/germany-surrendered-twice-world-war-ii

Bleecker, J. (2022). *The Paradoxes of Civic Nationalism in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*.

Bogale, S. (2023, October 21). *Parliament Contemplates Ratifying Military Non-disclosure Agreement With Russia*. The Reporter Ethiopia. https://www.thereporterethiopia.com/37040/

Booth, C. D. (2023). China and the United Wa State Army in Myanmar. In C. C. Harmon (Ed.), *Warfare in Peacetime: Proxies and State Powers*. Marine Corps University Press.

Border Dispute Between China And Bhutan. (n.d.). Www.pacom.mil; U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. https://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/Legal/J0 6%20TACAID%20-%20PRC-BHUTAN%20BORDER%20DISPUTE%20(FINAL).pd f?ver=ofbfrNNgIqZr7nFqm60lbw%3D%3D

Borowski, J. (2023, December 13). *Poland: Kosiniak-Kamysz Becomes Deputy PM and Head of the MoD*. Defence24.com. https://defence24.com/defence-policy/poland-kosiniak-kamysz-becomes-deputy-pm-and-head-of-the-mod-/poland-kosiniak-kamysz-becomes-deputy-pm-and-head-of-the-mod

Borowski, J. (2024a, January 2). *Polish Ministry of Defence Outlines the Priorities and 2024 Budget: Large Army, Full Readiness of the Territorial Defence Component*. Defence24.com. https://defence24.com/defence-policy/polish-ministry-of-defence-outlines-the-priorities-and-2024-budget-large-army-full-readiness-of-the-territorial-defence-component

Borowski, J. (2024b, May 10). *Generals: High Time to Polish Command System Reform. Artillery Assigned to Territorial Defence*. Defence24.com. https://defence24.com/armed-forces/generals-high-time-to-polish-command-system-reform-artillery-assigned-to-territorial-defence

Bozóki, A. (2016). Mainstreaming the Far Right. Cultural Politics in Hungary. *Revue d'Études Comparatives Est-Ouest*, *47*(04), 87–116. https://doi.org/10.4074/s0338059916004046

Brenner, D. (2019). *Rebel Politics: A Political Sociology of Armed Struggle in Myanmar's Borderlands*. Cornell University Press.

Brubaker, R. (2010). *Nationalism Reframed*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511558764

Brugen van, I. (2024, June 27). *Satellite data suggests Russia may be running out of tanks*. Newsweek. https://www.newsweek.com/satellite-data-russia-tank-losses-ukraine-war-1918313

Brunka, Z., Ryl, J., Brushtulli, P., Gromala, D., Walczak, G., Zięba, S., Pieśniak, D., Sein Anand, J., & Wiergowski, M. (2022). Selected Political Criminal Poisonings in the Years 1978–2020: Detection and Treatment. *Toxics*, *10*(8), 468. https://doi.org/10.3390/toxics10080468

Brzozowski, A., & Kozlov, P. (2024, February). *Hungary's ties to Russia make Europeans "increasingly uncomfortable."* Www.euractiv.com; EURACTIV. https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/hungarys-ties-to-russia-make-europeans-increasingly-uncomfortable/

Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. (2021, August 27). *U.S. Relations With Armenia – United States Department of State*. United States Department of State. https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-armenia

Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. (2022, September 16). *U.S. Security Coopera-tion With Ukraine*. United States Department of State. https://www.state.gov/u-s-security-cooperation-with-ukraine/

Butchenko, M. (2022, April 13). *Ukraine's Territorial Defence on a War Footing*. ICDS. https://icds.ee/en/ukraines-territorial-defence-on-a-war-footing/

Byrd, W. (2023, June 8). *The Taliban's Successful Opium Ban is Bad for Afghans and the World*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publica-tions/2023/06/talibans-successful-opium-ban-bad-afghans-and-world

Cash, J. (2023, May 15). *Xi: Strong China-Eritrea ties part of keeping peace in Horn of Africa*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/world/china-eritrea-should-en-rich-strategic-partnership-premier-li-2023-05-15/

Čáslavová, V. (2022, October 31). *The Tigray Conflict and the Role of Eritrea*. Hornin-stitute.org. https://horninstitute.org/the-tigray-conflict-and-the-role-of-eritrea/

Castillo, L. G., Conoley, C. W., Brossart, D. F., & Quiros, A. E. (2007). Construction and validation of the Intragroup Marginalization Inventory. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *13*(3), 232–240. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.13.3.232

Cecire, M. H. (2014). *Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan: Trilateralism and the Future of Black Sea Regional Geopolitics*. Cacianalyst.org. https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/12837-turkey-georgia-azerbaijan-trilateralism-and-the-future-of-black-sea-regional-geopolitics.html

Central Asia: Implications of Russia's War in Ukraine. (2023). Congressional Research Service. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/R47591.pdf

CES. (2018). *The End of WWII and the Division of Europe | CES at UNC*. Unc.edu. https://europe.unc.edu/the-end-of-wwii-and-the-division-of-europe/

Chang, J., & Chakrabarti. (2024, June 17). *How the far-right gained traction in this year's EU elections*. Www.wbur.org; On Point. https://www.wbur.org/on-point/2024/06/17/far-right-eu-elections-france-germany

Chao, M. (2021, May 27). *What's in a name? For Asian immigrants, a chance to "assimilate or vanish" | Mary Chao*. North Jersey Media Group; NorthJersey.com. http://eu.northjersey.com/story/news/2021/05/27/hidden-history-be-hind-asian-americans-anglicized-names/4892915001/

Charountaki, M., Kourtelis, C., & Irrera, D. (2024). *Non-State Actors and Foreign Policy Agency: Insights from Area Studies*. Springer.

China's Western Development Campaign. (2021). Www.everycrsreport.com. https://www.everycrsreport.com/reports/RL31104.html

Choate, P., & Tortorelli, C. (2022). Attachment Theory: a Barrier for Indigenous Children Involved with Child Protection. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(14). https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148754

Clair, R., Gordon, M., Kroon, M., & Reilly, C. (2021). The effects of social isolation on well-being and life satisfaction during pandemic. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *8*(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00710-3

Clark, M., & Hird, K. (2023). *Russian Regular Ground Forces Order of Battle*. https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/October%2012%2C%20 2023%20Russian%20Orbat_Final.pdf

Clausewitz von, C. (1976). *On war*. Princeton University Press.

Climate change / Eritrea | Interactive Country Fiches. (2021). Unepgrid.ch. https://dicf.unepgrid.ch/eritrea/climate-change#section-drivers

Coates, B. (2023, June 9). *A Century of Sanctions*. Origins.osu.edu. https://origins.osu.edu/article/economic-sanctions-history-trump-global

Collin, K. S. L. (2017, August 17). *America: China Doesn't Care about Your Rules-Based Order*. The National Interest. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/america-china-doesnt-care-about-your-rules-based-order-21943

Conciliation Resources. (2019). *Preparing Populations for Peace': Implications for Armenian-Azerbaijani Peacebuilding*. Conciliation Resources. https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Preparing_populations_for_peace.pdf

Confirmed losses. (2024, July 5). Ukr.warspotting.net. https://ukr.warspotting.net/russia/

Connell, D. (2006, March 6). *He Didn't Do It For Them – MERIP*. MERIP. https://merip.org/2006/03/he-didnt-do-it-for-them/

Connolly, K. (2024, March 2). Daniela Klette: dog walker, dancer – and Germany's most-wanted woman. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/mar/02/daniela-klette-germany-most-wanted-woman-neighbours

Constantin, L. (2021, November 12). *REvil ransomware explained: A widespread extortion operation*. CSO Online. https://www.csoonline.com/article/570101/revil-ransomware-explained-a-widespread-extortion-operation.html

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Toronto. (2021). *Things to Know about All the Lies on Xinjiang: How Have They Come About?* Toronto.china-Consulate.gov.cn. http://toronto.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zxdt/202105/t20210508_8989347.htm

Cornell, S. E. (2017). Turkey's Role: Balancing the ArmeniaAzerbaijan Conflict and TurkishArmenian Relations. In *The International Politics of the*

ArmenianAzerbaijani Conflict: The Original "Frozen Conflict" and European Security (pp. 89–105). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137600066_5

Corr, A. (2020). *China's diplo-terrorism in Myanmar*. Spotlight.licas.news. https://spotlight.licas.news/china-s-diplo-terrorism-in-myanmar/index.html

Crystal, D. (2012). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511486999

Curran, J. (2018). "Americanism, not globalism": President Trump and the American mission President Trump and the American mission on JSTOR. *Lowy Institute for International Policy*. https://doi.org/10.2307/resrep19793

Dan De Luce. (2016, February 3). *If Russia Started a War in the Baltics, NATO Would Lose — Quickly*. Foreign Policy; Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/03/if-russia-started-a-war-in-the-baltics-nato-would-lose-quickly/

Datta, S. (2020). *Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project: Navigating Myanmar's Ethnic Conundrum Webinar Report*. https://cuts-citee.org/pdf/Report-KMMTTP-Webinar-M-Connect-october-1-2020.pdf

Davis Van Wie, E. (2008). Uyghur Muslim Ethnic Separatism in Xinjiang, China. *Asian Affairs*, *35*(1), 15–29. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27821503

Debessay, A. (2023, December 22). *Unsolicited Advice to Brighed N'Hamedu (BNH) – Awate.com*. Awate.com. https://awate.com/unsolicited-advice-to-brighed-nhamedu-bnh/

Demertzis, M., & McWilliams, B. (2023, March 23). *How much will the EU pay Russia for fossil fuels over the next 12 months?* Bruegel | the Brussels-Based Economic Think Tank. https://www.bruegel.org/analysis/how-much-will-eu-pay-russia-fossil-fuels-over-next-12-months#footnote1_3mjn3cl

Demjaha, A., & Peci, L. (2016). *What Happened to Kosovo Albanians: The Impact of Religion on the Ethnic Identity in the State Building-Period. Policy Paper No. 1*. Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development. https://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/What_happened_to_Kosovo_Albanians_740443.pdf

Demourian, A. (2024, March 24). *3 men in Armenia attempt to storm Yerevan police station and 2 are injured by their own grenades*. AP News. https://apnews.com/article/yerevan-armenia-police-station-combat-bortherhood-0c9329c47908ba574c60469faaf52ed8

Díaz, C., Anhelina, B., Mathilde, H., & Machteld, V. (2023). *Wagner Group Unchained in Ukraine: Military, Political and Human Rights Impact of the Wagner Group Since the Large-Scale Invasion in 2022*. Novact. https://novact.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/3a_Informe-Wagner_ENG_v7.pdf

Dikshit, K. R., & Dikshit, J. K. (2014). North-East India: Land, People and Economy. In *Advances in Asian Human-Environmental Research*. Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7055-3

Directorate of Inteligence. (1984). *The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia: A Continuing International Threat*. https://www.cia.gov/reading-room/docs/CIA-RDP85T00283R000400030009-2.pdf

Dobrokhotov, R., Grozev, C., & Weiss, M. (2024, March 31). *Unraveling Havana Syndrome: New evidence links the GRU's assassination Unit 29155 to mysterious attacks on U.S. officials and their families*. The Insider. https://theins.ru/en/politics/270425

Donald Trump presidential campaign, 2016. (2017). In *Ballotpedia*. https://ballotpedia.org/Donald_Trump_presidential_campaign,_2016#:~:text=Focal%20points%20of%20Trump%E2%80%99s%20campaign,repealing%20financial%20and%20environmental%20regulations

Eckhard Janeba. (2023). Extraterritorial trade sanctions: Theory and application to the US–Iran–EU conflict. *Review of International Economics*, *32*(1), 49–60. https://doi.org/10.1111/roie.12682

Eland, I. (1995). Economic Sanctions as Tools of Foreign Policy. In D. Cortright & G. A. Lopez (Eds.), *Economic Sanctions*. Routledge.

