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CENTRE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY STRATEGIC STUDIES**



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The fourth edition of 2021 (volume 81) comprises four articles, and also Book review rubric, signed by our colleague, Scientific Researcher Mihai Zodian, PhD.

The journal opens with the section ***Security and Military Strategies*** where one can read an article elaborated by Colonel (Ret.) Scientific Researcher Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță, PhD, who continues the research concerning the latest progress in the field of research-development and innovation (RDI), with regard to expanding the capabilities of the future “mosaic” warfare in the light of competition for global and regional power.

The second rubric, ***Geopolitics and Geostategy: Trends and Perspectives***, contains an article signed by Mr. Mihai Tatomir, presenting the dynamics of Turkish-Romanian relations in the Black Sea region from a neoliberal perspective.

Next, the third rubric, ***Defence and Security Concepts***, comprises two articles belonging to Mr. Daniel-Mihai Duțu and Captain (Navy) Bogdan Tuțuiuianu; the first paper deals with the process of de-radicalisation and its potential for today's society, by presenting theoretical and practical de-radicalisation patterns, whereas the second article advocates for greater military and political emphasis on strategic communication in the context of the expansion and diversification of the hybrid phenomenon as a reality that must be related and countered to adversaries and used to achieve their goals.

Through ***Book review*** rubric, we would like to bring to your attention a bibliographic essay that is, in fact, a statistical debate on the future of war.

The edition also includes ***Scientific Event*** section, where one can read about aspects of interest from STRATEGIES XXI International Scientific Conference on “The complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment”, organized online on December 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Also, the edition includes the ***Guide for Authors*** section, a mandatory reading for those who wish to disseminate the research results in *Strategic Impact* journal.

For those who read for the first time *Strategic Impact*, it is an open-access peer reviewed journal, edited by the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies and published with the support of “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House, and, according to the National Council for Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU), the publication is a prestigious scientific journal in the field of military sciences, information and public order.



*Strategic Impact* is being printed in Romanian language for twenty-one years and in English for sixteen years and approaches a complex thematic: political-military topicality; security and military strategy; NATO and EU policies, strategies and actions; geopolitics and geostrategies; information society and intelligence, military history. Readers may find in the pages of the publication analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, points of view which study the impact of national, regional and global actions dynamics.

Regarding international visibility – the primary objective of the journal – the recognition of the publication's scientific quality is confirmed by its indexing in the international databases CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library, Germany), EBSCO (USA), Index Copernicus (Poland), ProQuest (USA) and, in addition, WorldCat and ROAD ISSN, but also its presence in virtual catalogues of libraries of prestigious institutions abroad, such as NATO and of universities with military profile in Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia etc.

*Strategic Impact* is printed in two distinct editions, both in Romanian and English language. The journal is distributed free of charge in main institutions in the field of security and defence, in the academia and abroad – in Europe, Asia and America.

In the end, we would like to encourage those interested to publish in our journal to prospect and evaluate thoroughly the dynamics of the security environment and, also, we invite the interested students, Master Students and Doctoral Candidates to submit articles for publication in the monthly supplement of the journal, *Strategic Colloquium*, available on the Internet at <http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/cs.htm>, indexed in the international database CEEOL, Google scholar and ROAD ISSN.

*Editor-in-Chief, Colonel Florian CÎRCIUMARU, PhD  
The Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies*

# WORLD MILITARY HIGH-TECH COMPETITION TO IMPLEMENT THE MOSAIC WARFARE CONCEPT

*Crăișor-Constantin IONIȚĂ, PhD\**

*There is a fierce struggle worldwide to seize and dominate the international high-tech market. This struggle fits perfectly into the political disputes over the new post-pandemic world order, where competition between the great powers is becoming more and more acute.*

*Recently, research, development and innovation (RDI) in the military field has become particularly important by accepting the increase in funds allocated to 20% of defence budgets. This fact is also reflected in the civilian field, through the importance that all developed countries, including the European Union and Romania, attach to digitization at national level. And dual-use RDI products are the most sought-after in the global high-tech market.*

*As a result, this paper is intended to continue to present the recent progress made in the RDI, in terms of developing the capabilities for the future Mosaic Warfare, in the light of the competition for global and regional power.*

**Keywords:** regional power; high-tech; Mosaic Warfare; digitisation; research, development and innovation (RDI).

## Introduction

In addition to a strong international economic and financial crisis and a difficult recovery of states at the social level, the post-coronavirus pandemic period will be characterised by the accentuation of political competition between the great powers for global and regional domination. In the new world order, it is clear that the United

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States will have to relinquish some of its global superpower prerogatives and accept a division of the world's leadership with other great powers, especially with China, which is rising in power and influence worldwide.

This phenomenon will probably happen after 2030, when the map with the disposition of the great powers will look different than hitherto. A projection for the next 20 years and in the perspective of the 2050s, made by American researchers on the Nextbigfuture.com blog (Figure no. 1), presents the possible economic and demographic growth of the most developed states in the world, with tendencies to seize regional power in their areas of interest. Thus, according to this analysis, the world after 2030 will be characterised by multilateralism and a fierce economic, demographic and military competition between developed countries will divide the great powers into three levels, as follows (Wang 2020a):

– Level 1 – will include the great powers with a tendency to become superpowers, such as the USA and China, in which the latter's economy will be twice as developed as the American one, after 2050;

– Level 2 – will include states with a gross domestic product (GDP) of about 5-6 trillion dollars, such as Japan and Germany; India is likely to reach this level after 2030;

– Level 3 – will have close and fierce competition between developed countries with a GDP of 2.4 - 4 trillion dollars, such as France, the United Kingdom, India and Italy and emerging countries such as Canada, South Korea, Australia, Brazil and Russia, which will struggle to reach this level after the 2030s, surpassing Italy and even France (Wang 2020b).

Economic growth in the competition for world and regional power will, in turn, influence both demographic and defence budget growths, which will not always have a positive influence on the new post-pandemic world order. The respective increase will occur in countries such as the United States (380 million people by 2050), Canada (will have a population of 50 million by 2050 and a growing military budget of \$ 22 billion), South Korea (52 million inhabitants and a military budget of \$ 44 billion per year), Australia (40 million inhabitants in 2048) (Wang 2020a). Both China (a possible decline in population from 11 to 1 billion), Japan and the European states (together with about 650 million inhabitants) will have difficulties in the field of demography, by drastically decreasing the population and the age of it, which could lead to a shift in the balance of power after 2050 to Africa (Nigeria) and South Asia (India, Indonesia, Vietnam and Turkey).

## **1. China's Tendency in the World Military Supremacy**

As for China, in addition to the strong economic development and a possible drastic decline in demographics, it is also characterised by the tendency to

Nº	Country (or dependent territory)	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1	United States	20,807,269	21,921,585	22,967,651	23,913,115	24,833,759	25,783,444
2	China <sup>[a]</sup>	14,860,775	16,492,813	17,933,629	19,512,741	21,217,565	23,029,813
3	Japan	4,910,580	5,103,175	5,337,329	5,626,634	5,848,652	6,014,277
4	Germany	3,780,553	4,318,485	4,556,812	4,726,374	4,877,584	5,040,941
5	India	2,592,583	2,833,874	3,094,177	3,368,899	3,657,454	3,958,812
6	France	2,551,451	2,917,668	3,060,618	3,183,642	3,299,486	3,411,710
7	United Kingdom	2,638,296	2,855,671	3,004,796	3,120,056	3,239,201	3,356,794
8	Italy	1,848,222	2,111,649	2,207,851	2,280,095	2,333,364	2,387,825
9	Canada	1,600,264	1,763,046	1,876,701	1,983,486	2,086,819	2,193,412
10	South Korea	1,586,786	1,674,112	1,763,385	1,850,789	1,940,869	2,030,178
11	Russia	1,464,078	1,584,216	1,662,593	1,737,740	1,812,792	1,894,163
12	Brazil	1,363,767	1,431,624	1,562,617	1,665,966	1,786,913	1,891,433
13	Spain	1,247,464	1,450,882	1,552,025	1,638,662	1,715,140	1,771,808
14	Australia	1,334,688	1,480,355	1,533,798	1,608,773	1,682,750	1,755,091
15	Indonesia	1,088,768	1,167,180	1,252,595	1,341,111	1,433,992	1,533,410
16	Mexico	1,040,372	1,094,528	1,145,643	1,197,860	1,250,889	1,305,727
17	Netherlands	886,339	1,005,711	1,052,226	1,093,550	1,132,008	1,172,435
18	Turkey	649,436	652,408	722,384	810,077	886,225	970,506
19	Switzerland	707,868	790,655	832,432	864,611	909,423	945,377
20	Saudi Arabia	680,897	735,483	777,191	813,868	853,457	895,176
21	Poland	580,894	634,899	691,626	749,467	804,355	857,126

**Figure no. 1:** Great Powers List after 2025

(Source: <https://www.nextbigfuture.com>)

outperform the US in military spending on the development of its naval (Figure no. 2) and land capabilities, being equipped with the latest developments in the field of advanced technology in order to surpass the American aerospace power, predicted to hold supremacy for the next 40 years. As set out in China Military Strategy, the full modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) will be completed in 2035, and by 2049 it will be transformed into a “World-class military force” (Cordesman 2019).

Thus, according to a report by the US Bureau of Naval Intelligence (ONI), by 2030, China will have a total of 424 warships, of which 76 will be submarines.

From this military analysis it is clear that in the following years we will witness the revival of a new type of cold war between the US and China, where the stake will be to win the competition for world domination, either by a single superpower – but without going back to unipolarity, because either of the two great powers will have to act through an alliance –, or by negotiating and accepting the division of global domination between these two states. But we cannot go back to bi-polarism,

Year of DOD report	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020 change from 2005
Ballistic missile submarines	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	+3
Nuclear-powered attack submarines	6	5	5	5	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	0
Diesel attack submarines	51	50	53	54	54	49	48	49	51	53	57	54	47	50	46	-5	
Aircraft carriers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	+2
Cruisers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	+1
Destroyers	21	25	25	29	27	25	26	26	23	24	21	23	31	28	33	32	+11
Frigates	43	45	47	45	48	49	53	53	52	49	52	52	56	51	54	49	+6
Corvettes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	15	23	23	28	42	49	+49
Missile-armed coastal patrol craft	51	45	41	45	70	85	86	86	85	85	86	86	88	86	86	86	+35
Amphibious ships: LSTs and LPDs	20	25	25	26	27	27	28	29	29	29	30	34	33	37	37	+17	
Amphibious ships: LSMs	23	25	25	28	28	28	23	26	28	28	22	21	23	22	21	-2	
<b>Total of types above (does not include other types, such as auxiliary and support ships)</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>294</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>+117</b>
China Coast Guard ships	n/a	185	240	248	255	n/a											
<b>Total U.S. Navy battle force ships (which includes auxiliary and support ships but excludes patrol craft)</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>+5</b>
<b>Total U.S. Navy battle force ships compared to above total for certain Chinese ship types</b>	<b>+75</b>	<b>+61</b>	<b>+59</b>	<b>+46</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>+12</b>	<b>+13</b>	<b>+14</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-42</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-49</b>	<b>-37</b>	<b>-112</b>

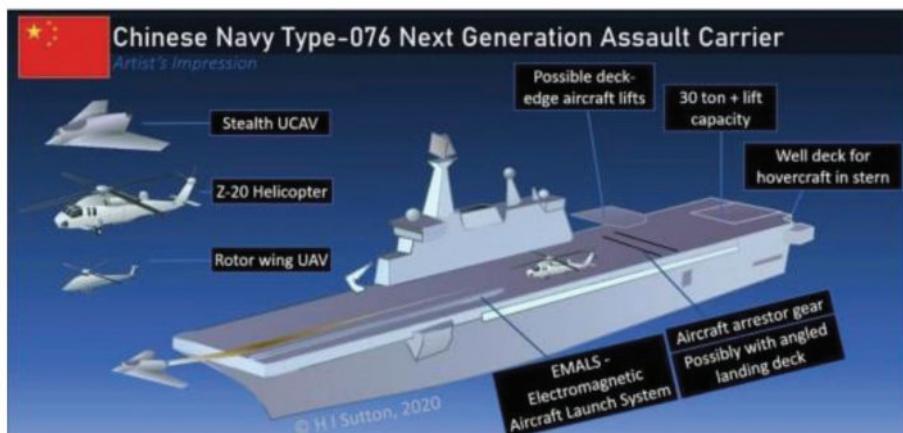
**Figure no. 2:** A comparison between the US and China Warships after 2005  
 (Source: FAS – *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities*)

because every great power will seek to attract as many levels 2 and 3 regional powers as possible in order to survive the competition.

Since then, China has the largest naval force, and Beijing's tendency is to increase the number of naval capabilities with modern and super-equipped battleships, such as the Hainan amphibious helicopter of the Yushen class (Type 075 and 076) (Figure no. 3), the Changzheng -18 submarine of Jin class (Type 094 SSBN), as well as the Dalian cruiser of Renhai class (Type 055).

If newly built aircraft carriers come close to the characteristics and strength of the American ones, all the other battleships are beyond what the Americans intend to build in the near future. In particular, we are referring to the reduction of US naval power by not putting into operation three super-carriers and reducing the budget allocated to the naval forces for fiscal year 2022. Thus, the new type of Chinese Dalian cruiser has a displacement of 12,000 tons (while cruisers and the American Aegis destroyers have a displacement of only 10,100 and 9,300 tons), 128 anti-aircraft, anti-ship and anti-ballistic missile launch cells, a 3D radar with a phased matrix, as well as electronic warfare systems and beat sensors (Wang 2021b).

The Hainan amphibious helicopter carrier will have a displacement of 35-40,000 tons, a deck for the permanent take-off of combat helicopters, seven large helicopter take-off areas and an open area for the launch of conventional amphibious or air-cushioned ships. For all these new types of warships, China will spend \$ 208.58 billion this year and increase its defence budget by 6.8% in the



**Figure no. 3:** The New Generation of Chinese Assault Aircraft Carrier of Type 076 Class  
*(Source: Forbes, July 23, 2020)*

coming years. Thus, China's defence budget is expected to be \$ 270 billion by 2023 (Wang 2021b).

China will also seek to overtake the United States in the land domain, especially in the area of anti-access areal denial systems (A2/AD), which contain dual ballistic and cruise missile launch systems and integrated air defence ones. Chinese conventional missile forces have developed without regard to the constraints of international treaties in the field, so that at this time, China has more than 1,200 ground launch ballistic missile (GLBM) and cruise missile (GLCM) systems between 500 and 5,500 km (Figure no. 4).

At the same time, the PLA has one of the largest long-range air defence forces in the world, which includes, in addition to domestic systems, the Russian S-400 and S-300 ones. So we can say that Beijing's great financial efforts have one purpose – to make the PLA a modern, world-class armed force that will support Chinese political leadership in winning the global economic and military competition to the detriment of the United States.

