

*Malina KASZUBA*

*Siedlce University of Natural Sciences and Humanities<sup>1</sup>*

*Wydział Nauk Społecznych*

*malina.kaszuba@uph.edu.pl*

*ORCID 0000-0003-1090-8330*

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## THE MILITARIZATION OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

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**ABSTRACT:** The transformation of the Russian foreign and security policy based on a more courageous use of military potential is a fact. Over the past several years, Russia has moved from articulating its interests to their enforcement with the use of military force. This article focuses on analyzing this process and identifying its potential consequences for global security. The conclusions drawn by the author, based on the conducted research, allow to state that the armed forces are and will be an important instrument of the Russian foreign and security policy. This does not mean, however, that the Russian Federation will strive for an armed conflict posing a threat to international security.

**KEYWORDS:** foreign and security policy, militarization, armed forces, Russian Federation

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## MILITARYZACJA ROSYJSKIEJ POLITYKI ZAGRANICZNEJ I BEZPIECZEŃSTWA I JEJ MOŻLIWE SKUTKI DLA BEZPIECZEŃSTWA GLOBALNEGO

**ABSTRAKT:** Transformacja rosyjskiej polityki zagranicznej i bezpieczeństwa oparta na coraz odważniejszym korzystaniu z potencjału militarnego jest faktem. Na przestrzeni ostatnich kilkunastu lat Rosja przeszła od artykułowania swoich interesów do ich egzekwowania przez zastosowanie siły militarnej. Niniejszy artykuł został skoncentrowany wokół analizy tego procesu oraz określenia jego potencjalnych konsekwencji dla światowego bezpieczeństwa. Wnioski, które sformułowała autorka w oparciu o przeprowadzone badania pozwalają stwierdzić, że siły zbrojne są i będą ważnym instrumentem rosyjskiej polityki zagranicznej i bezpieczeństwa, co nie oznacza jednak, że Federacja Rosyjska będzie dążyła do konfliktu zbrojnego stanowiącego zagrożenie dla bezpieczeństwa w wymiarze międzynarodowym.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** polityka zagraniczna i bezpieczeństwa, militaryzacja, siły zbrojne, Federacja Rosyjska

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<sup>1</sup> Uniwersytet Przyrodniczo-Humanistyczny w Siedlcach; Poland.

## INTRODUCTION

Russian Federation has never wanted and still does not want to come to terms with the loss of superpower status. It did not want – contrary to Western demands – to become a regional power. In Russian thinking, adopting such a status would be a geopolitical defeat.

Since Vladimir Putin took office as president, Russian power elites have been seeking to reverse the international order established after the end of the Cold War. Over the past several years, the Kremlin has been systematically implementing the plan of Russian domination in the twenty-first century. It conducts harassment activities of its closest neighbours – including Ukraine, Belarus and the NATO Baltic States. For many years, Russia has been building an arsenal of aggression. In an interview with the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko in September 2014, the President of the Russian Federation said: “If I want, within two days my troops will be not only in Kiev, but also in Riga, Vilnius, Tallinn, Warsaw and Bucharest”<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2014, Moscow has repeatedly used military threats against the Baltic and Nordic states, as well as the civilian aircraft of Western states. It deepened intelligence operations, intensified military exercises and combat readiness, carried out provocative manoeuvres of naval and air forces, conducted a nuclear power mobilization check, deployed nuclear weapons in the Kaliningrad Oblast, threatened the Republic of the Republic of Moldova, annexed Crimea and violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), from 1987.

The status of a global power requires an active foreign and security policy towards various countries and regions of the world in order to be able to successfully implement its various interests, often contrary to the interests of the recipient of this policy. Gaining world domination requires, to variable extent, a change in the existing order in these specified regions, and therefore a change in the post-Cold War order that has existed for nearly thirty years. These changes are already being made to a large extent, but without the armed forces, which determine the military dimension of Russia’s foreign and security policy today, will not be completed. This is the main thesis of this article.

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Research on the militarization of Russian foreign and security policy focuses on the study of the Russian armed forces that are an instrument for implementing this policy.

For the purposes of this research, it is particularly useful to refer to the theory of political realism, which is one of the three key paradigms of knowledge of security, because this theory prefers the traditional, militarized understanding of security.

Research on the military dimension of Russian foreign and security policy, in which the armed forces are a key instrument, is a serious challenge from a methodological point of view.

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<sup>2</sup> Putin ‘privately threatened to invade Poland, Romania and the Baltic states’, “The Telegraph” 18.09.2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/11106195/Putin-privatelythreatened-to-invade-Poland-Romania-and-the-Baltic-states.html> (21.10.2017).

If we treat them as an institution providing security for the state, and often for the international environment, we must study them from the perspective of security sciences, using the theory of international relations, theory of politics and theory of organization and management.