Emmelkamp, J., Asscher, J. J., Wissink, I. B., & Stams, G. J. (2020). Risk Factors for (Violent) Radicalization in Juveniles: A Multilevel Meta-Analysis. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *55*, 101489. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2020.101489

EPLF, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (Shaebia ሻዕቢያ). (2021). HOA Political Scene. https://www.hoa-politicalscene.com/eplf.html

Epstein, J. (2024, May 13). *Russia's increasingly turning to fast ATVs and motorbikes to find Ukrainian targets, but they're very vulnerable*. Yahoo News. https://sg.news.yahoo.com/russias-increasingly-turning-fast-atvs-204815239.html

Eric, O., & Rahn, W. (2016). Rise of the "Trumpenvolk": Populism in the 2016 Election. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *667*, 189–206. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24756150

Eritrea. (n.d.). United States Department of State. https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/eritrea/

Eritrea | UNDP Climate Change Adaptation. (2024). Adaptation-Undp.org. https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/africa/eritrea

Eritrea Demographics 2020 (Population, Age, Sex, Trends) – Worldometer. (n.d.). Www.worldometers.info. https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/eritrea-demographics/

Eritrean Independence Day: Why the diaspora is at war with itself. (2024, May 23). Www.bbc.com. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cw884l2wld8o

Ethiopia, Russia Sign Various Agreements to Enhance Military Cooperation. (2021). ENA English. https://www.ena.et/web/eng/w/en_26439

EU trade relations with Central Asia. (n.d.). Policy.trade.ec.europa.eu. https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/central-asia_en

EUDA. (2022a, June 14). *European Drug Report 2022: Trends and Developments | www.euda.europa.eu*. Www.euda.europa.eu. https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2022_en

EUDA. (2022b, November 21). *EMCDDA releases new findings on drug markets in the eastern and southern European Neighbourhood Policy regions | www.euda.europa.eu*. Www.euda.europa.eu. https://www.euda.europa.eu/news/2022/9/emcdda-releases-new-findings-drug-markets-eastern-and-southern-european-neighbourhood-policy-regions_en

EUDA. (2024a). *EU Drug Market: Heroin and other opioids — Trafficking and supply | www.euda.europa.eu*. Europa.eu. https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/eu-drug-markets/heroin-and-other-opioids/trafficking-and-supply_en

EUDA. (2024b, June 11). *Drug-induced deaths – the current situation in Europe (European Drug Report 2024) | www.euda.europa.eu*. Www.euda.europa.eu. https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/european-drug-report/2024/drug-induced-deaths_en

Europe correspondent. (2024, April 5). *EU-Armenia: shifting away from Russia*. EUROPE DIPLOMATIC. https://europediplomatic.com/2024/04/05/eu-armenia-shifting-away-from-russia/

European Commission. (2022). *REPowerEU: affordable, secure and sustainable energy for Europe*. European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowereu-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_en

European Commission. (2023, October 18). *New EU Roadmap steps up the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime*. Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/new-eu-roadmap-steps-fight-against-drug-trafficking-and-organised-crime-2023-10-18_en

European Council. (2021, November 16). *The EU's work to tackle terrorism*. Europa.eu. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/the-eu-s-work-to-tackle-terrorism/

European Council. (2023a). *EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine*. Council of the European Union. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/

European Council. (2023b, October 12). *Impact of Sanctions on the Russian Economy*. European Council. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/

European Parliament. (2024). *EP Joint Motion for a Resolution*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2024-0163_EN.pdf

European Parliament. (2023). *EU Mission in Armenia (EUMA)*. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/EUMA-Armenia%20-2023-02_0_0.pdf

Europol. (n.d.). *382 arrests during joint actions against traffickers using the Balkan route*. Europol. https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/382-arrests-during-joint-actions-against-traffickers-using-balkan-route

Europol. (2023). *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2023*. https://doi.org/10.2813/302117

Fabina, J. (2021, April 29). *Record High Turnout in 2020 General Election*. The United States Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/04/record-high%20turnout-in-2020-general-election.html

Fact Sheet on the National Endowment for Democracy — Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Penang. (2022). China-Consulate.gov.cn. http://penang.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/zt_19/zgwj/202205/t20220511_10684485.htm

FACT SHEET: Disrupting and Degrading – One Year of U.S. Sanctions on Russia and Its Enablers. (2023, February 24). U.S. Department of the Treasury. https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy1298

Factbox: With Strokes of Pen, Biden Overturns Trump Policies and Fights Covid-19. (2021, January 29). https://www.reuters.com/article/world/us/factbox-with-strokes-of-pen-biden-overturns-trump-policies-and-fights-covid-19-idUSKBN29Y2QM/

Faeser, N. (2023). *Brief summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends*. Bundesamtfuer Verfassungsschutz; Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community. http://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/EN/reports-on-the-protection-of-the-constitution/2024-06-brief-summary-2023-report-on-the-protection-of-the-constitution.pdf?__blob=publicatio

Feddes, A. R., & Gallucci, M. (2015). A Literature Review on Methodology used in Evaluating Effects of Preventive and De-radicalisation Interventions. *Journal for Deradicalization*, *0*(5), 1–27. https://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/33

Federal Communications Commission. (2013, June 20). *Telecommunications Act of 1996*. Federal Communications Commission. https://www.fcc.gov/general/telecommunications-act-1996

Feldstein, S., & Brauer, F. (2024, March 11). *Why Russia Has Been So Resilient to Western Export Controls*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/03/why-russia-has-been-so-resilient-to-western-export-controls?lang=en&center=china

Ferenczi, N., Marshall, T. C., Lefringhausen, K., & Bejanyan, K. (2016). Associations of insecure attachment with extreme pro-group actions: The mediating role of perceived marginalisation. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *91*, 84–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.11.057

Fiore, N. J. (2021). *Defeating the Russian Battalion Tactical Group*. Fort Moore: U.S army manuever center of excellence. https://www.moore.army.mil/armor/earmor/content/issues/2017/spring/2Fiore17.pdf

Fisher Smith, A., & Sullivan, C. R. (2022). Exiting far-right extremism: a case study in applying the developmental core need framework. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression*, *111*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/19434472.2022.2076718

Fog of Falsehood: (2016, May 10). FIIA – Finnish Institute of International Affairs. https://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/fog-of-falsehood

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on August 28, 2017. (2017). Sanfrancisco.china-Consulate.gov.cn. http://sanfrancisco.china-consulate.gov.cn/eng/xw/fyrth/201708/t20170828_9541361.htm

Fornůsek, M., & Bartoszewicz, M. G. (2023). Modern Army for Modern Times or Private Paramilitary? Polish Territorial Defense Force as a Benchmark Case in Conflict Evolution. *Democracy and Security*, *20*(1), 69–93. https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2023.2220108

Fox, J. A., & Levin, J. (2021). Mass Murder in America: Trends, Characteristics, Explanations, and Policy Response. *Homicide Studies*, *26*(1), 27–46. https://doi.org/10.1177/10887679211043803

Fraley, C. (2002). Attachment Stability From Infancy to Adulthood: Meta-Analysis and Dynamic Modeling of Developmental Mechanisms. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *6*(2), 123–151. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0602_03

Fuller, G., & Starr, S. (2003). *The Xinjiang Problem*. Central Asis-Caucasus Institute. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/30301/01_Xinjiang_Problem.pdf

Fults, A., & Stronski, P. (2022, April 25). *The Ukraine War Is Reshaping the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict*. Carnegieendowment.org. https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/04/the-ukraine-war-is-reshaping-the-armenia-azerbaijan-conflict?lang=en

Gavin, G. (2024a, March 19). *Armenian PM: We'll hand Azerbaijan some territory to avoid a new war*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.eu/article/armenia-pm-nikol-pashinyan-hand-azerbaijan-some-territory-avoid-new-war/

Gavin, G. (2024b, June 13). *EU wants Azerbaijan to fuel Russian gas pipeline in Ukraine*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-asks-azerbaijan-replace-russian-gas-transit-deal-ukraine-expiring/

Gavin, G. (2024c, June 13). *The secret arms deal that cost Putin an ally*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.eu/article/leaked-documents-reveal-belarus-armed-azerbaijan-against-ally-armenia/

Geoghegan, K. (2018). A Policy in Tension: The National Endowment for Democracy and the U.S. Response to the Collapse of the Soviet Union. *Diplomatic History*, *42*(5), 772–801. https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhx088

German Student Movement. (n.d.). Encyclopedia.pub. Retrieved February 27, 2023, from https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/32698

GHDI – Image. (n.d.). Ghdi.ghi-Dc.org. https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=2395

Gianitsos, M., & Karr, L. (2024, April 4). *Mali and Russia Explore Mali's Mineral Wealth; Niger Plays the Field; the Kremlin's Red Sea Ambitions in Eritrea*. Institute for the Study of War. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder-africa-file-april-4-2024-mali-and-russia-explore-mali%E2%80%99s-mineral-wealth-niger-plays

Gjerstad, M. (2024, June 11). *Russian T-90M production: less than meets the eye*. IISS. https://www.iiss.org/en/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/06/russian-t-90m-production-less-than-meets-the-eye/

Global Education Monitoring Report Team. (2006). *Language policy | Unesco IIEP Learning Portal*. Learningportal.iiep.unesco.org. https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/glossary/language-policy

Global Initiative. (n.d.). *Impact of the Ukraine war on drug markets in South Eastern Europe*. Global Initiative. https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ukraine-war-impact-drug-markets-south-eastern-europe/

Global Initiative. (2024, January 22). *The war in Ukraine is fuelling drug use among soldiers, particularly of synthetic substances*. Global Initiative. https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/ukraine-synthetic-drugs-ocindex/

Global Perspectives | Ethiopia-Russia Relations | Wilson Center. (2021, February 11). Wilson Center. https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/global-perspectives-ethiopia-russia-relations

Global Terrorism Database. (2017). *Terrorism Data in China*. Umd.edu. https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=3&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&country=44&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GTDID&od=desc#results-table

Gorodnichenko, Y., Korhonen, L., & Ribakova, E. (2024). The Russian economy on a war footing: A new reality financed by commodity exports. In *CEPR*. Centre for Economic Policy Research. https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/russian-economy-war-footing-new-reality-financed-commodity-exports

Goswami, N. (2013). *Tracking the source of "Weapon Providers" for NE Rebels | Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*. Idsa.in. https://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/TrackingthesourceofWeaponProvidersforNERebels_ngoswami_071113

Gould-Davies, N. (2023). The Wagner Revolt: Implications for Russia, Lessons for the West. *Survival*, *65*(4), 25–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2023.2239053

Gramlich, J. (2020, October 26). *What the 2020 electorate looks like by party, race and ethnicity, age, education and religion*. Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks-like-by-party-race-and-ethnicity-age-education-and-religion/

Grau, L. (2016, May 18). *The Russian Way of War: Force Structure, Tactics and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces (Dr. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles) – FMSO*. Foreign Military Studies Office. https://fmso.tradoc.army.mil/2016/the-russian-way-of-war-force-structure-tactics-and-modernization-of-the-russian-ground-forces-dr-lester-w-grau-and-charles-k-bartles/

Grauvogel, J., & Attia, H. (2019). Easier In Than Out: The Protracted Process of Ending Sanctions. *GIGA Focus Global*, *5*. https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/publications/giga-focus/easier-in-than-out-the-protracted-process-of-ending-sanctions

Greenberg, A. (2024, March 4). *Hackers Behind the Change Healthcare Ransomware Attack Just Received a $22 Million Payment*. Wired. https://www.wired.com/story/alphv-change-healthcare-ransomware-payment/

Grigorian, D. A. (2024). *Russia's Influence and Disinformation Campaign in Armenia*. European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE).