System	Launchers	Missiles	Estimated Range
ICBM	100	100	>5,500km
IRBM	200	200+	3,000-5,500km
MRBM	150	150+	1,000-3,000km
SRBM	250	600+	300-1,000km
GLCM	100	300+	>1,500km

**Figure no. 4:** The Chinese Missile Forces  
*(Source: Nextbigfuture.com, October 31, 2020)*

## 2. Winning the Aero-Space Supremacy by the US

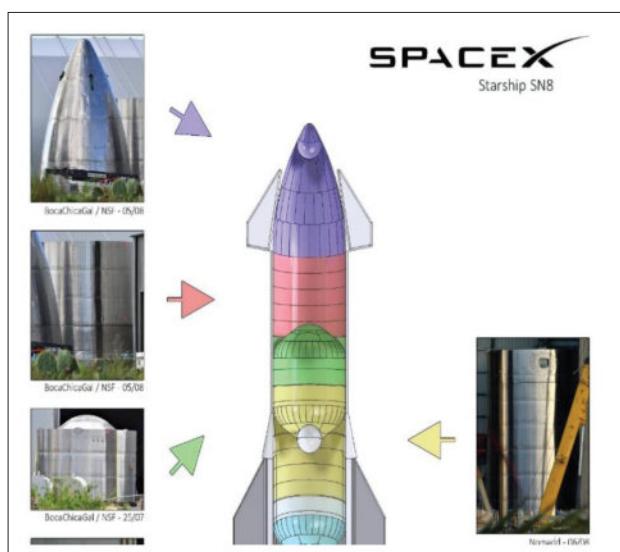
The major concern of the United States is to achieve the global air-to-ground supremacy and maintain it for the next 40 years. The main programme for this level of ambition is the SpaceX project – multirole spacecraft that can be used in fast-moving transport anywhere in the world (up to an hour and flying in low Earth orbit), but also as hypersonic bombers, developing speeds of 15 to 25 times larger than the sound/Mach, with a range of up to 12,875 km and can carry 100 tons of hypersonic bombs (Wang 2021a).

As part of the US Science and Technology Strategy 2030, the SpaceX Cargo Missile for Logistics Transport programme will materialize through the development and adaptation of innovative ideas under the Fourth Vanguard Civil Programme (Figure no. 5). Once completed, this type of cargo transport by means of a space rocket will quickly change the logistical situation, connecting materials, equipment, weapons and combat equipment with fighters in the area of operations assembled in a fraction of the time required today.

The role of the new capability includes support for resupply missions to theaters of operation anywhere in the world, as well as special air transport to deliver the equipment needed to quickly recover the loss of an operation, humanitarian aid and disaster relief in affected areas. Thus, cargo transport joins three other existing Vanguard programmes, including Skyborg (a central autonomous system on an unmanned aerial platform that allows autonomous missions), NTS-3 (a flight experiment to examine and establish ground capabilities, space and segmentation to

improve geospatial positioning, navigation and synchronization) and the Golden Horde (an initiative to demonstrate the possibility of a collaborative weapons network by creating an integrated weapon system in which different technologies act to attack different targets) (Department of the Air Force 2021).

The Starship SN8 prototype (Figure no. 6) of the SpaceX programme develops the hypersonic bomber capability provided by the US military concept of “hypersonic air



**Figure no. 5:** The Fourth Vanguard Programme

Source: [www.nextbigfuture.com](http://www.nextbigfuture.com)

weapons (HAWC)”, designed to overcome Russia’s similar developments in the 2 tons Avangard hypersonic vehicle, equipped with an UR-100NUTTH, flying with Mach 20 in the Earth’s atmospheric space), as well as the Chinese Dongfeng DF-17 hypersonic rocket (medium-range ballistic missile, equipped with a DF-ZF, which flies with Mach 5 and can have an unpredictable trajectory). India is also in an advanced process of developing hypersonic missiles.

If the SpaceX programme is to gain supremacy in the space domain, especially between the Earth’s Low Orbit and the atmosphere, Washington’s intention is to achieve that supremacy in the stratosphere, by developing a new generation of space rocket launch vehicles through the Vulcan Centaur Rocket programme, coordinated by Boeing and Lockheed Martin companies. This new vehicle, considered much cheaper (\$ 100 million launch) than the one produced by SpaceX, will replace the current Atlas and Delta missile fleet and will be equipped with two Blue Origin BE-4 engines, each with a power of about 250,000 kg-force (Wang 2021c).

Another American program for aerospace supremacy is the hypersonic spacecraft produced by Venus Aerospace Corp. (Figure no. 7), which will be able to fly at over 14,000 km/h and reach any point on the globe in an hour. In addition to the special design, the aircraft will incorporate a more efficient engine, which is being tested (Popescu 2021).

It is not of lesser importance that the next generation air supremacy aircraft be carried out (Figure no. 8) which is expected to become US Air Force equipment over the next five years and replace the famous F-35 JSF, whose manufacture will end in 2023. Considered a \$ 1 billion fighter aircraft of the sixth generation, this new air programme will include a System-of-Systems that incorporates a large manned and unmanned drone aircraft, with the most integrated recent functional technology (Wang 2020a). To incorporate the latest aerial software, US Air Force will call on Tesla.

A different low-altitude, short-haul model of transportation is the MK 2 Jetsuit military flight suit project (Figure no. 9), developed in competition by the British company Gravity Industries and the US Defense Research Agency (DARPA). The



**Figure no. 6:** SpaceX Starship SN8 Prototype  
(Source: [media.defense.gov](https://media.defense.gov))



**Figure no. 7:** The Prototype of the Venus Aerospace Corp. Hypersonic Plane  
(Source: <https://stirileprotv.ro>)

presented model was experimented in the second quarter of 2021, in an exercise conducted by British Commandos. MK 2 has two micromotors (with kerosene or diesel), but is also based on the natural balance capacity of the pilot, weighing 27.22 kg and flying for 10-15 minutes at a speed of 32-137 km/h. The suit also contains a Titanium armor that gives it a power of 1,050 bhp and the technical possibility to fly at an altitude of 3,660 m. In total, the flying suit costs \$ 450,000 and the Titanium armor \$ 350,000.



**Figure no. 8:** The American Next Generation Air Dominance Aircraft  
(Source: <https://www.nextbigfuture.com>)



**Figure no. 9:** Gravity Industries demonstrates the boarding utility of the MK 2  
(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suHOLFhbwsM>)

The flying suit can be successfully used by sailors in approaching the opponent's ships, by paratroopers in conducting amphibious raids, by mountain troops in hard-to-reach mountain areas, as well as by Special Operations Forces in infiltration missions behind enemy lines.

### 3. The Russian Federation's Intent to Win the Technological Competition

In the fight to win the global competition for the development and access to advanced military technologies that could be used in future conflicts, the Russian Federation has focused more on the dimensional and technological dominance of naval and A2/AD capabilities. Here, also, we refer in particular to the development of giant nuclear submarines and intercontinental torpedoes, the conquest and maintenance of domination at hypersonic speed, and the testing of the effectiveness of A2/AD systems in the Crimean Peninsula and the Kaliningrad Autonomous Region.

Immediately after the Black Sea naval crisis with the Great Britain in June 2021, the Kremlin began testing the largest nuclear submarine built in the last 30 years, in the White Sea. This is the giant nuclear submarine Belgorod (Figure no. 10), capable of launching nuclear strikes with six intercontinental Poseidon torpedoes and acting as a parent ship for smaller submarines. It is also able to dive to great depths and have robotic arms that can handle or even cut vital cables at the bottom of the seas (Andronie 2021).

The Poseidon 2M39 torpedoes (Figure no. 11), originally called Status-6, are just as gigantic and can only be launched by this type of submarine, representing Putin's most feared weapon, along with the 3M22 Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles. Considered an "apocalyptic tsunami-type" torpedo, it is designed as

a giant underwater drone (19.8 m wide and 198 m long), capable of traveling at very high speeds (130 km/h) and over long distances (the power of the nucleus allows torpedoes to cross oceans such as the Pacific or the Atlantic), performing a thermonuclear elimination blow (100-megaton) against a coastal target or city. “When it is detonated near the opponent’s coastline, such a large warhead (twice as strong as the Tsar’s Bomb) would flood a coastal city or enemy port with a radioactive tsunami, contaminating the area and making it uninhabitable in the coming decades” (Kizokawi 2021).



**Figure no. 10:** Launching the Giant Nuclear Submarine Belgorod by the Russian Navy  
(Source: Photo: Profimedia Images)

The effects of such a blow would be as disastrous as the events in Fukushima, when the major earthquake that took place on March 11, 2011, off the Japanese island of Honshy, with a magnitude of 9.0 on the Richter scale, followed by a huge tsunami wave of 23 meters high at the formation and flooding the 650 km in-land, caused an unprecedented nuclear disaster at four 11-reactor nuclear power plants in the region, killing 19,500 people and injuring another 100,000. Also, the entire area remained radioactive until August 2013 (World Nuclear Association 2021).

Alongside the Avangard strategic intercontinental ballistic hypersonic missile, which we have described in a previous chapter, other weapons through which Russia maintains its supremacy in the hypersonic realm are the Kh-47M2 Kinzhal or Kinjal (“dagger” in Russian) air-ground missile and the 3M22 Zircon or Tzirkon anti-ship missile. These are used by the Kremlin under the A2/AD systems and



**Figure no. 11:** The Poseidon Intercontinental Nuclear-Powered Nuclear-Armed Autonomous Torpedo  
(Source: Photo: Profilmmedia Images)

have recently been verified as a countermeasure to the joint NATO-Ukraine exercise “See Breeze” in the Black Sea.

The high-precision, dual-load Kinjal hypersonic rocket was launched in 2018, being the first hypersonic rocket to be launched worldwide. It can fly at a speed of 10 Mach (12,240 km/h), it has a range of over 2,000 km, and can be launched from a plane or on board battleships (Marin 2018). The Kinjal rocket is a modernised version of the 9M723 quasi-ballistic missile, part of the Iskander system. Having the ability to constantly adjust its trajectory, this missile is considered impossible to locate by the opponent’s radars.

In turn, the Zircon hypersonic rocket was launched in 2019, with a speed of about 9 Mach and a range of over 1,000 km (Meta-Défense.fr. 2019). The missile will be able to be launched from the vertical silo for the Kalibr naval cruise missiles and the P800 Onyx anti-ship missiles.

The new hypersonic weapon systems gives to the Russian Armed Forces naval supremacy near Eurasia, as well as the ability to hit most strategic allied targets (headquarters, command centers, communications nodes, radar stations etc.) in Europe, without having to protrude from the air protection umbrella of Russian airspace.

#### 4. The Future of Robotics in the World Technological Competition

Robots automation has grown so fast that very few powers and fields of activity can cope with it. In addition to the danger they pose to the various human occupations that they will be able to replace with much greater efficiency, robots are beginning to have more and more advanced social skills and, more recently, are proving that they can reproduce through a completely new form, neither human nor biological.

Considered by many multinational economic and IT companies as the “fourth industrial revolution”, (Pluralsight Blog 2013) technology in general and robotics in particular will bring, by 2025, a massive, unpredictable and unprecedented change in skills and abilities that will be required of people for future careers in all domains, including the military. More and more research institutions, including the Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (CSAIL) of the well-known Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), are working to improve human-robot interaction in assisted living units, learning robots how to interact to achieve their goals and analyse some ways to support psychologists in measuring social interactions between humans.

In 2020, scientists from the University of Vermont, supported by the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), presented the world's first robots made entirely of pluripotent stem cells from the skin of African claw frogs (*Xenopus laevis*), which they called “xenobots”. “These are new living machines. They are neither traditional robots, nor any known animal species. It's a new class of artifacts: a living, programmable organism” (Mazilu 2021).



**Figure no. 12:** The Creation of the First “Living Robots” – Xenobots  
(Source: [playtech.ro](http://playtech.ro))

These “living robots”, similar to the Pac-Man character in the video game with the same name (Figure no. 12), now have the ability to self-replicate and generate new versions of themselves. This generation is done through a process called “spontaneous kinematic self-replication” and not through the kind of reproduction

techniques we usually see in biological life forms. Thus, “we discover that synthetic multicellular assemblies can also replicate kinematically by moving and compressing dissociated cells in their environment into functional autocopies. This form of perpetuation, previously unseen in any organism, occurs spontaneously over the course of days, rather than evolving over millennia” (Kriegman, et all. 2021).

The question of the moment is how far will robotics go and how will these developments influence future fierce global competition? The conclusion is now outlined that, in the military field, we want to replace the fighters in the modern operational space, especially in dangerous areas or where we wish a faster action without human losses.

## Conclusions

Dominating the global competition for the acquisition and implementation of cutting-edge military technologies will make a decisive contribution to the development of new operational concepts for winning future conflicts and, in particular, to addressing the Mosaic Warfare, focusing on gaining a decisive advantage over any potential adversary. The aim is to obtain military supremacy by using the most sophisticated high-tech capabilities to increase the complexity of the multi-dimensional operating space, as well as to increase the confusion of potential opponents.

From what is globally expected regarding the fierce competition for the development and acquisition of the latest and most advanced technologies in the military field, we can say that we are already in a new arms race, with the aim for this time to gain supremacy in one or more action domains of the multi-dimensional operating space of future conflicts. It is no less true that the current situation is very similar to the period of the Cold War situation between the US and the former USSR. During that competition, the Soviets have lost and disintegrated, as a result of this particularly costly arms race in the field of aerospace – the so-called “Star Wars” –, which they did not face. As a remake of the 1980s, the struggle for aerospace supremacy is now between the United States and China, the latter seeking to gain ground in other areas, such as the Navy, Cyberspace and Information.

The growing rapprochement between China and the Russian Federation, embodied in a Strategic Partnership with economic, energy and military objectives, raises a serious security issue for the United States. If the latest US National Defense Strategy in 2018 called for the restoration of US competitiveness by blocking the challenges posed by global rivals such as Russia and China and banning the deterioration of the current balance of international order, a possible alliance between the two rivals has become the nightmare of American policymakers and Allied military theorists. Because no strategic document

foresaw such a threat, there is no strategic plan of how the United States and NATO could deal with such a major conflict. Hence the need to develop new operational concepts, such as “Multi-Domain Operations” and “Mosaic Warfare”, in order to win such a future conflict.

Although no Sino-Russian alliance has been reached so far, both Beijing and Moscow leaders continue to announce efforts to build a common front against US dominance and transatlantic power. In order to counter such a threat and prevent such an alliance, Russia, being considered the “weakest link”, began to be constantly drawn into the political games of the US administration during both President Donald Trump and Joe Biden, as well as to the European Union, in order to distance it from China and establish its historical role, of great Eurasian power.

The use of the latest and most advanced developments in science and technology in the military field will create amazing and unique opportunities for the one who will the global technological competition, because, in addition to the possibility of developing capabilities that are difficult to counteract, new operational concepts will be developed, such as “multi-field operations” and “mosaic warfare”, already in the attention of American military theorists and researchers. Also, the forces destined to participate in future conflicts will be reorganized and tailored differently to achieve the effectiveness and team action of the “man-machine” binomial in the multidimensional operating space.

