



"G.S.Rakovski" National Defense Academy
Defense Advanced Research Institute

NATIONS AT WAR

WHY DO NATIONS
PARTICIPATE IN WARS,
AND WHY NOT?

Proceedings of the 13th Annual Conference
of the Partnership for Peace Consortium CSWG

**G.S.Rakovski National
Defense Academy, Bulgaria**



**Defense History Office (SHD)
MoD, France**



**PfP Consortium of Defense Academies
and Security Studies Institutes**

13th Annual Conference of the PfPC *Conflict Studies Working Group*

***Nations at War: Why do Nations
Participate in Wars, and Why Not?***



**May 27 – 31, 2013
Sofia, Bulgaria**

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27-31 May 2013

**Edited by
Dr. Harold E. Raugh, Jr.**

**Compiled by
Dr. Jordan Baev**

G.S. Rakovski National Defense Academy
Sofia, Bulgaria
2014

ACTA 2013 Nations at War: Why do Nations Participate in Wars, and Why Not?



1914 - 2014

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Defense Advanced Research Institute
G.S.Rakovski National Defense Academy

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WELCOME

By

H.E. Mr. Todor Tagarev,
Bulgarian Minister of Defense¹

The topic of this international research conference -- “Nations at War: Why do Nations Participate in Wars, and Why Not?” -- is of special importance not only in its historic context, but also with regard to the challenges of our time. It is very reasonable that this topic has raised the interest of the distinguished researchers who have come to meet in Sofia.

The main areas of studies in their presentations are the mechanisms of making a decision whether to get involved or to refuse participation in a military conflict, the ways to start armed conflicts, and the transition from peace to war and from war to peace. These, however, do not cover all problems discussed at the research forum. Lively discussions are expected on other related topics: the significance of national culture in the military decision-making process; national specifics of military planning; national beliefs of “liberation” and “occupation”; the role of national interests in coalition operations; civil-military relations in times of crises and war; post-war transformation of defense systems; and restoration and strengthening of peace, among others.

During the days of the Conference, a Round Table will be organized, dedicated to select current issues related to military archives and military museums. In addition, two interesting photo exhibitions will be displayed: “The Bulgarian Military Leadership during World War One” (organized by the Regional Historical Museum in Kjustendil), and “The Fate of Bulgarian Jews in the Years of World War Two” (organized by the State Agency “Archives”).

This research forum is organized by the military history research centers in Bulgaria and France. It is attended by representatives of the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, as well as by military academic and research organizations from NATO and PfP countries.

Bulgaria is one of the founders of this prestigious scientific and scholarly community and has traditionally played an active role in it. It was not by accident

¹ Delivered by Mr. Dobromir Totev, Permanent Under Secretary of Defense.

that the Second Annual Conference of the Consortium was held in Sofia in 1999, when important decisions were made in favor of its enhancement, operation, and development.

Fourteen years later, our hospitable capital is hosting once again the military research elite of the Consortium to present their latest research accomplishments in the area of defense and security policy.

The attendance of more than twenty distinguished researchers from fourteen countries -- Austria, Bulgaria, Greece, Denmark, Canada, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, France, Czech Republic, Sweden, and the United States -- is a guarantee for the high standard of this event, kindly hosted by the Bulgarian military Alma Mater. Undoubtedly, the conference will generate lively discussions and debates, in which solid arguments and a positive attitude will help to find and defend the historical "truth."

I declare this international research conference open and wish effective work to all participants, and to our foreign visitors -- enjoy your stay in our country.

FOREWORD

By

Commodore Dimitar Angelov,
Commandant,
G.S. Rakovski National Defense Academy

War has been going hand-in-hand with the development of mankind since the moment of its birth. There have been too few and too short periods of time in the history of civilization without any hostilities taking place on Earth. Practically, the constant presence of war in the political life of states and nations logically makes it an attractive focus for research studies whose purpose usually is to reveal the reasons for the war, the methods of waging it, and the ways to end it.

This international scientific and scholarly conference will seek the answer to the question why and how a nation decides to get involved in a military conflict or to stay aside. This calls for analyzing issues like the process of making a decision and its implementation. Closely related are the problems concerning the role and place of national interests in the course of preparation for participation in a war and the defense of these interests in coalition operations.

The international scientific conference “Nations at War: Why do Nations Participate in Wars, and Why Not?” is organized by the military history research centers in Bulgaria and France. It is attended by representatives of the Consortium of Defense Academies and security studies institutes, as well as of other military academic and research organizations from NATO and PfP countries.

The attendance of about thirty distinguished researchers and historians from fourteen countries is a guarantee of the high scientific level of this event, which will be proved by the presentations and subsequent discussions.

I would like to welcome all participants to the international research conference “Nations at War: Why do Nations Participate in Wars, and Why Not?” and wish them effective work; and to all foreign attendees – enjoy your stay in Bulgaria.

NATIONS AT WAR: WHY DO NATIONS PARTICIPATE IN WARS, AND WHY NOT?

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Not Neutral, But Rather Close to War:

Sweden in the 19th Century

by

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In 2014 Sweden will celebrate 200 years without having been actively involved in a war, the last one was against Norway, ending with the Convention of Moss on 14 August 1814. During most of these years Sweden maintained its neutrality, and Sweden has since been regarded as a neutral state in northern Europe, after World War II and during the Cold War situated between the Warsaw Pact and NATO.

However, Swedish neutrality was neither permanently declared, nor upheld, and the “tradition” of Swedish neutrality cannot be given a fixed date of origin.

Unlike Switzerland, where self-imposed, permanent, and armed neutrality, designed to ensure external security, was agreed at the Congress of Vienna in May 1815 (Article 92) and finally established by the Treaty of Paris on 20 November 1815, or in Austria, where neutrality were incorporated into the Austrian constitution by the Law of 26 October 1955, Swedish neutrality was not formalized in any similar way.

From 1950 to the early 1990s neutrality was considered a foundation stone in the Swedish Government's Declaration of Foreign Policy, answering to the principle of the Swedish security policy: “Alliance free in time of peace, in order to be neutral in time of war.”¹ This policy was more or less officially brought to a close in 2004, when the Defence [sic] Bill declared it improbable that the country could, or would, stay neutral in case of an attack against another European Union (EU) member.

On three occasions in the nineteenth century Sweden was not only on the brink of war, but rather close to being actively – and deliberately – involved. In these cases a strict policy of neutrality was not the main reason for staying out of the war. Instead, it depended rather of foreign and domestic political issues, and not the least, of the doubtful state of the Swedish army and navy.

1 “Alliansfrihet i fred, syftande till neutralitet i krig.”

Neutrality

Neutrality in short expresses that the country in question declares to not involve itself in an ongoing armed conflict, and also expects the belligerents to recognize this declaration. A neutral country possesses both rights and responsibilities. The first comprehensive definition of neutral and neutrality was given by the Swiss legal expert Emerich de Vattel in 1758 in his work *Le Droit des gens ou principes de la loi naturelle*, and since 1907 it is covered in Sections 5 and 13 of the Second Hague Convention.

That implies that neutrality formally can only exist during war. A “neutralist policy” during peacetime tries to create the requirements needed to claim neutrality in case of war. The two most important prerequisites are to be non-aligned, that is, to avoid any ties that automatically can assign the country to either side in an armed conflict, and secondly, to possess a credible defense that can uphold impartiality and territorial integrity.²

Swedish Foreign Policy in the First Half of the 19th century

As a result of the peace treaty of Hamina in 1809, ending the war between Sweden and Russia, Sweden suffered the traumatic loss of Finland, the eastern part of the country. This disaster led to the selection of Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals, as heir to the Swedish throne.

Bernadotte, who became King Karl XIV Johan (Charles XIV John) in 1818, immediately as crown prince took a firm grip on Swedish international relations, and initiated the “Policy of 1812.” It signified close relations with both Russia as well as with Britain. With the Russian czar, Alexander I, he made an agreement that, in return for a guarantee by each country of the other's territorial integrity and possessions, Sweden would be promised to gain Norway. In practice, by this Sweden did accept the loss of Finland. Sweden also participated in the war against Napoleon, which finally forced Denmark to cede Norway to Sweden in 1814 (Treaty of Kiel, January 14).³ This policy was in effect until the second half of the 19th century.

This Swedish-Norwegian union, established in November 1814, was made up of two sovereign states that shared the same king, foreign policies, and diplomatic representations. Each had its own independent constitution, laws, parliament, government, administration, church, army, and currency. Initially, foreign policy was conducted by the king through the Swedish foreign ministry in Stockholm. Thus, Sweden-Norway was not one, single country – in contrast to Sweden and Finland that had been an integrated one.

2 Alf W. Johansson and Torbjörn Norman, “Den svenska neutralitetspolitiken i historiskt perspektiv” [“The Swedish Policy of Neutrality in a Historical Perspective”], in *Neutralitet och försvar* [Neutrality and Defense], ed. Bo Hugemark (Stockholm: 1986), 11, 41.

3 Ole Elgström, *Images and Strategies for Autonomy. Explaining Swedish Security Policy Strategies in the 19th Century* (Dordrecht: 2000), 41.

In 1834, Sweden-Norway issued a formal and unilateral declaration of neutrality to a perceived risk of armed conflict, when King Karl XIV Johan handed over to the British and Russian governments a confidential memorandum in case war would break out. That never happened, but the king had considered it wise “to formally declare my system of strong and independent neutrality.”

Neutrality had at this point not become a Swedish political policy, nor was this Swedish position taken for granted by other countries during a European conflict. However, the king could report to the Secret Committee of the Riksdag that his statement had been well received by the two powers.⁴

Danish-Prussian War of 1848

Karl XIV Johan was succeeded in 1844 by his son, Oscar I, who in turned was succeeded by his son, Karl XV, in 1859. Both made several deviations from the policy of 1812. The Swedish public opinion changed at the end of Karl XIV Johan's reign, to an ideological opposition towards the cautious relations with the czar and Russia.

A liberal movement revolving around Scandinavian solidarity, the so-called “Scandinavism,” took Denmark's side in its conflict with Prussia and Austria regarding Schleswig-Holstein. This movement also had not entirely ruled out the recapture of Finland from Russia, should a favorable opportunity arise.⁵

It is not unlikely that Oscar I was tempted to restore Sweden to a dominant power in northern Europe. This was first tested during the war 1848 between Denmark and Prussia. The Swedish policy was at first rather non-belligerent than neutral, and on the diplomatic level, Sweden openly supported Denmark.

The war had started when Danish troops in April 1848 struck against an uprising north of Flensburg in the duchy of Schleswig. German troops came to relief, and on 1 May 1848, these soldiers were standing at the river Kongeå, the border to Jutland, Denmark proper. The new Danish King, Frederik VII, asked Sweden for assistance, and in early May the Swedish Riksdag authorized that a Swedish-Norwegian army corps should assemble in Skåne, but with 5,000 soldiers stationed on the island Fyn in Denmark. The purpose was to facilitate Denmark's concentration of its troops to move Jutland and the duchies.

The task given to the commander of the Fyn Division, Lieutenant General Carl Gustaf Löwenhielm, was to land on the island, but if it was occupied by the Prussians, he was to recapture it and defend it. The division should also act as an advanced guard for the Swedish-Norwegian Corps and as a reserve for the Danish Army. However, Löwenhielm was strictly forbidden to cross Lilla Bält, the strait separating Fyn from Jutland. Löwenhielm's own assessment was that it was important to hold

4 Elgström, 42-43; Krister Wahlbäck, *Den svenska neutralitetens rötter* [The Roots of the Swedish Neutrality]. (Stockholm: 1984), 7-8; and Ove Bring, *Neutralitetens uppgång och fall – eller Den gemensamma säkerhetens historia* [The Rise and Fall of Neutrality -- or, The history of the Common Security] (Stockholm: 2008), 105-107.

5 Wahlbäck, 10-11.

out to Denmark the promise of immediate coordination, while the Germans should apprehend the Swedish force as a peaceful demonstration.⁶ This demonstration, and diplomatic pressure, made the Prussians order their forces to withdraw from Jutland. A truce was agreed to in Malmö on 2 July, but when the Prussian General Wrangel did not consider himself bound by it, and threatened to open the hostilities again, half of the Fyn Division was redeployed to Middelfart, close to Jutland.

According to Löwenhielm, had Prussian forces again entered Jutland, his division would have landed on the island of Als, and, depending on the military and political situation, would have been followed by the Army Corps from Skåne. However, after a new truce of 26 August, King Oscar I immediately issued an order that the Army Corps in Skåne and Fyn would be disbanded.⁷

Crimean War, 1853-1856

Early in the Crimean War, Sweden-Norway once again used neutrality as an instrument, and issued this declaration in December 1853. The financial situation, as well as the poor state of the Swedish Army and Navy, had made war undesirable.⁸ This declaration, as well as the 1834 pronouncement, used the neutral country's privilege to decide to what extent the belligerents were permitted to use Swedish harbors. This was perfectly in order, according to international practice, but in reality it meant a significant advantage for the power that did not possess its own harbors on the Baltic Sea, i.e., Great Britain and France. The English-French squadrons of Admiral Sir Charles Napier were thus able to use Fårösund on the island of Gotland as a base of operations in 1854 and 1855. Naturally, this was not received well in St. Petersburg. From the Swedish perspective it was considered in its self-interest that the Western navies could in practice establish a balance of power in the Baltic Sea area.

But while the war mostly was fought in the Black Sea area, the Baltic Sea was a secondary theater of operations. If the Western powers had changed their strategy, the Swedish King Oscar I was not unfamiliar with the option of entering the war, with the object of reuniting with Finland, or at least gaining the Åland Islands.⁹

After the fall of Sevastopol in September 1855, the negotiations resulted in the November Treaty, where Great Britain and France guaranteed the territory of Sweden

6 Carl Gustav Löwenhielm, *Greve Carl Gustaf Löwenhielms minnen* [The Memoirs of Count Carl Gustaf Löwenhielm] (Stockholm: 1929), 3:180-192, and Hjalmar Haralds, *Sveriges utrikespolitik 1848. Ett bidrag till belysning af danska frågans första skede* [Sweden's Foreign Policy in 1848. A Contribution to Illustrate the First Phase of the Danish Question] (Uppsala: 1912), 156-157, 170.

7 Löwenhielm, 199-206, and Letter from Löwenhielm to "a person in Göteborg [Gothenburg]," published in the daily newspaper Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning, 12 August 1848.