Groh, T. L. (2019). *Proxy War: The Least Bad Option*. Stanford University Press.

Gun Violence Archive. (2023). *Past Summary Ledgers | Gun Violence Archive*. Gunviolencearchive.org. https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/past-tolls

Gurski, P. (2020, April 24). *Today in Terrorism – 1975 Hostage Crisis in Sweden*. Borealis Threat & Risk Consulting. http://borealisthreatandrisk.com/1975-hostage-crisis-in-sweden/

Han, S. (2017). Attachment insecurity and openness to diversity: The roles of self-esteem and trust. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *111*, 291–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.02.033

Hanania, R. (2020, February 18). *Ineffective, Immoral, Politically Convenient: America's Overreliance on Economic Sanctions and What to Do about It*. Cato.org. https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/ineffective-immoral-politically-convenient-americas-overreliance-economic-sanctions#sanctions-political-act

HANSHEW, K. (2012). "Sympathy for the Devil?" The West German Left and the Challenge of Terrorism. *Contemporary European History*, *21*(4), 511–532. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23270683

Harris, S., Birnbaum, M., Hudson, J., Lamothe, D., & Stern, D. L. (2022, March 7). U.S. and allies quietly prepare for a Ukrainian government-in-exile and a long insurgency. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/03/05/russia-ukraine-insurgency/

Harvard University. (n.d.). *Russo-UkrainianWar: Background*. Russo-Ukrainian War. https://war.huri.harvard.edu/background/

Havlová, R. (2024). The World Uyghur Congress as an Actor of Foreign Policy. In M. Charountaki, C. Kourtelis, & D. Irrera (Eds.), *Non-State Actors and Foreign Policy Agency: Insights from Area Studies*. Springer.

Hayden, J. (2024, June 16). *Trump threatens to cut US aid to Ukraine quickly if reelected*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-ukraine-russia-war-threatens-cut-aid-election-2024/

Helf, G. (2023, September 28). *New Central Asian Leaders Look to Balance Relations with Major Powers*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/09/new-central-asian-leaders-look-balance-relations-major-powers

Hirsch, P. (2023, April 11). *Why sanctions don't work — but could if done right*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2023/04/11/1169072190/why-sanctions-dont-work-but-could-if-done-right

History of Right-Wing Extremism | Gale. (n.d.). Www.gale.com. https://www.gale.com/primary-sources/political-extremism-and-radicalism/collections/history-of-right-wing-extremism

Hoffman, B. (2017). *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia University Press.

Hummel, K. (2024, January 19). *Is Left-Wing Terrorism Making a Comeback in Germany? Analyzing the "Engel – Guntermann Network."* Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. https://ctc.westpoint.edu/is-left-wing-terrorism-making-a-comeback-in-germany-analyzing-the-engel-guntermann-network/

Hwang, J. C. (2018). *Why Terrorists Quit: The Disengagement of Indonesian Jihadists*. Cornell University Press.

Hwang, T.-J., Rabheru, K., Peisah, C., Reichman, W., & Ikeda, M. (2020). Loneliness and Social Isolation during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *International Psychogeriatrics*, *32*(10), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1041610220000988

Ignatius, D. (1991, September 22). *Innocence Abroad: The New World of Spyless Coups*. Washington Post; The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/opinions/1991/09/22/innocence-abroad-the-new-world-of-spyless-coups/92bb989a-de6e-4bb8-99b9-462c76b59a16

Internation Republican Institute. (2024, March 11). *IRI Armenia Poll: Increasing Negative Views of Russia, Strong Support for Nagorno-Karabakh Refugee Response*. International Republican Institute. https://www.iri.org/news/iri-armenia-poll-increasing-negative-views-of-russia/

International Department Central Committee of CPC. (2012, November 8). Www.idcpc.gov.cn. https://www.idcpc.gov.cn/english/cpcbrief/18thParty/index.html#10

Interpol. (2023, May 8). *Europe: Drug trafficking, organized crime increasing by "an order of magnitude."* Www.interpol.int. https://www.interpol.int/News-and-Events/News/2023/Europe-Drug-trafficking-organized-crime-increasing-by-an-order-of-magnitude

Irrera, D. (2022). The Power and Impact of Institutions on International Relations: From Intergovernmental to Non-governmental Organisations. In M. Charountaki & D. Irrera (Eds.), *Mapping Non-State Actors in International Relations*. Springer International Publishing.

Iskandaryan, A. (2014). *Nations in Transit Ratings and Averaged Scores*. Freedom House. https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/NIT14_Armenia_final.pdf

ISSAI. (2024). *Elevating Kazakhstan's AI Capabilities: Issai's Transformation and Ambitious Kazakh Large Language Model Project*. ISSAI. "Elevating Kazakhstan's AI Capabilities: Issai's Transformation and Ambitious Kazakh

Jacobsen, K. L., & Larsen, K. P. (2023). Wagner Group Flows: A Two-Fold Challenge to Liberal Intervention and Liberal Order. *Politics and Governance*, *12*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.7367

Jakupi, R., & Kreci, V. (2019). *Accounting for the Difference: Vulnerability and Resilience to Violent Extremism in Kosovo*. Berghof Foundation.

Janovsky, J., Naalsio, Dan, Kemal, & Black, A. (2022, February 24). *Attack On Europe: Documenting Equipment Losses During The 2022 Russian Invasion of Ukraine*. Oryx. https://www.oryxspioenkop.com/2022/02/attack-on-europe-documenting-equipment.html

Jardar Østbø. (2021). Strategic Transgressions: Russia's Deviant Sovereignty and the Myth of Evgenii Prigozhin. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, *29*(2), 183–207. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/787693

Jenkins, J. (2018, February 12). *Red Army Faction | History, Members, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Red-Army-Faction

Jennings, R. S. (2019, February 14). *Upgrading U.S. Support for Armenia's Postrevolution Reforms*. Carnegieendowment.org; The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/02/upgrading-us-support-for-armenias-postrevolution-reforms?lang=en

Jensen, S., & Al-Rawi, W. (2022). Irregular Militaries and Militias in International Relations: The Case of Iraqi Shiite Militias. In M. Charountaki & D. Irrera (Eds.), *Mapping Non-State Actors in International Relations*. Springer International Publishing.

Jie, Y., & Wallace, J. (2021, September 13). *What is China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)?* Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/09/what-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri

Kallberg, J. (2022, December 23). *Leader Loss: Russian Junior Officer Casualties*. CEPA. https://cepa.org/article/leader-loss-russian-junior-officer-casualties-in-ukraine/

Karlin, M. (2018, November). *The implications of artificial intelligence for national security strategy*. Brookings. http://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-implications-of-artificial-intelligence-for-national-security-strategy/

Karr, L. (2024, January 4). *Salafi-Jihadi Movement Update Special Edition: Ethiopia-Somaliland Port Deal Alters Horn of Africa Counterterrorism and Red Sea Geopolitics*. Institute for the Study of War. https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/salafi-jihadi-movement-update-special-edition-ethiopia-somaliland-port-deal-alters-horn

Kaura, V. (2020). India's Relations with China from the Doklam Crisis to the Galwan Tragedy. *India Quarterly, 76*(4), 501–518. https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928420961768

Kazantsev-Vaisman, A. (2023, September 27). *How Russia Tries to Use the Central Asian States After the Invasion of Ukraine*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic

Studies. https://besacenter.org/how-russia-tries-to-use-the-central-asian-states-after-the-invasion-of-ukraine/

Keller, H. (2018). Universality Claim of Attachment theory: Children's Socioemotional Development across Cultures. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *115*(45), 11414–11419. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1720325115

Khan, I. (2023). *Ukraine's Territorial Defence Force: War Creates Defiance*. Swedish Defence Research Agency. https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20Memo%208248

Kharnad, B. (2019, February 23). *THE WEEK*. The Week. https://www.theweek.in/

Kitts, M. (2020). Proud Boys, Nationalism, and Religion in advance. *Journal of Religion and Violence*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.5840/jrv2020102778

Klisz, M. (2022). The Polish Territorial Defence Forces (POL TDF): a significant component in national resilience and resistance. *Insights*, *2*(8), 1–8. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6034150d85deb0136ad574f2/t/62e943e3d638fb7137283256/1659454439093/KCIS+INSIGHTS+Klisz+2-8+August+2022.pdf

Kofman, M., Fink, A., Gorenburg, D., Chesnut, M., Edmonds, J., Waller, J., Stricklin, K., & Bendett, S. (2021). *Russian Military Strategy: Core Tenets and Operational Concepts*. Www.cna.org. https://www.cna.org/reports/2021/10/russian-military-strategy-core-tenets-and-concepts

Korshak, S. (2023, May 12). *3rd Separate Assault Infantry Brigade – Ukraine's Counteroffensive, Units to Watch #1*. Kyiv Post. https://www.kyivpost.com/post/16955

Krona, M., & Pennington, R. (Eds.). (2019). *The Media World of ISIS*. Indiana University Press.

Krouglov, A. (2022). Language planning and policies in Russia through a historical perspective. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 412–434. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2021.2005384

Kucera, J. (2024, March 29). *Russian Military Base in Armenia at Eye of a Geopolitical Storm | Davis Center*. Daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu. https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/insights/russian-military-base-armenia-eye-geopolitical-storm

Kucera, J., & Mejlumyan, A. (2021, June 21). *Armenia's Pashinyan wins reelection in landslide*. Eurasianet. https://eurasianet.org/armenias-pashinyan-wins-reelection-in-landslide

Kumar, A., Murthy, S. V., Singh, S., & Ragupathy, S. (2024). *The Ethics of Interaction: Mitigating Security Threats in LLMs*. ArXiv.org. http://arxiv.org/abs/2401.12273

Kursani, S. (2019). *Reintegrating Returning Foreign Fighters: What Approach Best Suits Kosovo?* Kosovar Centre for Security Studies.