The aim of this article is to explain the reasons for the militarization of Russian foreign policy and to indicate the potential impact of this process on international security. The general research problem has been formulated in the form of a question which concerns the role of the armed forces in the process of militarization of Russian foreign and security policy. The author adopts the hypothesis that the militarization of the Russian foreign and security policy is in fact increasing importance of the armed forces (military potential) and constitutes a threat of their use in achieving the goals of this policy. It was reasonable to use system and structural analysis in conducted research. Assuming that the armed forces are an internally ordered system of elements having a specific structure, they seemed the most adequate methods.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The foreign and security policy of the Russian Federation, including its armed forces, is the subject of many scientific and journalistic studies. This issue has become of particular interest after the annexation of Crimea. Experts and publicists dealing with the foreign policy of the Russian Federation, including its security policy, were surprised by the events in Ukraine from 2013-2014. They became an impulse to create studies on the threats created by Russia. Generally, these considerations focused on the issues of: rebuilding the empire, strengthening military capabilities, hybrid war, economic pressure, and especially in the energy sphere, information warfare in the media and cyberspace.

Attention is drawn to several publications whose authors clearly express concern about Russia's policy towards European countries. In their opinion, the successor of the USSR will sooner or later attack one of the countries of the Old Continent.

The first book is a monograph by Marcel H. Van Herpen, the director of the Cicero Foundation, a think tank, based in Maastricht, entitled *Putin's War: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*<sup>3</sup>. This book presents – in a broad historical context, an analysis of three wars waged by Russia: the Second Chechen War, the war with Georgia in 2008 and the war in Ukraine in 2014-2015. The message of the publication is to point out that the Kremlin is implementing a secret strategy divided into stages. This is actually an analysis of the implementation of the Kremlin's political thought, whose essence is always war, whose purpose is territorial expansion and internal war, which is to break and subordinate Russian society to a totalitarian, one-party political system.

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<sup>3</sup> Vide: M.H. Van Herpen, *Putin's War: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2015; Polish ed. *Wojny Putina*, Warszawa 2014.

The monograph of an American expert Douglas E. Schoen *Putin's Master Plan: To Destroy Europe, Divide NATO, and Restore Russian Power and Global Influence*<sup>4</sup> is maintained in the same tone. According to the author, Putin has a plan aimed at destroying the European political and economic system, dividing NATO, gaining influence in the world and marginalizing the United States. This war is being waged both by military and non-military instruments. Russia has shown several times that it is aggressive and willing to use its armed forces against its neighbours.

The original and interesting theory of Russian foreign and security policy is presented by the American political scientist Agnia Grigas in the monograph *Beyond Crimea. The New Russian Empire*<sup>5</sup>. The author speaks in a similar tone to Schoen. She recognized that the Russian plan was developed in detail and implemented consistently and without major obstacles. Russia is rebuilding its empire systematically and methodically. It is a thought-out process carried out in seven stages: 1) the use of soft force, which in the case of Russia takes the form of soft pressure or hard diplomacy; 2) humanitarian policy directed towards the Russian minority in other countries, involving the promotion of Russian culture; 3) supporting compatriots by creating pro-Russian organizations and directing their activity profile; 4) handing Russian passports to the population of Russian or Russian-speaking origin; 5) information warfare, involving the media expansion addressed to compatriots abroad; 6) protection of the rights of compatriots abroad; 7) annexation. In the author's concept, the first five stages will gradually create conditions for annexation of the territory, which is a strategic goal. The sixth stage is the preparation of the military operation, and the seventh is the use of armed force and the capture of territory.

Polish researcher Mirosław Minkina also points to the role of the armed forces in Russia's foreign policy. However, he focuses on the geopolitical context of the rivalry between the United States and Russia, aspiring and seeking the status of a power. His analysis focuses on the identification of the interests of both sides establishing qualitative and quantitative categories of influence, and at the same time understanding the behaviour of the US and Russia. The author devotes more attention to the areas of argument and different perceptions of conflicts, but does not show what role the armed forces play in this competition. The unexplored military aspect of this dispute is reflected in this article<sup>6</sup>.

The role played by the armed forces in Russian foreign and security policy is perceived by Russian scientists and experts quite differently, which in a sense seems natural. The lack of Russian studies on their own armed forces is puzzling. One can get the impression that this is an extremely sensitive sphere, subject to special protection of classified information. In studies, reports, as well as the newspaper of the Russian armed forces "Krasnaâ Zvezda" one

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<sup>4</sup> Vide: D.E. Schoen, *Putin's Master Plan: To Destroy Europe, Divide NATO, and Restore Russian Power and Global Influence*, New York 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Vide: A. Grigas, *Beyond Crimea: The New Russian Empire*, New Haven, London 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Vide: M. Minkina, *Rosja-Zachód. Walka o wplywy*, Warszawa 2017.

can only find a narrative whose essence comes down to a kind of mantra that Russian army is strong, efficient and ready, and its operational, armament and equipment abilities are quickly and systematically improved. A similar spirit prevails in the scientific journal “Voennaâ Mysl”. Dmitri Trenin, a former officer of the Soviet Army, despite scientific reliability and research distance, believes that fear of Russia is exaggerated and there is no reason to fear Russian aggression. In the monograph entitled *Should We Fear Russia?*<sup>7</sup> he analyzes Western fears of Russia. According to Trenin, Russian assertive policy does not pose a serious threat to security and does not lead to an armed conflict. “Russia has entered the post-imperial period”; “Russia will never be an empire again”; “The Russian empire is a past that will never return”<sup>8</sup>. One of the key arguments to prove the rightness of such thinking is the lack of will and power of the ruling elite to bear the costs of management and responsibility for the empire. Theses formulated by the cited author are not only simplified, but also inconsistent with the facts. Such thinking is contradicted by analytical material, theses and conclusions formulated in this article.