But there is also a downside to this fierce technological competition. In addition to the hard-to-overlook moral and legal issues of how far one can go with the freedom of decision given to machines and robots or the change in human performance, there is also the danger of the consequences of using sophisticated weapons near urban areas. What happened in Nagasaki and Hiroshima at the end of World War II, may be repeated in the future, with far greater effects, similar to the Fukushima disaster. And a competition like this one, the states with a lower economic power, such as Romania, will not be able to keep up and will become mere spectators, having to be on one side or the other of the great competitive powers.

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# THE DYNAMICS OF TURKISH-ROMANIAN RELATIONS IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION. A NEOLIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

*Mihai TATOMIR\**

*The Wider Black Sea Region is a complex geopolitical construct. On the one hand, the area has a huge potential in terms of raw material extraction, while facilitating the trade between states. On the other hand, within this geographical area there are several frozen conflicts caused by state and non-state actors. In this context, regional geopolitical developments are issues of interest for both Romania and the Republic of Turkey, countries that have numerous common energy, trade and security goals. For this reason, the study starts from the premise that the Romanian-Turkish relations in the Wider Black Sea Region can be viewed from the perspective of the neoliberal theory of international relations. In order to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the subject, a brief history of the political dynamics between the two states, as well as a presentation of the geopolitical aspects of the area were included in the article.*

**Keywords:** *Wider Black Sea Region; Turkey; Romania; bilateral relations; neoliberalism; international institutions.*

## Introduction

This paper aims at highlighting the dynamics of Turkish-Romanian relations in the Wider Black Sea Region. Since most studies focused on this topic approach the issue from a historical perspective, the paper brings an element of novelty as the

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analysis is made considering the viewpoint of international studies and geopolitics, starting from the premise that countries' political relations can be seen through the prism of neoliberal theory developed by Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane. Thus, the two authors begin with the specific ideas of realism, respectively neorealism, according to which the international system is characterized by anarchy and the states seek to maximize their power. However, anarchy does not rule out the possibility of cooperation between states when actors identify common interests. More specifically, as stated by Robert Keohane in *After Hegemony, Cooperation and Discord in a World Political Economy*, states tend to cooperate in order to maximize their interests and reap greater benefits than they would gain by acting on their own account (Keohane 1984, 69). Neoliberal theorists also place strong emphasis on the role of international institutions and economic connections in enhancing interdependence and, implicitly, cooperation (Meiser 2011, 24). It must be noted from the beginning that there is no widely accepted definition in the scientific community of the specified institutions. However, John Duffield considers as types of international institutions the treaties, organizations, regimes, conventions, etc., which play a role in regulating relations between states (Duffield 2007, 1).

At the methodological level, the paper is a result of the literature analysis that falls into the fields of history (Koc 2018) international relations (Keohane 1984) (Nye and Keohane 2009) (Meiser 2011), and geopolitics (Balog 2009) (Ancuț and Dănilă 2009) (Buțiu 2009) (Cioculescu 2009a). A special attention has been paid to economic relations and international institutions because, as already mentioned, they are key elements of neoliberal theory. Topics such as the security interests of the two actors, specific to realism and neorealism, were also addressed, as neoliberal theorists do not deny their importance, but only argue that the foreign policy agendas of state actors include other components than those of security nature.

At the structural level, the study comprises three topics, each being the subject of study of a section: in the first part presents the evolution of Turkish-Romanian relations since the Middle Ages; in the second part, the research focuses on the geopolitical features of the Wider Black Sea Region; the final section includes a brief analysis of the factors that determine the dynamics of the relations between the two countries.

## **1. Key Moments in the History of Turkish-Romanian Relations**

The history of the Romanian-Turkish bilateral relations dates back to the Middle Ages, when the rulers of the Romanian countries began sending the soles to the Ottoman Empire (MAE 2022), in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the tradition of representing Romanian rulers through diplomatic agents being established. However, relations



between the two peoples were largely antagonistic due to the Ottoman Empire's expansionist tendencies in the Balkan Peninsula.

After Romania proclaimed its independence, there were several diplomatic efforts to overcome the differences between the new state and the Ottoman Gate. In fact, the relations between these actors in their "modern" form have their bases in 1878 (at legation level) (Cioculescu 2009b, 25).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, two events that took place had a strong impact on Romania's foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. The first is the outbreak of the Second Balkan War in 1913, when Romanians and Ottomans aligned their interests in the fight against Bulgaria. The second event was the First World War, a context in which Romania had joined the political-military alliance of the Entente, while the empire turned to establish an alliance with Germany and, implicitly, with the Central Powers. The interwar period marked a moment of normalization of relations between the two actors, especially during the 1930s. In 1934, both Greater Romania and the Republic of Turkey acceded to the Balkan Agreement, as for both, maintaining the status quo in the region had become a goal. One year later, the diplomatic activity carried out by Foreign Minister Nicolae Titulescu and his Turkish counterpart, Tevfik Rüştü Aras, materialized through the signing of a Treaty of Friendship, Non-Aggression, Arbitration and Conciliation. In 1938, diplomatic relations were raised at embassy level.

At the end of World War II, Romania entered the Soviet sphere of influence, while Turkey benefited from US economic aid through the Marshall Plan. Moreover, Romania joined the Warsaw Pact Organization in 1955, a political-military alliance formed in response to the establishment of NATO, of which Turkey had become a member in 1952. A proof of the negative impact of the Cold War on the Turkish-Romanian relations was the September 1957 event, when Foreign Minister Stoica proposed to convene Balkan states to discuss regional political issues, but Turkey and Greece rejected Romania's request (Koc 2018, 266).

The reconciliation of the two states took place after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. Turkish President Turgut Özal was the second political leader to visit post-socialist Romania (Koc 2018, 267), proving Turkey's interest in strengthening diplomatic relations with the Romanian state. Since then, Romanian and Turkish diplomatic representatives have repeatedly made official visits in order to improve political relations (Koc 2018, 268). Thus, during the 1990s, the two actors collaborated in order to sustain trade cooperation by establishing the Association of Turkish Businessmen (1993) and the Dobrogea Association of Turkish Businessmen (1999). Actions were also implemented at cultural level: in 2007, the Cantemir Museum in Istanbul opened its doors, while in Romania the Yunus Emre Institute was created, offering Turkish language lessons to Romanian citizens. In fact, according to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Romania has an embassy



and a cultural institute in Ankara, a general consulate in Istanbul and Izmir, and five honorary consulates in important Turkish urban centres. Turkey has also opened an embassy in Bucharest, a general consulate in Constanța, two cultural centres in the aforementioned cities and two honorary consulates in Cluj and Iași (MAE 2022).

It is also important to mention that on December 13, 2011, a Strategic Partnership was signed between Romania and Turkey, on the occasion of the former Romanian President's (Traian Băsescu) visit to Ankara. The decision to raise the Romanian-Turkish relations at the level of a Strategic Partnership was based on "very good bilateral relations, intense political dialogue, as well as the common interests of the two countries, at bilateral, regional and international level" (MAE 2021a). In 2016, during his visit to Ankara, the current President of Romania, Klaus Iohannis, stressed the importance of the partnership and of the continuation of friendly and cooperative relations between Turkey and Romania, stating: "This visit finds us in a complicated geopolitical and regional context, with many security risks and challenges to which we must find solutions. My belief is that together, by virtue of a strong Strategic Partnership, we can better manage these risks. Our citizens want security and prosperity, and through joint efforts we are trying to meet these expectations" (Presidency.ro 2016). The Romanian President also discussed the need for cooperation between the two states in the Black Sea region, as proof of solidarity with NATO: "In terms of security and defence, we are closely linked to cooperation and partnership within the North Atlantic Organization. As you know, Romania considers the Black Sea of strategic importance not only for the security of the region, but also for the Euro-Atlantic area and must benefit from an increased attention" (Presidency.ro 2016). Also, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that "Romania and Turkey share similar views on the issues we face today. We are firmly committed to strengthening bilateral relations in all areas, based on the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed by the two countries in 2011" (Presidency.ro 2016). Thus, the partnership is the proof that the two countries have managed to overcome historical disputes through diplomatic dialogue.

## 2. Wider Black Sea Region – Geopolitical Aspects

In terms of geography, the Black Sea is located at the intersection of two continents, its extended region bringing together 10 states: 6 riparian countries – Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Georgia and Turkey – and 4 states which history, proximity and close ties with the Black Sea basin recommend them as relevant actors in the area: Armenia, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova and Greece (Pop and Manoleli 2007, 9).

The geopolitics of this space can be viewed from various perspectives. At the energetic level, it is estimated that the Black Sea would have reserves of about

10 billion barrels of oil and 1.5 trillion square meters of natural gas (Roșca and Senic 2013, 12). Moreover, the sea is an important trade route between Asia and Europe, respectively a transit zone for products and resources from Asia (especially the Caucasus) to the European continent. Its energy and commercial potential are in the attention of both the states in the area and the international organizations of which some of them are members, mainly the European Union. European officials acknowledge that Europe is currently far from producing the amount of energy needed to meet the demand in its own market.

In terms of security dynamics, in the Wider Black Sea Region there are numerous frozen conflicts in Abkhazia, Transnistria, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh that cause the emergence of terrorist movements (Buțiu 2009, 44). Moreover, the South Caucasus region does not have a regional security structure (such as a diplomatic organization), that is indispensable for negotiating solutions to conflicts (Cioculescu 2009a, 40). Also, the separatist entities fighting in the aforementioned disputes resorted to various forms of cooperation, in 2016, laying the foundations of the Community for Democracy and Peoples' Rights (CDDP). The fact that the CDDP usually meets at the same time as the summits of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM) take place may lead to the idea that it seeks, in fact, to counteract its legitimacy (Cioculescu 2009a, 40).

Regional instabilities are fuelled by Russia's efforts to discourage NATO and the EU from entering new strategic partnerships with actors in the Wider Black Sea Region. For example, Azerbaijan, a close ally of Turkey, represents an alternative source of energy supply for European countries and a way to reduce energy dependence on Russia. However, projects such as the Trans-Adriatic pipeline, completed in 2020, are unlikely to exist in the near future, as Russia has consolidated its position by stationing troops in the region on the pretext of initiating a peacekeeping mission after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In addition, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 generated two new sources of insecurity: firstly, the materialization of Russia's expansionist tendencies leads to the conclusion that the federation will have new territorial claims in Ukraine, a state that wants to join NATO; secondly, the Russian army has strengthened its position in the area.

The European Union remains a major player, being a key economic partner for Turkey, Azerbaijan, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia and Armenia. Moreover, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) applies to most of this countries, so that they have a special status in their relations with the Union. NATO also plays an important role in this geopolitical space and its value for the partners in the Wider Black Sea Region has grown due to Russia's increasingly aggressive actions, a context in which the region is and will continue to be characterized by tense relations between the West and the Federation (Ancuț and Dănilă 2009, 32).

In conclusion, the Wider Black Sea Region presents both military risks and

opportunities in terms of intensifying trade and ensuring the states' energy needs, while remaining an area of interest for international actors.

### **3. Romania-Turkey Relations in the Black Sea Area in Terms of International Institutions**

In this section of the paper, the focus is on Turkish-European relations in the Wider Black Sea Region in the light of economic interests, security objectives, instruments of cooperation and international law.

According to the latest statistics, in 2017, Turkey represents Romania's first trading partner outside the EU and the 5<sup>th</sup> partner in Romania's total foreign trade (MAE 2022). In turn, Romania is also an important trading partner for Turkey, ranking 15<sup>th</sup> in exports and 17<sup>th</sup> in imports (MAE 2022). Thus, as the Black Sea is an important trade route for the riparian states, it facilitates the exchange of Romanian-Turkish products. Bilateral economic relations are governed by a number of agreements such as the Agreement on Investment Promotion and Protection (Acordul pentru promovarea și protejarea investițiilor) and the Agreement between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Republic of Turkey on economic and technical cooperation (Acordul între Guvernul României și Guvernul Republicii Turcia cu privire la cooperarea economică și tehnică), but also by the EU-Turkey Association and Customs Union Agreement (signed in 1963) on the basis of which the Customs Union was subsequently established. The two actors are also cooperating on finding alternative sources of energy supply in order to reduce energy dependence on Russia, the Nabucco project being an evidence of this fact. Moreover, according to the latest statistics, the energy resources available in Romania in 2020 decreased by 6.2% compared to 2019 (Mazilu 2021), while Turkey's dependence on the use of natural gas has increased (Ankara Bureau for Economic Promotion and Cooperation 2020), which means that Turkish and Romanian officials will be more focused on their common energy issues in the future.

Russia's actions in the Wider Black Sea Region are a source of insecurity for both Turkey and Romania. The importance of the Russian Black Sea monopoly has been repeatedly emphasized by the geopolitician Alexandre Dugin, who considers that the port of Constanța and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits have the greatest strategical value for the Federation. It must be noted that following the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, Russia has increased its naval capabilities, seizing 70% of the Ukrainian navy (Celac and Aydin 2017, 4). However, Turkey has repeatedly bought Russian weapons, which has brought dissatisfaction to European states and NATO members, a factor that negatively influences the dynamics of Turkish-Romanian relations. In fact, according to the data provided by Romania's

MFA website, the last high-level bilateral visit, took place 7 years ago (in 2015). However, the crisis in Ukraine seems to be generating a common geopolitical stake for the two states, namely the repositioning of NATO, with increased attention to the Black Sea and Russia. This is evidenced by the joint statement of the foreign ministers of the Romania-Turkey-Poland Trilateral, during which the following were stated: “We agreed that we must continue to straighten NATO’s deterrence and defence position, sustain the political dimension of the Alliance, and support the ‘open door’ policy.” Russia’s aggression is not the only issue on the security agendas of Romania and Turkey. Similar to other EU countries, Romania attaches great importance to cooperation with Turkey on migration management, given that the Black Sea is a crossing point from Asia to Europe.

The institutionalized international instruments within which the Romanian-Turkish collaboration is carried out are extremely numerous, so as we will focus on only the most important ones:

- Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), formed on June 25, 1992, brought together 11 heads of state and government representing Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. Subsequently, Serbia (2004) and Northern Macedonia (2020) joined as Member States. The main objectives of the organization are to develop and diversify bilateral and multilateral cooperation in accordance with the principles and rules of international law, to improve the business environment and to promote individual and collective initiative of enterprises and companies directly involved in economic cooperation and to intensify the mutual respect, trust and to promote the dialogue and cooperation between BSEC member states (MAE 2021b);

- BLACKSEAFOR brings together the six states bordering the Black Sea, creating a framework for collaboration on rescue missions and humanitarian assistance;

- Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC) continued the Southeast Europe Cooperation Initiative (SECI Center), with experience and superior coverage that can be a real support and a model through its activity for others similar organizations. It comprises 12 member states, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Turkey and Hungary (Pop and Manoleli 2007, 19);

- Civil-Military Emergency Planning Council in South-Eastern Europe (CMPCSEE) formed by Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, aims to develop databases on civilian-military emergencies (Pop and Manoleli 2007, 20). To achieve this, Member States have decided to: develop common standards for planning and responding to regional disasters or emergencies; develop databases on civilian-military emergencies and digital maps of roads, railways, pipelines and airports in south-eastern Europe; set up emergency operations centres in each country, with common communication standards and conduct national and multinational exercises

(Pop and Manoleli 2007, 20);

- Black Sea Euroregion is an initiative launched in 2006 in Constanța, bringing together all ten states in the Wider Black Sea Region, which aims to achieve sustainable development in key areas such as the environment, economy, society, culture, youth and good governance (Pop and Manoleli 2007, 20);

- Black Sea Synergy, officially launched in 2008 in Kiev, aims to create an environment of cooperation between EU and Black Sea countries in the areas of democracy, human rights, good governance, border management, frozen conflicts, energy, transport, maritime policy, fisheries, trade, migration, development, education and research (MAE 2021c).