Kuźniak, M., & Mańczak-Wohlfeld, E. (2017). Language Planning Activities and Policy – the Case of Poland. *Glottodidactica. An International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *43*(2), 63. https://doi.org/10.14746/gl.2016.43.2.03

Labunski, F. (2023). Energy without Russia : the consequences of the Ukraine war and the EU sanctions on the energy sector in Europe. *Wupperinst.org*. https://doi.org/978-615-6289-67-4

Langan, T. (2023). *Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Report 2023*. Federal Bureau of Investigation. https://www.ic3.gov/AnnualReport/Reports/2023_IC3Report.pdf

Laruelle, M., & Limonier, K. (2021). Beyond "hybrid warfare": a digital exploration of Russia's entrepreneurs of influence. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *37*(4), 318–335. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2021.1936409

Lawniczak, B. (2023). Substitute to War: Questioning the Efficacy of Sanctions on Russia. *Journal of Advanced Military Studies*, *14*(2), 227–245. https://doi.org/10.21140/mcuj.20231402011

Lee, R. W., & MacDonald, S. B. (1993). Drugs in the East. *Foreign Policy*, *90*, 89–89. https://doi.org/10.2307/1148945

Lenderking, T. A. (2024, April 19). *Securing the Red Sea: A Global Response*. United States Department of State. https://www.state.gov/securing-the-red-sea-a-global-response/

Lian, T. (2023, September 23). *The Indian Trilateral Highway Project and Myanmar's Spring Revolution*. Thediplomat.com. https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/the-indian-trilateral-highway-project-and-myanmars-spring-revolution/

Lillis, J. (2022, July 12). *Washington Flags Central Asian States over Potential Sanctions-Dodging*. Eurasianet. https://eurasianet.org/washington-flags-central-asian-states-over-potential-sanctions-dodging

Lintner, B. (2019, April 29). *The United Wa State Army and Burma's Peace Process*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/04/united-wa-state-army-and-burmas-peace-process

Lintner, B. (2020). *Why burma's Peace efforts Have Failed to end Its Internal Wars*. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/20201002-pw_169-why_burmas_peace_efforts_have_failed_to_end_its_internal_wars-pw.pdf

Luckey, D. (2024, April 16). *China's Role in Synthetic Opioid Trafficking: Efforts to Reduce Supply of Precursor Chemicals at the Primary Source*. Www.rand.org. https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CTA3334-1.html

Lyngaas, R. (2023, December 14). *Sanctions and Russia's War: Limiting Putin's Capabilities*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/sanctions-and-russias-war-limiting-putins-capabilities

MacKay, J. (2019, February 4). *How do Hackers Normally Get Caught?* MetaCompliance. https://www.metacompliance.com/blog/phishing-and-ransomware/how-do-hackers-normally-get-caught

Mackerras, C. (2004). Ethnicity in Asia. In *Routledge eBooks*. Informa. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203380468

Mackerras, C. (2015). Xinjiang in China's Foreign Relations: Part of a New Silk Road or Central Asian Zone of Conflict? *East Asia*, *32*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-015-9224-8

Malyasov, D. (2023, December 14). *Russian army receives new batch of BMP-3 and BTR-MDM vehicles*. Defence Blog. https://defence-blog.com/russian-army-receives-new-batch-of-bmp-3-and-btr-mdm-vehicles/

Mamgain, S. (2023, June 23). *Bhutan-China Border Dispute: Regional Security Concerns − CENJOWS*. Cenjows.in. https://cenjows.in/bhutan-china-border-dispute-regional-security-concerns/#_edn2

Maniszewska, K. (2006). Sympathy for the… Baader. Regarding the media coverage of the Red Army Faction. In T. Płudowski (Ed.), *Terrorism, Media, Society*. Adam Marszałek Publishing House.

Mark, E. (2018, March 16). *The "Resource War" in Kachin State*. Thediplomat.com. https://thediplomat.com/2018/03/the-resource-war-in-kachin-state/

Marsden, S. V. (2020). *Reintegrating Extremists: Deradicalisation and Desistance*. Macmillan.

Marten, K. (2019). Russia's use of semi-state security forces: the case of the Wagner Group. *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *35*(3), 181–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586x.2019.1591142

Marten, K. (2023). Whither Wagner? The Consequences of Prigozhin's Mutiny and Demise. *Survival*, *65*(5), 45–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2023.2261245

Marten, K., KendallTaylor, A., Nietsche, C., Lokker, N., & Taylor, K. (2023). Front Matter. In *Potential Russian Uses of Paramilitaries in Eurasia* (p. [i]-[i]). Center for a New American Security; JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep57027.1

Martin, T., Laitin, D. D., & Steinmetz, G. (2001). *Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 19231939*. Cornell University Press; JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1rv61tj

Maru, M. T. (2022, September 22). *What Ethiopia and Tigray need for peace talks to succeed*. Www.aljazeera.com. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/9/22/what-ethiopia-and-tigray-need-for-peace-talks-to-succeed

Mascarenhas, L. (2021, September 16). *Mass shootings in the US increased during the coronavirus pandemic, study finds*. CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/2021/09/16/us/mass-shootings-increased-in-pandemic/index.html

Mata, W. (2022, November 30). *Russia "stops deploying army as battalion tactical groups" in Ukraine, says MoD*. The Standard; Evening Standard. https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/russia-battalion-tactical-groups-ukraine-deployment-putin-moscow-ministry-of-defence-latest-update-b1043400.html

Mathieson, D. S. (2020, September 17). *The Arakan Army in Myanmar: Deadly Conflict Rises in Rakhine State*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/11/arakan-army-myanmar-deadly-conflict-rises-rakhine-state

Mathou, T. (2004). The Spider and the Piglet: Proceedings of the First International Seminar on Bhutan Studies. In K. Galay (Ed.), *Gross national happiness and development: Proceedings of the first international seminar on operationalization of gross national happiness*. Centre for Bhutan Studies. https://books.google.pl/books?id=kCVPOAAACAAJ

Mattei, C., & Zeiger, S. (2021). *Factors Contributing to Radicalization*. Hedayah. https://hedayah.com/app/uploads/2021/10/Factors-Contributing-to-Radicalization.pdf

Matthews, O. (2018, March 23). *Has Vladimir Putin Lost Control of Russia's Assassins? The Kremlin may have ordered a hit on an ex-Russian spy in the U.K. But some point to a scarier prospect--that Moscow's death squads did it on their own*. Gale Academic OneFile; Newsweek. https://link-gale-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/apps/doc/A531258960/AONE?u=txshracd2598&sid=googleScholar&xid=2a8c3e5e

Mayer, M. (1978). The German October of 1977. *New German Critique*, *13*, 155. https://doi.org/10.2307/3115192

McDonough, M. (2024, January 22). *Large language model | Definition, History, & Facts*. Encyclopedia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com/topic/large-language-model

McFaul, M. (1999, May 1). *What Are Russian Foreign Policy Objectives?* Carnegieendowment.org. https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/1999/05/what-are-russian-foreign-policy-objectives?lang=en&center=russia-eurasia

McNeill, B. (2023, February 17). *Addressing social isolation may be key in preventing mass shootings, study finds*. VCU News. https://news.vcu.edu/article/2023/02/addressing-social-isolation-may-be-key-in-preventing-mass-shootings-study-finds

Meduza. (n.d.). *Financial Times: западные страны в поисках ответа на серию российских диверсий обращаются к тактике борьбы с КГБ."(Western countries, in search of a response to a series of Russian sabotage, are turning to tactics to combat the KGB*. http://website3.production.meduza.io/news/2024/06/04/financial-times-zapadnye-strany-v-poiskah-otveta-na-seriyu-rossiyskih-diversiy-obraschayutsya-k-taktike-borby-s-kgb

Mensik, H. (2022, September 8). *Healthcare cyberattacks led to worse patient care, increased mortality, study finds*. Healthcare Dive. https://www.healthcaredive.com/news/cyberattacks-hospitals-disrupt-operations-patient-care-Ponemon/631439/

Merari, A. (1993). Terrorism as a strategy of insurgency. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *5*(4), 213–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559308427227

Meseret, E. (2018, July 8). *With hugs, leaders of Ethiopia, Eritrea restore relations*. AP News. https://apnews.com/article/9c5c3675d2114e0ea089e51df902d1b7

Meservey, J. (2023, July 17). *Eritrea's Growing Ties with China and Russia Highlight America's Inadequate Approach in East Africa | Hudson*. Www.hudson.org. https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/eritreas-growing-ties-china-russia-highlight-americas-inadequate-approach-east-joshua-meservey

Michell, Y. (2024, February 12). *Equipment losses in Russia's war on Ukraine mount*. IISS. https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/military-balance/2024/02/equipment-losses-in-russias-war-on-ukraine-mount/

Mikhelidze, N. (2010). *The Turkish-Armenian Rapprochement at the Deadlock*. Istituto Affari Internazionali. https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iai1005.pdf

MilitaryLand.net. (2022, December 16). *Ukrainian 98th Battalion Azov on the move somewhere in the area of operations*. X (Formerly Twitter). https://x.com/Militarylandnet/status/1603777511535841280

Miller, J. (2020, October 26). *What the 2020 electorate looks like by party, race and ethnicity, age, education and religion*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/10/26/what-the-2020-electorate-looks

Millward, J. A. (2000). *Violent Separatism in Xinjiang: A Critical Assessment*. East-West Center Washington.

Milov, V. (2024, May 23). *Oil, gas, and war: The effect of sanctions on the Russian energy industry*. Atlantic Council. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/russia-tomorrow/oil-gas-and-war/

Ministry of Mines and Petroleum. (n.d.). *TAPI Project | Ministry of Mines*. Momp.gov.af. https://momp.gov.af/tapi-project

Mints, A. A., Suny, R. G., Dowsett, C. J. F., & Howe, G. M. (2024, June 27). *Armenia – Independence*. Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/place/Armenia/Independence

Mochizuki, M., & Han, J. (2020, September 16). *Is China Escalating Tensions With Japan in the East China Sea?* Thediplomat.com. https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/is-china-escalating-tensions-with-japan-in-the-east-china-sea/

Moneyhon, M. D. (2003). China's Great Western Development Project in Xinjiang: Economic Palliative, or Political Trojan Horse. *Denver Journal of International Law & Policy*, *31*(3), 491–519. https://digitalcommons.du.edu/djilp/vol31/iss3/9

Monitoring Missions and Priorities in Eritrea. (n.d.). Gsphub.eu. https://gsphub.eu/country-info/Eritrea

Moran, C. (2013, June 19). *A Closer Look: Why Teens Are Prone to Peer Pressure*. National Review; National Review. https://www.nationalreview.com/the-home-front/closer-look-why-teens-are-prone-peer-pressure-colette-moran/

Mueller, C. (2023, June 26). *No, China isn't providing tanks to Ukraine for use against Russia | Fact check*. USA TODAY. https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2023/06/26/china-claims-neutrality-not-sending-tanks-to-ukraine-fact-check/70348003007/

Mumford, A. (2013). *Proxy Warfare* (first). Polity Press.