The conclusions of the literature review prompted the author to undertake research, which resulted in the presented article. In other words, the author made an effort to explain the reasons for the militarization of Russian foreign and security policy and to assess the effects of this process on global security.

## **PREMISES FOR THE MILITARIZATION OF FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

The state security policy in the literature on the subject is understood “as the purposeful and organized activity of the competent state organs, aimed at satisfying all the values that make up the content of state security”<sup>9</sup>.

In turn, Justyna Zając emphasizes that “security policy, which is part of the general policy of the state, is carried out to protect the four basic values of national security, which include: existence (of the state, nation, population), territorial integrity, political independence and quality of life. The state conducts a security policy in order to take up challenges and minimize threats that may be internal (within the state) or external (international)”<sup>10</sup>.

Stanisław Bieleń argues that the essence of security policy is specific engineering, involving “the design, testing and implementation of security systems and procedures for limiting the probability of the occurrence of detrimental events, ways to protect against their

<sup>7</sup> Vide: D. Trenin, *Should We Fear Russia*, John Wiley & Sons 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 232.

<sup>9</sup> J. Stańczyk, *Współczesne pojmowanie bezpieczeństwa*, Warszawa 1996, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> J. Zając, *Środki polityki bezpieczeństwa państwa [in:] Bezpieczeństwo i prawa człowieka: teoretyczne aspekty bezpieczeństwa i praw człowieka*, cz. I, red. M. Ożóg-Radew, R. Rosa, Siedlce 2004, s. 227.

effects, reducing these effects, as well as examining mechanisms, processes of mutual interaction of threats, the civilization environment and the natural environment”<sup>11</sup>.

Russian foreign and security policy is a derivative of the traditional perception of international relations, the essence of which is thinking in categories of political realism. Political realism assumes anarchy of the international system and struggle, or at least competition between the states that seek to obtain the greatest possible strength, giving them the opportunity to act effectively in the sphere of international relations and ensure the desired high level of security. According to Bobo Lo, in realistic Russian thinking, which determines the security policy of this country, three distinct trends can be seen.

In the first one, the international scene is a zero-sum game between countries, in which if one side wins, the other loses. In such thinking it is difficult to find a space for cooperation between states, because in such thinking it is impossible for both parties to win<sup>12</sup>.

In the second, the best balance of international stability is considered to be a balance of power, which in the mainstream Russian thinking means a bipolar world, such as during the Cold War. Therefore, after the collapse of the USSR, Russia rejected the unipolar world, with the monopoly of the United States. This was also openly expressed by Vladimir Putin in a speech to the deputies after the occupation of Crimea in March 2014, recognizing that “the bipolar system in international relations has brought stability in these relations. When this bipolarity disappeared, the law of the stronger replaced international law”<sup>13</sup>.

In the last, third tendency, there is a belief in the need for spheres of influence. The lost Soviet republics, which became independent states, are considered to be exclusively the Russian sphere of influence. This is where the hysterical response to the attempts to locate Western bases on their territory comes from. The so-called colourful revolutions that could result in the entry – in various forms – of Western institutions, resources and non-governmental organizations into the post-Soviet area, which, according to the Kremlin, may significantly reduce its influence, and ultimately lead to a change in the Russian political system and its disintegration.

The Russian concept of realistic perception of international reality, including the international security environment, is implemented in practice. There is an agreement in the scientific community that Russia is trying to rebuild its imperial position. This clearly determines its choice of material and immaterial assets at its disposal, and uses them to implement foreign and security policy. In the context of the described activities, the use of the armed forces as a means of implemented foreign and security policy is of particular importance. For over a decade, Moscow has been expanding its military potential, which has

<sup>11</sup> S. Bieleń, *Polityka bezpieczeństwa państw*, “TeKa Komisji Politologii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych O.L. PAN”, 2010, nr 5, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> B. Lo, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era. Reality, Illusion and Mythmaking*, New York 2002, p.103.

<sup>13</sup> Обращение Президента Российской Федерации Владимир Путин выступил в Кремле перед депутатами Государственной Думы, членами Совета Федерации, руководителями регионов России и представителями гражданского общества, 18.03.2014, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603> (26.06.2018).

increased more than 20 times since Putin took power. The developed plan for purchasing defence of approx. \$ 700 billion in the next ten years provides for the introduction to the armed forces of four intercontinental ballistic missiles, more than 2,000 new generation tanks, six hundred modern or modernized combat aircrafts, eight submarines armed with ballistic missiles, and fifty other warships, new guns and air defence systems<sup>14</sup>. Russia's intention is to achieve a strategic and operational balance – and perhaps an advantage – over the United States in the category of conventional and unconventional weaponry, as well as to gain the ability to conduct operations at all theatres of war, including cyberspace<sup>15</sup>. The annexation of Crimea, and earlier the war with Georgia, systematic checks of combat readiness, as well as the scenarios and scale of military exercises lead to the assumption that the armed forces may be used during various political-military crises and economic disputes.