8 Elgström, 43.

9 Jussi T. Lappalainen, "Oskar I:s planer 1854-1856" ["The plans of Oscar I in 1854-1856"], in *Militärhistorisk tidskrift* [Journal of Military History] (1984): 5.

and Norway, while Sweden-Norway pledged not to cede any territory to Russia. In reality, the neutrality of 1853 was given up, and in general terms military assistance was promised against any Russian actions. At the same time, Sweden had received security, and saw itself participating in reaping the harvest of victory.¹⁰

France, however, had used this treaty to put pressure on Russia to make peace. When the peace conference of Paris took place in 1856 instead of a campaign in the Baltic area, it became clear that Oscar I had been used as a pawn in a bigger game. Sweden gained the Russian guarantee to not to fortify the Åland Islands again. This achievement was seemingly related to the distrust awakened in St. Petersburg. It is also unclear what Oscar I had in mind regarding the situation of Finland: should it be reunited with Sweden, or would it have gained a more independent position?¹¹

Danish-German War of 1864

In the early 1860s, the tension rose again in the duchies in the southernmost part of the Jutland Peninsula. Schleswig and Holstein were connected to the German Confederation, but had the Danish king as their duke. From a Swedish viewpoint it was clear that Denmark should remain a strong and friendly nation, also in practice acting like a buffer from Prussia and Germany. Danish domestic political struggles and the rise of an able and ruthless leader in Prussia, namely Bismarck, might have made the Swedish King Karl XV more moderate. Instead, the Swedish foreign policy was to actively offer advice to Denmark, thus creating a sort of moral commitment by Sweden.

In July 1863, the Danish and Swedish kings met in the resort of Skodsborg, north of Copenhagen, where Karl XV proposed to Frederik VII the establishment of a defensive alliance. The news spread immediately that the Swedish king had assured Denmark the support of 20,000 troops to defend Schleswig, should the Germans attack.

When real negotiations about a defensive alliance were to begin in August 1863, firm opposition against it appeared in the Swedish Cabinet. The argument was that the Swedish military resources were limited and antiquated, and no actual support could be offered to Denmark. There was also the risk that Russia would exploit the situation, where Sweden supported Denmark in war, to avenge the Crimean War.

After a long and gruesome political, as well as moral, crisis in the autumn of 1863 (mostly due to domestic disunity), the plans for an alliance were renounced. When Stockholm failed to notify Copenhagen about the important change, Danish resentment about Swedish vacillation rose. It was not decreased, after the short war of 1864, when Denmark lost both Holstein and Schleswig.¹²

¹⁰ Bring, 118.

¹¹ Wahlbäck, 12-13.

¹² Wahlbäck, 13-14.

Why did Sweden not go to war?

The Swedish political course of action during the half century following the end of the Napoleonic Wars cannot be called a strict policy of neutrality. It was rather a policy of neutrality *ad hoc*. Two formal and unilateral declarations of neutrality were issued (1834 and 1853), but they were also rendered obsolete when the political situation changed.

Sweden had not been unfamiliar with the idea of actively entering in a war, as long as the political gains seemed favorable, but this attitude was never unanimous. In 1848, the Swedish force on Fyn and in Skåne was demobilized as soon as the truce was signed on 26 August 1848. The Swedish diplomatic pressure on Prussia and Denmark had thus been successful. It seems also quite unlikely that Swedish troops would have been actively involved in battle, unless the Prussian forces had become a viable threat to Sweden.

During the Crimean War plans were developed to ship troops to Finland and carry out operations on a Finnish front. However, Sweden and Oscar I had overrated the will of the Western powers to continue the war. The king also had never considered if there existed a Finnish desire to join Sweden again. Finally, in 1863, when the Swedish and Danish kings met in joyful fraternity, promises and declarations were made without domestic support in either Sweden or Norway.

When it mattered, there existed no national unity. In both Danish situations, a persistent domestic opposition existed against any involvement. During the Crimean War, public opposition against war was rare from the military side, but most of the higher commanders hesitated about a war. In 1863, the Swedish king did not have a clear understanding of the public opinion in Sweden, and any initiative of his own was halted.

When in 1848 the Prussian forces never returned to Jutland, the reasons for war disappeared. In 1856, the Paris Peace Conference made the November treaty obsolete. And when war broke out in 1864, any plans of an alliance with Denmark were dead, and in addition, the Swedish Army was not battle-ready. An opportunity favorable for Sweden's entry into war never occurred.

Finally, the major part of the Swedish Army and elements of the Navy during the 19th century still relied on the old Indelningsverket and Det ständiga knektehållet,¹³ an allotment system where villages provided soldiers as a veritable insurance against conscription or taxes. Already in these days, the training of the units was reduced, due to economical reasons. Also the equipment was neglected; of the four infantry regiments in the Fyn Division in 1848, one (Älvsborg Regiment) initially still carried obsolete flintlock muskets, and was furnished with unzeroed caplock muskets only just before it left Sweden.¹⁴ Accordingly, the operational plans of 1855 were never realistic.

¹³ Literally, "Allotment Department," and "The permanent keeping of soldiers," respectively.

¹⁴ Lars Tingsten, "Sveriges militära aktion år 1848 och neutralitetstjänstgöring år 1849–1850" ["Sweden's Military Action in 1848 and the Neutrality Service in 1849-1850"], *Historisk tidskrift* [Historical Journal] (1926): 13-14.

What happened in 1863 may have been the collapse of an active Swedish foreign policy, which prepared the way towards the tradition of neutrality. The thoughts of ever again deploying the Swedish Army and Navy outside Sweden basically disappeared. Even if no formal statements were issued, it was very clear in 1866 and 1870 that Sweden would stay neutral in these conflicts. In 1878 and 1885, Sweden was again very close to making official neutrality declarations in order to counter any Anglo-Russian conflict.¹⁵

¹⁵ Elgström, 43, and Johansson and Norman, 14-15.

Liberation or Occupation: Problems of Modern Russian-Bulgarian Relations through the Prism of History

by

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Abstract

This article is focused on an ideological view on the process of overthrowing the pro-German government and establishing the pro-Soviet regime in Bulgaria in 1944. The author of this article holds the thesis that as far as modern historiography is concerned the argument about liberation (occupation) of Bulgaria in 1944 has political and ideological connotations being influenced by the rhetoric of the Cold War, although modern historiography should be very objective when evaluating consequences of competition between two large geopolitical blocs.

Historically, in three world wars – two “hot” and the Cold War, Bulgaria participated on the side of the opponent blocs, hostile to Russia (the USSR) and only once it was the ally (satellite) of Russia.

The questions of how Russia evaluates the events of its own history after these tectonic changes of the twentieth century are rather up to date, as they seem to be in Bulgaria. The conflicting nature of relations during World War I and World War II and allied actions in the Cold War era form a complicated picture when disputable opinions simultaneously coexist on the questions associated with these relations.

In Russia, both Perestroika and the USSR collapse have caused a tendency to self-abasement in own history assessment. The attitude to the liberation of the peoples of Europe from the Nazi occupation, which the Soviet historiography was developing, met systematic pressure by the anti-Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, according to which the process of changing the pro-fascist regimes to communist ones was interpreted as occupation.¹

1 Sergey Kara-Murza, *Soviet Civilization* (Kharkov: Book Club, 2007), 2: 575.

Similar processes occurred in Bulgaria when amid the collapse of the communist regime anti-Soviet and anti-communist sentiment dictated the reconsideration of the evaluation of the previous historic events. However, in the course of time this discourse has become an obstacle to establish contemporary constructive relations between Russia and Bulgaria, which are historically related by various aspects of their relations through the centuries. It is seen that this socio-cultural background is much more significant than the historical grievances and ideological issues. People are looking for what unites them, and there are more connecting points than separating ones in the Russian-Bulgarian relations.

Questions on the relations between the USSR and Bulgaria after WWII cannot be understood without taking into account the context that had led to the participation of Bulgaria in the war on Germany's side. The Soviet attitude towards the increase in German influence in Bulgaria and attempts to involve it in the anti-Soviet block were reflected in the memorandum of 17 January 1941, in which Bulgaria was considered a part of the USSR's security zone.

Under the German occupation of the most parts of Western Europe and increasing its influence in the Balkans, Churchill considered the pro-German approach of Bulgaria as a threat of German encroachment against Turkey, Yugoslavia, and Greece, where Bulgaria had to play a role of a "minor" ally.² The fears were justified in March 1941 when Bulgaria joined the "Rome-Berlin-Tokyo" Axis, and in April 1941 when it participated in the invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece, having occupied a part of Macedonia and northern Greece. This Bulgarian policy was determined by the historic revanchism, taking its roots from the Second Balkan War when former allies in the coalition against Turkey had defeated Bulgaria and annexed some of its territory.

On account of the implementation of the "policy of appeasement," Bulgaria and its neighbors were thrown into a dilemma whether to choose one of the alliances that were forming during 1938-1941. Bulgaria's geopolitical position basically predetermined its choice in favor of Germany. However, the history of Bulgaria's obedience in relations with Germany left Bulgaria certain freedom of actions. In addition to keeping the former government that had taken the pro-German course, Bulgaria retained some elements of the democratic system, but regarding foreign policy, Bulgarian concessions to Germany were more superficial than meaningful.

During the course of the war, Bulgaria fought openly on the side of Germany against the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (USA), and in December 1941 Bulgaria provided its territory for German military forces. At the same time, due to propitious attitude of its people towards the USSR, Bulgaria did not take part in the German Operation Barbarossa and only supported the southern flank of the Eastern Front and Eastern Mediterranean theater of military operations. In fact, Bulgaria was Germany's only satellite that did not fight against the USSR openly. This contradicts the widely-spread Russian misconception that Bulgaria, along with Germany's other allies, fought equally against the USSR. Indicative is the fact

2 Joachim Ribbentrop, *Secret diplomacy of the Third Reich* (Smolensk: Rusich, 2005), 228.

that the official Soviet statistics of the European war prisoners published in 1990 has no Bulgarians as a separate category of war prisoners on the list,³ although Bulgarians can be found in some Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) prisoner of war documents.

In general, Bulgaria's participation in the war between Germany and the USSR was rather limited and consisted mainly of political, logistical, and organizational support. Nevertheless, the fact that Bulgaria openly fought against the UK and the USA, as well as its indirect support of Germany, had led to the point when on 5 September 1944 the USSR, within the framework of the Allied coalition, declared war on Bulgaria. It was also underlined that Bulgaria had already been in state of war with the USSR.

Later the events in Bulgaria were developing according to the "Italian scenario." The pro-German government had been overthrown; Bulgaria was not only out of the war, it also declared the war to Germany. The pro-Soviet government headed by K. Georgiev was established. The pro-German supporters and members of the fascist and Nazi organizations were prosecuted. Thus, Bulgaria came under the influence of the emerging Soviet bloc. Since 1912 it had already been the fifth coalition in which Bulgaria participated.

Bulgaria's long-term fate was determined during the negotiations of the key Allied, who by virtue of being the war's "victors" establishing new international law and defining the spheres of influence in the post-war Europe. Questions of ideology faded into insignificance and, as had been the case before the Versailles Treaty, Munich Agreement, and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, that the key elements of such negotiations had been traditional the national interests of Great Powers. Such interests had always been above ideological differences and contradictions. Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, a famous American political scientist and former National Security Adviser, explained the essence of this formula in his study *The Grand Chessboard* where countries and peoples within accepted geopolitical doctrines were divided into players, figures, and pawns.⁴

In the post-war division of Europe, Bulgaria found itself among the number of those geopolitical "bonuses" which were the USSR's as the result of the war. Its role remained was similar to what it had when it had supported Germany: it had become the USSR's satellite in a new world war which was named the Cold War. Examining this process from the perspective of what international law should look like and from relations between countries big and small is some sort of anachronism, which is distorting the truth about this period of time when morale factors were used in propaganda campaigns for the division of territories and spheres of influence. De-facto Bulgaria had changed sides once again. However, it could have not necessarily been their independent decision as defined by objective factors.

In contemporary Russia, where discussions about its own history are still on the top of the agenda, the attitude towards the liberation of Bulgaria is generally based

3 Military Historical Journal (September 2009).

4 Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Great Chess Board* (Moscow: International Relationship, 2005), 256.

on what was happening in the 1960s and 1980s. In Great Patriotic War studies very little attention was devoted to the future role of countries being liberated within the framework of opposition between the Warsaw Pact countries and NATO.

Therefore, the status of Bulgaria, as the satellite of the Soviet Union, was investigated in the range of studies more from political and ideological rather than historical point of view.

The Marxist dialectic nature of the Soviet historiography erased the problem of the national grievance which was associated with the fact that Bulgaria was involved in both world wars on the side of Russia's enemies. From the point of view of the Soviet historiography, WWI had an imperialistic nature and served the interest of big business, thus the nations of these countries are not directly responsible for decisions made by the officials of the countries of Triple Alliance and the Entente. In just the same way after WWII, the main interpretation of Bulgaria's participation as the ally of the Third Reich was the pro-fascist approach of the government of the country, however, within the bounds of the new Communist regime and promoted internationalism, it was almost impossible to confront Bulgarians.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact various historians and public figures tried to enquire into the subject of historical "grudges" based on the fact that Russia helped Bulgaria to gain independence and the latter, in its turn, reciprocated with ingratitude. As a rule, such a position is based on an uncritical approach to the investigation of historical sources associated with the changes in Russian-Bulgarian relations during the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and the collapse of a neo-Slavist policy. Generally this perspective is not widely supported in Russian society and its scholarly community.⁵

It is considered that Bulgaria supported Germany at the end of the 1930s due to the failure of the policy of appeasement and the *collapse of the Versailles system which included treaty obligation* to provide international security. The Anschluss of Austria and liquidation of Czechoslovakia inevitably forced countries of Eastern Europe to cooperate with Germany. Countries as Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania being biased against USSR were convinced that Germany was a better geopolitical choice. The USSR with its attractive idea of World Revolution and Communist International activities was treated as a threat to governing elites of Balkan countries. As a result, Bulgaria among other states had become one of the satellites of Hitler's Germany.⁶

The concept of "liberation" was based on the generally accepted fact of notorious criminality of supporting the Nazis in World War II, as defined at the Nuremberg Trial. During the war, Soviet allies shared this point of view and were making it clear during various conferences that, after the liberation of a number of countries from the Nazi's influence, they would be ready to keep them under Soviet influence.