Myanmar military removes rebel Arakan Army from "terrorist" list. (2021, March 11). Www.aljazeera.com. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/myanmar-junta-removes-rakhine-rebels-from-terrorist-list

Myers, S. L., Barry, E., & Fisher, M. (2017, July 26). How India and China Have Come to the Brink Over a Remote Mountain Pass. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/26/world/asia/dolam-plateau-china-india-bhutan.html

Myre, G. (2016, August 24). *2016 by the numbers: Hillary Clinton dwarfs Donald Trump in TV ad spending – CBS News*. Www.cbsnews.com. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2016-election-numbers-hillary-clinton-donald-trump-tv-advertisement-spending/

Myre, G. (2021, March 16). *Intelligence Report: Russia Tried To Help Trump In 2020 Election*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2021/03/16/977958302/intelligence-report-russia-tried-to-help

N, S. (2014, June 26). *Eritrea: Definitions you have to know*. Dissident Diaries. https://dissidentdiaries.wordpress.com/2014/06/26/definitions-you-must-know/

National Endowment for Democracy. (2020, May 29). *Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act Builds on Work of NED Grantees*. NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for DEMOCRACY. https://www.ned.org/uyghur-human-rights-policy-act-builds-on-work-of-ned-grantees/

National Institute on Aging. (2024, July 11). *Loneliness and Social Isolation — Tips for Staying Connected*. National Institute on Aging. https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation/loneliness-and-social-isolation-tips-staying-connected

NATO. (2021). *NATO's response to hybrid threats*. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm

Nelson, H. (2022, December 16). *West Virginia Guard Hosts Irregular Warfare Planning Conference*. National Guard. https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article/3248692/west-virginia-guard-hosts-irregular-warfare-planning-conference/

New database compiles common traits of US mass shooters. (2022, February 5). Www.jurist.org. https://www.jurist.org/news/2022/02/new-database-compiles-common-traits-of-us-mass-shooters/

New World Encyclopedia. (2019). *Eritrean-Ethiopian War – New World Encyclopedia*. Newworldencyclopedia.org. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eritrean-Ethiopian_War

Noctua, A., & Mas, C. (2023). *How Many Tanks Left For Russia Now ?* Institut Action Resilience. https://institutactionresilience.fr/publications.php

Nostrand van, E. (2024, February 23). *Phase Two of the Price Cap on Russian Oil: Two Years After Putin's Invasion*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/phase-two-of-the-price-cap-on-russian-oil-two-years-after-putins-invasion

Nye, J. S. (2023, September 6). *Is America Reverting to Isolationism? | by Joseph S. Nye, Jr.* Project Syndicate. https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/us-republicans-dangerous-isolationism-by-joseph-s-nye-2023-09

O' Rourke, R. (2018). *China's Actions in South and East China Seas: Implications for U.S. Interests-Background and Issues for Congress Ronald O'Rourke Specialist in Naval Affairs*. https://china.usc.edu/sites/default/files/article/attachments/crs-2018-china-in-south-china-sea.pdf

Oam, W. (2022, November 13). *My Honest Experience – Ukrainian Foreign Legion Volunteer | Civ Div*. Www.youtube.com. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZD5mZK4yMw

Olech, A. (2024). The Wagner Group in Africa. The sham battle of Russian mercenaries against terrorism. *Przegląd Konstytucyjny*, *5 (2024)*, 273–309. https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383ter.24.010.19398

Ong, A. (2018). Producing Intransigence: (Mis)understanding the United Wa State Army in Myanmar. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *40*(3), 449–474. https://doi.org/10.1355/cs40-3e

OPIPIB. (2023, December 12). *The launch of the first Polish open large language model: PLLuM*. National Information Processing Institute – National Research Institute; Ośrodek Przetwarzania Informacji – Państwowy Instytut Badawczy. http://opi.org.pl/en/the-launch-of-the-first-polish-open-large-language-model-pllum/

Oprysko, C. (2019, September 25). *Trump pressed Ukraine's president to work with Barr for dirt on Biden – POLITICO*. POLITICO; Politico. https://www.politico.com/story/2019/09/25/white-house-releases-transcript-of-trumps-call-with-ukraines-president-1510767

Orben, A., Tomova, L., & Blakemore, S.-J. (2020). The Effects of Social Deprivation on Adolescent Development and Mental Health. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, *4*(8), 634–640. https://doi.org/10.1016/s2352-4642(20)30186-3

Ostrovsky, S. (2024, January 22). *Unmasking GRU Unit 29155: Christo Grozev explains how he helped expose the Russian spies creating chaos in the West*. The Insider. https://theins.ru/en/politics/268521

Ozer, S. (2020). Globalization and radicalization: A cross-national study of local embeddedness and reactions to cultural globalization in regard to violent extremism. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *76*, 26–36. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2020.02.007

Ozer, S., & Bertelsen, P. (2019). Countering radicalization: An empirical examination from a life psychological perspective. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, *25*(3), 211–225. https://doi.org/10.1037/pac0000394

Ozer, S., & Obaidi, M. (2022). Globalization and Radicalization: The Rise of Extreme Reactions to Intercultural Contact, Sociocultural Disruption, and Identity Threat. *Springer EBooks*, 107–130. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04644-5_5

Ozer, S., Obaidi, M., & Anjum, G. (2023). Extreme Reactions to Globalization: Investigating Indirect, Longitudinal, and Experimental Effects of the Globalization–Radicalization Nexus. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 014616722311676. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231167694

Ozer, S., Obaidi, M., & Pfattheicher, S. (2020). Group membership and radicalization: A cross-national investigation of collective self-esteem underlying extremism. *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations*, *23*(8), 1230–1248. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220922901

Pan, Y. (2022, February 16). *Is the Russian Economy Really Suffering?* CERES. https://ceres.georgetown.edu/research/student-projects/is-the-russian-economy-really-suffering/

Panossian, R. (2006). Post-Soviet Armenia: Nationalism & Its (Dis)Contents. In *Making and Protecting the Nation in Postcolonial and Postcommunist States* (pp. 225–247). University of Michigan Press. https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.126246

Pap, A. L. (2017). Democratic U-turn, the chronology of building an illiberal democracy. *Routledge EBooks*, 11–34. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315168005-2

Parameswaran, P. (2020, March 25). *What Does Myanmar's New Arakan Army Terrorist Designation Mean for the Country's Security?* Thediplomat.com. https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/what-does-myanmars-new-arakan-army-terrorist-designation-mean-for-the-countrys-security/

Parlapiano, A., & Lee, J. C. (2018, February 17). The Propaganda Tools Used by Russians to Influence the 2016 Election. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/16/us/politics/russia-propaganda-election%202016.html

Pauls Purvins, Evalds Urtans, & Vairis Caune. (2024). Using Large Language Models to Improve Sentiment Analysis in Latvian Language. *Baltic Journal of Modern Computing*, *12*(2). https://doi.org/10.22364/bjmc.2024.12.2.03

Pelz, W. A. (2016). Economic Collapse and the Rise of Fascism, 1920–33. *A People's History of Modern Europe*, 127–141. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1c2crfj.14

Pepinsky, T. (2023, December 24). *The return of US isolationism*. East Asia Forum. https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/12/24/the-return-of-us-isolationism/

Perry, V. (2016). *Initiatives to Prevent/Counter Violent Extremism in South EasEurope: A Survey of Regional Issues, Initiatives and Opportunities*. Regional Cooperation Council.

Pew Research Center. (2017, October 20). *The shift in the American public's political values*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/feature/political-polarization-1994-2017/

Pike, J. (2024). *Red Army Faction (RAF)*. Globalsecurity.org. https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/raf.htm

Pirro, A. L. P. (2022). Far right: the Significance of an Umbrella Concept. *Nations and Nationalism*, *29*(1), 101–112. https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12860

Pizzi, J. (2023). Profiteers of Misery. *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, *21*(2), 291–330. https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mqad022

Plaut, M. (2023, December 19). *Eritrea's active opposition: the rise of Brigade N'Hamedu*. Martin Plaut. https://martinplaut.com/2023/12/19/eritreas-active-opposition-the-rise-of-brigade-nhamedu/

Pobocha, P. (2020, December 15). *Receding from View: History and Gerhard Richter's October 18, 1977 | Magazine | MoMA*. The Museum of Modern Art; MoMA. http://www.moma.org/magazine/articles/468

Poggeschi, G. (2004). *Language Policy in Latvia*. Noves SL.: Revista de sociolingüística. http:// academia.edu/112508840/Language_Policy_in_Latvia

Poland's military modernisation – still many challenges ahead. (2023, March 6). Casimir Pulaski Foundation. https://pulaski.pl/en/pulaski-policy-paper-polands-military-modernisation-still-many-challenges-ahead-robert-czulda-2/

Polyakova, A. (2014). STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: Putin and Europe's Far Right. *World Affairs*, *177*(3), 36–40. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43555253

Pothecary, J. (2016, November 21). *Dangerous Waters: The Situation in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait | Center for International Maritime Security*. Cimsec.org. https://cimsec.org/dangerous-waters-situation-bab-el-mandeb-strait/

Potočňák, A., & Mareš, M. (2022). Russia's Private Military Enterprises as a Multipurpose Tool of Hybrid Warfare. *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, *35*(2), 181–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2022.2132608

Press, A. (2024). *Cyberattacks on Hospitals Are Likely to Increase, Putting Lives at Risk, Experts Warn*. US News & World Report; U.S. News & World Report. https://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2024-02-14/cyberattacks-on-hospitals-are-likely-to-increase-putting-lives-at-risk-experts-warn

Prokopenko, A. (2024, March). *Is the Kremlin Overconfident About Russia's Economic Stability?* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/03/is-the-kremlin-overconfident-about-russias-economic-stability?lang=en#_edn4

Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN). (2021). *Rehabilitation Manual – Rehabilitation of radicalised and terrorist offenders for first line practitioners*. Home-Affairs.ec.europa.eu. https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/radicalisation-awareness-network-ran/publications/rehabilitation-manual-rehabilitation-radicalised-and-terrorist-offenders-first-line-practitioners_en

Radio Free Asia. (2017, February 24). *Ethnic Militias Decide Not to Sign Myanmar Government's Cease-fire Agreement*. Radio Free Asia. https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/ethnic-militias-decide-not-to-sign-myanmar-governments-ceasefire-agreement-02242017145929.html

Ranjan, A. (2021). *China's New Claim in Eastern Bhutan: Pressure Tactic or Message to India?* Institute of South Asian Studies. National University of Singapore. https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/chinas-new-claim-in-eastern-bhutan-pressure-tactic-or-message-to-india/

Reed, J. (2024, May 8). *Change Healthcare attack expected to exceed $1 billion in costs*. Security Intelligence. https://securityintelligence.com/news/change-healthcare-cyberattack-exceeds-1-billion-costs/