This trend is also part of the Russian military operation observed during the Ukrainian crisis at the beginning of 2014, carried out by the so-called “green men”. This operation, most often referred to as “hybrid”<sup>16</sup>, was part of a complex military operation, which included information warfare, attacks in cyberspace, propaganda, demonstration of force and threats of its use. In April 2015, the then NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen issued a statement that Russia is conducting a hybrid war with Europe through subversive activity from within<sup>17</sup>. Hybrid activities also include the deployment of air defence missile systems in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, systematic violation of the airspace of the Baltic States, and building a fortified region in the Kaliningrad Oblast (Anti Access / Area Denial – A2 / AD).

The facts indicated above clearly show that the armed forces are an important means of achieving the strategic goals of the Russian foreign and security policy, which significance has been steadily increasing over recent years. This is not only the result of actions aimed at rebuilding the power, but the effect of the Russians' fears for their security.

The perception of threats which the Russian Federation poses results from the observation and the analysis of the events over the past fifteen years. Of these, the most important for the Russian strategic thought were: the war in Iraq (2003), the abovementioned Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) and other colourful revolutions in the post-Soviet space (2005-2018), the Arab Spring and Western intervention in Libya (2011), election protests in Russia (2011-2012) and the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine (2013- 2014). All these events in the Kremlin's thinking are arranged in a logical sequence, implemented in accordance with the scenario of the special-political operation against Russia planned by the West.

<sup>14</sup> F. Weir, *Fearing West, Putin pledges biggest military buildup since cold war*, “The Christian Science Monitor” 10.02.2012, <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2012/0220/Fearing-West-Putin-pledges-biggest-military-buildup-since-cold-war> (18.09.2018).

<sup>15</sup> S.J. Blank, *Imperial Ambitions: Russia's Military Buildup*, “World Affairs” May/June 2015, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/imperial-ambitions-russia%E2%80%99s-military-buildup> (18.09.2018).

<sup>16</sup> The author further argues with this term, taking the view that such activities have always accompanied armed forces throughout history.

<sup>17</sup> D. Sharkov, *Russia Engaging in 'Hybrid War' With Europe, Says Former NATO Chief*, “Newsweek” 15.04.2015, <https://www.newsweek.com/2015/04/24/former-nato-chief-says-europe-hybrid-war-putin-322293.html> (18.09.2018).

Russia permanently presents itself as a state-power, exposed to a constant threat that must be countered by mobilizing all forces and resources including increasingly better trained and equipped armed forces. In Russian policy, there is a noticeable tendency to make decisions solving foreign and security policy problems through military instruments.

There is no doubt that the Kremlin perceives the US and NATO as a major threat to its security, its geopolitical ambitions and interests, and the pursuit of superpower status. This was clearly articulated in the Russian Security Strategy of 2015 and Military Doctrine. Moscow claims that it has serious difficulties in implementing its internal and security policy because of the growing resistance from the United States and its allies who are striving to maintain their current global dominance. These documents also express fears of building NATO military capabilities near the Russian borders, the missile defence system and the deployment of non-nuclear precision weapons<sup>18</sup>. In the National Security Strategy, international threats are characterized in Chapter II *Russia in the Modern World*, par. 7-29. The spirit of these records can be brought down to clearly expressed theses, diagnosing the international situation in such a way that the entire international reality threatens Russia, which must remain vigilant. What emerges from this is the image of Russia as a besieged fortress, at the gates of which NATO and the West are standing. Almost all of the provisions of Chapter II contain a diagnosis that something threatens Russia and it has something to fear<sup>19</sup>.

These threats have been clearly operationalized and specified in the Military Doctrine. All those mentioned in the security strategy were military threats implying tasks for the armed forces. In Part Two of the Doctrine of *Military Dangers and Military Threats to the Russian Federation*, they were categorized into: “the main external military dangers” – par. 12, “the main internal military dangers” – par. 13 and “the main military threats” – par. 14

External military dangers include, but are not limited to: the growing military potential of NATO and the deployment of allied infrastructure at the borders of Russia, the deployment of military contingents in the territories bordering Russia, territorial claims to the Russian Federation and its allies, interference in their internal affairs, and the use of military force in the neighbouring countries.

Internal military dangers are an attempt to change the constitutional system of the Russian Federation, destabilize the functioning of state institutions and its infrastructure, and the activities of terrorist organizations. The emergence of circumstances and conditions for the use of the armed forces, disruption of the defence’s command and control system, military exercises on the territory of other states and the formation of the armed groups on the territory of Russia and the neighbouring countries were the military threats are taken into account.

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<sup>18</sup> D. Trenin, *The Revival of the Russian Military: How Moscow Reloaded*, “Foreign Affairs” 95(3), pp. 23-29.

<sup>19</sup> Указ Президента Российской Федерации от 31 декабря 2015 года N 683 «О Стратегии национальной безопасности Российской Федерации», «Российская газета» 31.12.2015, pp. 7-29, <https://rg.ru/2015/12/31/nac-bezopasnost-site-dok.html> (16.09.2017).



The authors of both documents showed a high sensitivity (not to say hypersensitivity) to the development of the situation in the post-Soviet space. In Moscow's perception, colourful revolutions, escalations of ethnic tensions – in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria, religious – in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and territorial claims – Crimea, are recognized as military dangers. On the other hand, demonstration of military force during exercises, partial or total mobilization – the armed forces of Ukraine and the exercises of NATO countries – are considered by Moscow as military threats. In this context, it is worth analysing how Russia perceives contemporary armed conflicts.