In terms of international law, three main documents regulate Turkey's relations with Romania in the Black Sea area. In chronological order of their signing, the first is the Montreux Convention adopted in 1936 by 11 states, including Turkey and Romania, the contracting parties recognizing the "principle of freedom of passage and maritime navigation" (Indaco n.d.) through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The second document, the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, strengthened the principle of compliance with existing treaties governing navigation in international waters. The third major international document for the Wider Black Sea Region is the 1998 BSEC Charter, by which the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization has gained international recognition.

## Conclusions

Turkish-Romanian relations have a long tradition, being influenced over time by political and historical contexts from various periods. The fall of the communist bloc in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the twentieth century created a beneficial environment for diplomatic dialogue which has resulted in overcoming historical differences and establishing a framework for cooperation between Romania and Turkey.

The economic and security objectives of the two states in the Wider Black Sea Region are to reduce their energy dependence, promote trade and combat regional instability, which are mainly rooted in Russia's hostile actions. In this context, the elements that have a major impact on Romania's relations with Turkey are the common economic interests, the security goals, the international institutional instruments of cooperation and the international treaties signed by both parties. Therefore, the relations between the two actors can be viewed from the perspective of the neoliberal theory of international relations, despite the fact that the analysis has also identified some issues specific to realism.

As the topic is extremely broad, this study is just the beginning for future scientific initiatives. The elements that influence the Turkish-Romanian relations

were briefly presented and there are many quantitative and qualitative limits, as several collaboration tools and visions of Turkish and Romanian officials on the political dynamics were not included.

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# DERADICALISATION: BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Daniel-Mihai DUTU\**

*To combat extremist ideologies and the threat of mass radicalisation, experts have developed a series of research in order to identify and understand the factors that lead to the radicalisation of an individual, but also the factors that, having an opposite effect, can lead to its deradicalisation. Therefore, more and more authors recognize the importance of studying the process of deradicalisation and its potential for today's society. Hence, the paper aims to further address this process by presenting specific terminology, theoretical and practical models of deradicalisation, and signalling difficulties and limitations during the development of national disengagement and deradicalisation programs caused by the lack of practical information on the results of these initiatives.*

**Keywords:** *extremism; radicalisation; deradicalisation; disengagement; depolarization.*

## Introduction

The phenomenon of radicalisation is an increasingly present problem in today's society, reaching the attention of the general public, especially since the emergence of the terrorist group Islamic State. Although there are many studies and articles on the subject of radicalisation, very few offer a solution to this threat. Therefore, studies on deradicalisation and disengagement are few and do not receive the attention they deserve from the international community.

In fact, there are few authors who have studied the subject of deradicalisation, and among them we mention John Horgan, Daniel Koehler, Jessica Stern and Kate Barrelle, on whose research this paper is based. It seeks to establish a general

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theoretical framework applicable to extremism. All these authors are aware that deradicalisation is one of the least studied topics, although its importance is undeniable, and they signal the need for in-depth research and studies. Therefore, this paper aims to introduce the general concepts of *disengagement* and *deradicalisation*, and to identify a series of *push and pull* factors that can lead to deradicalisation of an individual, but also to present some models of deradicalisation, both theoretical and used in practice. At the same time, the paper seeks to draw attention to the difficulty of continuing research on deradicalisation, in part because of the lack of practical information on the results of deradicalisation initiatives, but also because of the lack of attention towards them.

The topic will be approached from a multidisciplinary perspective, using theories and models that belong to areas of research such as criminology, psychology and psychoanalysis, but which are relevant and contribute to a better understanding of the processes of radicalisation and deradicalisation.

## 1. General Conceptual Framework

*Disengagement* is a behavioural, physical change of the individual (from criminal to non-criminal), who gives up armed and/or behavioural violence and becomes peaceful, as he/her no longer engages in violent actions (Koehler 2017, 3). However, this change refers only to the behaviour of the individual, not to his ideology and beliefs; these elements do not necessarily change, but, at best, undergo some process of fading. Thus, the individual is no longer determined to act violently, but this change does not necessarily lead to an alteration of the radical ideology.

Disengagement can be both a voluntary process (the individual wants to give up the violent lifestyle) and an involuntary one (the individual is captured or arrested by the authorities or killed in battle) (Koehler 2017, 14). Capturing or killing an individual blocks his or her ability to act violently, but arrest does not affect the cessation of violence, and individuals who have been incarcerated usually resume their violent and radical lifestyle they had prior to their arrest. For example, the detention and incarceration of a terrorist has no long-term effect, being only an immediate solution to this problem. As the arrest and life imprisonment of all terrorists is not only unlikely but also counterproductive, as there are not enough detention centres to house them in large numbers, their permanent isolation is not possible.

Kate Barrelle believes that sustained disengagement refers to the individual's commitment to society after he or she leaves the extremist organization, calling this process *pro-integration* (Barrelle 2015, 129). This non-linear process consists of three stages of behavioural and identity change: *the reduction, after desertion, of the identity associated with the group, the emergence of a new identity and the*



*finding of a new group or entities the individual identifies with* (Koehler 2017, 25). Thus, there is a two-way process of disengagement or deradicalisation: distancing oneself from radical life and engaging in a non-extremist environment (Koehler 2017, 80). However, this model does not focus on the psychological changes that underlie disengagement.

*Deradicalisation*, on the other hand, represents both a behavioural change in the sense of renouncing violence, and an ideological one, the term referring to an “individual or collective cognitive change from criminal, radical or extremist identities to a non-criminal or moderate psychological state” (Koehler 2017, 2). Thus, as John Horgan points out, deradicalisation involves both a physical and a mental change of the individual, who believes that “there is no indication that disengagement has the effect of deradicalisation” (Horgan 2008, 8). Moreover, the disengagement of the individual, but without its deradicalisation, increases the chances of recidivism, especially in the case of religiously motivated terrorists, who are prone to recidivism and return to violent behaviour (Koehler 2017, 14).

If *depluralization* (defining specific religious or political issues by contextualizing them using the experience and past of the individual in order to connect global or abstract issues with specific micro-events) (Koehler 2017, 71-76) is the engine of radicalisation, a reverse process is needed, meaning a *repluralization* of political concepts and values, this process referring to an “individual psychological distancing from a specific extremist or radical ideology” (Koehler 2017, 81). According to Koehler, the process of deradicalisation must be personalized for each individual, taking into account both the individual process of radicalisation and the psychological and external factors that triggered radicalisation (Koehler 2017, 81).

## 2. Factors and Models of Deradicalisation

An extremely important element that leads to disengagement and/or deradicalisation is a “special and often even traumatic event to create a cognitive opening and reconsideration of a person’s involvement in a radical or extremist group” (Koehler 2017, 15), so that the individual begins to question his membership in the extremist group or organization. There is a process of analysis of personal values, self-analysis and introspection in the mind of the individual, a process that can have the effect of leaving the organization and disengaging, as well as, in some cases, deradicalisation. Studies of this individual process have shown that individuals who leave a terrorist organization are usually not motivated by a single traumatic event, but by many such events that, put together, create insecurity and uncertainty (Koehler 2017, 71-76).

*Push factors*, i.e. the factors that push the individual to leave the organization,



are usually related to the internal dynamics of the organization, being defined as representing “negative circumstances and social events that make membership in the organization uncomfortable and unattractive” (Bjorgo 2016, 234). Daniel Koehler presents a list of these factors: *negative social sanctions and stigma associated with membership, distrust of group ideology, frustration with hypocrisy and group behaviour, loss of group social support, role migration, or even loss of status in the organization* (according to Hwang’s analysis, in the case of Indonesian jihadists, this factor may also involve a cost-benefit logic regarding group involvement and commitment, which can have the effect of leaving the group and disengaging the individual (Hwang 2015, 11-14), *psychological and physical abuse by the group members, disappointment with the outcome of armed conflict and the effects of violence, tactical differences regarding various operations, disapproval of group or leadership strategies, unfulfilled expectations, cognitive dissonance* (“cognitive mental struggle when presented with new information or experiences that conflict with their existing beliefs, values or ideals” (Koehler 2017, 18).

*Pull factors* are those “positive factors that attract individuals to a more profitable alternative” (Bjorgo 2016, 234) and can be both external factors and internal desires. Thus, Daniel Koehler analyses the following *pull* factors: the *desire to live a normal life, the experience of events that change the life and priorities of the individual, old age, the desire to start a family, the intervention or pressure from family members, new positive relationships with movements or people outside the group, career prospects, changing socio-political environment* (socio-political motives that led to violence are no longer relevant) (Koehler 2017, 18-19). *Push and pull* factors must lead to the re-pluralization of the individual’s beliefs and opinions, thus triggering the process of deradicalisation.

In his analysis of the causes of Indonesian jihadists’ disengagement, Hwang identifies six factors that lead to leaving a terrorist organization (Hwang 2015, 15). Although some of these factors were mentioned earlier, the fact that Hwang came to almost the same conclusion by analysing the testimonies of jihadists is relevant to our research, giving it more objectivity and credibility of the arguments. Thus, these factors are: *disappointment with tactics, leadership or other aspects of the group, realizing that the price of continuing actions is too high, establishing or re-establishing relationships with individuals or networks outside the jihadist circle, family pressure, changing personal and professional priorities, humane treatment by the authorities* (Hwang 2015, 15).

The list of these factors is not exhaustive, as individuals are very different from each other, so the reasons that lead to radicalisation and, subsequently, to leaving the terrorist organization can be extremely different. Therefore, determining and analysing the reasons that led to radicalisation and leaving the organization can be the basis of the individual strategy for disengaging the individual, this process



can have the effect of both deradicalisation of the person and his reintegration into society.

However, it is necessary to take into account the so-called *inhibitory factors* (Koehler 2017, 20), because they can prevent the desertion from the terrorist organization. Daniel Koehler identifies *negative sanctions from the group* as the main inhibitory factor, with social pressure on members of the organization not to provide information to third parties (media, authorities, people outside the group), to comply with the group's internal rules and, of course, not to desert. Any of the above-mentioned actions that an individual can take to betray the trust of the group may result in sanctions from the group members, such as "disappointment, prosecution, death threats, physical assault, harassment, verbal threats, contempt, and even murder" (Koehler 2017, 20). To these can be added blackmail of any kind and the spread of false rumours about the deserter that can make it considerably more difficult for him to reintegrate into society, as well as the loss of group protection, ostracism and torture (Koehler 2017, 20).

Koehler conducted a study showing that when faced with a case of desertion, the group has two staged reactions: emotional (shock, anger, betrayal, fear, etc.), and logical (reflecting and further establishing the strategy so that the group is not endangered). In this second stage, the group takes action against the deserter, and Koehler states that most defamation and ostracism campaigns aimed at deserters are focused on topics such as "psychological disorders, alcoholism, ideological instability, corruption and bribery through government agencies, drugs, depression, fear of government repression, homosexuality and paedophilia" (Koehler 2017, 23), which can be followed by crime and murder.

Rusbult's 1983 model of investment is taken over by Horgan and applied to the study of deradicalisation, resulting in the idea that massive investment in the organization and lack of alternatives lead to increased commitment and loyalty, and lack of investment and lack of alternatives result in lack of commitment and loyalty to the group (Koehler 2017, 24).

Another interesting model with a general applicability is the one involving the role change made by Helen Ebaugh in 1988, based on interviews with ordinary people who have undergone a change in their lives, which has also led to a change in their role. In a first stage, Ebaugh identifies a *doubt about the role of the individual* (Koehler 2017, 49) as a result of events that had a relative impact; the second stage refers to the *search for alternatives* (Koehler 2017, 49), Ebaugh stating that negative reactions from third parties can end the process, while positive reactions can encourage it; the third stage is represented by *the crossroads* (Koehler 2017, 49), and in the last stage the *role of former* (Koehler 2017, 49) (former detainee, former doctor, etc.) will be created. Ebaugh also identifies the so-called "residues of the role" (Koehler 2017, 49), referring to the elements that belonged to the



former identity, but which are still active even after the change. These residues are important for the study of deradicalisation, as they can cause the individual to re-engage in violent actions even after deradicalisation.

At the same time, it is worth considering Klandermans' model, as presented in Koehler's paper, a model that distinguishes between three forms of commitment to an extremist group. Thus, there is a *moral obligation* to be part of the organization or *normative commitment* (Koehler 2017, 24), representing "the result of a socialization and learning process shaping the individual normative (values and ideas) framework in congruence with the group's ideology" (Koehler 2017, 24), this commitment being the key mechanism of radicalisation. Also, there is an *emotional attachment* to the organization or *affective commitment* (Koehler 2017, 24), based on the feeling of belonging to a group and resulting in an increased involvement. However, we can talk about a *continuance commitment* (Koehler 2017 24), depending on what the individual invested in the organization and the alternatives it may have. In this case, he/she is making a cost-benefit analysis of his/her membership to the group (refers to Rusbult's model of the relationship between investment, alternatives and the degree of involvement in the group's actions).

Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen establishes a relationship between push and pull factors and Klandermans's model. She believes there are multiple factors that have the effect of corroding each type of engagement described above. Thus, the *doubt about the ideology of the group* (Koehler 2017, 24-25) affects the normative commitment, the *doubt about the behaviour and leadership of the group* (Koehler 2017, 24-25) has the effect of corroding the affective commitment, and the *doubt related to personal or practical aspects* (Koehler 2017, 24-25) affects continuance commitment.

As already mentioned, knowledge of the factors that motivated the individual to leave the organization is necessary to find the best method of deradicalisation that fits his psychological and behavioural profile, given the trajectory and path of the individual from radicalisation to at the time of desertion.