With the beginning of the Cold War and within a framework of global

5 Leonid Reshetnikov, The Bulgarians have never betrayed Russia, [http:// www.stoletie.ru/slavyanskoe_pole/2010-03-03.htm](http://www.stoletie.ru/slavyanskoe_pole/2010-03-03.htm) (accessed 21 December 2012).

6 A.A. Silant'ev, *The Fifth Column: Fascist and Antifascist Movements in the World, 1941* (St. Petersburg: Terra, 1997), 748.

confrontation, the USSR's opponents reviewed their positions and started judging USSR for imposing pro-Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe or even "occupying" some states. However, they were not bothered by the fact that, like the USSR, they imposed loyal regimes both in Europe and in other regions. Therefore, talking about "occupation," it makes sense mentioning that both sides had occupied the countries of a divided Europe. Otherwise, the unilateral approach highlights double standards.

Small countries and their populace who are "bargaining chips" in the games of the Great Powers may follow the ideology of the winning camp as they did within their bloc as the satellite nations. Alternatively, they may leave behind the obsolete conceptions of the Cold War era and start establishing a modern historiography free from ideological views of powerful countries becoming independent not only in political and territorial sovereignty matters, but also in a self-assessment of own history.

From our point of view, the "liberation or occupation" dispute is the conflict of two myths -- the good and the evil. Obviously, this problem is typical not only of minor countries like Bulgaria, but also of major geopolitical players such as Russia and the USA, which in their historical, political, and ideological studies still speak in terms of the Cold War era which was over a long time ago.

This question is slightly easier for Bulgaria in today's realities because it was not the originator of those clichéd mottos, notions, and accusations that still thrill the Bulgarian society with meaningless "liberation or occupation" debates. Such debates only cause a split in the society and prevent it from accepting its own history and maintain a balanced attitude when opposite points of view are possible and not antagonistic.

France may be a prime example, where in the twentieth century significant historical and ideological work was carried out on the general understanding of its own history. Ms. M. Le Pen, the leader of the National Front of France, clearly expressed this idea: "I accept it all from Gergovia to Resistance movements, from the Capet dynasty monarchy to Napoleon saga. Yes All!"⁷

In conclusion, note that modern historiography should move away from the discourse of the Cold War era where two obsolete approaches conflict with each other. It is worth looking at the shared past through the prism of the fates of small nations within a giant chess game of geopolitical titans.

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7 Pier Zhanen, History of France according to National Front. State. Fr. <http://inosmi.ru/world/20120903/198447042.html> (accessed 3 December 2012).

A Professional Army as a Successful Factor of War – Case Study: Serbia, 1876-1918

by

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Serbian Army

Abstract

This paper deals with development of the professional army structures in Serbia during the 19th century and shows how a professional military organization was a key factor for achieving success during the Balkan wars and World War I. German influence on its development is also emphasized. The paper is based on primary source documents from the Serbian Military Archive, Archive of the Serbian Academy of Science, official Serbian military press of the time, and selected literature in Serbian, English, Bulgarian, and Russian.

During the 19th century, the predominant type of military organization in the Tributary Principality of Serbia was the militia-type army, which was a legacy of Serbian uprisings against the Ottomans from the beginning of the century.¹ Together with the militia there were also a small number of garrison troops which would be used as a nucleus to rapidly establish a professional Army. In 1870, these garrison troops numbered 123 officers and 4,918 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and soldiers.² Serbian officers educated abroad played a predominant role in establishing

1 For details about Serbian Army in that period, see: Радослав Марковић, Војска и наоружање Србије кнеза Милоша (Београд: Научно дело, 1957); Живота Ђорђевић, Српска народна војска 1861-1864 (Београд: Народна књига, 1984); Мило Ђурђевац, „Организација српске војске у доба кнеза Милоша и уставобранитеља (1815-1860)“, Војноисторијски гласник, VI (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 1957), 52-79; Мило Ђурђевац, „Народна војска у Србији 1861-1883. године“, Војноисторијски гласник, IV (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 1959), 78-79.

2 Славица Ратковић-Костић, Европеизација српске војске 1878-1903 (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 2007), 30.

a regular army. The education of Serbian cadets abroad began in 1833 when the first group of 30 cadets was sent in Russia.³ After that the next group was sent in 1846 to Prussia.⁴ From that time forward Prussia (later Germany) would be the main country in which Serbian officers would receive their military education.⁵ The Artillery School, founded in 1850, was the first military educational institution in Serbia.⁶ The school prepared the officers not only for the artillery but also for all the other military branches. Its main characteristic was a small number of cadets (ten to twenty candidates per year). The main military subjects at the Artillery School, and later at the Military Academy, were taught by Prussian instructors. In addition, the founder of the Chair of Tactics at this institution was General Ranko Alimpić, who had attended the Prussian Superior Military Academy (Kriegsakademie).⁷ Until the 1876-1877 (First) Serbian-Turkish War, the Artillery school trained 147 officers for military duties within the Serbian Army. From this number, 56 were additionally educated abroad, mostly in Prussia.⁸ Following the Prussian organizational pattern, the General Staff was formed in February 1876. It was the main commanding executive within the Ministry of Army which would transform into the Supreme Command in war time.

When the 1876 war started, Serbia had only 317 officers, with only 37 of them of senior rank. The majority of the officers were promoted from the ranks and were characterized by the lack of any serious military education. Reserve officers were mostly peasants who had attended only short officers' courses. The lack of officers was partly overcome thanks to the engagement of 718 Russian officers who led the Russian volunteer corps of 2,500 men. Serbia entered the First Serbian-Turkish War with an army that lacked discipline and cohesion. Military funding was also inadequate, a situation made worse because the Tributary Principality had no foreign allies. The Army numbered more than 123,000 soldiers carrying outdated armament and led by about 800 Serbian officers, of whom more than 80 percent had not attended any military school. The Army was also equipped with 206 cannons. The Serbian Army's performance was very poor during this war.⁹

3 Радослав Марковић, Војска и наоружање Србије кнеза Милоша (Београд: Научно дело, 1957), 276- 280; Мило Ђурђевац, „Организација српске војске у доба кнеза Милоша и уставобранитеља (1815- 1860)“, Војноисторијски гласник, VI (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 1957), 61.

4 Живомир Спасић, Петар Протић-Драгачевац, животни пут и дело (Крагујевац: Светлост, 1977), 44-45.

5 Artillery Committee, № 86, 7 March (old style) 1879, Ратник (The Warrior) (official part), VII (Београд: Историјско одељење главног генералштаба, 1879), 56.

6 About Serbian Artillery School, see: Споменица седамдесетпетогодишњице Војне академије, 1850- 1925 (Београд: Министарство војске и морнарице, 1925).

7 Милић Милићевић, Љубодраг Поповић, Генерали војске Кнежевине и Краљевине Србије (Београд: Војноиздавачки завод, 2003), 21-26.

8 „Статистика Војне академије“, Ратник, I (Београд: Историјско одељење Главног генералштаба, 1880), 91.

9 Славица Ратковић-Костић, Европеизација српске војске 1878-1903 (Београд:

After its defeat, Serbia, during the ministry of the Prussian scholar, Colonel Sava Grujić (4 November 1876-1 October 1878) started to reorganize the Serbian Army. Having in mind the Prussian experience from the Napoleonic wars, Grujić increased garrison troops from four to eight battalions and ordered that every one of the thirty-two companies of garrison troops become a part of one battalion of National Militia in order to augment the fighting power of the latter. In August 1877, a new army force structure was established that introduced five active and one reserve army corps instead of the earlier four corps model.¹⁰

After this reform, Serbia achieved some success in the Second Serbian-Turkish War (1877-1878), and its independence and territorial expansion was recognized at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. Serbia had entered the war as a Russian ally with a reorganized army of 124 infantry battalions, 24 cavalry squadrons, and 232 cannons.¹¹

Having obtained its independence, Serbia followed European models of institutional development, including modernization of the army. In 1879, in a manner similar to Scharnhorst's military reform experiences of the early 19th century,¹² the Commission (which later becomes a committee for the reorganization of the Army) was formed.¹³ Of the twenty-seven members of this committee, nineteen had been educated abroad, including twelve German scholars.¹⁴ In 1880, the Artillery School became the Military Academy, consisting of both a basic officer course and a staff college. In 1883, the dualism of garrison troops and militia was replaced with the system of conscription. In case of war, these garrison troops were reinforced with reserve troops. This change was provided by the new Law of Army Organization. This law also imposed conscription for all the men aged 20-50 with no exemptions. Regular military service was from six months to two years long. There were three rounds of "call-ups." The first call-up covered men not older than 30, and was called Active Troops. The second call-up referred to those between 31 and 37, while the third call-up involved men between 38 and 50. The country was divided into five division areas. Each area had three military (regimental) counties and each county comprised four military (battalion) districts. For war needs, they were supposed to

Војноисторијски институт, 2007), 32-34.

10 Новица Б. Ракочевић, *Ратни планови Србије против Турске од војда Карађорђа до краља Петра* (Београд: Давидовић, 1933), 140; Милић Милићевић, Љубодраг Поповић, *Генерали војске Кнежевине и Краљевине Србије* (Београд: Војноиздавачки завод, 2003), 80, 140.

11 Чедомир Попов, „Србија у источној кризи 1875-1878.“, *Историја српског народа*, V-1 (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1994), 399.

12 Regarding German military reforms, see Walter Görlitz, *The German General Staff: Its History and Structure 1657-1945* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1953), and Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955).

13 „Реорганизација српске војне снаге“ (из Опште војног одељења министарства Ф№ 6569), *Ратник*, VII (Београд: Историјско одељење главног генералштаба, 1879), 78-80.

14 Order of the Army Minister Ф№ 4760, 15/27 September 1881, *Службени војни лист* (*Official military gazette*) (Београд: Министарство војно, 1881), 855-857.

form five first-line active divisions, five second-line divisions, and sixty third-line battalions.¹⁵

However, it took time to organize and develop well-trained reserve units with a relatively small number of officers and recruits in garrison troops (20,640) and to obtain the first substantive results of the reform process.

Serbia entered Serbian-Bulgarian War, 1885-1886, with only 248 well-educated and -trained officers, including 10 cadets and only 28.000 soldiers who had completely finished military training.¹⁶ On the Bulgarian side there were 685 well-educated and -trained officers, 71 cadets, and 110,000 soldiers.¹⁷ The disparity in the size and quality of the two armies was one of many reasons for the poor performance of the Serbian troops during the war. After the Serbian defeat in the Serbian-Bulgarian War in 1885, the Army started to develop rapidly, and when Milan Obrenović, the former king, became the Army commander in 1898, its development was accelerated. In two-and-a-half years, Obrenović managed to transform twenty regiments of two battalions each into fifteen regiments of four battalions each, and as a consequence, infantry units got larger by 50 percent. The number of cadets in the Military Academy grew, too, and in order to get the needed number of officers, the curriculum was temporary reduced from three to two years. This way the Serbian Army trained in a short time 710 new officers. Many new military buildings were built, 90,000 rapid-fire infantry rifles Mauser M99¹⁸ were ordered from Germany, and 44 new cannons were purchased in France.¹⁹ According to the Law on Organization of the Army, from 1901, the whole army was divided into three line units and the final defense troops. As a result of new larger army formations introduced during the King Milan reforms, the active troop establishment also increased. The officers were to be used in case of mobilization for taking senior command positions inside the war-time units together with reserve officers who would be assigned to subordinate positions. Before the Balkan Wars, the number of peace-time officers in the Serbian Army was higher (8 percent) than that of the Bulgarian (4.7 percent) or Rumanian Army (6 percent).²⁰

15 Славица Ратковић-Костић, *Европеизација српске војске 1878-1903* (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 2007), 93-113.

16 Споменица седамдесетпетогодишњице Војне академије, 1850-1925 (Београд: Министарство војске и морнарице, 1925), 269-277.

17 Никола Рухчев, *Военното училище на България*, (София: Съюза на възпитаниците на ВНВУ, ШЗО, 2012), 90.

18 This Mauser rifle was the best rifle in the world at the time. German Infantry used the same model until 1945. About Mauser rifles used in Serbian Army, see Branko Bogdanović, *Srpski Mauser* (Beograd: Kelkom, 2004).

19 See more: Милић Милићевић, *Реформа војске Србије 1897-1900* (Београд: Војноиздавачки завод, 2002), 7-77, and Славица Ратковић-Костић, *Европеизација српске војске 1878-1903* (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 2007), 261-308.

20 Данило Калафатовић, „Кратка студија овогодишњих војних буџета Србије, Бугарске и Румуније“, *Ратник*, VIII, (Београд: Историјско одељење Главног Генералштаба, 1912), 69.

Army reorganization was very expensive, and military budget expenditures increased by 33 percent in 1884-1885, while in 1900 they reached 44.33 percent of the total state budget.²¹

The process of modernization continued after the ruling dynasty changed in 1903. Special attention, focusing on leadership potential, was paid to the education and selection of the officers and NCOs. The basic course at the Military Academy was three years long, and increased to four years in 1904. After graduating from the Military Academy, Serbian officers were assigned as platoon and company commanders and trained for possible future battalion command. The Staff College demanded from the officers additional two years of education. After the Staff College, the best scholars were attached for service with the General Staff for two years. General Staff rides and command post exercises were also conducted regularly from 1883 to 1913.²² Apart from the Military Academy, there were specialized Infantry and Artillery schools used for practical military training. During the winter period, specialized winter courses were established to introduce to the troop officers innovations in new weaponry and tactical development. There were also officers promoted from the ranks, and others (mostly Serbs from Austro-Hungary and Montenegro) who received their military education abroad, mainly in Russia and Austro-Hungary.²³ All officers were required to pass the special exams for promotion to the ranks of captain and major. Technical officers were mostly trained in Austro-Hungary, Russia, Belgium, and France. Beginning in 1898, large-scale division maneuvers were conducted. They were used by the General Staff to choose the best commanders in case of war.

Regarding the NCOs' education, most of them were selected from the best conscripts during the basic military training and then sent to the specialized military NCO schools (the Infantry School in Belgrade was established 1889, the Artillery School in Kragujevac in 1890, the Cavalry School in Belgrade in 1899, and the Engineer School in Niš was established 1894). The education period was two years long, after which they attended winter warfare training courses.²⁴ According to the Austro-Hungarian military Attaché in Serbia, Staff-Major Otto Gellinek, Serbian NCOs were considered, in terms of military education and behaviour, more similar to the officers than to the soldiers. Most of them performed officer's duties, too.²⁵

Special attention was given to the education of reserve officers. Military subjects and training were introduced to secondary schools and the faculties, including

21 See more: Славица Ратковић-Костић, *Европеизација српске војске 1878-1903* (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 2007), 382-390.