## **THE MATERIAL DIMENSION OF THE MILITARIZATION OF RUSSIAN FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**

The analysis conducted on Russian security policy and its military aspects shows that Moscow has chosen strategic loneliness. The choice of such an option justifies, *inter alia*, breaking the norms of international law, strengthening authoritarianism and an open confrontation with the West. Russia's actions in the third term of Vladimir Putin, and especially the conflict with Ukraine and the pressure exerted on its neighbours, show that Russia is ready to use military force to achieve its political goals.

One can identify two ways of thinking concerning the present situation of the Russian Federation. The first one reflects the centuries-old imperial tradition, in which the territory is perceived as an important attribute of Russian statehood which serves as a buffer guaranteeing the security of power. Armed forces are naturally used to implement this concept. In the past, this view was represented, among others, by Tsar Nicholas I. The second way of thinking was the belief that the size of Russia depends on self-sufficiency and the foundation of the nation's development and prosperity on its own resources. In an international environment, Russia should show its strength at the negotiating table, not on the battlefield. This view was expressed by Alexander Gorchakov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the reign of Tsar Alexander II. Both directions are present simultaneously and are not mutually exclusive. But nowadays the first trend seems to be dominant, especially when Russian diplomacy demands the establishment of a new international order, and a new security system.

Moscow, despite the crisis caused by Western sanctions, considers the modernization of the armed forces as a priority because it treats them as a key to achieving strategic goals and influencing other countries. The plan to purchase new armaments for land, naval and air-space forces is to enable operations to be carried out remotely from its territory and to resist the military superiority of the US and NATO during the regional conflict. In December 2016, at a meeting of the council of the Minister of Defence with the participation of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Defence Minister Sergey Shoygu presented a panoramic picture of the opponent that the Armed Forces will potentially face:

It is noticeable that the nature and geography of the challenges for our country are expanding, and that the role of military force in international relations increases. Instead of joining forces to fight the common global evil – terrorism, NATO recognizes Russia as the main threat and continues to accumulate its military capabilities at our borders. Under this pretext, the military budget of the countries of the North Atlantic Alliance increased by USD 26 billion, amounting to USD 918 billion. The NATO leadership decided to deploy 4 reinforced battalion tactical groups next year in the Baltic States and Poland, and to deploy and station the armoured brigade of the US ground forces in the territory of some Eastern European countries. The intelligence activities of NATO countries towards Russian territory have become more active. In 10 years, the total number of flights of their reconnaissance aviation at the Russian borders increased almost threefold, and in the southwest of Russia – eight times. For comparison, in the 90s there were 107 such flights, in the 2000s – 298, and this year 852 were counted. This forced us to increase by 61% the number of fighter flights, in order to prevent violations of Russian airspace on the Baltic and Black Sea and in the Arctic. The overall intensity of maritime reconnaissance activities near Russian territorial waters increased one and a half times. We are carefully observing these activities and we are strongly counteracting the attempts to violate Russia's maritime borders. In NATO, the intensity of military exercises has doubled, most of which are anti-Russian in nature. For example, in the armed forces of Great Britain, to mark the opponent at the Salisbury Plain Training Area, Russian production tanks and military uniforms of the Russian army began to be used. For the last time such methods of army training were used by fascist Germany during the Great Patriotic War. None of the exercises of foreign countries escaped our attention, especially in border regions. The results of each of them were analysed and included in the training and combat activity of troops. The US missile defence system in Europe has reached the level of initial operational readiness. Its elements will be developed in Japan, and next year in South Korea. The versatility of the Mk-41 launcher of the missile defence system, after slight adaptation, allows the placement of manoeuvring missiles "Tomahawk". The number of such rockets at our borders can range from 150 to 300 units with a range of up to 2400 km. Flight time to Russia's western borders is less than 10 minutes. A program to modernize nuclear air bombs and their storage locations in Europe is being implemented in the USA. It is about two hundred modernized American charges located in Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, West Germany and Turkey. These actions pose an additional threat to Russia, to which we must react. It is noteworthy that the armed forces did not get involved in the arms race, but are systematically implementing the rearmament program of the army and fleet adopted in 2012<sup>20</sup>.

This statement is part of the theoretical output of Russian military thought regarding the military security of the state. In the case of the Russian Federation, this security depends on several conditions. First of all, from the dynamic changes taking place in the world, in which

<sup>20</sup> Выступление Министра обороны Российской Федерации генерала армии Сергея Шойгу на расширенном заседании Коллегии Минобороны России (22 декабря 2016 г.), [http://function.mil.ru/files/morf/2016-12-22\\_MoD\\_board\\_extended\\_session\\_RUS.pdf](http://function.mil.ru/files/morf/2016-12-22_MoD_board_extended_session_RUS.pdf) (3.11.2017).

Russia deserves to regain the historic and fair place of a superpower, not a regional power, as proposed by Western countries. Secondly, the capabilities of the armed forces to combat the transnational threats, especially terrorism, and such a military transformation to lead an effective fight in contemporary armed conflicts. And thirdly, to deter threats to Russia and reverse their direction, which can lead Western countries to a state of hysteria<sup>21</sup>.