### **3. Disengagement and Deradicalisation Programs**

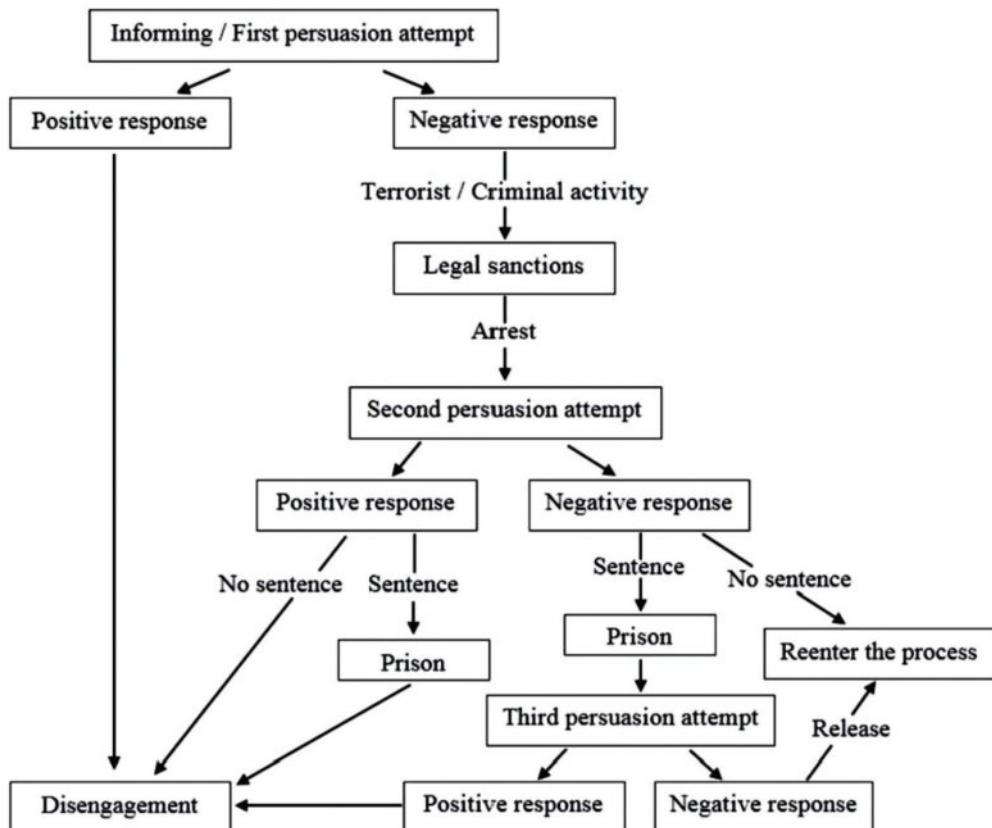
Disengagement and deradicalisation programs represent "any method, activity, or program designed to reduce individual or collective physical and ideological commitment to a group, milieu, or movement designated as 'extremist' or violently radical" (Koehler 2017, 29). In his paper, Horgan believes that these deradicalisation programs are understood as programs that reduce the risk of the individual re-engaging in actions that lead to the spread of terror. However, this perspective on deradicalisation programs refers to the rehabilitation and reintegration into society of those who have already taken part in the attacks, i.e. those who have been

engaged in criminal and illegal actions, first involving the arrest and imprisonment of the individual as a precondition for these programs (Koehler 2017, 29). Horgan does not take into account self-radicalisation, i.e. the cases in which the individual wants to radicalize voluntarily, without outside intervention.

The approach of these programs, which precondition the incarceration of the individual, can range from informal discussions between prisoners and imams (in Australia) and intensive weeks of religious education courses lasting several weeks (in Mauritania), to programs lasting several years (in Saudi Arabia) (Pettinger 2017, 7). The example of the program in Saudi Arabia is perhaps the most famous, assuming, in addition to the ideological component, “political education, vocational training, painting, physical education, and to facilitate the reintegration of individuals” (Pettinger 2017, 7), to which is added the attempt to find a wife once the individual is released. The Saudi program thus incorporates both the ideological component and a continuing disengagement through the reintegration of individuals into society, encouraging, among other things, the participation of former activists to encourage deradicalisation. Saudi officials estimated that the program has a re-engagement rate of 0%, but as expected, this figure did not reflect reality, thus the officials reaffirmed that the rate is 10-20%, although it is believed that it is, in fact, 30-40% (Pettinger 2017, 11-12). One problem that all deradicalisation programs face is the lack of a standard for measuring recidivism, which is an extremely subjective assessment. However, the Saudi program focuses on deradicalizing those individuals who have not been directly involved in violent attacks, which implies a low degree of radicalisation.

Another successful *deradicalisation program* is *The Disengagement and Deradicalisation Pilot Program*, created in 2009 by the Adana Police Department in Turkey, which wanted to disengage individuals, abandon radical ideologies and reintegrate them into society through counselling, finding a place to work, and the guarantee of certain benefits, such as health insurance, housing and education (Bastug and Evlek 2016, 35). This program was a model for the Turkish authorities, so other law enforcement agencies took the initiative. Bastug and Evlek developed a working model of this program, starting with the law enforcement attempt to inform the individual about the dangers to which he is exposed by adhering to a radical ideology, the individual’s response determining the next process. This model is a relevant example for our research and, although it is intended to be implemented by law enforcement, it can also be used in other disengagement and deradicalisation programs. The model can be seen in Figure no.1.

*Push and pull* factors are extremely important for establishing the right and appropriate methods that have an effect on each individual, especially for those who choose to leave the violent lifestyle voluntarily. To be effective, the tools used by deradicalisation programs must be based on both the reasons that led to



**Figure no. 1:** The stages of the disengagement process (Bastug and Evlek 2016, 37)

the radicalisation and the *push and pull* factors that led to the desire to disengage. Relevant to this are both Klandermans' model and the analogy made by Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen between *push and pull* factors and the types of commitment that an individual can have towards the extremist organization. An effective program must target all three types of commitment presented to minimize the chances of re-engagement.

Researchers who have studied the phenomenon of deradicalisation have taken elements from other disciplines, such as criminology, psychoanalysis, psychology, etc., so that the study of deradicalisation is a multidisciplinary one. Collaboration between several areas of research is essential for the creation of effective programs in the short, medium and long term, programs that can be evaluated in accordance with certain performance standards and that lead, in fact, to disengaging and deradicalizing extremists.

Greater integration of ethnic and religious groups into society in Western states could be a solution to prevent the radicalisation of these groups (Stern 2010, 1-4).



Initially, European governments viewed radicalisation as an issue of integration, a social issue, and refused to include a religious component in initiatives to combat violent extremism (CVE) (Rabasa et. all, 2010, 123). Thus, EU Council's attempt to revise the *Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism* in 2014 did not provide a religious component for the initiatives for combating radicalisation, even though they promoted the importance of disengagement and deradicalisation programs (Council of the European Union 2014). A 2015 European Parliament resolution also stated that “terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality or civilization” (European Parliament 2015) and that “(...) the misuse of religion, for negative purposes, and not religion itself, is one of the causes of radicalisation” (European Parliament 2015). There was no consensus at European level on CVE initiatives, nor were there any mechanisms to counteract the ideological component of radicalisation (Rabasa, et. all 2010, 122).

However, EU Member States have begun to pay more attention to the religious component of radicalisation, thus the *EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda 2020* states that Member States will be supported in sharing “experiences and good practices with regard to exchanges among religious and community leaders on the prevention of radicalisation” (European Commission 2020, 8). Also in 2016, the European Commission stated that “religion can play a vital role in preventing or countering radicalisation: it binds communities, strengthens the sense of belonging and guides people in a positive direction” (European Commission 2016, 4).

Programs of *disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation* (*Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Reinsertion*, DDRR) are not discussed enough in the literature, although their role is very important. The DDRR program is “a process that is introduced after a conflict and aimed mainly at ensuring the transition of combatants to civilian life” (Koehler 2017, 38-39). According to Koehler, there are three stages of a DDRR program: the first refers to the *collection and destruction of the weapons of the warring parties* (Koehler 2017, 39), in order to avoid the resume of armed conflict; the second phase aims to *demobilize the organizations and groups that participated in the conflict* (Koehler 2017, 39) (this had happened in the case of the FARC paramilitary group in Colombia, and the peace agreement between the Colombian government and the organization was ratified in 2016); the last stage refers to the *reintegration into society of ex-combatants* (Koehler 2017, 39) through various means, such as financial assistance, education and job insurance. This type of program is very effective in post-conflict reconstruction and has become the focus of UN and World Bank relief efforts and peacekeeping operations. DDRR programs are very important for the study of deradicalisation, especially because these initiatives encourage cooperation with members of the groups involved in the conflict, so the information gathered is extremely relevant. However, the information obtained did not necessarily form the



basis of the deradicalisation programs that were subsequently implemented, so there is a cognitive gap between them. At the same time, there are some shortcomings of a DDRR program, such as the lack of standards for measuring the level of reintegration of ex-combatants, although it has been observed that those with better education and economic support integrate much more easily (Koehler 2017, 41).

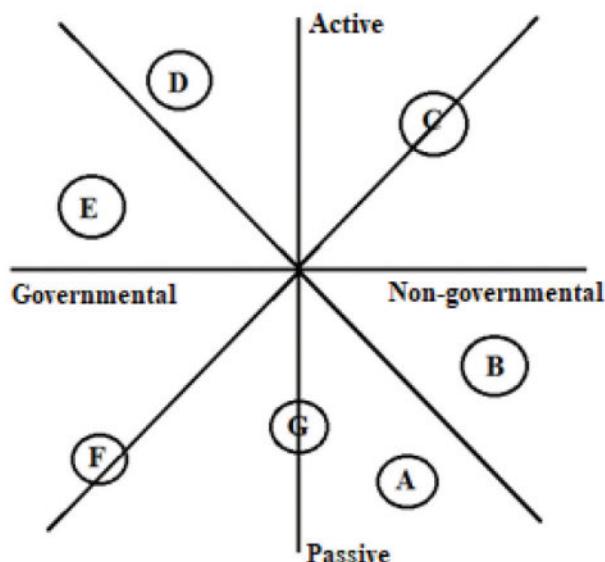
Deradicalisation, disengagement, reintegration and rehabilitation programs have been frequently used to obtain intelligence, being subordinated to military, police or secret services. Although the need to gather information is essential, the interactions of extremists with the authorities can lead to undesirable consequences, such as refusal to cooperate, the creation of psychological barriers and obstacles to reintegration into society (Koehler 2017, 95-96). However, these programs reduce the number of fighters who are members of terrorist organizations, help gather information that is very important to researchers and for the development of intelligence regarding the group and ideology. At the same time, the information gathered can be used, as Koehler points out, to create information campaigns and prevent radicalisation. The contribution of former extremists to these campaigns is also important, as their life stories can prevent radicalisation among potential followers of radical ideology (Koehler 2017, 104-106).

Daniel Koehler is the first researcher to provide a typology of *Deradicalisation and Disengagement Programs* (DDP), which identified seven types of these programs. These programs, grouped into typologies, must have several key elements: be targeted at individuals or groups who define themselves as radical, aim to achieve well-defined effects having the purpose of reintegrating target groups into society, and most importantly, the program must not use violence to obtain results (Koehler 2017, 112). A very interesting aspect of these programs is that they have tried to classify terrorism as a psychological disorder, but this has failed because there are not enough arguments to establish that violent radicalisation is a disease, on the contrary, it has been observed that terrorists are normal individuals (Koehler 2017, 114).

DDPs are a type of individual (micro-social) intervention that aims to reduce engagement or involvement in extremist groups. Koehler identifies three characteristics of these programs, such as: the *type of actor* (Koehler 2017, 116-117) who can start such a program, which can be initiated by both state authorities and NGOs, but a public-private partnership is seen as the most effective option (hybrid programs); *communication strategy* (Koehler 2017, 117-118) that it promotes, which can be active (trying to persuade individuals to take part in the program) or passive (the individual volunteering to take part in the program), noting that there is a higher rate of recidivism in the case of active DDPs because the individual does not have a cognitive openness or has a wrong motivation to join the program; *the relevance of the ideological component* (Koehler 2017, 118-119), so that only

programs that aim at an ideological change or a psychological disengagement can be classified as deradicalisation programs.

Thus, given the characteristics of such programs, the seven types of programs at the micro-social level are: type A (non-governmental, passive and includes the ideological component), type B (non-governmental, passive, without ideological component), type C (non-governmental, active, with or without ideological component), type D (governmental, active, and includes ideological component), type E (governmental, active, without ideological component), type F (governmental, passive, with or without ideology) and type G (public-private partnership, passive, with or without ideological component) (Koehler 2017, 119-135).



**Figure no. 2:** Typology of deradicalisation and disengagement programs  
(Koehler 2017, 119)

As can be seen, there are many approaches to deradicalisation, thus we cannot talk about the existence of a universal method of deradicalisation. However, there is a consensus among experts about the role of family and friends in the deradicalisation process, as well as the role of psychological and family counselling. The importance of these aspects is given by the fact that, during the radicalisation process, the family's role is diminished, and the individual believes that his family will reject him and will not accept his new values and beliefs. Starting from this scenario, the experts from Hayat encourage families to behave in the opposite way, i.e. the family to be patient and open to dialogue. Hayat (Arabic for *Life*) is a counselling service that has been helping to eradicate young Muslims since 2011. This initiative is funded by the German government, and its effectiveness is given by the fact that experts

can be contacted by phone both by family and individual. Thus, the strategy of this initiative is to act on several levels, involving both the family and the individual, as well as imams, schools and, in some cases, authorities and law enforcement: “deradicalisation programs should not work around or above leaders of communities, organizations and families, but to include them, to work with them as equal partners and to share their fears, troubles and worries” (Boghani 2016).

Daniel Koehler, the initiator of this program, states that “the approach of the Hayat program is to involve the whole family, to bring together all those who have a positive relationship with the person in question” (Jansen 2014). Based on an Islamic argument (“The Prophet Muhammad clearly says that paradise is at your mother’s feet. (...) When you are a Muslim, you cannot avoid this: you must tell your parents and, above all, to your mother.”) (Jansen 2014), the program wants to replace extremist ideology with family values and the unity that exists within the family.

Hayat has become very popular among deradicalisation initiatives, receiving calls including from Austria, Canada, France and Sweden, and experts can offer their services in several languages, such as Arabic, English, Turkish, German and others. Moreover, it is desired to expand the program in the UK, Canada and Australia, and there may be a mutual exchange of information and skills between different states (Jansen 2014).

Koehler states that since 2012, Hayat experts have received more than 4,000 calls, which have resulted in more than 1,500 counselling cases (Boghani 2016). Koehler believes in the importance of the life stories of former extremists, working with them to facilitate deradicalisation. He also wants a balance between prison sentences and eradication programs, saying that “if you just increase the pressure in a container, but without creating a valve to release steam and provide a way out, it’s not good” (Boghani 2016).

## Conclusions

In order to combat extremist ideologies and the threat of mass radicalisation, deradicalisation and disengagement centres have been set up all over the world. These are practical solutions and effective alternatives to incarcerating terrorists. These centres aim to combat extremist ideology, reduce the involvement of followers of this ideology in violent actions, and prevent such actions. An effective deradicalisation requires a personalized program for each individual, because the causes and reasons that lead to radicalisation, as well as the elements that can promote deradicalisation, are different for each individual. However, there are no centres exclusively for the deradicalisation of jihadists, and the spread of Islamist ideology with the return of former fighters to their home states poses a threat to state security.

Despite its importance, the deradicalisation process is poorly studied, and the lack of relevant information on deradicalisation centres is a significant obstacle to the understanding and practical applicability of this phenomenon. Another impediment is the impossibility of assessing the degree of deradicalisation of an individual, which has a subjective assessment.