22 Велики рат Србије за ослобођење и уједињење Срба, Хрвата и Словенаца (Serbia's Great War for liberation and unity of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), I, (Београд: Историјско одељење Главног Ђенералштаба, 1924), 25.

23 Милан Ж. Миловановић, „Неколико мисли о тактичкој обуци официра“, *Ратник*, III (Београд: Историјско одељење Главног Ђенералштаба, 1912), 34.

24 Први балкански рат 1912/1913 (*операције српске војске*), I (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 1959), 210-211, 231-232.

25 Military Archive Belgrade, Collection 2 (Archive of the Serbian Army from the Balkan wars 1912/1913), Box 9, Faille 2, doc. 15.

military training during the summer holidays, and every Serbian scholar or student would have become a reserve officer or NCO. They also had to pass special exams for reserve officers or NCOs, and after that to spend a full period of service in a unit. They could be promoted to the ranks of sergeant or second lieutenant after attending at least two large-scale military exercises in the role of platoon commander or NCO.²⁶ One could conclude that the Serbian reserve officer's corps was considered part of the Serbian elite of the time.

After 1903, General (later Field Marshal) Radomir Putnik, was the Chief of the Serbian General Staff and the key official in charge of military armament, organization, and combat readiness. Putnik was self-educated as a staff officer. The only foreign language he spoke was German, and he read a lot German military literature.²⁷

A new Serbian national doctrine was created following the German model. It was more flexible and relatively free of dogma, completely based on French-Prussian, Serbian-Bulgarian, and Russian-Japanese war experiences. The Serbian Army had also adopted the so-called mission-type orders and tactics. Colonel Thompson, British liaison officer at the Headquarters of the 1st Serbian Army during the First Balkan war (1912-1913), testified how great the influence of German military thoughts was on the Serbian officer corps when he proclaimed: "Serbian staff officers considered the war more like a science, than as a drama. They were the men who always tried to find some similarity between the situation at the battlefield they faced at the moment and the same situation from the career of their belloyed strategist -- Moltke the Elder."²⁸ The German influence was also predominant in the 1911 Serbian War Service Manual, the main doctrinal document of the Serbian Army at the time. Mobilization and concentration plans were developed as well as war plans for different contingencies.²⁹

As a result of these developments, the costs of which often exceeded the economical capacities of the country, Serbia managed to create an army that included a high percentage of the population (higher than the European average), but as far as the organization and readiness are concerned, it followed European standards.

26 „Пројекат закона о устројству војске“ (*Project of Law on Organization of the Army*), § № 70, 71, 72, Додатак *Службеном војном листу* (*Official Military Gazette*) № 51 (Београд: Министарство војно 1882), 2, 12-13; *Закон о устројству војске* (*Law on Organization of the Army*), Ф№ 2248 from 1/13. November 1886, *Службени војни лист* (*Official Military Gazette*), № 43 - 44 from 12/24th of November 1886, § № 85 – 92, (Београд, Министарство војно, 1886), 1037-1039.

27 Archive of the Serbian Academy of Science (ASAS), Fund № 11444, Драгутин Милутиновић, „Војвода Радомир Путник“, *Успомене на наше војводе*, (unpublished) Београд, 1939, 4.

28 Василий Б. Каширин, „Высший и старший командный состав армий стран Балканского полуострова в оценках и суждениях русских военных специалистов в начале XX века“, *Человек на Балканах глазами русских* (ур. Р.П. Гришина, А.Л. Шемякин), (Санкт Петербург: РАН, 2011), 204.

29 *Први балкански рат 1912/1913 (операције српске војске)*, I (Београд: Војноисторијски институт, 1959), 227-228.

The Serbian Army also modernized its armaments and equipment. It purchased balloons, airplanes, machine guns, and military motor trucks. It also acquired 60 field and 25 mountain batteries of artillery produced by the French company Schneider. Immediately before the Balkan wars, the regular Serbia Army contained 2,349 officers and 29,206 NCOs and soldiers. Of those officers, some 1,697 were graduates of the Serbian Military Academy, including 426 of them who had also completed the Staff College. Thanks to this, Serbia was able to mobilize ten operational divisions (first and second line) and one cavalry division. The whole Serbian Army, including the staff and supply units, numbered 345,708 soldiers, 544 cannons, 230 machine guns, 11 airplanes and 50 military trucks. Recalling the poor performance of the Serbian troops during the Serbian-Turkish and Serbian-Bulgarian wars, European public opinion had prejudices regarding the capabilities and abilities of the Serbian Army. These prejudices were shattered as a result of its excellent performance during the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars.

Serbia was well prepared diplomatically, economically, and militarily for the Balkan Wars. Serbia was allied to Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro, and was supported by Russia during the First Balkan War, and allied with Greece, Montenegro, Romania, and Turkey during the Second Balkan War.

After the Second Balkan War, a new infantry division was formed, with two more being organized in summer 1915. In July 1914, Serbia could count on 3,712 professional active-duty and 6,725 reserve officers and about 400,000 well-trained soldiers and NCOs, many of whom had recent combat experience.³⁰

Serbia entered the Great War supported by Russia, Great Britain, and France, and later by Italy, Romania, and the United States. The first significant results of the army modernization were demonstrated during this period. Serbian military professionalism already helped achieve a victory against the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, and in 1914 against Austro-Hungarian troops as well. Great results had been achieved not only against badly-performing Ottoman Army units, but also against the well-trained, -organized, and -equipped Bulgarian Army and at the beginning of World War I, against the army of one Great Power (Austria-Hungary). Serbian troops also played a predominant role during the breakthrough of the Macedonian Front in September 1918. One of the main reasons for the good performance of the Serbian troops was the learning and adherence to German mission-type orders and tactics. Serbian officers, including senior commanders, led their soldiers personally by example in combat. That gave excellent results during the operations, but the price for that was extremely high in casualties, especially among the younger generation of officers. During the Great War, Serbia lost 38.1 percent of its professional officers in the ranks of second lieutenant to major.³¹

30 *Ратна ранг-листа активних официра и војних чиновника 1914 – 1915* (стање 15. августа 1915), (Ниш: Министарство војно, 1915), and *Ратна ранг-листа резервних официра 1917-1918* (стање 01.06.1918), (Крф: Министарство војно, 1918).

31 Mile Bjelajac, *Jugoslovensko iskustvo sa multietničkom armijom 1918-1991* (Beograd: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju, 1999), 23.

The best testimony about the value and high quality of the Serbian Army was given by German Field Marshal August von Mackensen who commanded German troops in the campaign against Serbia 1915. In his memoirs, he said: "In Serbs I have found the best soldiers of the Balkans. Serbs have fought extremely high-hearted . . . One honorable enemy whose soldier had the value of two soldiers of other nations".³²

Serbian experience gives a good example how superior military organization can be created from the army which was, regarding its war performance before the 1903 reforms, one of the worst in the world.

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Needed Research on the Topic of Why Bulgarians Go to War

by

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Why do nations (and in particular, Bulgaria) go to war when it has been known for thousands of years that after meeting the enemy on the battlefield, not all warriors are going back at home alive? And not all of the survivors continue to live like normal people until the end of their earthly time, being tortured by their wounds or other ailments that caused by these military operations.

Why do nations go to war, since it has been well known that in the days of military campaigns (and after them, from their effects) children and families of soldiers suffer the most? Why do nations go to war when it is never certain they will return victorious from the battlefield? It is also not clear if the soldier may be captured. Why, during war, do people spent colossal resources that could be used better elsewhere when it has always been known that war will not disappear as a phenomenon?

Can answers to these questions be sought only in the almighty power of the state? Could they be explained only with the powers of the authority from antiquity onward, imposing compulsory military discipline, violation of which was led even to the death penalty? If these questions can be answered “yes,” then how does one explain the miracles of bravery and feats that ordinary people in military uniforms did and still doing during hostilities?

Similar questions can be asked, and in more sophisticated terms. The responses, however, are neither easy nor unique, nor have eternal content that may give immutable explanations valid for all periods of human civilization. This is because the reasons why nations go to war are undoubtedly fiendishly complex phenomenon. They are extremely varied; solving them is largely not always practicable to be fully rational. These motivations are obviously one of those invisible colossal, but not destructible, “energies” that create the drama of the great existential processes of mankind -- since the dawn of its civilization, and to this day.

However, some answers should be given to these questions, because when nations go to war, this is by no means a coincidence or completely thoughtless effort. If people's participation in the war was an irrational and completely incomprehensible phenomenon, it could not explain the resilience of the soldiers. Those who for years endure hardships of military campaigns and deprivation in the trenches, apparently driven by some personal awareness that their sacrifice serves certain great and fully justified, believe in their meaningful cause. The answers to these dilemmas should always be sought at least in two parallel, but at the same time, autonomous fields, namely global and regional perspectives. That is, first the field of values that motivates the behaviour of the individual and the masses in the universal being, and then on the field of the determinants of locally specific fate of individual nations, need to be examined.

Within the first field -- the global -- we can speak of the existence of seemingly universal, equally valid, and repeated factors, reasons, and circumstances, which generally provide a relatively satisfactory explanation of the above question: why do nations go to war? In this regard, for example, is it doubtful that all nations go to war often because they believe that they are fulfilling some great civilizing mission. The reason can perhaps be reduced to defending the country from external attacks and protecting the safety, life, and property of the citizens. There are also many examples of nations going to war to assist in the liberation of their countrymen from a foreign yoke.

Do the people of a nation not going to war ostensibly to help the survival of other friendly people realize the latter were subject to the unfair superior military aggression? Do we not know many examples of nations going to war to prevent a powerful aggressor after a certain time to become uncontrolled conqueror?

At the same time, do we not know some "military peoples" in human history, people who lived only or mainly from war? The plunder and loot obtained after the defeat of the enemy on the battlefield were for centuries the primary means for biological survival of these military peoples. For centuries, the conquering sword of Avars, Khazars, Cumans, Pechenegs, and Tatars hung over Europe. These nations for a couple hundred years were orchestrating "process factors" on the continent, but precisely because they lived primarily "for" and "from" war, these nations did not create their own permanent countries. As a result, today they do not present as separate factors in human civilization.

The answer to the question "why do nations go to war?" globally relates to the impact of the colossal amount of objective and subjective natural, climatic, economic, political, and cultural factors and conditions that have affected the life of ethnic groups over the centuries. This response has most often been associated with the presence (or absence) of sufficient resources in the development of the respective people. It is directly related to the civilization values at which they were present, as well as the engendered statesman-like wisdom of leaders that headed individual nations.

Thinking globally, it is difficult to find people who may not have been influenced to some extent by these universal (or classic) reasons, provocations, or specific

occasions for which they were going to war, for centuries, anywhere in the world.

At the same time, if the question “why nations go to war” is considered within the specific local situations, there are always other specific factors that cannot be ignored in the search for answers to this issue. Because in different historical periods, nations generally resolved various fundamental problems associated with the development of their society. The majority of European nations between the fifth and twelfth centuries principally engaged in laying the foundations of their own, modern national states. Later, efforts were aimed at the discovery of the new world and its eventual industrialization. Energies were focused mainly on the political modernization and democratization of the internal state life. These are well-known truths that are relevant to the specific factors that explain why nations in different regions were then going to war.

There has always been on a regional basis for various reasons for going to war. Various values were dominant in societies in different historical eras. By the ninth century in Europe, Christianity and paganism still existed together, and it was only thereafter that Christianity dominated the continent. The Crusades weakened eastern European, opening the way for the penetration of the Islam in Europe through armed aggression.

Specific military alliances were also made locally and regionally, with a classic examples being the Triple Entente from the beginning of the twentieth century. They were generally the product of societies united with common strategic interests (or ideologies), only important for that group of people. Thus were born the notions of “holy” wars of Christians against Muslims, and of Islamic “jihad” against the infidel Christians. The ideology of aggressive imperialism of the late nineteenth century, then fascism and Nazism in modern times, also created conditions for large and lengthy wars between nations. The presence of specific, regional, and state conflict environments have, therefore, served as mobilizing factors for people in different parts of the world, which increased the motivation to go to war in the name of national security.

In the spirit of these most common introductory reflections, what specific answer can be given to the dilemma: Why do Bulgarians in particular go to war? There is no one specific answer to this quandary. One can look for this answer in at least three relatively independent, local-specific, military political fields of Bulgarian military history.

First, the local-specific military political field can be differentiated between the seventh and fourteenth centuries. This is when the Bulgarians built their independent feudal state, when the Bulgarian nationality was formed in Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia, and which became the basis for the development of a rich material and spiritual culture. Medieval Bulgaria in the ninth century had already created favorable conditions for the development of the Slavonic alphabet, literature, and Christian type of public life whose fruits subsequently spread far beyond its borders to other Slavic countries. The Byzantine Empire was the external political partner of Bulgaria in this period. Territorially, it was located on three continents, and its ruler managed a multi-million population. The Byzantine Empire had tremendous raw

materials, and financial and military resources, plus the experience and traditions that were the legacy of the ancient Greek and Roman state civilizations. These undeniable advantages provided the foundation for centuries of Byzantine policy to develop and implement a major external political strategy in respect of Bulgaria -- its conquest -- or at least placing Bulgaria highly dependent upon the will of Vlahern palace in Constantinople. In all 40 wars that were fought between Bulgaria and Byzantium, the aggression generally came from the south, from Constantinople! It was like this since the time of the first Bulgarian-Byzantine war fought in 681, and to the last, which was in 1346.

The continuous threat of Byzantium inevitably required the construction of a powerful Bulgarian military defense system. The state built and maintained over 2,000 fortresses that were hard to capture. Strong military legislation maintained high levels of preparedness and discipline in the ranks of the army. As a result, although they had considerably limited resources compared with Byzantium, in the majority of the wars, the Bulgarians came out as winners. The Byzantines were inflicted with overwhelming military and political defeats.