The reconstruction of military potential takes place through the modernization of land forces – mainly at general level. The current structure, equipment and *modus operandi*, reflected in exercises confirms that the basis of military power is mainly ground forces that can be used in large-scale land operations. There is no indication that this will change in the near future. The Russian armed forces will be able to carry out one to two combined operations on a large scale, involving several thousand vehicles and aircrafts and about 150,000 soldiers. Such an operation will be conducted in the style of the Soviet army. It results directly from exercise scenarios, structure of land forces, in which large tactical units dominate. The Soviet style of potential combat operations (not scale) is also evidenced by the assumptions of the State Armament Program until 2020, which provides for the replacement of new equipment, primarily the armament of land and airborne units. These will be mainly armoured personnel carriers, tanks, barrel and rocket artillery. As mentioned earlier, there is a noticeable retreat from the concept of Serdiukov, who was a supporter of relatively small – battalion and brigade – manoeuvring battle groups. Currently, one can clearly see a return to large and heavy manoeuvring units and tactical compounds. The exemplification of this trend are plans to strengthen the Western and Southern Military District with additional divisions and the introduction of airborne troops, tank companies, although they reduce the strategic mobility of these troops.

In the naval forces there is a slow but gradual change of surface and underwater units. The armament of these forces includes primarily frigates, corvettes, submarines, including strategic ones. The state of naval forces prompts the thesis that they will continue to perform the function of nuclear deterrence, and the operations will be limited to supporting combined operations, mainly near the Russian coast. It can be assumed that around 2025, the Russian Navy will be enriched by several new cruisers and destroyers, which will increase its capabilities to conduct naval operations off the coast of the Russian Federation. But despite these limited capabilities, naval forces undertake operations in parts of the world where Russia has strategic interests. In recent years, the fleet has performed tasks in the Mediterranean<sup>22</sup>, Arctic, Western Hemisphere and the Indian Ocean<sup>23</sup>. In 2016, the frequency of naval vessels actions increased. They performed patrol missions in the Arctic zone, the central and northern

<sup>21</sup> Д.А. Павлов, А.Н. Бельский, О.В. Клименко, Актуальные вопросы обеспечения военной безопасности Российской Федерации, “Военная Мысль” № 1/2015, с. 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Visit to the Armed Forces Central Command Centre* 6.06.2013, Prezydent FR <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/18269> (3.11.2017).

<sup>23</sup> *Russia Military Power. Building a Military to Support Great Power Aspirations*, Defense Intelligence Agency 2017, p. 43. <http://www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Russia%20Military%20Power%20Report%202017.pdf> (3.11.2017).

Atlantic, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Since 2012 the operation has been conducted in the Mediterranean. Its purpose is to ensure the interests of Russia and its allies. Averages of 15 surface ships of various classes participate in this operation<sup>24</sup>.

Air force and naval aviation have a significant number of aircrafts from the USSR era. Data on the introduction of new aircrafts and helicopters are not precise – from several dozen to several hundred. Russian aviation is prepared above all to support combined operations. However, it lacks equipment with precision weapons. In operation in Syria, primarily non-guided missiles were used to destroy ground targets. Long-range aviation is a priority for Russian leaders. It is perceived as an effective deterrent and one of the most important components of forces intended for use outside the territory of the Russian Federation. Russia is systematically sending its long-range aircrafts to the Pacific, Arctic, Latin America (Venezuela) and to US airspace. In 2016, long-haul aircraft performed 17 patrol flights over the seas and oceans – Norwegian, Northern, Black, Japanese, Yellow, the western part of the Pacific, the north-eastern part of the Atlantic and the Arctic region<sup>25</sup>. Current long-range aircrafts are able to carry out a mission of 5,000 to 10,000 km from the home base<sup>26</sup>.

Air and naval expeditionary operations are to indicate that Russia is able to send its forces and intervene in foreign conflicts. Indeed, involvement in the conflict in Syria shows that the armed forces are able to carry out such an operation, including logistics, enabling them to function longer away from permanent dislocation<sup>27</sup>.

The operation in Syria has been underway since September 2015, which is the pride of the Russian Armed Forces. The Russian Defence Minister stated at the end of 2016 that the basic tasks set for him had been completed. Russia is using the conflict in Syria to demonstrate the progress or actually the successes of the modernization program. The world, especially the West, was to see technologically advanced weapons that Moscow is able to use effectively, both within and outside its territory. The Russian Armed Forces are characterized by efficiency and training of flying and ground personnel, capable of fighting in modern conflict. Such a demonstration of new capabilities was firing on targets in Syria, the Kalibr type manoeuvring missile intended to combat land targets, from naval units in the Caspian and Mediterranean. Part of this demonstration was also the destruction of ground targets from strategic Tu-160M1 and Tu-95MS, and Tu-22M3 bombers from Iran<sup>28</sup>.

Minister S. Shoygu did not hide that the involvement of the Russian Armed Forces in Syria allowed for solving many geopolitical problems. International terrorist organizations in Syria have been seriously weakened, which stopped their spread in the region. Their financing

<sup>24</sup> Выступление Министра обороны Российской Федерации генерала армии Сергея Шойгу на расширенном заседании Коллегии Минобороны России (22 декабря 2016 г.), op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>26</sup> *Russia Military Power...*, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>27</sup> *Syria conflict: US presses Russia on military build-up*, BBC News 16.09.2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34263955> (3.11.2017).