In conclusion, further research on deradicalisation is needed, both to increase the effectiveness of the programs already implemented and to develop new such initiatives. Also, the gap between theory and practice must be eliminated, being necessary both the collaboration between specialists for the multidomain study of deradicalisation, as well as the implementation of new programs and the construction of several deradicalisation centres, activities that require a political consensus at international level.

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# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION - OPPORTUNITY AND NECESSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF HYBRIDITY

*Bogdan ȚUTUIANU\**

*In an era of internet, highly developed technology, and hugely exploited and omnipresent information environment, communication in the field of defence and security has acquired remarkable significance. In an age of expansion and diversification of the hybrid phenomenon, of an assertive geopolitical competition based in large measure on any methods and means employed so as to ensure the fulfilment of own state interests, it is easy to notice the use of media and social networks more than any time before, in order to influence and even manipulate public opinion meant to change perceptions, mislead, polarize and divide. This gave rise to the necessity of emergence of strategic communication concept, developed in the western world, including at the level of North Atlantic Alliance in order to support the achievement of security goals of the Alliance and the Member States. The present article is a plea for raising awareness upon the increased importance of strategic communication, at military and political levels, in the context of expansion and diversification of hybrid phenomenon as a reality that needs revealing and countering, when coming from our opponents, and used for reaching own goals.*

**Keywords:** Strategic Communication; information; hybridity; disinformation; information environment.

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## Introduction

In the wake of a series of largely mediated 2021 big events, with considerable strategic importance and impact such as G7 Summit, NATO Summit and the bilateral Summit of the presidents of the United States and Russian Federation, it can be easily agreed that Strategic Communication, hereinafter named StratCom, all the messaging, the narrative adopted and the subsequent, supporting facts are of extreme relevance. In the field of security and defence, communication is extremely important not only to ensure the appropriate functioning and coordination of all the factors, but also to transmit in an adequate manner the justification for the actions undertaken and their effects on a general level. According to Admiral James Stavridis, “Effective communication requires leaders of an organization to take an early and persistent role in deciding how ideas and decisions are shaped and delivered” (Stavridis 2007, 4).

The definition of strategic communication and the implications for the political-military world are still under debate. What is clear, however, as shown in the consistent work of Christopher Paul, is that „perceptions and understandings of images, policies, and actions matter, that the success of many policies is contingent on the support they receive from various populations (both foreign and domestic), and that perceptions are influenced both by what you do and what you say” (Paul 2011, 1). At purely political level, Admiral Stavridis was also saying that “in the national security context, a leader can improve the effects of operational and policies planning by ensuring communication implications of that planning are considered as early as possible in the process. If planning is done in that fashion, then it is likely that the communication associated with it will indeed be strategic in its effects” (Stavridis 2007, 7).

On the other hand, in the era of expansion and diversification of the hybrid phenomenon, of approaches that are far from being traditional or conventional and of an assertive competition among states based on influence, the relevance and role of StratCom acquire even more significant dimensions in order to build the trust and support of own audience, to diminish the effects of enemy StratCom and to deter this enemy from taking any kind of action against own interests.

The aim of the present paper is to clarify to some extent the complexity of the strategic communication process and establish if its intensive employment and exploitation are justified. Thus, we are also going to check the research hypothesis according to which, in the current geopolitical and military context, StratCom is related to the ongoing hybridization process and therefore it has a major role in countering the effects of the hybrid phenomenon. The analysis will comprise a brief description of hybridity, underlining the connection between the hybrid phenomenon and the information domain, followed by a presentation of the importance and role



of StratCom in this context. The research methods used for this endeavor are those associated with qualitative exploratory research, more precisely the descriptive method, that of pointing out certain aspects of current concepts and phenomena, as well as the content analysis method, meant to make the connections among these in order to generate reliable conclusions. The research is built on a mix of capstone documents, different reports, studies, focused on both issues of StratCom and hybridity.

Also, from the beginning, we have to make it clear that all the ideas, opinions and conclusions expressed in this paper belong to the author, representing a personal approach and analysis, and do not reflect in any way the official points of view or positions adopted by any national authorities or organizational entities.

## 1. The Intrinsic Link between Hybridity and the Information Environment

We consider it essential to briefly address the matter of the hybrid context that is invoked in the title of the paper, as hybridity has lately got more and more attention, as it has become more and more visible in so many domains. Also, this part of the article can be seen as a preliminary step, preparing the ground for pointing out the link between the information environment and *hybridity*, understood as a combination of unconventional and conventional threats which create a mutant threat, hard to counter. Afterwards, that will be also useful for trying to elucidate the specific role played by StratCom in this hybrid context.

According to a dedicated research paper of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE), hybrid threats are considered genuine “levers of influence” (Aday, *et al.* 2019, 23), respectively “information or influencing activities” (Aday, *et al.* 2019, 23), which can be deciphered as the influencing efforts of the hybrid aggressor fully responsible for targeting its victim also in the information domain, transforming it in real battleground of the hybrid aggression.

For clearly understanding the hybridity mechanism used by the above-mentioned aggressors against their targets and its inherent interconnection with the information domain, we have to switch to another valuable resource related to a framework of collaboration between NATO and a group of different nations and other organizations, which among other areas of interest has been focused inclusively on understanding and countering hybridity. One of the products developed within Multinational Capability Development Campaign/Countering Hybrid Warfare project (MCDC/CHW) describes the hybrid warfare as “the synchronized use of multiple instruments of power tailored to specific vulnerabilities across the full spectrum of societal functions to achieve synergistic effects” (Cullen and Reichborn-Kjennerud 2017, 8). The comprehensive description of the hybrid phenomenon

includes, among other instruments of power, the informational one (Cullen and Reichborn-Kjennerud 2017, 9). Furthermore, the same reference work highlights the fact that the hybrid aggressor is doing that by exploiting those vulnerabilities of the targeted state “across the political, military, economic, social, informational and infrastructure (PMESII) spectrum” (Cullen and Reichborn-Kjennerud 2017, 4). Along with those PMESII range targeted vulnerabilities, once again the one connected to the informational dimension is included in the list.

In accordance with the document called *NATO 2030 Initiative*, the current security environment is characterized by “the re-emergence of geopolitical competition” (NATO 2020a, 16) that came along with “a proliferation of hybrid attacks” (NATO 2020a, 17). In the content of the communique (NATO 2021) of the latest 2021 Brussels NATO Summit, the hybrid phenomenon is repeatedly mentioned – actually, 15 times – in various contexts, in the form of different expressive syntagms gravitating around the word *hybrid*. By that, the overall hybridity can be specifically portrayed as a mixture and combination of those hybrid-centric syntagms, as follows: *hybrid actions*, *hybrid activities*, *hybrid threats*, *hybrid campaign(s)*, *hybrid warfare*, and *hybrid challenges* (NATO 2021). Linking the latest NATO Summit with the previous one, also organized in Brussels, would assure more than just a leap back in time, namely an opportunity to explain what is beyond that mixture of words. In the *2018 Brussels NATO Summit Declaration*, hybrid activities were depicted as challenging tools used indiscriminately by both state and non-state actors in order to “create ambiguity and blur the lines between peace, crisis, and conflict” (NATO 2018). This can be taken as an overture of the current security dynamics which fully resonates with the overall picture illustrated in latest yearly report of NATO Secretary General, released in 2020. This describes the current security environment and situation as “a world of growing global uncertainty, more sophisticated and disruptive cyber and hybrid threats, and exponential technological change rapidly transforming the way wars are fought” (NATO 2020b, 10).

On the other hand, returning to the connection between hybridity and information environment, it must be underlined that the same hybrid attacks have had eroding, undermining, dividing and weakening effects, affecting the cohesion within societies through “disinformation and subversion” (NATO 2020a, 64), among other hybrid tools. Apparently, this is possible since “information is now a domain of contest” (NATO 2020a, 48), and “the information environment is contorted by misinformation, disinformation, and deception” (NATO 2020a, 48). By paraphrasing the incumbent NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, who labelled hybridity as a destabilizing, “dark reflection” (NATO 2015) of Alliance’s stabilizing efforts, disinformation can be labelled as the dark mirroring reflection of reality, an evil side of communication meant to distort reality for influencing purposes. A concrete

example in this regard is the statement made by the same Jens Stoltenberg who said that in the context of coronavirus pandemic there were attempts made by Moscow and Beijing to undermine the cohesion of the Alliance, by describing in an untruthful, malicious way the state of facts and the relationships among Member States, as well as the capacity to provide mutual support to counter the effects of the pandemic and save lives. On the contrary, NATO General Secretary emphasized the existence of extended cooperation at the level of the Alliance regarding medical support and transportation of patients, including by air (Joswiak 2020).

The issue may become even more stringent serious when these influencing activities are performed in an intrusive way. In this hybrid context, the hybrid perpetrator, totally responsible for planning, initiating, applying, amplifying, and perpetuating the hybrid pressure, is directly or indirectly involved in actions pertaining to this kind of “dark” communication. Consequently, its target is involuntarily the recipient of that aggressive, deceptive type of communication, that is neither truthful and justified, nor objective or showing integrity.

The exponentially advancing transformations in the technological field have also played a dominant role. “Technological trends suggest that the portfolio of hybrid hazards will rapidly expand” (Ondrejcsák and Lippert 2019, 212), and this looks like an accurate prediction at least in information environment. Beyond the traditional or specialized means such as the media, that has been done through new ways and means. Practically, everything became possible due to the rapid progress and innovations made in the technological field. The use of personal data of those who use one way or another the online environment and the use of artificial intelligence easily lead to a personalization of the digital content people are exposed to, according to their interests, sensitivities, or vulnerabilities (Kreps 2020). Definitely, in an era of hyper-techologization, communication is carried out in a newer, quicker, more innovative way, irrespective of the languages used, the explicit styles and formats, the concrete contexts and circumstances, or the specific means used for that. By exploiting these spectacular metamorphoses and rapid transformations, communication itself, no matter its originator and its receiver(s), or the targeted audience(s), has self-propelled into a new era and a new information environment. Due to technological advances and innovations, communication has become a high-speed, almost instantly provided, all-over-spread reality, without borders and other physical limitations. There is even the idea of so-called guerrilla communication strategies, equated with the principles of guerrilla warfare, accomplished and serving particular purposes due to these technological developments, social media and online networking and communication platforms (Nothhaft and Schölzel 2015, 18). Thus, „the aim of guerrilla communication is not to win but to introduce irregular ways to communicate to change the rules and norms of communication” (Holtzhausen, Fullerton, *et al.* 2021, 55).



That had both positive and negative intertwined consequences. In this new information domain, human virtual inter-linking and communication based on smart-device interconnectivity have been skyrocketing, as social trends facilitated and encouraged by internet and social media platforms. In the beginning, the level of expectation was very high, and everything sounded extremely encouraging since “the early days of the internet promised a mind-expanding utopia, where we could freely exchange new ideas and contemplate other points of view” (Grimes 2017). Yet, there seems to be a considerable difference between the pioneering day prospects and current reality since, beyond the anticipated socializing and exchanging ideas, online social media became a significant source of information. The final product is a mixture of apparently certified news, made of qualified ways and views, thoughts, beliefs, judgements, ideas (Grimes 2017). As a bonus, „rumors and gossip” (Grimes 2017) have been infiltrated, routinized and became part of this new reality, dramatically decreasing and dulling the ability to clearly distinguish between solid fact-checked information and misleading/deceiving views, thoughts, believes nurturing and fertilizing the so-called “echo chambers” and “online bubbles” (Grimes 2017). By that, the social networking services and messaging services spread in online space have created favorable environments for disinformation flow and expansion. That is not a simple guess since they have been already classified and labeled as “important means of spreading disinformation” (European Commission 2018, 4). Also, as it is clearly shown in the content of *NATO 2030 Initiative*, it has become a booster and multiplier of the earlier coined term *dark mirroring reflection* of the reality and information, since “disinformation, propaganda, and misinformation are especially dangerous in times of rapid technological advancements” (NATO 2020a, 64).

Therefore, in a hybrid context, from both perspectives of the hybrid actor and its victim, the information domain has a strong significance. The bigger picture could be clearer if the way of seeing the information environment were aligned with that provided by StratCom COE, respectively as a sort of trinomial space, namely comprising three dimensions. The first one, a *cognitive dimension* is the one “where people think, understand and decide” (Aday *et al.* 2019, 9). The second one, a *physical dimension* is created by “facts, knowledge and data” (Aday *et al.* 2019, 9). The third one, extremely relevant in this context, is the *informational dimension* consisting of “individuals, organizations and infrastructure” (Aday *et al.* 2019, 9). These dimensions are able to assure the desired level of understanding the interaction between various players in this field, the way of seeing and perceiving what is going on around them and the way of making decisions according to the respective deductions. This, in other words, is the equivalent of the key obligation and responsibility related to StratCom, of knowing, understanding and assessing this multi-dimensional space. It is not just the hybrid aggression that is based on an

integrated exploitation and synchronization of all instruments of power, including the informational one. According to StratCom COE, that is also the case for StratCom which is based on a “collective and integrated” (Aday *et al.* 2019, 22) effort, an effort involving all relevant governmental authorities, an inclusive effort that has the same foundation of understanding the information environment.

All these aspects can be virtually encapsulated in a *hybrid toolbox* meant to counter the consistent set of synchronized hostile actions, corresponding to every hybrid aggressor’s instrument of power. Altogether, these directly or indirectly influencing tools produce a diversity of effects in all informational environment dimensions. Asymmetric actors [...] employ actions to create information effects rather than to win tactical engagements on the battlefield. Their field of battle is political, and information strategy is their key weapon (Farwell 2012, 225). Thus, the common perception regarding the current hybrid context is that the competition has gradually moved into the information environment which has become a contested one, permanently under dispute. That is why there is a need for strategic communication to „promote awareness of, attention to, and consideration of the information and communication implications of government and military actions and utterances (Paul 2011, 54).

## 2. The Relevance of StratCom

Regarding the complexity and the real dimension of the type of communication under analysis, we need to start from the assumption that the human factor is involved, one way or another, in communication. From a basic and utterly simplified perspective, communication could be seen as a naturally verbalized continuation of the way of feeling, thinking, seeing and perceiving people, things, actions or reactions, of judging, classifying, categorizing and labelling them in direct connection with the surrounding reality. Through communication, a huge part of those thoughts and feelings are translated into images accompanied or not by spoken or written words, in a variety of combinations, used both privately and publicly. Words as meaning carriers spread information around either privately, or publicly to a larger targeted audience that in turn will do the same thing. There are lots of elements pertaining to effective communication ways and means currently under consideration (Popp, Astorino-Courtois 2021).