At the same time the Bulgarians were going to war, they also attempted to continue good neighborly relations with Byzantium. In at least two cases, Bulgarian armies played a crucial role in saving the Byzantine civilization from complete and irreversible collapse. The first was in the year 718. At this time, for one year the mighty army of the Arabian caliphate besieged Constantinople and the European mainland. The Bulgarian Army, led by Khan Tervel, then inflicted a devastating defeat on the Arabs. In this case, the Bulgarians realized that not removing the new invader from the Balkans was more dangerous than the existing Byzantine threat.

The second case was in 1205. On the 14 April Battle of Adrianople, the Bulgarian Army, commanded by Tsar Kaloyan, defeated the Latin Empire and captured on the battlefield Emperor Baldwin of Flanders. This military victory allowed Byzantium, shattered and captured shortly before by the Crusaders, to return to the European political scene as an independent state entity in only a few years.

Why did Bulgarians go to war in these cases? Because they had to fight to defend their country, so it could survive as the safe haven for its people and its unique culture. Bulgarians went to war to assert their right to have an independent place in the family of civilized European nations. Their country could not survive without a military force. People understood this perfectly well and contributed to solving the main historical task of that time.

The second specific local military political field in which the combination of factors and motivations changed fundamentally for the Bulgarians to go to war was related to the period of the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries. Since the late fourteenth century, the Ottoman dynasty conducted large-scale invasions of the Balkans. One after another Bulgaria, Byzantium, Serbia, Albania, the lands to the east and north of the Black Sea, and the southern part of Hungary, fell under the authority of the Sultan.

Under these conditions, the Bulgarian state underwent seemingly irreversible collapse. The Bulgarian national dynasty was liquidated. The Bulgarian aristocracy

was completely destroyed. The spiritual elite of the people -- writers and scholars -- were driven beyond its ethnic boundaries. The capital of medieval Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnovo, was razed to the ground, as were some 2,000 fortresses and most of the monasteries -- the major repositories of writings and books. An unbearable tax regime was imposed on the Bulgarian people. A "blood tax" was introduced, in which the "best" children of Bulgarian origin were taken forcibly from their parents every five years to be converted into Janissaries, the elite troops of the Sultan. Women and young people were sold into slavery. It was, therefore, perfectly clear in the era of late feudalism that these factors would change fundamentally the motivations, objectives, and modalities of the Bulgarian attitude towards war.

For nearly 500 years -- a half millennium -- the Bulgarian people did not organize any unilateral war of conquest against another nation. Instead, Bulgarians started seeking strategic allies to resolve their qualitatively new, historic task: restoring the independence of their own country, so the objective and subjective conditions may occur again in which the people could freely develop their material and spiritual culture.

This is why from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries the Bulgarians went to war primarily as volunteers and not under the aegis of the state. They had already fought primarily as allies of those European military forces that were trying to limit Ottoman expansion into Europe. This was the main purpose for which the Bulgarian volunteers were involved in the campaign of the Hungarian King Sigismund in the Balkans as early as 1407; these were the reasons Bulgarians fought alongside troops of Polish King Jagiello Vladislav III, and fell in battle with the armies of Sultan near Varna in 1444; and these are the reasons why the Bulgarian volunteers participated in a series of Austrian Turkish wars in the eighteenth century -- in addition to the four Russian-Turkish wars in the nineteenth century waged in the Balkans.

As a result of Bulgaria's active support given to anti-Ottoman forces in Europe in 1878, objective possibilities were created for re-establishing the foundations of the independent Bulgarian state. The Bulgarians were thus motivated by a third factor for why their people went to war. The reasons for this new philosophy was rooted primarily in the behavior of the Great Powers, played a crucial role in the final settlement of the Bulgarian national question in summer 1878.

The Russian Army assisted in liberating Bulgaria from Ottoman rule, and Western European opponents of Russia feared the creation of a new, powerful Slavic state in the Balkans that would have been in close relations with St. Petersburg officials. The strategically significant Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits were too close to the southern Bulgarian border to leave their future destiny, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, dependent on a possible Bulgarian-Russian strategic alliance.

Russian opponents at the Congress of Berlin in June 1878 ensured that Bulgarian national territory was broken into five parts. North Dobrogea was transmitted to the Kingdom of Romania, as compensation for the annexation of Bessarabia by Russia. The Principality of Bulgaria, a vassal of the Sultan, was formed from Mysia plus the area around Sofia. The province of Thrace was declared an "autonomous,

self-governing area” with an invented new name -- Eastern Rumelia -- which was virtually within the Ottoman Empire. The entirety of Whole Macedonia, where in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Bulgarian population was in the majority, was returned without any changes in the Sultan’s dominions. Pirot and Nish, also then populated mostly by Bulgarians, was transferred to the Kingdom of Serbia.

In this debilitating situation, the main Bulgarian political task was the removal of this injustice imposed on them and the preparation for the completion of national liberation, and reunification within a common, free, and independent state of the forcibly dispersed Bulgarian people. For thirty-three years Bulgaria made these comprehensive efforts alone and through peaceful means to achieve this goal. In 1885, the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia united peacefully, without war. Serbian King Milan declared that the “balance of power” in the Balkans had been broken and declared war on Bulgaria. The Bulgarian people rose patriotically, fought, and successfully defended the first step of national unity in only twenty days.

By 1912, all Bulgarian governments had made every effort to apply Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin by peaceful, diplomatic means, providing the required reforms to be carried out also in Macedonia that would give the local population self-government. All efforts remained futile. The Sultan’s military police and administrative machinery subjected Christian elements in the region to a constant genocide. Only in 1912 when it became abundantly clear that any peace initiatives would not be successful, did Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro form the Balkan Union. The united Balkan countries then requested to conduct “reforms in Macedonia.” Instead of granting permission, the Sultan declared war on the Balkan Christian states, at which time the four Balkan allies took military action in October 1912.

The Ottoman Empire, in sum, lost the Balkan War of 1912-1913. The Bulgarian people contributed decisively to eradicate the last vestiges of feudalism in Southeast Europe to ensure progress and development. The four allied Balkan countries could not, however, find a fair formula for dividing according to ethnicities their reclaimed heritage. Lands with a predominantly Bulgarian population again remained under foreign rule within Serbia and Greece. This was the main reason for three successive wars in 1913, in the period of 1914 to 1918, and again from 1941 until the autumn of 1944. The Bulgarians then entered ferocious military campaigns, knowing they should contribute to the national unification of their forcibly dispersed people, so that all Bulgarians would live within a free and independent state.

That is why the Bulgarians went to war from 1912 to 1944. Bulgarian intellectuals put their nationalistic yearnings and philosophies into practice theory and practice on the battlefield and achieved their goal.

Conclusion

There continues to be a need for additional research on the topic of why Bulgarians go to war. Well-researched, objective, and detailed studies on this topic are the most viable means to explain the past of the Bulgarian nation and its relationships with neighbours, so the reasons for these great achievements are understood. Exploring further this theme will allow one to even better clarify the “civilization mission” that small nations have undertaken in the past (and may perform in the future) in the European development.

Research on this topic will also provide greater clarity about contentious issues regarding the relationship between a people and their friends and enemies. Clarity is especially needed between countries that are members of a common defensive military political union. The benefits will be explained more convincingly of healthy relationships between people and their responsible elite that define the major historical tasks of each new era. Well-researched and insightfully explained responses to “why Bulgarians go to war” ultimately will create a new serious argument to justify a profitable state policy for the comprehensive progress of the Bulgarian people (and from there to the region to which it belongs) in the twenty-first century.

Building Alliances before Venturing into Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: The Impact of Coalitions

by

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Abstract

The aim of assuring their future destiny and their independent existence motivated the Balkan States to unite, attempt a rapprochement, and fight for the liberation of their subjugated compatriots. Greece signed a military agreement with Bulgaria, though not with Serbia or Montenegro. By the beginning of autumn 1912, the four Christian Balkan states, although they had not signed a common defense pact, were in solidarity and of united purpose against the Ottoman Empire.

During the first decade of the 20th century, the situation in Europe gave an impetus to a development concerning the Balkan states. They tried to consolidate their existence, creating perspectives for further territorial gains at the expense of their neighbors and, most of all, of the Ottoman Empire. The motivation for this varied from ethnographical, geopolitical, and economic realities to historical and cultural rights. The international position of Greece had undergone a profound, though gradual change. The most important aspect of this change was to link the future of Greece with that of its Balkan neighbors of the Ottoman Empire in a way that had been unforeseen in the late 19th century. The outcome of the Eastern Crisis of 1897 had determined the status quo of the Balkans for the next ten years.

The enmity between Greece and the Ottoman Empire was perennial and stemmed from the heritage of the Ottoman occupation and the ongoing hostilities between the two nations. Therefore, the powers involved in the Balkans (Great Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy, and France) supported the preservation of the legal status quo set by the 1878 Berlin Conference, while promoting their interests in the region in every way, despite

the open confrontation between them in other geographic areas. Their policy resulted in a new lease of life for the collapsing Ottoman Empire, but, at the same time, constituted a very serious obstacle for the liberation of enslaved Greeks.

The grievous outcome of the Greco-Ottoman War of 1897 and the tensions stirred up in all matters of national importance proved to the Greek political and military leadership that it was absolutely necessary to strengthen the country militarily. Indeed, by 1904 the Greek nation was confronted with the dilemma of whether to continue to maintain a passive attitude towards Bulgaria in Macedonia, and simply confine itself to protests directed at the Great Powers, or whether to undertake action. The second view prevailed and from that year on the Greek response became unwavering. Additionally, the outbreak of the Libyan war had made the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire a distinct possibility. In spite of the anti-Ottoman feelings of the Balkan states and their common aspiration to broaden their lands to the detriment of Ottoman Empire, they came up against historical memories, ecclesiastical controversies, ethnic conflicts, and territorial claims.

As early as August 1906, it was obvious that Greece could not at the same time fight both the Empire and the Bulgarians and that she should ally with the Bulgarians in order to fight the first. In 1908, the Young Turks, a revolutionary group that led a rebellion against the authoritarian regime of the Ottoman sultan, were claiming a regime that would give liberty and equality to all the nationalities within the empire. This gave rise to aspirations for a reunification of the Greek with the Ottoman area.

At the end of October 1908, the Sublime Porte proposed an alliance to Greece, Serbia, and Romania. The last remained reticent, but Greece responded favorably: by assisting the Ottoman Empire against Bulgaria, the Greek government at that time had hoped to be compensated with the annexation of Crete. Serbia, too, had reacted favorably, but when the Porte had demanded a division of territories following a victorious war against Bulgaria, Serbia had rejected the proposal.

In May 1909, the Porte acknowledged a new independent status of Bulgaria in return for a financial arrangement. Besides, Ottoman fear of Bulgaria in the wake of the independence crisis had given birth to several abortive schemes for defensive alliances. Meanwhile, a fundamental renewal of the Greek national web and a structural change of the political scene were caused in August 1909 by the Military League, a group of junior officers claiming a revolutionary solution to the chronic problems of the state, society, and the army. This opened the way to the premiership of the political leader Venizelos.

Venizelos steered Greece towards a foreign policy which aimed at ending isolation and unconditional attachment to Turkey out of fear of Bulgaria, though his views also had undergone several revisions. As islander himself, and aspiring to the union of his native island Crete with Greece, it was only too natural that he should regard Greece primarily as a maritime power and to believe that only a strong naval force would secure for Greece a dominant role in the Eastern Mediterranean. As early as August 1906, he stated that Greeks could not fight both the Turks and the Bulgarians and that they should ally themselves with the Bulgarians in order to fight the Turks. Two years later, however, under the influence of the short-lived euphoria following the Young Turk revolution, he had not hesitated to declare that the future of Hellenism lay in a renovated, Hellenized, and constitutionally-governed Ottoman Empire. Like many Greek politicians, he had welcomed the decision to demand compensation for Bulgaria's declaration of independence, not in liberating Macedonia but in the union of Crete with the Hellenic state. He realized that any claims to Macedonia would have to be backed by military might, an eventuality which presupposed a radical reorganization of the Greek armed forces. By January 1910, the progressive deterioration of

Crete's international position convinced Venizelos -- Prime Minister already -- that not even Crete could be annexed without war. In the war that would follow, Greece would remain on the defensive along her mainland frontier and obtain mastery of the sea by occupying the islands. He concluded that an understanding with Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, and possibly even the Albanians was necessary and would result, by means of reasonable mutual concessions, in the conclusion of an alliance among all these peoples for the expulsion of Turkey from Europe and its limitation to Constantinople and its surrounding region. The first months of 1910 were a period during which the subject of Greek-Bulgarian relations underwent a thorough re-examination.

On the other hand, Russia, which had emerged out of the Bosnian crisis deeply humiliated and isolated from Britain and France, now attempted to regain her lost ground and achieve the security of the Dardanelles (Straits). This attempt made Russia the dominant factor in the new situation. Meanwhile, to gain additional support, approached Italy and signed a secret agreement for a revision of the Straits settlement in return for helping Italy in Tripolitania. After its failure towards a revision of the status of the Straits, she reactivated its Balkan policy, no longer in terms of an alliance with Ottoman Empire, but through an alliance between the Balkan states to turn against it. As protector of all Slav interests in the Balkans, Russia aroused in the Balkan peoples the consciousness that, for the common good, they must unite together as closely as possible and therefore she was willing to assist and welcome with the greatest satisfaction every attempt at rapprochement between them. At the time, Russia did not consider Greece to be a Balkan state. The unpredictable developments of the Cretan question, the confused state of her internal affairs after the 1909 coup, and the deplorable condition of her army, had convinced Russia that Greece could not be considered a dependable factor in a Balkan alliance and that it was dangerous to begin talks with her at too early a date. Not until the beginning of 1910, when it became obvious that the Ottoman Empire was building a fleet that threatened her predominance in the Black Sea, did Russia realize the advantages of encouraging Greek military and naval preparations.