<sup>28</sup> N. Kozhanov, *What's at stake for Russia in Syria?*, BBC News 21.09.2015 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-34290965> (3.11.2017).

and supply system was destroyed and the collapse of the Syrian state was prevented. However, the most important political achievement – according to the minister – is breaking the chain of colourful revolutions in the Middle East and Africa<sup>29</sup>.

Regardless of expeditionary capabilities to develop and prepare the armed forces to act outside its own territory, Russia has developed a system referred to in English by NATO military term A2/AD (Anti-Access – A2 Area Denial – AD). Briefly speaking, it means preventing an opponent from conducting operations in a specific area. The term “fortified region” could be accepted, but it does not seem to reflect the essence of this system. The anti-access and area denial system consists of four key components: electronic warfare combined with other information and disinformation activities, precise strikes from air, land and sea space<sup>30</sup>. This concept is part of the underground infrastructure system inherited from the USSR, built to ensure the survival of state leadership and command of troops during the armed conflict with the West. This infrastructure consists of underground bunkers, tunnels, secret metro lines and other facilities near Moscow, other large cities and headquarters of military commands. Most likely, these objects have strategic importance to date, because, as Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan write, it is a subject to special Federal Security Service (FSB) protection and access to them is not widely available<sup>31</sup>.

The strengthened military potential of the Russian Federation and its undoubted strategic successes make Putin and his environment more self-confident and he is becoming increasingly convinced of impunity. The war with Georgia did not meet with strong international condemnation, despite the announcements; no sanctions were introduced against Russia. It seems that the President of the Russian Federation did not believe that the annexation of Crimea would be met with international condemnation, either. If Russia had not shot down a passenger plane of Malaysian airlines in July 2014, the military operation in Donbas would be continued. It is not excluded that the Crimea-style takeover option for eastern Ukraine would be implemented. The occupation of Crimea certainly surprised the West, but on the other hand, when analysing how Russia resolves conflicts and disputes, such a scenario could be expected. It is easy to assess events *post factum*, but the issue of Crimea’s return to Russia has been discussed and expressed by Putin several times, for example at the NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008.

Drawing conclusions from these recent events, it is reasonable to ask about the next probable Russian military intervention, especially since the Russian Armed Forces are well prepared for operations. The Baltic States are most often mentioned as the next victims of the Russian war.

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<sup>29</sup> Выступление Министра обороны Российской Федерации генерала армии Сергея Шойгу на расширенном заседании Коллегии Минобороны России (22 декабря 2016 г.), *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> *Russia Military Power...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

<sup>31</sup> A. Soldatov, I. Borogan, *The New Nobility. The restoration of Russia’s Security State and the Enduring Legacy of the KGB*, New York 2010, pp. 129-135.

## CONCLUSION AND ATTEMPT TO LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

Russia, as shown in the analysis of the militarization of its foreign and security policy, has sufficient strength and instruments to impose its will on the neighbouring countries<sup>32</sup>. By pessimistic reasoning, this expensive instrumentation is built for a specific purpose. None of the NATO or EU member states intends to attack Russia and has no territorial claims against it. So it seems reasonable to ask why Moscow is acting in this way. One may also ask the question what circumstances must occur in order for the Kremlin to use its constantly enriched intervention potential against a neighbouring country. Such circumstances do not have to occur only in the external environment of Russia, they do not have to be specific. Their determinant is the specific sense of security and interests that do not fit into Western rationalism. They may result from the Kremlin's thinking about its power, from a sense of injustice in the system of international relations and Russia's place in this system, or from the desire to retaliate that "they (West – MK) lied to us". Let's try to identify circumstances that could lead Moscow to assertive behaviour, hypersensitivity that would result in military intervention.

The first of them seems to be the need to move the opponent away from Russian borders. This is centuries-old Russian thinking, which was a factor driving the expansion and territorial enlargement. For centuries, Russia has been forced to defend a large territory with a proportionally small population. Such thinking led to the conquests of Siberia and Crimea in the time of Catherine II. The intervention in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 was caused by the closeness of liberal views, then Western imperialism, to the USSR. The reasons for the war with Georgia in 2008 were reflections at the NATO summit in Bucharest regarding Georgian and Ukrainian membership in the Alliance. Although these countries were not included in the Membership Action Plan, it was announced that in the future they would become members of this security organization. Fears about the opponent's proximity to Russian borders may take the form of aggressive action in the event of Sweden's and Finland's decision to join NATO. None of these countries has yet made a political decision on the issue. There is a lively debate on this issue, which does not stop Moscow from intimidation and harassment of these states<sup>33</sup>.

Another pretext for launching Russia's military-political and information arsenal may be protecting interests and helping its allies. This is the task of the state and the armed forces contained in strategic documents. It also follows from Article 4 of the CSTO Charter, according to which "if one of the Member States undergoes aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty), it will be considered by the Member States as aggression (armed attack menacing to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty) to all the Member States of this Treaty". In the event of aggression (the third understanding of aggression repeated – MK) for any of the member states, all other members

<sup>32</sup> Vide: M. Kaszuba, *W uścisku Moskwy: obszar poradziecki*, Warszawa 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Vide: S. Forss, P. Holopainen, *Breaking the Nordic Defense Deadlock*, The United States Army War College 2015 <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1253> (4.11.2017).

at the request of that state shall provide him with the necessary help, including military assistance, and support by means at their disposal exercising the right of collective defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter<sup>34</sup>.