Similarly, by going from this basic level to a much higher one, at state and above-state level, this dissemination scheme would be replicated and could be interpreted as promoting and conveying the specific national security values, interests and objectives, the vision of the political establishment. It would definitely carry a higher degree of sophistication and formalization, exploiting the existing diplomatic channels, the specialized media agencies and outlets. There would be the

same information interchanging and sharing effort but between two or more states, groups of states, organizations and so on. In this case, the human involvement is a little selective, StratCom requiring and involving an entire mixture of politicians, decision makers, managers, specialists, subject matter experts, and practitioners, irrespective of their specific political orientation, status, position, rank, affiliation, nationality, gender, or age. Thus, according to Christopher Paul, the notion of strategic communication comprises all the „coordinated actions, messages, images, and other forms of signaling or engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives” (Paul 2011, 3).

In the same way, in accordance with a paper included in the NATO StratCom COE official journal, this kind of communication is multifaceted, a mixed process accurately defined by the complexity of producing and maintaining this reality, and also by repairing and transforming this reality (StratCom COE 2020, 23). By refining and adjusting reality to serve a certain purpose, the result would be moderately altering or even radically changing the general public’s perception of this surrounding reality. Thus, information may turn into disinformation. In order to reveal the real meaning and dimension of disinformation, one can use the terms in which it was introduced in an EU dedicated action plan, respectively that is “verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm” (European Commission 2018, 1). The same area of disinformation could include or associate any complementary, voluntary actions such as misinformation, deception and manipulation.

The very existence of the *information – disinformation* binomial is sufficient for the emergence and use in this context of StratCom. Obviously, what is needed is the appropriate reaction of exposing and revealing disinformation, of countering and combating disinformation, the same disinformation that is “often part of hybrid warfare” (European Commission 2018, 3). As the new ways and means of the communicating era have been developing in the same geopolitical trend, in the earlier mentioned competition and its subsequently associated hybrid manifestations, this overlapping and synchronization have created the premises for a more rapid proliferation of a contemporary form of disinformation. However, according to the above-mentioned paper, included in the official journal of NATO StratCom COE, it is “hardly something new” (StratCom COE 2020, 22), but on the contrary, a phenomenon with a very long history. The same reference work emphasizes, in total accordance with its title, that the last ten years represented “The Long Decade of Disinformation” in which this tendency of “mass manipulation of information” (StratCom COE 2020, 21) has been continuously growing. Also, the same disinformation is associated to a consistent campaign of “information war” (StratCom COE 2020, 23) or “information warfare” (StratCom COE 2020, 24) which

in turn is fully aligned with the hybrid aggressor's approach and conceptualization of StratCom, the abstracted counterpart and equivalent of this commonly used concept in the Western world.

On its turn, according to NATO StratCom COE vision, StratCom is intriguingly approached as a "philosophy or mindset" (Aday *et al.* 2019, 10), a "process" (Aday *et al.* 2019, 10) and a "capability" (Aday *et al.* 2019, 10). That sort of philosophy or mindset is explained by the fact that in StratCom everything is an active part of communication and communicates by itself, no matter if we are talking about specific words or combinations of words, about different deeds, performances, actions, imagery, visual depictions and illustrations, about strategies, policies, plans or projects. This entire argumentation highlighting the connection between hybridity and the information environment, respectively the parallelism between communication, StratCom, disinformation and information warfare was meant to create the foundation for analyzing the role of StratCom under the present circumstances.

The deductive preliminary conclusion made at the end of previous section is validated by reality. Lately, the information environment has been massively used as a playground by the hybrid aggressors, either state or non-state actors, a fact accurately reflected in the regular reports, specialized literature, dedicated articles and security studies. Thus, examples could be brought from the generous range of publications that have been developed and published under NATO StratCom COE umbrella, since 2014, its first year of existence. This is an easy provable fact because all those research products are not classified in any way, but on the contrary, there is no room for secrecy since they are accessible to any audiences and are openly available on its specific site, [www.stratcomcoe.org/publications](http://www.stratcomcoe.org/publications). Among that diversity of titles there are some self-explanatory terms and defining concepts of the hybrid arsenal as follows: *disinformation, propaganda, manipulation, information laundering, information operations, fake news, hostile narratives, information war, information campaign*, etc.

All of these are self-defining for the ongoing influencing process that can be easily associated with unconventionality. They could all lead to affecting the way of people's thinking and perceiving things and realities, degrading the level of awareness and consciousness and also influencing the way of acting and reacting. In this context of perpetual hybridity, directly jeopardizing the overall stability and security of the targeted states, we will try to clarify an essential aspect, based on this level of understanding: "What is the role of StratCom in the context of hybrid threats?".

### **3. The Role Played by StratCom in a Hybrid Context**

Due to all aforementioned arguments, at least theoretically, it should not be difficult to answer to the question regarding the role played by StratCom in the

current hybrid context. Thus, we could mention the way in which StratCom is described in a subchapter of *NATO 2030 Initiative*, a subsection suggestively named *Strategic Communications, Public Diplomacy, and Tackling Disinformation*. Thus, StratCom is depicted as “a critical tool of deterrence and defence” (NATO 2020a, 48). The terms used are clear and explicit, at least for the purpose of this paper, but, in terms of clarity, the definition might be considered too generic. For that reason, it can be supplemented with a relevant aspect regarding disinformation, that is “effective communication is essential to counter and deter disinformation” (European Commission 2018, 7). Also, as shown, „one of the long-term goals offered for strategic communication and public diplomacy is the generation and creation of credibility” (Paul 2011, 50), while another one is „the promotion of shared values” (Paul 2011, 51).

There is something more beyond that clear combination between StratCom and the effort of tackling disinformation. The idea is backed by another credible source, the second product of the MCDC/CHW project, focused specifically on countering hybrid warfare. As it was mentioned in its content, *along capability and credibility, communication is emphasized as one of the dedicated pillars for deterring hybridity* (Monaghan *et al.* 2019, 35). This approach resonates with the definition mentioned earlier, portraying StratCom as a deterrence tool. Beyond this, any interested reader and/or audience can find the role of communication in this context explained as “the two-way understanding and perception that informs cost-benefit calculations on both sides” (Monaghan *et al.* 2019, 35). According to the hybridity mechanism described before, the two sides invoked that must be fully aware of the implications of their actions are the hybrid aggressor and the target of the hybrid aggression.

Therefore, in these circumstances, in terms of deterring hybridity, this trio comprising *capability, communication and credibility* should not be seen as a mere iteration of desiderates. In real life, *this trio must be materialized in a set of preemptive, proactive, and reactive measures* which are inter-dependable, because one without the other would be able neither to provide efficiency nor to have the desired effect in deterring hybridity.

The specific capabilities are supposed to cover all essential functions necessary to mitigate hybridity in an early and timely manner, such as *monitoring, detecting, identifying, revealing, attributing, and rejecting any hybrid actions and activities*. These capabilities give actional weight and embolden the determination to react and to respond when the re-emerged competition and influence sought by hybridity are beyond any bearable limits. Without those capabilities designed for early detection and opportune intervention to counter the hybrid threats, no matter what the volume of communication would be involved, most probably there could not be enough and palpable room for credibility.

Still, beyond presenting and promoting all those specific capabilities and

their overall efficiency, there is another side of the credibility, namely the political determination to point the finger to the perpetrator, to reveal its hybrid actions publicly. StratCom is involved in this equation, too, by conveying the appropriate messages, following own narrative. All lexical and imagological constructions are expected to be directed towards motivating, initiating or improving cooperation and coordination, increasing consciousness, improving situational alertness and better understanding. This needs to be done in a synchronized and coherent way, in order for the targeted audience to anticipate, to be ready, to be involved, to be proactive against hybrid actions. All the energies, all the efforts, all the solutions materialized in actions must coalesce, coagulate and converge towards the desired deterring effect.

Besides generating credibility, even though it is seen itself as a mindset, StratCom represents a real helping tool and option for changing people's mentality. Thus, beyond voluntary involvement and unconditioned taking of responsibility, first of all, it is about continuous adaptability and flexibility so as to keep the pace with the expansion and diversification hybridity. Ideally, it would occur at the highest or leadership levels of an organization and be carried out at the lowest or tactical levels. It educates and informs publics; but the most effective strategic communication changes behavior (Holtzhausen and Zerfasss 2015, 354).

Secondly, StratCom is about changing the traditional threat perception. By revealing the reality created by this type of hybrid threats, there would be some real impulse for coordination and integration of all relevant actors. In the inter-agency, inter-institutional format, cooperation and communication can pave the way for a better mutual understanding, sufficient for sensing and framing the larger picture, so as to acquire the ability to think strategically and in an integrated way. Thus, the institutions involved in the defence system would come to the operational maturity of adjusting their own existing tactics and methods in this regard. Spreading out knowledge about hybrid threats should not be a one-way road.

Beside the warning component meant to make everybody aware of the presence (if not even omnipresence) of this hybrid phenomenon, there is an acute need for another aspect that can be reached via StratCom. Thus, we consider that there is a need for an elaborate explanation focused on the demystification of hybridity. That is an essential element since everyone should understand that the hybrid phenomenon is not an unusual characteristic of a statal or non-statal actor targeting and detrimentally acting against your line of work, acting domain, state, or organization. By that demystification, this kind of hybrid threats can be seen as tangible threats that can be counteracted by some tangible actions, translated in adjusted tactics and methods. This reflects the second of the "Five key principles for deterring hybrid aggressors" (Holtzhausen and Zerfasss 2015, 40), as they are highlighted by the second MCDC/CHW product in a specific infobox, expressing the same idea in the maritime domain: "hybrid aggressors are determable" (Holtzhausen

and Zerfasss 2015, 41). With a new, refreshed, somehow adjusted mentality to this new reality, that would in turn help to reduce the chances for transforming this new hybrid reality into a new normality and somehow discourage and stop any other hybrid interference. Thus, “strategic communication and its confluent effects with kinetic action should stand on an equal footing with military strategy” (Farwell 2012, 225).

We can, therefore, synthetize the relevance of StratCom by enumerating the objectives detailed above: promoting own interests, revealing the hybrid phenomenon at information level and countering its effects, and even deterring all hybrid acts as such.

## Conclusions

We consider that all the arguments presented in this paper are sufficient reasons to prove our hypothesis that, under the current circumstances of extended and diversified “hybridization”, manifested inclusively via disinformation, majorly favored by hyper-digitalization, this new reality has all the premises to become a darker picture, perpetuated in the future, if the relevance, importance, and role of StratCom are diminished or ignored. In a hybrid context, StratCom can be considered highly relevant since it is simultaneously a mindset, a process, and a capability with a significant fingerprint in the informational realm. In terms of benefits and desired effects, StratCom can be seen as a two-edged sword. Irrespective of its name and form of manifestation, due to the diversity of the targeted audiences it should cover both external and internal target audiences.

On the same note, StratCom can be seen as one of those soft solutions for increasing the deterrent effect, by making everybody aware of that hybrid aggression, by portraying the legitimacy of own actions and responses, proportionality of reaction and intervention. In any hybrid context, StratCom is an appropriate tool for fighting disinformation and its influencing effects in the information environment. Also, it is an efficient tool for disseminating reassuring messages about own capabilities, for portraying and proving the level of awareness, of determination to act and react for legitimizing credibility. At the same time, StratCom has a significant role in demystifying hybridity and making people understand that the hybrid phenomenon is not a game with a predetermined result, with an outcome which cannot be prevented or changed in any way.

StratCom has to be one of the basic ingredients for a successful formula of deterring hybridity, representing both an opportunity and an acute necessity especially in the current security context and dynamics. Its role is highly relevant and can create favorable conditions for better preventive options and timely responses, essential for efficiently deterring and countering hybridity, anywhere

and at any time. Any possible intention of denying, ignoring or diminishing the importance and role of StratCom in the current context of hybridity expansion and diversification should be seen as a serious issue by any state.

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# THE STATISTICAL DEBATE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF WAR: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

*Mihai Zodian, PhD\**

Steven Pinker, *Îngerii mai buni ai naturii noastre. De ce s-a diminuat violența* [The Better Angels of our Nature], Publica Publishinghouse, 2019 [2011], p. 888.

Bear F. Braumoeller, *Only The Dead: The Persistence of War in The Modern Age*, Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 314.

Nils Petter Gledish (coord.). 2020. *Lewis Fry Richardson. His Intellectual Legacy and Influence in the Social Sciences*. Heidelberg: Springer, p. 156.<sup>1</sup>

The attributes of warfare and the future of conflict gained the public's attention with the famous work by Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of our Nature*, translated in Romanian a few years ago. The author argued from a statistical perspective that we are living in the most peaceful period in history, at least considering the last hundreds of years, or more precisely that the threats against the life of an average citizen have fallen to a minimum, including domestic violence, war, criminality, the punishments, etc. (Pinker 2019, 14-21). His ideas raised many critiques and praises, which inspired in part the arguments of Braumoeller, in *Only the Dead*, and from the volume edited by Nils Petter Gledish. The theme is significant in itself, since the causes of war and of its attributes are still scientific puzzles, but also in the context of Great Power politics apparent renewal, as exemplified by the Russian in Ukraine since 2014 or in Taiwan.

Firstly, some clarifications are necessary. This debate is not about practical issues such as the operational dimensions of war, hybrid warfare and other similar

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<sup>1</sup> The text is inspired by the impressive syllabus made by Jack Levy for the course on theories of war, which can be found here: <http://home.uchicago.edu/~mjreese/CurrentStudents/LevyPOLSGR8832.pdf>

topics, and cannot be dismissed by one or two counterexamples. The participants are interested in investigating a few attributes which are important for explaining this phenomenon, among them occurrence, frequency, probability or costs defined in terms of battle deaths (Geller and Singer 1998). Since the perspective is inductive and statistical, the theoretical aspect is very dim and the focus is on general findings about the war.

Now, for Pinker, the world gets better, but the pathways are fuzzy. I should underline that the main standard of evaluation is the risk that an average person may fall victim to physical aggression, be it war or crime. This somehow surprising conclusion is the result of different tendencies, some being thousands of years old: the formation of states; processes of political centralization; the Enlightenment; the peace between the Great Powers in the last decades; a reduction in the severity of war since 1990, and the growing value of human rights (Pinker 2019, 14-21). The main point of controversy for me is the interpretation of interstate and Great Power war and his preferred criterion of risk, defined as the relative measure of battle deaths compared to world population.

The author underlined some limits of his thesis. Most importantly, the projection is uncertain and one cannot guarantee that this trend of peacefulness will continue, since we may live in the interval between two great conflicts, as some critics have pointed out, while the power law may fool us (Talbot 2018; Clauset 2020). From these critics, Talbot is the most notorious, while Clauset uses an interesting statistical analysis, reprinted in the volume edited by Nils Petter Gledish. Furthermore, a measure of intellectual prudence comes from two other points, stressed by Braumoeller: any conflict may escalate to the level of a major war, and the trends are concentrated in the Western democracies (Braumoeller 2019). Even taking into account these objections, the debate is important, since it may imply, for countries such as Romania, a reduction in costs, maybe also in the frequency of security threats of a violent nature (war, terrorism, criminality, etc.) and the issue of whether the change will continue.