The Balkan states had recognized both the danger inherent in Young Turk chauvinism and the need to stand up against it. Their close cooperation was crucial for their own survival and for the liberation of their subjugated compatriots. A rapprochement between Greece and Bulgaria was achieved rapidly, with both the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Bulgarian Exarch playing a leading part in the process. The treaty for a Greco-Bulgarian alliance was drafted on August 1910, but was not signed because Greece wanted to include in it the issue of the abrogation of the Exarchate Schism. The idea of an alliance underwent further elaboration in early 1911. The time was ripe for direct negotiations between Greece and Bulgaria which, though aiming primarily at the protection of the Christians of the Empire, might even explore the possibility of the collapse of Ottoman rule in Europe. In March, Serbia and Bulgaria had a rapprochement in cultural and commercial fields and at the end of the month, Bulgaria favored the creation of an anti-Austrian bloc under the aegis of Russia, a block in which Serbia would be the key partner. At the same time, Montenegro expressed its unreserved desire to join any alliance against the Ottoman Empire. It was impossible to think of a Balkan alliance without the participation of Greece. The new round of soundings began and although these efforts did not end in an official agreement, they nonetheless reflected the prevailing mood in both countries, which was conducive to cooperation. They also provided the opportunity for mutual assurances that each country would come to the aid of the other in the event of an Ottoman attack. It was not the first time that such an alliance of the Christian Balkan states against Turkey had been sought. Previous efforts, however, had borne no fruit. It deserves to be mentioned that the first endeavor to form an alliance was attempted by the Serbian king in

1860, but it was thwarted by his assassination the same year. Greece made similar proposals to Bulgaria in 1891 and 1897, but they foundered owing mainly to Sofia's policies.

In October 1911, Greece informed that she would assist Bulgaria in the event of an Ottoman attack, if Bulgaria undertook to do the same if the Ottoman Empire attacked Greece. Bulgaria avoided any commitment since discussions with Serbia concerning a defensive alliance had just begun; these came to no conclusion. Russia sought the opinion that a promise of support might encourage Greece to pursue an aggressive and self-interested policy with regard to Crete. The Bulgarian government was reluctant to reject the offer, for a Bulgarian denial might drive Greece into an anti-Slav combination dominated by Austria-Hungary and including Romania and the Albanians. The alliance with Serbia was a priority, while the entente with Greece should be exclusively confined to a guarantee of the status quo; if Greece wanted a defensive agreement, she would eventually join the Serbo-Bulgarian alliance, in which case she would have to accede to all its clauses.

The outcome of this activity in the Balkans became apparent at the beginning of 1912. In February, a secret Serbo-Bulgarian treaty of friendship and alliance was signed in Sofia. It stipulated mutual military assistance in order to secure the political independence and territorial integrity. Beyond these goals, an appendix to the treaty provided for possible military intervention against the Ottoman Empire if domestic disorders there threatened the interests of either ally, or if the preservation of the status quo in the Balkans became problematic. The treaty also provided for the distribution of liberated territories if the outcome of a war with the Ottoman Empire were to be successful. A military agreement was signed in April, which provided for the mobilization of 200,000 Bulgarians and 150,000 Serbs in the event of a war with the Ottoman Empire, Romania, or Austria-Hungary. A complementary military agreement was signed a few weeks later in June between the General Staffs of both countries.

In contrast, Greco-Bulgarian negotiations faced serious difficulties due to Sofia's territorial claims on the Greek lands of Macedonia and Thrace, which were to be liberated from Ottoman subjugation. Despite these thorny issues Greece finally decided to sign a defense pact with Bulgaria that contained no mention of the fate of any liberated territories. In May 1912, therefore, a treaty providing for a defensive alliance was signed between Greece and Bulgaria; it had a three-year term and called for mutual assistance and support in the event that the Ottoman Empire attacked either state. A military agreement was also signed three months later in September, just before the declaration of war. According to this agreement, in the event of an Ottoman-Bulgarian war, Greece undertook the obligation to attack the Ottoman Empire with an army of 120,000 men and its entire fleet. Bulgaria undertook a comparable obligation in the event of a Greco-Ottoman war, namely to attack the Ottoman Empire with an army of 300,000 soldiers.

Given that Bulgaria claimed terrestrial areas but did not border on Greece and the Ottoman Empire occupied both island and terrestrial areas bordering on Greece, it became apparent that if the strengthening of the Army was a matter of discussion, the arming of the Navy was beyond any doubt. Greece, with considerable naval forces, would be a reliable agent in the southeastern Mediterranean Sea, attracting the interest of the Great Powers which would probably support the national affairs of the country when they understood that would benefit from the same. The members of the Balkan Alliance, Bulgaria, and Serbia were in need of the Hellenic naval power in the Aegean area in order to obstruct the operations and transportation of the Ottoman Navy. In reality, the Serbian and Bulgarian Armies had the potential to successfully confront the Ottoman Army, even without the participation of the Hellenic Army. However, they realized that the influence and probably the outcome of military operations would have been negative for them in the case of the unhindered use of

the Aegean Sea by the Ottoman Navy. The Greek contribution in this anti-Ottoman alliance was more than necessary in terms of securing allied dominance.

During summer 1912, the Balkan understanding was completed through oral agreements between Greece-Serbia, Greece-Montenegro, and the signature of a secret military convention between Montenegro and Bulgaria, as well as an agreement between Montenegro and Serbia. These protocols comprised the diplomatic web of the Balkan alliance; however, it was not cohesive enough, since it was exclusively based on the hostility against Turkey. Therefore, the Great Powers could not remain indifferent to the developments in the Balkans. The Balkan League served the Russian interests as a containment barrier against Austro-Hungarian aggression in the Balkans and a means of pressure against the Ottoman Empire. Russia, however, did not wish a Balkan war that would probably lead to the elimination of European Turkey, thus forcing it to stand against other Powers in the Straits.

France also opposed a Balkan war, like Austro-Hungary, which was not ready to undertake a political initiative in the Balkans. Germany, the patron Power of the Ottoman Empire, continued to support Austro-Hungary and strengthen its dominant position. On the other hand, it correctly believed that a victory of Balkan nationalism would create adequate conditions for the insertion of German influence in the Balkans. Italy expected the opening of a second frontier for the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans so as to lead Turkey to a peace treaty between them and be finally awarded Tripolitania. The role of England in the acceptance of Greece in the Balkan Alliance and the Greek-Bulgarian rapprochement was important and absolutely understandable, if one considers that the cooperation between Serbia and Bulgaria resulted from Russian encouragement. England did not oppose the demolition of the Ottoman Empire which was controlled by Germany, however, and did not wish such a collapse to allow the Slav element to reach the Mediterranean Sea. This could be obstructed by the participation of Greece in the alliance of the Balkan Slav-orthodox states.

The Great Powers themselves had most misleading information on the extent of the preparations of the Balkan Governments. Beyond doubt, Russia was the best informed, directly involved in the negotiations for the Serbo-Bulgarian Treaty of March and also had detailed information on the Greek-Bulgarian Treaty of May. But even the Russians had no knowledge of the military convention which Bulgaria had concluded with Serbia in July and of the preliminary oral agreement concluded with Montenegro in June. Not until mid-summer did they realize that Serbia and Bulgaria were preparing for war and the full extent of the destabilizing effect of the Albanian uprising at the time. Greece's intention had been to build up a complete system of Balkan alliances before venturing into war, being unaware of the provisions of the Serbo-Bulgarian Alliance Treaty and of the agreement reached between Montenegro and Bulgaria, that Montenegro would begin hostilities in early October.

Each Balkan state understood that it could not stand up by itself against a still militarily-strong Ottoman Empire in case of armed conflict, thus cooperation among the states was necessary. Simultaneously, Greece embarked on an intense diplomatic campaign, since it had become apparent that she alone could not successfully confront the Ottoman Empire militarily, nor did Athens expect that it could unilaterally force the Empire to accede to Greek demands. Conditions were conducive to a diplomatic initiative, as a spirit of conciliation and mutual understanding had already begun to take hold among the rulers of the other Christian states of the Balkans. A rapprochement between Greece and Bulgaria was achieved rapidly and reflected the prevailing mood in both countries, which was favorable to cooperation. At the same time, based on the demand and supervision of Russia, negotiations took place with a goal to joint action between Serbia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. Greece did not sign any treaty or military agreement with Serbia or Montenegro. It was only after the war had begun that

the two countries decided to send representatives to the corresponding general headquarters in order to coordinate military operations. Montenegro had signed a treaty with Serbia that September, the purpose of which was to define the manner in which operations against the Ottoman Empire were to be conducted.

Throughout September, the Great Powers tried to devise a way of preserving peace, but they were unlikely to agree on joint pressure on the Porte. The Balkan states began to mobilize, though notified by Austria-Hungary and Russia in the name of all the Great Powers that they would not tolerate a violation of the status quo. It had taken the Balkan Governments two weeks to agree upon a common démarche to the Porte, which had attempted to detach Greece from the other Balkan states. By the beginning of autumn 1912, the four Christian Balkan states, although they had not signed a common defense pact, were in solidarity and of united purpose against the Ottoman Empire. On 17 October, the Ottoman Empire declared war on Bulgaria and Serbia, but not on Greece. The next day King George directed his address to the nation¹ and the Greek Government joined its Balkan allies and the war.

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1 "To my people:

Sacred obligations towards our dearest country, towards our subjugated brothers and towards humanity compel the state, after the failure of peaceful efforts to secure the human rights of the Christians under the Turkish yoke, to end by the use of arms the plight they have suffered for so many centuries. Hellas and its allies, fully armed, inspired by the same sentiments and bound by common obligations, undertake the sacred struggle for justice and freedom of the oppressed peoples of the East. Our army and navy, fully conscious of their duties towards the nation and Christendom, mindful of national traditions and proud of their moral supremacy and worth, throw themselves into the struggle with faith, in order to render freedom to the oppressed with their holy blood. Hellas and its brother allied nations will seek at all costs to accomplish this holy mission, and having called on the help of almighty God in this most just struggle of civilization, we exclaim: LONG LIVE GREECE. LONG LIVE THE NATION."

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Assessing the Capacity for Total War: Swedish Military Attachés and National Characteristics in the Interwar Baltic Sea Area, 1918-1939

by

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Abstract

The end of the First World War and the collapse of the empires surrounding the Baltic Sea saw the birth and rebirth of several new states in the region. From the Swedish point of view, the situation required close attention in assessing the stability and military developments of these nations, particularly Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. This paper examines how the Swedish military attachés analyzed these states and on which foundation the assessments built. One important factor was the concept of total war, derived from the lessons of the First World War. Scrutinizing a state's capacity for total war included assessments of national characteristics, especially concerning minorities. The paper also explores the ideological factors framing the assessments of the new states, from the perspective of Sweden, an old state. Finally the paper also includes how the attachés used their ideas on future wars as a parameter in assessing the military developments of the new Baltic militaries.

Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to discuss and outline how national characteristics were used by Swedish military attachés in the Baltic during the interwar period, 1918-1939. As a neutral actor during the First World War, Sweden was not directly touched by

war, but all the same she had to cope with an entirely new situation in the Baltic. New states emerged from the shattered empires and in the Baltic, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland were founded on the remains of the multinational empires of Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. Through revolution and coup d'état, the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia, while the sailors of the imperial German Navy rebelled in Kiel. This situation has been characterized as a watershed from the pre-war era.¹ The fallen empires and the new Randstaten markedly improved the security situation for Sweden, but at the same time demanded action and assessments of the surrounding area. One way of scrutinizing the surroundings and assessing the political and military development in the region was through military attachés. As high-ranking military officers, their purpose was to evaluate the military prowess, broadly understood as capacity and intentions. The purpose from the Swedish horizon was always to focus on Russia or the Soviet Union or whatever incarnation the threat from the East came in. From the First World War came the concept of total war as nations, states, empires, and countries embroiled in the path of ultimate destruction of other nations, states, empires, and countries. The understanding of total war was inherently important in the assessments, as it was the individual understanding of the how the next war would manifest itself. As noted, this essay concentrates only on discussing a part of the definition of what was total war, i.e., concepts of race and national characteristics, through answering the questions: what role did national characteristics play for Swedish military attachés in their assessments as part of a belief system?² Secondly, what did national characteristics mean for the capacity of making war in these assessments? Thirdly, how were the ideas of national characteristics linked to the education and background of the attachés?

In the essay, the reports from Swedish military attachés in Riga (responsible for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Warsaw, and Helsinki were studied. The reason for studying these particular posts comes from a definition of nation-building by Ernest Gellner. He defines old states and new states as having a different relationship to their history and the use of history as a means of achieving independence.³ Sweden in this case is an old state while Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were new states without ever experiencing statehood in the past. Finland and Poland were in between old and new states, a *Mittelstand* so to speak. Finland had been annexed by Russia as a Grand Duchy in 1809, maintaining the old laws and thereby experiencing a *sonderweg* in Czarist Russia. Poland was reborn again in 1918, after the final partition in 1792, founded on a vast history of statehood. Both Finland and Poland were, however, not "old" in the sense that their borders were undisputed. Quite the contrary. These definitions of the different states spilled over into how Swedish attachés understood their surroundings. For example, the relationship to Finland was one of historical

1 Barbara Tuchman, *Augusti 1914* (Stockholm: Atlantis 1987), 11-16; see also Barbara Tuchman, *Det stolta tornet: världen före första världskriget* (Stockholm: Atlantis 1983).

2 Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era* (Colchester: ECPR Press 2007).

3 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1983), 88-101.

significance as Finland was part of the realm from around 1200 to 1809. There was a Swedish minority in Finland and most Finnish officers were Swedish or at least spoke Swedish. Therefore the relation was close but not amiable as Fennomans challenged the old elites through nationalist language policies. Therefore the Swedish understanding of Finland was the old state looking at the immature juvenile.

“To Re-Conquer Finland within the Borders of Sweden”

This phrase comes from the poem *Svea* by Esaias Tegnér, written in 1811, after Sweden had lost Finland to Russia in the war of 1808-1809. It has been interpreted as a poem hallowing modernity and that the loss of Finland finally brought a situation when peace would reign. Sweden should focus on modernizing the country instead of engaging in foreign affairs. This brought a sense of non-alignment, establishing a new foreign policy paradigm, the policies of 1812. Sweden would not try to reconquer Finland and instead accept *Modus Vivendi* with Russia. Norway would be forced into a union with Sweden as compensation for Finland.

As a result of a new policy came the concepts of non-alignment, but this did not mean neutrality *per se*. In the Prusso-Danish War of 1864, Sweden-Norway supported Denmark, but choose not go to war. The leading military circles entertained a view of *realpolitik*, in which the major powers dominated the international system and that military force decided outcome. In this system, Sweden could only trust herself and her relatively small military forces.⁴ Through these concepts came a Swedish understanding of the Baltic Sea area and a self-image of being non-aligned. The military in Sweden during the latter half of the 19th century often promoted a defensive doctrine, i.e., military force was the absolutely last option and only if Sweden was attacked.⁵

The background to the Swedish assessment of the new situation in the Baltic built on this history. Sweden around 1920 was not looking for possible allies, but rather to establish links to assess how stable the new political surroundings actually were. The new situation, from a Swedish point of view, was that the states in the region ought to be neutral, and thereby not becoming embroiled in wars due to alliances with great powers. Instead, the states bordering the Soviet Union ought to be strong and thereby protect Sweden as a barrier. It was not as in the case of Poland, a question of finding suitable allies against the USSR.⁶

The only possible ally for Sweden was Finland, and then with a very strong “possible.”