Reed, J. T., & Raschke, D. (2010). *The ETIM: China's Islamic Militants and the Global Terrorist Threat*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Rehman, I. (2017). Rise of the Reactionaries: The American Far Right and U.S. Foreign Policy. *The Washington Quarterly*, *40*(4), 29–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660x.2017.1406706

Reid, R. (2003). Old Problems in New Conflicts: Some Observations on Eritrea and its Relations with Tigray, from Liberation Struggle to Inter-State War. *Africa*, *73*(3), 369–401. https://doi.org/10.3366/afr.2003.73.3.369

Reid, R. (2021, January 28). *A very Ethiopian tragedy: Tigray, the TPLF, and cyclical history*. Georgetown Journal of International Affairs. https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2021/01/28/a-very-ethiopian-tragedy-tigray-the-tplf-and-cyclical-history/

Research, E. (2023, November 29). *Black Basta ransomware victims have paid over $100 million*. Www.elliptic.co. https://www.elliptic.co/blog/black-basta-ransomware-victims-have-paid-over-100-million

Rielage, D. (2017, September 1). *Coast Guard: Wrong Tool for the South China Sea*. U.S. Naval Institute. https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2017/september/coast-guard-wrong-tool-south-china-sea

Riggi, J. (2020). *Ransomware Attacks on Hospitals Have Changed | Cybersecurity | Center | AHA*. Www.aha.org. https://www.aha.org/center/cybersecurity-and-risk-advisory-services/ransomware-attacks-hospitals-have-changed

Ritzmann, A. (2017). *The Role of Propaganda in Violent Extremism and how to Counter It*. Www.iemed.org. https://www.iemed.org/publication/the-role-of-propaganda-in-violent-extremism-and-how-to-counter-it/

Robert, J. E., & Schmidt, D. (2024, January 22). *10 Benefits and 10 Challenges of Applying Large Language Models to DoD Software Acquisition*. SEI Blog; Carnegie Mellon University. https://doi.org/10.58012/ygk8-kf82

Roberts, F. (2024). *Soviet Policy on Nationalities, 1920s-1930s*. Uchicago.edu. http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/soviet-imaginary/socialism-nations/soviet-policy-nationalities-1920s-1930s/

Romanticizing Ghedli (I): The Excuses. (2008, March 12). Ehrea.org. http://www.ehrea.org/gedli.htm

Rondos, A. (2024, June 29). *The Horn of Africa – Its Strategic Importance for Europe, the Gulf States, and Beyond*. CIRSD. https://www.cirsd.org/en/

horizons/horizons-winter-2016--issue-no-6/the-horn-of-africa---its-strate-
gic-importance-for-europe-the-gulf-states-and-beyond

Rorke, B. (2017, October 2). *The Rise of the Far Right and Anti-Gypsyism in Hun-
gary*. Www.opensocietyfoundations.org. https://www.opensocietyfounda-
tions.org/voices/rise-far-right-and-anti-gypsyism-hungary

Rousseau, C., Aggarwal, N. K., & Kirmayer, L. J. (2021). Radicalization to Violence: A View
from Cultural Psychiatry. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, *58*(5), 136346152110480.
https://doi.org/10.1177/13634615211048010

Rousseau, C., Johnson-Lafleur, J., Ngov, C., La Rochelle, X., Brouillette-Alarie, S.,
Gignac, M., Veissière, S., & Crocker, A. (2023). Risk assessment challenges
in a specialized clinic for individuals referred for violent extremism. *Journal
of Threat Assessment and Management*. https://doi.org/10.1037/tam0000214

Rubin, M. (2023, September 12). *Eritrea Is a State Sponsor of Terror*. American
Enterprise Institute – AEI. https://www.aei.org/op-eds/eritrea-is-a-state-
sponsor-of-terror/

Russia has launched its offensive in Ukraine's east, says Zelensky. (2022, April 17).
France 24; FRANCE 24. https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20220417-
zelensky-says-russia-aims-to-destroy-the-region-of-donbass-vows-to-
defend-it

Safdar, A. (2017, November 1). *Eritrea opposition: Security forces kill 28 protesters*.
Www.aljazeera.com. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/1/eritrea-
opposition-security-forces-kill-28-protesters

Sajid, H. (2024, February 10). *The State of Multilingual LLMs: Moving Beyond
English*. Unite.AI. https://www.unite.ai/the-state-of-multilingual-llms-mov-
ing-beyond-english/

Savage, P. (2017). *Russian Social Media Information Operations: How Russia has
Used Social Media to Influence US Politics*. JSTOR. http://www.jstor.org/sta-
ble/resrep06042

Saxena, I., Uri Dabaly, R., & Singh, A. (2021, November 18). *China's Military and Eco-
nomic Prowess in Djibouti: A Security Challenge for the Indo-Pacific > Air Uni-
versity (AU) > Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs Article Display*. Www.airuniversity.
af.edu. https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2847015/chinas-
military-and-economic-prowess-in-djibouti-a-security-challenge-for-the-i/

Scaturro, R. (2023). *Disruption or Displacement? Impact of The Ukraine War On Drug
Markets in South Eastern Europe*. Global Initiative. https://globalinitiative.net/
wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ruggero-Scaturro-Disruption-or-displacement-
Impact-of-the-Ukraine-war-on-drug-markets-in-SE-Europe-GI-TOC-17-July.pdf

Scaturro, R. (2024). *An Altered State Evolving Drug Trends In Wartime Ukraine*. https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Ruggero-Scaturro-An-altered-state-Evolving-drug-trends-in-wartime-Ukraine-GI-TOC-February-2024.pdf

Scheepers, D., & Ellemers, N. (2019). Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology in Action*, *1*(1), 129–143. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-13788-5_9

Schwirtz, M., & Méheut, C. (2024, February 20). Russian Pilot Who Defected to Ukraine Is Believed Dead in Spain. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/world/europe/russian-pilot-maksim-kuzminov-spain.html

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.-a). *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 2: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 116th Congress, 1st Session*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume2.pdf

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.-b). *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 1: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 116th Congress, 1st Session*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume1.pdf

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.-c). *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 3: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 116th Congress, 1st Session*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume3.pdf

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.-d). *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 4: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 116th Congress, 1st Session*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report_Volume4.pdf

Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. (n.d.-e). *Russian Active Measures Campaigns and Interference in the 2016 U.S. Election, Volume 5: Russia's Use of Social Media with Additional Views. 116th Congress, 1st Session*. https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/documents/report_volume5.pdf

Shaghai Metals Market. (2010). *China's Norinco Signs Myanmar Copper Mine Contract to Strengthen Reserves | SMM*. Metal News. https://news.metal.com/newscontent/100010339/chinas-norinco-signs-myanmar-copper-mine-contract-to-strengthen-reserves

Shaver, P. R., & Brennan, K. A. (1992). Attachment Styles and the "Big Five" Personality Traits: Their Connections with Each Other and with Romantic Relationship Outcomes. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *18*(5), 536–545. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167292185003

Shirinyan, A. (2019). Armenia's Foreign Policy Balancing in an Age of Uncertainty. In *Futurearmenian.com*. https://futurearmenian.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Armenias-Foreign-Policy-Balancing-in-an-Age-of-Uncertainty.pdf

Shtuni, A. (2021). *Repatriating ISIS Foreign Fighters From Syria: The Balkans Case*. Middle East Institute.

Sial, F. (2022, September 1). *Sanctions and the changing world Order: Some Views from the Global South*. Developing Economics. https://developingeconomics.org/2022/09/01/sanctions-and-the-changing-world-order-some-views-from-the-global-south/

Skrzypczak, W. (2017). *Poland's Territorial Defence Force-Its role, Significance and Tasks*. Casmir Pulaski Foundation. https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Pulaski_Policy_Paper_No_9_17_EN-Polands-Territorial-Defence-Force-%E2%80%93-Its-Role-Significance-and-Tasks.pdf

Smith, B. (2021, December 5). How TikTok Reads Your Mind. *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/05/business/media/tiktok-algorithm.html

Solomon, S. (2023, May 22). *In State Visit, Eritrea and China Signal Deeper Partnership*. Voice of America; Voice of America (VOA News). https://www.voanews.com/a/in-state-visit-eritrea-and-china-signal-deeper-partnership-/7104234.html

Soloshcheva, M. A. (2017). The Uyghur Terrorism: Phenomenon and Genesis. *Iran & the Caucasus*, *21*(4), 415–430. https://doi.org/10.2307/26548912

South, A., & Joll, C. M. (2016). From Rebels to Rulers: The Challenges of Transition for Non-state Armed Groups in Mindanao and Myanmar. *Critical Asian Studies*, *48*(2), 168–192. https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2016.1161963

Spandler, H. (2018, June 22). *To Make An Army Out of Illness: the history of the socialist patients' collective by Helen Spandler – Asylum Magazine*. Asylum Magazine. https://asylummagazine.org/2018/06/to-make-an-army-out-of-illness-the-history-of-the-socialist-patients-collective-by-helen-spandler/

Spyscape. (n.d.). *The 13th Department: The KGB's Top-Secret Assassination Unit*. Spyscape.com. https://spyscape.com/article/the-13th-directorate-the-kgbs-top-secret-1960s-assassination-unit

Stigant, S., & Phelan, M. (2019, August 29). *A Year After the Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace Deal, What Is the Impact?* United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/08/year-after-ethiopia-eritrea-peace-deal-what-impact

Stojkovski, F., & Kalajdziovski, N. (2018). *Community Perspectives on the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Macedonia*. https://hope-radproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Stojkovski-Kalajdziovski-2018-Community-perspectives-on-the-prevention-of-violent-extremism-in-Macedonia.pdf

Strachota, K. (2023, July 10). *Mastering the growing crisis in the South Caucasus: A role for the West and Turkey*. Middle East Institute. https://www.mei.edu/publications/mastering-growing-crisis-south-caucasus-role-west-and-turkey

Strack, C. (2024, March 11). *Germany's RAF terrorism — an unresolved story – DW – 03/10/2024*. Dw.com. https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-raf-terrorism-an-unresolved-story/a-68474099

Stringer, H. (2022). *Empowering communities to prevent mass shootings*. Apa.org. https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/01/feature-empowering-communities

Strokan, M. (2023). A Window to India? The Trilateral Gas Union and Russia's Energy Pivot to Asia. *Asian Affairs*, *54*(3), 498–526. https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2023.2254077

Sun, D. (2010a). China and the Global Jihad Network. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, *1*(2), 196–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2010.517036

Sun, D. (2010b). *FIGHTING WITH NO MILITARY BASES ABROAD: GLOBAL JIHAD NETWORK AND CHINA'S ANTI-TERROR STRATEGY DEGANG SUN (Associate Professor at Middle East Studies Institute*. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/115256/rieas141.pdf

Superanskaja, A. V. (1995). Eastern Slavic Names. *Namenforschung*, 812–816. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110114263.1.8.812

Symon, D. (2022, September 29). *China's high-stakes incursion in the heights of Bhutan*. Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank. https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2022-10/chinas-high-stakes-incursion-heights-bhutan

Tarschys, D. (1985). Secret institutions in Russian government: A note on Rosenfeldt's*knowledge and power*. *Soviet Studies*, *37*(4), 525–534. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668138508411608

TAŞ, F., & ERDEM, R. (2020). YETİŞKİN BAĞLANMA STİLİNİN ÖRGÜTSEL AÇISINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ. *Pamukkale University Journal of Business Research*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.47097/piar.834871. This source was translated utilizing artificial intelligence resources.