The article sounds almost the same as art. 5 of the Washington Treaty, with the difference that it clarifies the concept of “aggression” every time the term is used. At the same time, “aggression” is treated in a broader way. This allows Russia to qualify any event in a Member State as aggression. A so-called colourful revolution or a government that Moscow will not accept may be considered a threat to the security of a member state.

Russia may be provoked to take political and military steps by the deployment of missile defence components. This problem has been dominated by the crisis in Ukraine, but it remains relevant. Moscow recognizes missile defence as a hostile act that disrupts strategic stability. Despite the diplomatic efforts of the US and European countries, Russia has not been convinced that this system is not directed against it. Missile defence has entered the implementation phase of its European component. Therefore, actions related to the further saturation of the Kaliningrad Oblast with Iskander ballistic missile and S-400 Triumf fourth-generation air-missile systems should be expected<sup>35</sup>.

On the other hand, it should be remembered that the pursuit of having efficient and modern armed forces is a feature of every country that has the ambition to play a significant role in the international environment. Armed forces make it easier to articulate position, to force others to listen, show power, deterrence, forcing the enemies to the abandonment of hostile intentions<sup>36</sup>. According to Bettina Renz, the scenario of the Russian offensive against NATO is not possible now or in the future. Russia would have to lose rationalism by opting for a conflict with the West that could turn into a nuclear conflict because of the Western considerable advantage<sup>37</sup>. Military strength is a key category of state power. As the classic of offensive realism Hans Morgenthau stated, as long as the international system remains anarchic, “armed force as a threat or potential is the most material factor that creates the political power of states”<sup>38</sup>.

During the Cold War, large conventional forces, along with the potential of nuclear deterrence, distinguished the USSR and the US as two superpowers. Despite the view that nuclear weapons reduced the importance of conventional forces, both countries took into account their importance in defence and operational planning and allocated significant budgetary resources. It was understood that nuclear deterrence has its limits and the pursuit of its interests below the nuclear threshold is possible due to conventional potential. After the

<sup>34</sup> Договор о коллективной безопасности от 15 мая 1992 года [http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT\\_ID=126](http://www.odkb-csto.org/documents/detail.php?ELEMENT_ID=126) (5.11.2017).

<sup>35</sup> K. Giles, A. Monaghan, *European Missile Defense and Russia*, Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press 2014, p.47 <https://ssi.armywarcollege.edu/pdf/files/PUB1219.pdf> (5.11.2017)

<sup>36</sup> B. Renz, *Russian Military Power. Why Russia is Reviving Its Conventional Military Power*, “Parameters” 46(2) Summer 2016, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>38</sup> H. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., New York 1973, p. 29.

end of the Cold War, the view that military significance in international relations and security policy would diminish was quite common. The USSR collapsed, the risk of global conflict ended, and the development of democracy and economic interdependence were to cause rivalry between states around economic rather than military matters. But this belief lasted quite a short time. Military strength remained the decisive factor in the art of governing the state, even though economic rivalry has become even more important and the threat of global conflict was over.

In the absence of a direct opponent, the United States developed the concept of “two wars” in the early 1990s. It was a criterion determining the power of the state, measured by its military capabilities, which is capable of conducting two major military operations. That country was to be the US, and no other country would be able to make such an effort. Since there was no real threat from a particular state, the ability to conduct two military operations and presence in various regions of the world was to serve in crisis response, regional deterrence, humanitarian aid, defending the territory against non-state actors, building partnerships and supporting civil authorities<sup>39</sup>.

So how can we place this way of thinking in the context of broad considerations on the militarization of foreign and security policy and articulated fears about the new Kremlin conflict? Contrary to appearances, there is no contradiction here. Moscow’s security policy is implemented through a wide variety of instruments. But there are also more and more efficient and modern Russian armed forces, which support this policy by the very fact of their existence, checking combat readiness, the possibility of conducting –in various scales and forms – a military operation in every region of the world, in all geographical and climatic conditions. The international community, especially the West, is to know about it, and this knowledge is to be confirmed by strong evidence, which Russia is effectively implementing. Looking at Russia, one cannot fall into the extreme of demonization and expect Russian army to cross the territory covered by Article 5 guarantees. But neither can one underestimate and not pay attention to specifically understood Russian foreign and security policy.

In summary, based on the experience of the last few years only, efficient and modern armed forces will constitute an important instrument of Russian foreign security policy and the international community must be aware of this. However, a balance needs to be found between demonizing this fact on one hand and disregarding it on the other. It can be confidently assumed that the significance of the Russian armed forces in the policy pursued by this country will be helpful in their further transformation justified by both geopolitical and military premises, as it has been to this date.

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<sup>39</sup> Vide D. Goure, *The Measure of a Superpower: A Two Major Regional Contingency Military for the 21st Century*, The Heritage Foundation Special Report No. 128 January 12, 2013 [http://thf\\_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/SR128.pdf](http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2013/pdf/SR128.pdf) (5.11.2017).



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