4 Mats Hellstenius, “Krigens som inte blev av: Sveriges fredliga officerskår vid 1800-talets mitt.” Ph.D. dissertation, Lund University, 2000) 168-169; Alf W. Johansson and Torbjörn Norman, “Den svenska neutralitetspolitiken I historiskt perspektiv,” in *Neutralitet och försvar: perspektiv på svensk försvarspolitik 1809-1985*, ed. Bo Hugemark (Stockholm: Militärhistoriska förlaget, 1996).

5 Hellstenius, *Krigens som inte blev av*, 172.

6 Piotr Wawrzeński, *Med osäker utgång: polska militära bedömningar av Sverige, Finland och Baltikum* (forthcoming).

In 1930, alliance with Finland became an argument for Swedish military élites to tie Social Democracy to the interventionist ideals of the League of Nations.⁷ Poland was out of the question concerning an alliance, as Poland was seen as adventurous and chauvinistic. Poland's strategic position between Germany and the Soviet Union was considered precarious, but she was also a major military power in the region. Sweden considered a strong Poland would therefore work as a counterweight to Germany and the Soviet Union.

This was from the outset part of a larger political "game" for the major European powers. France and the Great Britain were involved in supporting the Whites against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War. But the purposes diverged, as France initially bet on a White restoration in Russia and was therefore divided between supporting the nationalist liberation movements combating the Bolsheviks, who were White but aimed at liberation, not restoration. France and Russia had been allies since 1892, while Great Britain only allied with Russia at the outset of the First World War. When a Bolshevik victory seemed inevitable, the French had to build a web of alliances in Central Europe, and in this Poland became the foremost ally. Britain, on the other hand, more wholeheartedly supported the liberation movements in the Baltic States.⁸ Finland had a very particular role in the political controversies in the region as the "Whites" in the civil war won with the help of Germany in May 1918. After the armistice in November 1918, Finland quickly had to redirect its foreign policy from a defeated Germany to a victorious Entente.

Sweden and the "New" States in the Baltic

Sweden initially greeted the emergence of new states on the shore of the Baltic with apprehension. When the Baltic States declared themselves independent in 1918 and sought recognition from Sweden, relations were established. Sweden, together with Norway and Denmark, did not de jure recognize independence but awaited what France and Great Britain would do. Sweden's foreign policy has been described as having a strong legalistic bias.⁹ The end of the world war through the defeat of the Central Powers was judged as inevitable, but not entirely positive. Germany had fallen

7 Helge Jung, ed., *Antingen -- eller: freds- och försvarsproblemet i saklig belysning* (Stockholm: Ny Militär tidskrifts bokförlag, 1930). General Helge Jung (1886-1978) was one of the foremost military personalities in Sweden during the 20th century and formulated Swedish defense policies during the latter part of the century. He was Commander-in-Chief, 1944-1951.

8 Erik Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia, del V: 1919-1939* (Stockholm: Norstedts 1959), 56-57; Patrick Salmon, *Scandinavia and the Great Powers, 1890-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

9 Torbjörn Norman, "A Foreign Policy Other than the Old Neutrality -- Aspects of Swedish Foreign Policy after the First World War," in *The Baltic in International Relations between the Two World Wars*, ed. Aleksander Loit and John Hiden, 237 (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Sockholmiensis, 1988).

to a second rate power, Russia was embroiled in civil war, and all of a sudden Sweden was a major player in the area and the Swedish Navy was the largest in the Baltic. In some cases she was called on by the new states to support their wars of independence/civil wars. This challenged the Swedish self-image of "wait and see" although the outcome became exactly that. The Baltic States and Finland, as well as Great Britain, proposed that Sweden should be involved in assisting the independence movements. Sweden however declined, referring again to *realpolitik*. After the wars were won, Sweden normalized relations, recognized the independence of the Baltic States, and also proclaimed that Sweden had an interest in the *randstaaten*. A complicating factor was that Great Britain and France had conflicting interests in the region. France tried to build alliances by supporting Poland and a Baltic alliance under Polish lead. Great Britain instead strove for maintaining the states strong as barriers, but not by strengthening Poland, something that also would strengthen France.¹⁰ Sweden, on the other hand, was not involved in the alliance-building or controversies as such, apart from being a spectator. The Swedish government clearly stated that all Swedish military commitments in the Baltic were out of the question.¹¹

One of the initial international issues discussed after independence was a naval neutralization policy in the Baltic, proposed by the Baltic States and Finland. The purpose was to negate the power of the Russian Navy and maintain a balance of power in the Baltic. Sweden was apprehensive once again, as the Swedish Navy would not be dismantled, but instead should have the task of bottling up the Baltic strait together with Denmark. Through this Great Britain could not enter the Baltic, something that could pit Sweden against Great Britain and France. This proposal came from Finnish Prime Minister Vennola, and was seen in Sweden as part of the ongoing conflict over the Åland islands.¹²

In all the conferences concerning a border state alliance between Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, and also France (as Poland's ally) in 1920, 1921, and 1922, Sweden was hesitant. For example, Estonia tried to get Sweden to become the leading power in the Baltic, focusing on the neutralization of the entire region.¹³ The Swedish default position was to be positive to the new states in the region, but not get involved in any form of alliance. The main problem was the relationship with Finland, which had been shaky from the beginning and also in the conflict over

10 Wilhelm M. Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum: Från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår* (Stockholm: Publica, 1993), 14-16; Kalervo Hovi, "Cordon Sanitaire or barrier de l'Est? The Emergence of the New French Western European Alliance Policy, 1917-1920," Ph.D. dissertation, Turun Yliopisto, Turku; Kalervo Hovi, *Intressesfären im Baltikum; Finnland im Rahmen der Ostpolitik Polens 1919-1922* (Helsinki: SHS, 1984); and Olavi Hovi, "The Baltic Area in British Policy 1918-1921: Part I: From the Compiègne Armistice to the Implementation of the Versailles Treaty 11.11 1918-20.1 1920," Ph.D. dissertation, Helsinki Yliopisto, Turku 1980.

11 Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*, 19.

12 Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens*, 58.

13 In Tallinn (Reval) 2nd of August 1921, Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens*, 60.

the Åland islands. Swedish politics in the Baltic can be summarized as a policy of non-alignment, within the framework of the League of Nations.¹⁴ Researcher Marko Lehti also describes the Baltic alliances as the construction of an arena on which independence could be manifested, understood, promoted, and displayed.¹⁵

Sweden closely monitored the alliance frameworks in the Baltic, mostly from a negative point of view. For example, when the Finnish parliament refused to ratify the alliance with Estonia, Latvia, and Poland in 1922, this was seen as positive by Stockholm. A closer relationship between Finland and the Baltic States was negative, as the Baltic states were too weak. A closer relationship with Poland meant that Finland could become a pawn in the Great Power games. All alliances in the region were dangerous developments to Sweden, which reacted negatively.¹⁶ During the 1930s, the main security policy objective was to tie Finland to Scandinavia, while an Estonian and Latvian alliance was judged as unrealistic. The Scandinavian states could not give the Baltic States the military security they needed. Therefore Sweden, for the same realpolitische reasons, supported a Baltic-Polish Alliance, which in reality was impossible due to the relationship between Poland and Lithuania. The Swedish view on the Baltic States and their role in Swedish military strategy was affected by the antagonism between the Navy and the Army, resulting in entirely different assessments. The Navy maintained that a Soviet attack on the Baltic States would continue westward over Sweden. Hence the Navy needed funds. The Army maintained that a Soviet attack would turn southward against Poland and Germany, not immediately threatening Sweden. Therefore, the funds sought by the Navy should be diverted to the Army and later to the Air Force.¹⁷

The Swedish General Staff, the Attachés, and Military Intelligence

Intelligence has always been an integral part of military assessments and judgments. In Sweden, the formal organization of intelligence sections was a more modern innovation. The Intelligence Section (Underrättelsebyrån) had existed earlier, but became important in 1905 concerning the dissolution of the union with Norway. It was also active during the war and the preceding domestic controversies over national defense. But during the interwar period intelligence activities almost solely rested on the Department of Foreign Affairs in the General Staff (Generalstabens utrikeavdelning) of which military attachés were part. The material produced focused on Russia. The interest in Russia and its successor Soviet Union still remained, and one of the primary tasks of attachés was to assess the capabilities and intentions of

14 Lönnroth, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens*, 68.

15 Marko Lehti, *A Baltic League as a Construct of the New Europe: Envisioning a Baltic Region and Small State Sovereignty in the Aftermath of the First World War* (Frankfurt-am-Main: Lang, 1999).

16 Carlgren, *Sverige och Baltikum*, 19-20.

17 Lars Ericson (Wolke), "Buffert eller hot? De baltiska staterna i svensk militärplanering år 1940," in *I orkanens öga: 1941 -- osäker neutralitet*, ed. Bo Hugemark, 128-130 (Hallstavik: SMB, 2002).

the Soviet Union. Acquiring information was therefore an extremely important part of the day-to-day business of the attaché. Information on the USSR changed hands between the attachés and the regional General Staffs. The interest in Russia had naturally begun much earlier than the interwar period, and Petersburg became the station where the attaché-service became more formalized around 1900.¹⁸

Another branch was the Intelligence Section tasked during the 1920s to gather information on foreign affairs, hinder espionage, and curb antimilitarism.¹⁹ While the Department of Foreign Affairs primarily employed attachés, the Intelligence Section employed a few officers in Stockholm and a network of agents, mostly focused on domestic antimilitarism. The agents abroad were often sea captains or agents of the Swedish arms industry.

Only in 1937 did a new directive stipulate the establishment of a formal Intelligence Department (Underrättelseavdelningen). The head of the department was Colonel Carlos Adlercreutz (previously attaché to Helsinki).²⁰ The professionalization of military intelligence from the late 1930s increased the possibilities to exchange information with foreign intelligence services. Berlin became an important source of information concerning the East, mostly on the strategic situation of the Baltic States. Otherwise the Nordic countries were important sources of information, although the situation was complicated because Denmark, for example, did not want to challenge Germany in disclosing too much information.²¹ Finland, however, was the most important intelligence partner for Sweden and the official exchanges were only the tip of the iceberg.²²

When Adlercreutz took over there were fifteen intelligence stations: in Berlin, Helsinki, London, Riga, Paris-Brussels, Rome, Warsaw and Moscow. There were naval attachés to Helsinki-Baltic States, Copenhagen-Oslo, London, Paris-Haag and Rome. Air Force attachés were found in Berlin and London. The military attachés had a position in between the military and the political establishments. They reported primarily to the Department of Foreign Affairs within the General Staff (from 1937, the Defense Staff) and to the Ministry of Defense. The material was kept in the Military Archives (Krigsarkivet, KrA) and consisted of four different kinds of reports and correspondence. The most official document was the Report (Rapport) to the Ministry of Defense (Försvarsdepartementet) on various topics, either initiated by the attaché himself or commissioned from Stockholm. In general, the attaché was not allowed to make general political assessments as this was the task of the

18 Gunnar Åselius, "Militärattachéerna i S:t Petersburg: en undersökning av det svenska underrättelseväsendets professionalisering 1885-1917," *Militärhistorisk tidskrift* 1991.

19 Jan Ottoson och Lars Magnusson, *Hemliga makter: Svensk militär underrättelsetjänst från unionskrisen till det kalla kriget* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1991), 65.

20 Wilhelm M. Carlgren, *Svensk underrättelsetjänst, 1939-1945* (Stockholm: Liber/Allmänna förlaget, 1985), 9-12.

21 *Ibid.*, 15.

22 Martti Turtola, *Från Torne älv till Systerbäck: Hemligt försvarssamarbete mellan Finland och Sverige 1923-1940* (Stockholm: Probus, 1987).

minister.²³ This was not, however, entirely true since the reports are full of political assessments often with a slight military coating. In correlation with this, there are also the Travel Reports (Reserapporter) written and compiled by officers attached to foreign armies and/or establishments. Another form of correspondence was the Message (Meddelande) sent by the attaché on his own accord, typically on the local press debates on various military or political topics, to inform the General Staff about ongoing matters. The most informal was the Handletter (Handbrev) sent between the head of the Department and the attaché, discussing current affairs concerning service, i.e., daily business. These letters often contained important information on the attachés' informants. All the reports, messages, and letters went by diplomatic courier to Stockholm, or by coded telegrams. Finally, the sources also revealed that information was disclosed only in person, when the attaché went to Stockholm to brief.²⁴

The attachés in the Baltic Sea area had several important tasks. They assessed the political stability of the new states, particularly concerning the influence of communists and leftists in general. Most often, communist parties were outlawed, but assessing their cell activity was an important task. This mattered in the general estimation of military efficiency as conscripts could be potential communists. The overall strength and influence of communists, as well as centrifugal minority nationalism, was of primary interest.

National Characteristics

The concept of national characteristics has a long history and is related to older medical concepts of the humors, for example, which has provided the notions of people being sanguine or phlegmatic. These medical concepts came from antiquity and from historians, such as Herodotus, claiming that there were differences between peoples depending on the climate. This was modernized by Montesquieu who, in *De l'esprit des lois* (1748), meant that there was a difference between people from colder and warmer climates as colder climates made people reserved and warmer climates made people inclined to submission. During the 1800s, the concept of climate developed into racial biology and Social Darwinism. Close to the concepts of climate were the moral economic ideas purporting that people living on plains were less hardworking than people living in woodlands or mountains. In Europe, these ideas were commonplace and Sweden was, quite the contrary, no exception.²⁵ In Sweden, racial concepts were strong in academic circles but also in more popularized

23 Klaus-Richard Böhme, "Tysklands expansion börjar: Österrike 1938, Tjeckoslovakien 1938-1939," i *Stormvarning: Sverige inför andra världskriget*, ed. Bo Hugemark, 46 (Hallstavik: SMB, 2002).