Territorial Defence Forces – Ministry of National Defence – Gov.pl website. (2024, July 4). Ministry of National Defence. https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/territorial-defence-forces

Territorial Defense Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. (n.d.). Ministry of Defence of Ukraine. https://www.mil.gov.ua/ministry/sklad-zbrojnix-sil-ukraini/sili-teritorialnoi-oboroni-zbrojnih-sil-ukraini.html

Tharoor, I. (2023, August 13). Analysis | Ukraine's war of attrition draws parallels to World War I. *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/14/ukraine-world-war-one-two-historical-comparison-parallel-trench/

Thayer, C. (2017, July 24). *Alarming Escalation in the South China Sea: China Threatens Force if Vietnam Continues Oil Exploration in Spratlys*. Thediplomat.com. https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/alarming-escalation-in-the-south-china-sea-china-threatens-force-if-vietnam-continues-oil-exploration-in-spratlys/

The 1976 TPLF Manifesto: TPLF's "Republic of Greater Tigray." (2011, December 16). Amnewsupdate. https://articles2u.wordpress.com/2011/12/16/the-1976-tplf-manifesto-tplfs-republic-of-greater-tigray/

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2019). Russo-Turkish wars | Russo-Turkish history | Britannica. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russo-Turkish-wars

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. (2016). Leninism. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Leninism

The Ethiopian Revolution, The Derg, Civil War and Famine. (n.d.). Www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk. http://www.ethiopiantreasures.co.uk/pages/derg.htm

The International Institute For Strategic Studies. (2022). *The Military Balance 2022*. IISS. https://www.iiss.org/publications/the-military-balance/the-military-balance-2022

The Irrawaddy. (2022, February 16). *Why The Arakan Army Attended Myanmar Junta's Union Day Event*. StratNews Global. https://stratnewsglobal.com/myanmar/why-the-arakan-army-attended-myanmar-juntas-union-day-event/

The New Humanitarian. (2020, November 18). *The New Humanitarian | Women soldiers join Myanmar's Arakan Army conflict*. Www.thenewhumanitarian.org. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2020/11/18/myanmar-women-army-arakan-rakhine-female-soldiers-peace

The State of Eritrea Ministry of Land, Water and Environment Department of Environment. (2021). *First Biennial Update Report (BUR I) Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*. United Nations Climate Change. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Eritrea%20BUR1.pdf

Tibet: Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report. (2024). Freedom House. https://freedomhouse.org/country/tibet/freedom-world/2024

Tinmaz, H., Lee, Y.-T., Fanea-Ivanovici, M., & Baber, H. (2022). A systematic review on digital literacy. *Smart Learning Environments*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-022-00204-y

Topcu, N. (2020, October 12). *A Relationship on a Pipeline: China and Myanmar*. China Research Center. https://www.chinacenter.net/2020/china-currents/19-3/a-relationship-on-a-pipeline-china-and-myanmar/

Travis, C. K. (2023). Nostalgia, Hypermasculinity, and the American Far Right: What Ever Happened to Being Proud of Your Boy? *New Political Science*, *45*(4), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2023.2272537

Tsouloufas, G., & Rochat, M. (2023). Revisiting the effectiveness of economic sanctions in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal*, *29*(3), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2198247

U. S. Mission Armenia. (2018, November 21). *U.S. Embassy Officials Discuss Elections Assistance with Armenia's Central Electoral Commission*. U.S. Embassy in Armenia. https://am.usembassy.gov/elections-assistance/

U. S. Mission Armenia. (2023, September 15). *Eagle Partner Exercise Builds Upon Longstanding U.S.-Armenian Security Cooperation*. U.S. Embassy in Armenia. https://am.usembassy.gov/eagle-partner/

U.S Department of the Treasury. (2002, September 12). *Press Statement on the UN Designation of The Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement*. U.S. Department of the Treasury. https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/po3415

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2024). *U.S. Department of Health & Human Services – Office for Civil Rights*. Hhs.gov. https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/breach/breach_report.jsf

U.S. Mission Armenia. (2023, December 22). *Track II Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Initiatives*. Am.usembassy.gov. https://am.usembassy.gov/track-ii-conflict-resolution-and-peacebuilding-initiatives/

UHRP. (n.d.). *About.* Uyghur Human Rights Project. https://uhrp.org/about/

Ünal, M. C. (2016). Terrorism versus insurgency: a conceptual analysis. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, *66*(1), 21–57. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-015-9601-7

Understanding the Effects of Social Isolation on Mental Health. (2020, December 8). Publichealth.tulane.edu; Tulane University. https://publichealth.tulane.edu/blog/effects-of-social-isolation-on-mental-health/

Underwood, A. (2018, July 31). *The sudden end of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war, explained*. Vox; Vox. https://www.vox.com/2018/7/31/17595988/ethiopia-eritrea-peace-abiy-ahmed

UNESCO. (2024). *Education for all: literacy for life*. Doi.org. https://doi.org/10.54676/HFRH4626

UNHCR. (2023, March 29). Rohingya emergency. *UNHCR*. https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/rohingya-emergency

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2011). *Drug Trafficking*. Unodc.org. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/index.html

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2014). *The Illicit Drug Trade through South Eastern Europe*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit_DT_through_SEE_REPORT_2014_web.pdf

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2021a, November). *Drug Situation in Afghanistan 2021: Latest Findings and Emerging Threats*. https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Afghanistan_brief_Nov_2021.pdf

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2021b). *Latest findings and emerging threats 2*. https://afghanistan.un.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Afghanistan_brief_Nov_2021.pdf

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2023). *UNODC World Drug Report 2023 warns of converging crises as illicit drug markets continue to expand*. United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2023/June/unodc-world-drug-report-2023-warns-of-converging-crises-as-illicit-drug-markets-continue-to-expand.html

US Department of State. (2008). *Allied Occupation of Germany, 1945-52*. State.gov. https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/cwr/107189.htm

US Department of State. (n.d.). *The Asia Foundation: Related Appropriations*. https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/123640.pdf

US Department of State. (2017). *Remarks at the New Silk Road Ministerial Meeting*. U.S. Department of State. https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/09/173807.htm

US warns Russian invasion could see Kyiv fall in days, leave 50,000 civilians dead. (2022). Timesofisrael.com. https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-warns-russian-invasion-could-see-kyiv-fall-in-days-cause-50000-casualties/

Van Rosmalen, L., Van der Veer, R., & Van der Horst, F. (2015). AINSWORTH'S STRANGE SITUATION PROCEDURE: THE ORIGIN of AN INSTRUMENT. *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, *51*(3), 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1002/jhbs.21729

Vartanyan, O. (2024, March 4). *Armenia Struggles to Cope with Exodus from Nagorno-Karabakh | Crisis Group*. Www.crisisgroup.org. https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/armenian-azerbaijani-conflict-armenia/armenia-struggles-cope-exodus

Verma, S. (2024, May 13). *America's healthcare networks are under attack*. Healthcare Dive. https://www.healthcaredive.com/spons/americas-healthcare-networks-are-under-attack/715747/

Violence Prevention Project. (n.d.). *Key Findings – Comprehensive Mass Shooter Data*. The Violence Project. https://www.theviolenceproject.org/key-findings/

Влад Волошин. (2024, November 9). *Іноземні гранатомети майже витіснили радянські зразки цієї зброї в нашому підрозділі — інструктор ТрО*. Armyinform.com.ua. https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/06/17/inozemni-granatomety-majzhe-vytisnyly-radyanski-zrazky-cziyeyi-zbroyi-v-nashomu-pidrozdili-instruktor-tro/

Vohra, A. (2024, February 12). *China Is Quietly Expanding Its Land Grabs in the Himalayas*. Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/02/01/china-is-quietly-expanding-its-land-grabs-in-the-himalayas/

Vurmo, G., & Sulstarova, E. (2018). *Violent Extremism in Albania: A National Assessment of Drivers, Forms and Threats*. Institute for Democracy and Mediation.

Wallas, T., & Hordecki, B. (2021). Members of the Polish Language Council on the Problems of Linguistic Diversity and Linguistic Inclusion in Poland. *Social Inclusion*, *9*(1), 63–74. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v9i1.3595

Walsh, D., & Dahir, A. L. (2022, March 16). Why Is Ethiopia at War With Itself? *The New York Times*. https://www.nytimes.com/article/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained.html

Watson, E. (2024, June 13). *U.S. does not expect significant Russian breakthrough in Ukraine's Kharkiv region – CBS News*. Www.cbsnews.com. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kharkiv-ukraine-russian-breakthrough-pentagon-comment/

Weber, S. (2023, July 27). *Eastern Europe's Looming Health Crisis | Think Global Health*. Think Global Health. https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/eastern-europes-looming-health-crisis

Wells, K. (2024, June 19). *Cyberattack led to harrowing lapses at Ascension hospitals, clinicians say*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2024/06/19/nx-s1-5010219/ascension-hospital-ransomware-attack-care-lapses

Whitaker, B., Chasan, A., Messick, G., & Weingart, J. (2024, April 14). *Criminal exploits of Scattered Spider earn respect of Russian ransomware hackers – CBS News*. Www.cbsnews.com. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/scattered-spider-blackcat-hackers-ransomware-team-up-60-minutes/

White, H. (2017, August 22). *What the US would need to deter China*. Www.lowyinstitute.org. https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/what-us-would-need-deter-china

Why Tigrayans Will Always Be at Odds with Eritreans. (2023). Reddit.com; R/Eritrea on Reddit. https://www.reddit.com/r/Eritrea/comments/17nv0ka/why_tigrayans_will_always_be_at_odds_with/

Willingham, A. J. (2023, August 15). *What is Maslow's hierarchy of needs? A psychology theory, explained*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/world/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-explained-wellness-cec/index.html

Winkler, C., Cori Elizabeth Dauber, Lovelace, D. C., Army War College (U.S.). Strategic Studies Institute, & Army War College (U.S.). Press. (2014). *Visual propaganda and extremism in the online environment*. Strategic Studies Institute And U.S. Army War College Press.