Pinker relies on a body of research initiated by Lewis Fry Richardson, who identified two main attributes of wars, occurrence and severity (Geller and Singer 1998, 27-28; Pinker 2019, 236). Thus, the onset of war follows a Poisson distribution, meaning it is a rare phenomenon (Richardson 1944). But judging the relationship between frequency and severity, defined in absolute terms, the researcher noticed that the trend is of a power law distribution, in which just a few events are dominating the majority of occurrences (Claušet 2020, 116; Spagat and Weezel 2020, 131-132). The phenomena are considered independent and possessing equal probability; these two main characteristics were found many times, even with new data (*ibidem*).

The idea of rarity requires some clarification. It is a conclusion based on historical statistics and on the Poisson distribution: if one assumes no significant

change after 1945 or 1953, and takes into account the historical frequency of 0.67 yearly conflicts, then the probability of a new war in the next year is of 30%; the probability of two new wars is 11%; of three, 0.025% and of four, 0.043% (Geller and Singer 1998, 1; Winner 2015). A similar relationship holds in cases of terrorist attacks, the proportion of rich people in modern societies, or car crashes (MacLean and Teale 1982-1983; Clauset 2020, 116; Spagat and Weezel 2020, 131-132). A new war may not change a trend, but two or more occurring in parallel are significant.

Rarity also means that the risk of a conflict is small but it cannot be neglected: this argument is derived from the power law mentioned above, which may cause problems for forecasting, as Taleb famously argued, and it resumes the conventional wisdom (Geller and Singer 1998, 1; Taleb 2018; Pinker 2019, 264-274; Spagat and Weezel 2020, 131; Clauset 2020). Thus, taking into account frequency and impact, major wars are comparable with 7 degrees' earthquakes and other phenomena, which means that the most severe security threats are unlikely to happen but they may occur anytime, following a seemingly random process of escalation (Clauzet 2020, 116; Braumoeller 2019). Nassim Taleb considered that forecasting methods based on extrapolation and normal distribution may fail, since it is enough for one big event to happen and the trend apparent is reversed, a common idea in the study of warfare (Taleb 2018; Clauset 2020, 115-166). The classical example is the reduction in severity of European conflicts preceding World War I, and the associated extrapolation which stimulated the "cult of offensive" (Evera 1984; Cirillo and Taleb 2016).

Consequently, many critics have argued that Pinker is wrong. Pasqualle Cirillo and Nassim Nicholas Taleb argued that their data on conflicts do not show a change in the risk of a major war, which remained Black Swans; the probability of a world war being one at 80 years, but their ideas also raised objections (Cirillo and Taleb 2016; Spagat 2017; Taleb 2018). For his part, Bear Braumoeller reasoned that the intensity of war did not change (battle deaths compared to the population of state engaged in conflict, contrary to the world population); neither did the severity (defined as direct battle deaths); the rate of initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes (violence with losses less than a war) has been reduced since 1990, but inside an overall process of growth in the last two centuries and finally, that while the prevalence of war fell (war compared to population close to Pinker's preferred idea), the power law nature may confuse observers (Braumoeller 2019, 85-87, 106-107, 188-122). Last but not least, Clauset employed a different methodology to make the case that the probability of a major conflict is, on the average, one at each 161 years and we may be inside of this loop, which makes difficult to judge Pinker's thesis, since we do not know whether the change is real (Clauzet 2020, 123-125).

The data is ambiguous and the dispute remains unsolved. In the same volume edited by Nils Petter Gledish, Michael Spagat and Stijn van Weezel have shown

that, if we choose a breaking point after 1953, the results are more favorable to Pinker's ideas than if one is starting to count since 1945, but the conclusions are not definitive for them either. (Spagat and Weezel 2020, 138-139). The main concept, the costs of wars, is operationalized in different ways, according to authors' perspective, while an academic consensus is still frail on these issues. For now, the dominant feeling remains the one expressed by Jack Levy, Thomas Walker and Martin Edwards, that, even if the severity of great power war grew, on the long run and by comparison with total population size, their frequency and the severity of all wars fell starting with 1950s; nevertheless, interstate wars are not yet outdated (Levy, Walker, and Edwards 2001, 15-48).

The debate shows that security threats such as war and terrorism are difficult to understand even when data are available. The persistence of these ambiguities suggests that a rigid empirical approach risks offering only incomplete answers or it may reflect researchers' values, but relying on a theoretical perspective may correct some of these, if it is rigorous enough. Two general issues need to be remembered. Is war a homogenous class of events and can be treated as an autonomous variable, or if not, should it be integrated in a bigger category, or broken in smaller conceptual pieces (Vasquez 2009)? The second issue remains the problem of war decline, Pinker's proposal being yet difficult to judge.

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# STRATEGIES XXI INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

## **“THE COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT”**

December 09<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2021

STRATEGIES XXI International Scientific Conference on “*The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment*”, the latest scientific event on the 2021 agenda of Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies (CDSSS), was organised online, on December 09<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, enjoying consistent participation, both military and civilian figures from Defence, Public Order and National Security system and national security fields (academia, researchers, students, MA students, PhD students and postdoctoral candidates), and, at international level, representatives from similar institutions, active in the field of security and defence.

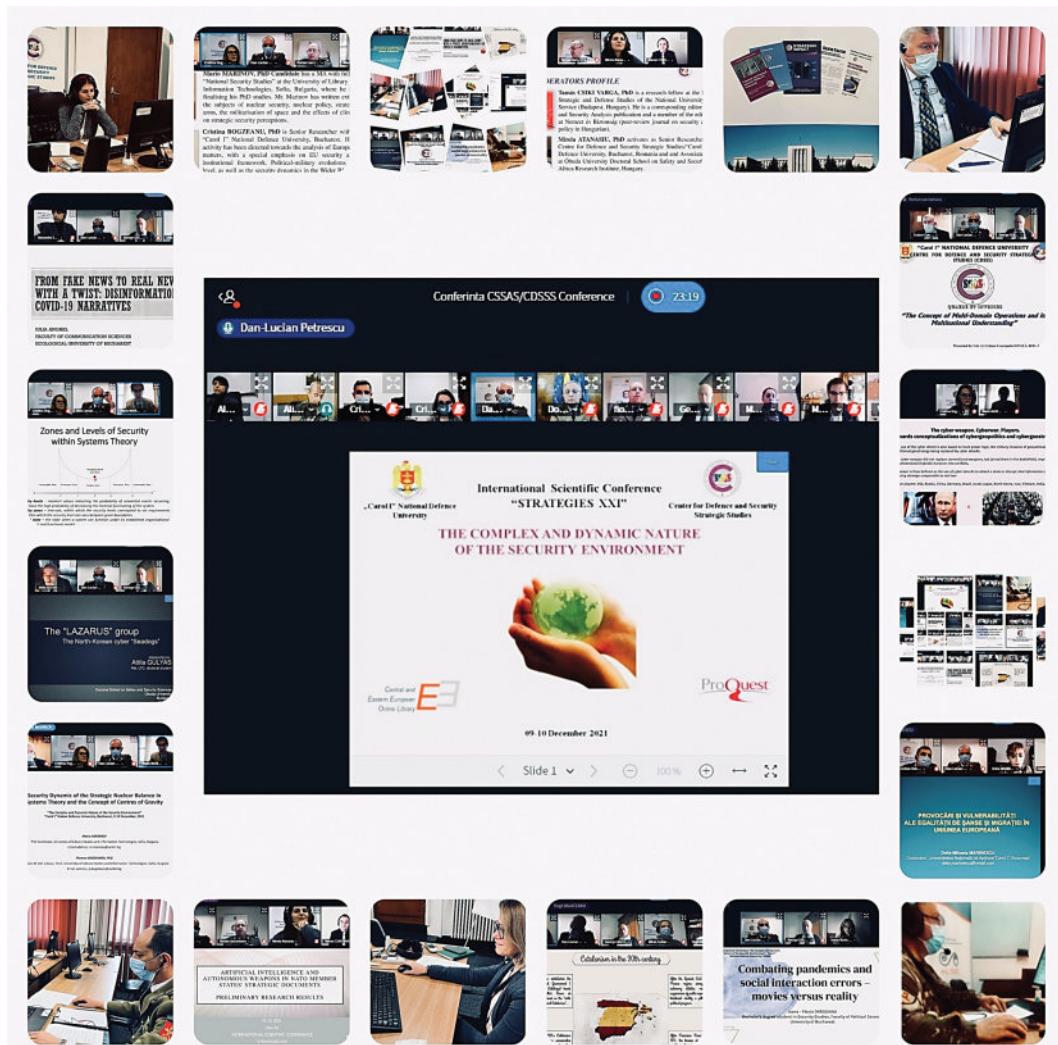
The scientific event framework enjoyed a dynamic atmosphere, supported by the contribution of speakers, delegates and attendees from the Ministry of National Defence, academic personnel and researchers from academia in Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, United Kingdom and Northern Ireland and Hungary.

The seven specific sections of the conference in the field of security and defence were chaired by the Director of the Centre, Colonel Florian Cîrciumaru PhD, together with Colonel Dan-Lucian Petrescu PhD; overall consistency was ensured by the Conference scientific secretary, Colonel (Ret.) Crăișor-Constantin Ioniță PhD.

The conference first session, held online on December 9, consisted of four sections, and its presentations focused on the following issues: *Pandemic challenges on security*, *State and non-state actors in power relations*, *International humanitarian law and Military history*, being moderated by:

- Colonel Dan-Lucian Petrescu PhD, CDSSS;
- Associate Professor János Besenyő PhD, Obuda University, Hungary, together with Senior Researcher Alexandra Sarcinschi PhD, CDSSS;
- General (Ret.) Virgil Bălăceanu PhD, Romanian Reserve Officers Association, together with Researcher Mihai Zodian PhD, CDSSS.

The session covered topics such as: biological threat; hybrid aggression in the pandemic context; the role of international and regional organizations during the pandemic period; effects on trends in the international security environment; measures and interinstitutional cooperation in crisis management, terrorism and violent, illegitimate action; managing political transitions in different regions of the globe; nuclear disarmament and the proliferation phenomenon in all its aspects; humanitarian protection during armed conflicts (legal instruments for the protection of victims, civilian population and property, protected categories of persons and goods, special rules, etc.); regulation in international law of the armed forces use.



**Event Photo: STRATEGIES XXI International Scientific Conference**  
**“The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment”**



The second conference session, held on December 10, included three panels, namely: *National defence and resilience*, *Areas of strategic interest* and *Strategic concepts and theories*, chaired by the following moderators:

- Mario Marinov, University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, Bulgaria, together with Senior Researcher Cristina Bogzeanu, PhD, CDSSS;
- Tamás Csiki Varga, PhD, National University of Public Services, Budapest, Hungary, together with Senior Researcher Mirela Atanasiu, PhD, CDSSS;
- Colonel Alin Bodescu, “Carol I” National Defence University, together with Senior Researcher Cristian Băhnăreanu PhD, CDSSS.

The sections created the framework for debating topics such as: strategic theory and practice; strategic action; strategic concepts; military strategic thinking; close proximity (Moldova, Ukraine, Russian Federation, Serbia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey); stability and change in the international security environment; evolving security concepts; the economic factor and world economic re-establishment; migration, terrorism; the Middle East and North Africa; Asia; the USA, etc.

The papers and debates with scientific character contributed to the achievement of event’s objectives, namely: disseminating the latest research in the field, creating a framework for guidance and dialogue between participants, and strengthening national and international scientific cooperation, thereby classifying the success of the scientific event.

Information on future scientific activities organized by CDSSS can be found by accessing the website: <https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/manifestari.htm>.

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# GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

We welcome those interested in publishing articles in the bilingual academic journal *Strategic Impact*, while subjecting their attention towards aspects to consider upon drafting their articles.

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- ✓ **Originality** of the paper – own argumentation; novelty character – not priorly published;
- ✓ **Quality of the scientific content** – neutral, objective style, argumentation of statements and mentioning of all references used;
- ✓ **A relevant bibliography**, comprising recent and prestigious specialized works, including books, presented according to herein model;
- ✓ **English language** shall meet academic standards (British or American usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Romanian authors shall provide both Romanian and English versions of the text.
- ✓ **Adequacy to the editorial standards adopted by the journal.**

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- ✓ **Title** (centred, capital, bold characters, font 24).
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- ✓ 6-8 relevant **keywords** (italic characters)
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- ✓ **Tables / graphics / figures**, if they are useful for the argumentation, with reference made in the text. They shall be also sent in .jpeg /.png/.tiff format as well.

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The article shall have footnotes and bibliography, in the form seen below. Titles of works shall be mentioned in the language in which they were consulted, with transliteration in Latin alphabet if there is the case (e.g. in the case of Cyrillic, Arabic characters etc.). Please provide English translation for all sources in other languages.

The article will comprise in-text citation and bibliography (in alphabetical order), according to The Chicago Manual of Style<sup>1</sup>, as in examples below:

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*Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)*

Grazer, Brian, and Charles Fishman. 2015. *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Smith, Zadie. 2016. *Swing Time*. New York: Penguin Press.

*In-text citation*

(Grazer and Fishman 2015, 12)

(Smith 2016, 315–16)

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<sup>1</sup> URL: [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html)



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In the reference list, include the page range for the chapter. In the text, cite specific pages.

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(Thoreau 2016, 177–78)

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### *Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)*

Keng, Shao-Hsun, Chun-Hung Lin, and Peter F. Orazem. 2017. “Expanding College Access in Taiwan, 1978–2014: Effects on Graduate Quality and Income Inequality.” *Journal of Human Capital* 11, no. 1 (Spring): 1–34. <https://doi.org/10.1086/690235>.

LaSalle, Peter. 2017. “Conundrum: A Story about Reading.” *New England Review* 38 (1): 95–109. Project MUSE.

### *In-text citation*

(Keng, Lin, and Orazem 2017, 9–10)

(LaSalle 2017, 95)

## WEBSITE CONTENT

### Reference list entries (in alphabetical order)

Bouman, Katie. 2016. “How to Take a Picture of a Black Hole.” Filmed November 2016 at TEDxBeaconStreet, Brookline, MA. Video, 12:51. [https://www.ted.com/talks/katie\\_bouman\\_what\\_does\\_a\\_black\\_hole\\_look\\_like](https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_bouman_what_does_a_black_hole_look_like)

Google. 2017. “Privacy Policy.” Privacy & Terms. Last modified April 17, 2017. <https://www.google.com/policies/privacy/>

Yale University. n.d. “About Yale: Yale Facts.” Accessed May 1, 2017. <https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts>

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(Bouman 2016)

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Manjoo, Farhad. 2017. "Snap Makes a Bet on the Cultural Supremacy of the Camera." *New York Times*, March 8, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/08/technology/snap-makes-a-bet-on-the-cultural-supremacy-of-the-camera.html>

Mead, Rebecca. 2017. "The Prophet of Dystopia." *New Yorker*, April 17, 2017.

Pai, Tanya. 2017. "The Squishy, Sugary History of Peeps." *Vox*, April 11, 2017. <http://www.vox.com/culture/2017/4/11/15209084/peeps-easter>

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(Manjoo 2017)

(Mead 2017, 43)

(Pai 2017)

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