Winter, C. (2015). *The Virtual "Caliphate": Understanding Islamic State's Propaganda Strategy*. Quilliam. https://voxpol.eu/wp-content/uploads/filebase/report/the-virtual-caliphate-understanding-islamic-states-propaganda-strategy.pdf

Winter, C., Neumann, P., Meleagrou-Hitchens, A., Ranstorp, M., Vidino, L., & Fürst, J. (2020). Online Extremism: Research Trends in Internet Activism, Radicalization, and Counter-Strategies. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence (IJCV)*, *14*(2), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.4119/ijcv-3809

Woellner, B. P. (2019). *The Advent of Russian Special Operations Command* [Master Thesis]. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1083710.pdf

Woldemariam, M. (2023, December 15). *Taking Ethiopia-Eritrea Tensions Seriously*. United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/publications/2023/12/taking-ethiopia-eritrea-tensions-seriously

Wolf, A. (2021, June 16). *Biggest Healthcare Industry Cyberattacks*. Arctic Wolf. https://arcticwolf.com/resources/blog/top-healthcare-industry-cyberattacks/

Wong, M. (2024, April 12). *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic; theatlantic. http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/04/generative-ai-low-resource-languages/678042/

World Bank. (2021). *Western Balkans Regular Economic Report No. 19: Subdued Recovery*. World Bank Group.

World Bank. (2023, October 3). *Bhutan: Overview*. World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bhutan/overview

World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal. (n.d.). Climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org. https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/eritrea

World Bank Group. (2018, February 26). *Modern Farming Boosts Production in Afghanistan's Khost Province*. World Bank; World Bank Group. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/02/26/modern-methods-and-much-needed-irrigation-help-farmers-increase-their-incomes-in-rural-afghanistan

World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Cyber-attacks on critical health infrastructure*. Www.who.int. https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cyber-attacks-on-critical-health-infrastructure

World Health Organization. (1970). *Human health and dams : the World Health Organization's submission to the World Commission on Dams (WCD)*. Apps.who.int. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/66163

World Health Organization. (2023, July 14). *WHO steps up its humanitarian response in southern Ukraine following the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam*. Www.who.int. https://www.who.int/europe/news/item/13-06-2023-who-steps-up-its-humanitarian-response-in-southern-ukraine-following-the-destruction-of-the-kakhovka-dam

World Uyghur Congress. (2019). World Uyghur Congress. https://www.uyghurcongress.org/en/

Worth, K. (2016). *Lone Wolf Attacks Are Becoming More Common – And More Deadly*. PBS. http://pbs.org.wgbh/frontline/article/lone-wolf-attacks-are-becoming-more-common-and-more-deadly/#:~:text=Over%20the%20last%2075%20years

Wrong, M. (2012). *I Didn't Do It For You: How the World Used and Abused a Small African Nation (Text Only)*. HarperCollins UK.

Wyne, A. (2022). The Evolving Geopolitics of Economic Interdependence between the United States and China: Reflections on a Deteriorating Great-Power Relationship. *Asia Policy*, *29*(3), 81–105. https://doi.org/10.1353/asp.2022.0046

Xiong, Y., Hong, H., Liu, C., & Zhang, Y. Q. (2022). Social isolation and the brain: effects and mechanisms. *Molecular Psychiatry*, *28*(28). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41380-022-01835-w

Xu, J. (2016). Review in History and Current Situation of East Turkistan. *Institute of Research in China's Borderland China Academy of Social Science-Beijing 100732*, *37*(6), 1–10.

Yamei. (2017, October 24). *Full text of resolution on CPC Central Committee report – Xinhua | English.news.cn*. Www.xinhuanet.com. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-10/24/c_136702625.htm

Yawar, M. Y., & Greenfield, C. (2022, September 28). *Exclusive: Afghan Taliban Sign Deal for Russian Oil Products, Gas and Wheat*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/markets/

Yaziji, M., & Doh, J. (2009). *Classifying NGOs: definitions, typologies and networks* (pp. 3–14). Cambridge University Press.

Yeung, J. (2023, January 18). *South Korea brought K-pop and K-dramas to the world. The Korean language could be next*. CNN. http://www.edition.cnn.com/2023/01/17/asia/korean-language-learning-rise-hallyu-intl-hnk-dst/index.html

Young, C. (2022, April 13). *What Really Happened in Ukraine in 2014—and Since Then*. Www.thebulwark.com. https://www.thebulwark.com/p/what-really-happened-in-ukraine-in-2014-and-since-then

Yujun, F., Gabuev, A., Haenle, P., Bin, M., & Trenin, D. (2019, April 8). *The Belt and Road Initiative: Views from Washington, Moscow, and Beijing*. Carnegieendowment.org. https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2019/04/the-belt-and-road-initiative-views-from-washington-moscow-and-beijing?lang=en

Zeidan, A. (2019). Nagorno-Karabakh | region, Azerbaijan | Britannica. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/place/Nagorno-Karabakh

Ukraine-war-on-drug-markets-in-SE-Europe-GI-TOC-17-July.pdf

Authors' bios

Nicholas Ayers is an undergraduate student at Baylor University. He is majoring in international studies and minoring in military studies. He holds an interest in military matters pertaining to Central and Eastern Europe.

Theodore Brandenberger is a junior at Virginia Commonwealth University majoring in International Relations with minors in Russian Studies and Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. He is interested in Eastern and Central European geopolitics, open source intelligence, and international security.

Minseo Chung was born and raised in South Korea and moved to the US in 2020. He is currently studying political science at Binghamton University. He has taken various classes on international politics and history, allowing himself to understand and deepen his knowledge of international relations. His main focus is on interventionism and security studies, which led him to join a minor program at Binghamton University called I-GMAP, which stands for the Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention. Since he has ethnic ties with Asians, specifically Koreans, he wanted to study more about East Asian politics and history that can hopefully help future generations. He can speak three languages: his mother tongue is Korean, second is English, and third is Chinese.

Alison Crist is an undergraduate student at Michigan State University working towards her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Law, Justice, and Public Policy. She intends on pursuing a future in investigatory studies. Passionate about understanding the mind of a criminal, Alison aims to leverage her education to make significant contributions to the field of criminal justice.

Harris Franz is third year bachelor student at the University of Texas majoring in International Relations and Global Studies. His area of study is Eastern European and Eurasian studies with an emphasis in international security. He is particularly interested in the complexities of globalization; its pros, its cons and how economies have become incredibly intertwined.

Timothy Ham is a junior undergraduate student at Michigan State University majoring in criminal justice with a minor in peace and justice studies. His research interests include South American Cartels, drug trafficking, and counterinsurgency. Upon graduation and gaining his bachelor's degree, he hopes to obtain a position in Federal Law Enforcement.

Maximilian Ivchenko is pursuing a career in the foreign service and studying International Relations at the University of Texas at Austin. He has spent considerable time (three months every summer since the age of five) in Ukraine, acclimating to the environment, culture, and language.

Connor Liam Jensen is a post-undergraduate from Stetson University, where at 20 he earned his B.S. in Political Science and a Minor in REES. At Stetson, he earned the Medallion scholarship, which helped him pursue international politics, law, and Russian studies. Connor was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and Dobro Slovo Honor Society and became the president of Stetson's Model UN. He is now working on applications to graduate school to further his international and security studies.

Duncan Kindopp is an undergraduate student at Case Western Reserve University. He is studying Finance and International Studies with an area focus on Asia and a topical focus on Diplomacy and Security. He hopes to find a job in public service with the United States Federal Government after graduation.

Wyatt Krieg is currently a rising senior from the University of Texas at Austin, where he is studying International Relations and Global Studies on the Int. Security Track with a minor in Russian. He has conducted research on two published open-source and commercial geospatial intelligence reports with UT Austin's Tearline Project, under the supervision of the National

Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA). He looks to expand his experience in OSINT and earn a career with the US Government

Carol Massey is an undergraduate student at Michigan State University, majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology. At the time of publication, she will be in her second year at Michigan State. After gaining her bachelor's degree, Carol hopes to pursue a doctorate in Clinical Psychology.

Celestyn M. Pawlak is attending Michigan State University as an undergraduate double majoring in Criminal Justice and Psychology with a minor in Human Behavior and Social Services. She plans to get a Master of Bachelor of Arts in Psychology within the next few years and then attend graduate school. She hopes to further her education at the Michigan School of Professional Psychology and obtain a PsyD. She has an extreme interest in behavioral psychology and the relationship that exists between psychological disorders and criminality.

Xavier Raymondson is a senior at Washington and Lee University pursuing two bachelor's degrees in Sociology and Eastern European and Russian Area Studies. He is interested in researching the South Caucasus after spending over a year abroad (15 months) in the region, most of which was in Yerevan. Additionally, he is interested in studying social networks, extremism, peacebuilding, and diplomacy. He also takes online data science courses in R and SQL in his free time to complement his studies.

Katherine Sanchez is a post-undergrad student currently taking part in a research program with Collegium Civitas in Warsaw, Poland. She received a dual bachelor's degree in Russian and Eastern European Studies and Linguistics from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She is interested in International Relations, Intelligence, and Anti-Terrorism.

Michael Stewart is majoring in politics and Russian, concentrating on Eastern European studies at Sewanee, The University of the South. Previously, he worked as a research assistant to Dr. Richard Weitz, a senior research fellow at the Hudson Institute, where he was tasked with reading and analyzing documents, frequently in Russian, to help further his supervisor's role not only within the Hudson Institute but in US foreign

policy as a whole. From January to May, he completed a semester abroad at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan via Middlebury's CV Starr Schools Abroad, taking advanced coursework in Russian and Central Asian history, politics, and culture (all conducted in Russian).

Nash Tucker is a senior undergraduate student at The University of Texas at Austin majoring in International Relations and Global Studies with a minor in Russian. He has a keen interest in Russian and Eastern European affairs.

Barbara Uzun is a rising fourth year at the University of Virginia double majoring in Foreign Affairs and Russian & Eastern European Studies, with a minor in Data Science. Born in Odessa and fluent in Russian and Ukrainian, she has a strong background in the culture and languages of the region. Barbara is currently working on her distinguished major thesis on Russian Foreign Policy.

Aidan Weatherford is a student of Texas A&M University, and an International Relations major with a minor in Russian. He has a vested interest in Eastern European security, and hopes to someday work in international relations or as an analyst. He would like to take this opportunity to thank all the students and faculty he spent time studying with at Collegium Civitas for the wonderful knowledge, insight, and inspiration they provided. For further inquiries he can be reached at weatherfordaidan@gmail.com.

This book results from the 10th edition of the Summer School "Security and Society in the Information Age" held at Collegium Civitas in Warsaw, Poland, between June and July 2024.

Twenty students from various U.S. universities participated in the program, which combines the four-week intensive course on Central Europe & Security Issues with a two-week research internship with the Terrorism Research Center – a research unit at Collegium Civitas and a leading think-tank on security issues in Poland. Collegium Civitas and SRAS are proud to offer this immersive experience that educates and prepares future leaders to understand and engage with complex global challenges.

This volume brings together papers by undergraduate students – participants in the program presenting the "Youth Perspectives on Security". The curriculum was particularly poignant, focusing on the regional and global implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and exploring the interconnectedness of conflicts across different regions, including the Middle East. The topics discussed during the program are reflected in the papers by the contributors to this volume. The topics range from hybrid warfare, migration issues, and countering terrorism through war and peacebuilding to geopolitical strategies of powers in the multipolar world.

We hope you will find the perspectives gathered in this book interesting, and we invite you to learn more about the study abroad and summer school program "Security and Society in the Information Age" at: www.securityandsociety.org.