24 Carlgren, *Svensk underrättelsetjänst*, 13.

25 Carl Frängsmyr has studied the concept of climate in Swedish thinking during the late 18th century; see Carl Frängsmyr, "Klimat och karaktär: Naturen och människan i sent Svenskt 1700-tal," Ph.D. dissertation, Uppsala universitet, 2000.

versions.²⁶ The ideas of national characteristics had a long history and influenced how individuals (or attachés for that matter) perceived the world.

The First World War, for example, was described in Swedish popular culture as a war between civilizations as opposed to a war between states. These civilizations were described in racial terms, but also by saying that German culture stood against the British peddlers.²⁷ This also aligned Sweden to the German cultural sphere. The war culture meant that the enemy could be obliterated as the victor was a superior culture. This Darwinist interpretation of war and peace became influential as it developed into the understanding of total war during the interwar period. Total war required total obedience and racial uniformity. The idea of national characteristics functioned as a way to define the surrounding world, and incorporated cultural understandings, history, and tradition as well as climate and race.

Finland -- The Culturally Inferior State

The Swedish idea of Finland was divided, as it was positive that Finland had thrown off the Russian yoke and had become an independent state. The problem was that there were Fennomans proclaiming Finnish superiority over the Swedish minority. This complicated the relationship between Sweden and Finland for a long time (even up to this day). The general Swedish understanding of Finland departed from a position of a perceived Swedish cultural superiority.

In the spring of 1920, Major Lagerlöf, the Swedish attaché to Helsinki, wrote about the Russian menace in assessing the resilience of the Finnish population. His conclusion was that Finland could not survive unless the Swedish minority fully supported Finnish statehood. The controversies between Swedes and Finns, fuelled by the Fennomans, threatened to crush Finland. The reason was that the Finns were culturally inferior:

Firstly, it showed itself to be [Finnish population] yielding to the Russification during the last phases of czarism; when the Germans came here in 1918 they threw themselves into their arms, only to, after the German catastrophe, with a light heart accept and see the Entente and particularly the English as their true saviours and friends. This untrustworthiness is inherited in the Finnish nation; it can however be understood, because during long periods of unfreedom individuals as

26 A few examples of these kinds of thoughts can be found in Isidor Flodström, *Sveriges folk: en utbildnings-, odlings- och samhällshistorisk skildring* (Uppsala: Almqvist och Wiksell, 1918), and Johan Evert Rosberg, *Nordiskt kynna: jämförande karaktäristiker* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1932).

27 Lina Sturfelt, "The Call of the Blood: Scandinavia and the First World War as a Clash of Races," in *Scandinavia and the First World War*, ed. Claes Ahund, 199-200 (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2012); Cf. Lina Sturfelt, "Eldens återsken: Första världskriget i svensk föreställningsvärld," Ph.D. dissertation, Lunds universitet, 2008.

well as an entire people acquire the characteristics of slaves. There is all the reason to fear that Finnish Finland one day will hail Russia as their true ally. The Swedish nation is of different mettle. It will not easily bend. The mood, at least in Österbotten, is such that it is a certainty that the Swedes will strongly appeal to the "Motherland" -- an appeal that Sweden according to my belief cannot for her national honour ignore. I still believe that a Swedish irredenta on the Finnish mainland is possible.²⁸

The so-called language battle had deep foundations and incorporated national characteristics where the Finns were believed to inherit submissive features for historical reasons, something that had not inflicted the Swedish population that had also lived under Russian rule. There was a clear definition of Swedes as superior, while Fennomans were described categorically as excessively nationalistic in their talk of a "Finnish spirit" directed towards both Russian and Swedish rulers. Major Lagerlöf's assessment in the autumn of 1920 was that the Finnish Army needed their Swedish officers described as the only "intellectual force in Finland." The strongest opposition to Fennomans was found in Österbotten (Ostrobothnia), while Swedes in other areas were portrayed as being mixed with Finns and not as resistant. The foundation was the self-aware, free-holding, and strong Swedish farmers in Österbotten.²⁹ It was clear to the attaché that the Russian influence had destroyed the national character in a similar manner in the Baltic states.

Although, as my reports have stated, there are certain benefits within the Latvian and Estonian armies, it is my definite opinion that whether these states come together or not, they cannot resist their powerful eastern neighbour [sic]. The reason for my opinion is that these countries, politically as well in military leadership, lack a moral fibre. Estonians as well as Latvians are and remain border peoples, whom have sucked up all the vices signifying the peoples of Czarist Russia. . . . A common trait among Estonian and Latvian higher officers is that they seem to be adventurers, wreckage from the Great War, brought into leading positions, without having the necessary qualifications to fill the positions.³⁰

28 Message no. 26, "Concerning the Russian Menace," February 27th 1920 from Major Lagerlöf till head GS/DFA, 3-4, vol. Finland EIa:5, General Staff, Department of Foreign Affairs (GS/DFA), Military Archives, Stockholm.

29 Report Litt. C. 77 "Concerning the Nationality Struggles and Finnish Defence," November 26th 1920 from Major Lagerlöf to Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Finland, 200 EIa:6, Military Archives, Stockholm.

30 Message no. 24, May 3rd 1927 from Major Rydeberg (in Helsinki) to head GS/DFA, 2. GS/DFA, Baltikum, 200 EIa:2, Military Archives, Stockholm.

Several of these descriptions of Finnish and Baltic peoples come from conservative notions of the free-holding peasant as the backbone of the nation, and in this case the common conservative defense of agrarian society was transferred to the Swedish minority in Finland. The peasant became a symbol of tradition, history, and evolutionary development as opposed to revolutionary ideas of an organic social harmony.³¹ Against these positive forces stood the Fennomans -- intellectually inferior, fanatical, and driven by “chested nationalist vanity.”³² The centrifugal forces inside the newly-founded states meant the resurgence of pan-movements since the Versailles treaties had not solved the nationality issues. In Sweden, Riksföreningen för svenskhetens bevarande i utlandet (National Union for the Preservation of Swedishness Abroad) was founded with an agenda of strengthening Swedishness in Finland and Estonia to negate chauvinistic Polish policies.³³ Poland was the antithesis to Swedish policy, strengthening Finland and the Baltic States but not allowing too much Polish influence. Poland was seen as adventurous and driven by chauvinistic attitudes that could lead to war and thereby threaten Finnish independence.

Also during the 1930s, the differences between different Swedish segments in Finland was mentioned. In a travel report from July 1936, Major S. A. Carlsson of the General Staff wrote that the Swedish population in the cities in southern Finland raised their children to become Finns and therefore the urban population would be gone within a few generations. The peasants on the other hand held on to their traditions.³⁴

The Swedish attachés in general were positive towards Finland and Finnish independence, but also nurtured quite a sceptical approach to the amateurism of the Finnish Army during the early 1920s. The division between regular army and Skyddskåren – Suojuskunta (Civil Guards) was particularly troublesome. In many cases Civil Guards were described as the only military organization that actually worked in Finland, but on the other hand as a “state within the state” that could all too easily develop into a coup d’état. The assessments in general built on three factors:

- 1) Evolutionary view on social and military development;
- 2) Concept of organic harmony between different groups in Finland;
- 3) Notion of national characteristics.

31 Fredrik Eriksson, “Det reglerade undantaget: Högerns jordbrukspolitik 1904-2004,” Ph.D. dissertation. Stockholm University, 2004, 45-47.

32 Report Litt. G. 118, “Concerning the Language Question in the Army,” October 30th 1924 from Lieutenant Colonel Rydeberg to Minister of Defense. GS/DFA, Finland, 200 EIa:14, Military Archives, Stockholm.

33 Bengt Kummel, “Nationalism över statsgränser: rörelser som enat och splittrat,” I *När imperier faller: Studier kring riksupplösningar och nya stater*, ed. Max Engman, 126, 140 (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1994).

34 Travel Report by Major of the General Staff S.A. Carlsson Concerning Particular Observations in Relation to Studies in Finland, July 31st 1936, 4-5. GS/DFA, Travel Reports, EIg:120, Military Archives, Stockholm.

The image of Finland and its military in Swedish reports was one of a society threatened to be dissolved by its inherent antagonisms. This was the common view of societies that had not “evolved naturally and organically” but been established in war and revolution. Therefore, Finland was threatened not only by Bolsheviki (foreign and domestic) but also by armed Fennomans with support among the Civil Guard.

The national characteristics were partly formed by nature and geography, something that influenced political opinions. For example, as in wastelands with low education, communism became strong, and if this was combined with an industrial center, communism would become unrivalled. The image of the Finnish soldier was quite like the image of the Polish soldier below. He was patriotic (sometimes too patriotic), hardy, and sturdy. The image of Finland as the country of the sauna also existed in the reports.

It is said that if a Finns knows he will take a sauna afterwards, he will endure any hardship. It is also certain that this kind of bath has a remarkable influence on the entire organism and the great successes of the Finns on the sports tracks can to a large extent be explained by sauna.³⁵

Lieutenant Hanze from the Swedish 13th Infantry Regiment discussed the capacity of the Finnish soldier in a travel report. He had served in the Karelian Guards Regiment in Viborg. In general, he was positive about the education and about all military units in the garrison. He emphasized the many similarities between Swedish and Finnish infantry:

Personal legerity was striking. Standing at attention when spoken to, quick and firm answers to questions, diligent salutes were commonplace. The uniforms were simple and soldierly. Something which gave shape to a bad fitting coat was the use of a belt. It was always worn and gave the individual a sporty and dashing appearance, often found lacking among Swedish soldiers. On the belt bayonets were never carried outside service. The reason was perhaps the dangers of fiery tempered soldiers.³⁶

35 Travel Report by Lieutenant at the Regiment of Norrbottens A, G:son Hallström Concerning Experiences from his Commanding to a Finnish Army Unit, July 14th 1931; Education and sorting of soldiers, 11; Combat assessments, 18-21; Fänrik Ståhl was mentioned 28 and the quotation from, 29. GS/DFA, Finland, 200 Elg:116, Military Archives, Stockholm.

36 Travel Report in Accordande to General Order 1805/1931 by the Lieutenant at the Regiment of Dalarna K.J. T. Hanze Concerning Service in the Finnish Army, February 13th 1932; Relationship Swedish-Finnish, 4; Quotation from 5-6; Conclusions concerning combat is quite similar to the ones made by Hallström, 17-19. GS/DFA, Finland, 200

The description is packed solid with national characteristics: the Finn bathes in a sauna and he fights with a knife. If being drunk had been added; this Swedish image of Finns would have been complete.

The East as a Representation of Evil

In 1923, Major Frey Rydeberg, the Swedish attaché to Helsinki, reported on his travels to Viborg Civil Guards district and the Karelian Isthmus. He reported that the training was “serious” and conducted with “great interest” and the feeling of preparing to meet the hereditary enemy was prevalent. The people of Karelia were defined through their warlike disposition:

... For him who have seen these areas [sic], the impression remains that at Systerbäck [the border with Russia] runs a distinct boundary between culture and barbarity, and also to the Karelian population, clearly aware of the peril, threatening its culture from the East. The population is ready to fight, with all the powers at their disposal they will fight for their culture.³⁷

The report is quite typical as it deals with purely military phenomena such as equipment, terrain, training, and capacity. This was combined with an analysis of the spiritual character of the soldiers, which in this case departed from the border landscape with deep forests and from history with the threat from the East. These factors had given the Karelian guardsmen their character.

The same factors also applied to the Baltic States where national characteristics, race, and history had created physically strong and hardy peasant populations. But the three Baltic States were also divided into a triptych of race. The Estonians were the most Nordic, while Latvians and Lithuanians were more Slavic. The Estonians and Latvians had also lived under the rule of Baltic Germans which had given consistency to these states but also hatred towards German influence. The Lithuanians, on the other hand, had inherited “a Polish disposition,” whatever that meant.³⁸ These descriptions of the history, founding, and internal cohesion are symptomatic for how Swedish military assessments were constructed and understood in the interwar

Elg:117, Military Archives, Stockholm.

37 Report F. 36, “Concerning a Journey to the Karelian Isthmus,” June 1st 1923 from Major Rydeberg to Minister of Defence, Quotation from, 4. GS/DFA, Finland, 200 E1a: 11, Military Archives, Stockholm.

38 The attaché to Riga Curt Juhlin-Dannfelt in the 1950s wrote a memoir called “Hågkomster” or “Recollections” to his family on what he had seen during his service abroad. It has never been published but is preserved as a typed manuscript. See Archive of Curt Juhlin-Dannfelt, Military Archives, Stockholm, “Recollections”, 130-131. Lithuania was described by Juhlin-Dannfelt as an operetta-country similar to the ridiculous dictatorships in Central America, 142.

period. The division between an Estonia with more Nordic traits and an orderly state structure, was compared to Latvia which was still quite orderly but more Slavic. Finally came Lithuania, l'enfant terrible of the region. Lithuania was Polish and Slavic -- hence not to the liking of Swedish attachés. Militarily the Baltic States were assessed as quite irrelevant as they could not defeat a Soviet attack, although the will to fight existed. In a letter from August 1928, Captain Juhlin-Dannfelt, attaché to Riga, described how the Baltic states worked before a visit from Major Ernst af Klercker (head of the Foreign Department):

These new states are very sensitive to all attention shown them from the old states, and they are foremost very flattered over all military visits. A visit is also surely devoted to strengthening the position of the Swedish representative, as it will satisfy his great thirst for vanity/parades, solemn demeanor, parades, etc. /becomes satisfied.³⁹

Juhlin-Dannfelt often mocked the overuse of military pomp and circumstance among Swedish officers as well as in the Baltic. In a memorandum written before he was transferred to Berlin, he wrote about the situation in Riga. In general, Juhlin-Dannfelt considered that information was obtainable but only if the attaché had time to work up channels of information. But for Juhlin-Dannfelt, national characteristics and racial concepts were also important factors for sorting impressions:

Distinctive characteristics of the Baltic military are such distinct sense of and anxiety about his own dignity, weakness of attention, and a somewhat ceremonious approach, extreme touchiness and inaccessibility unless formal arrangements are observed. The 'oriental' qualities, which will need to be taken into account when working as military attaché, having developed in the resp. states, the feeling of belonging to a small 'new' nation with minimal historical past, weak traditions and in most respects relatively poorly developed culture. To win trust and establish the relations necessary, without which work as military attaché will not yield the desirable results took a considerable amount of time, all the more so as the value of time and the pace of work completely differs from Swedish concepts.⁴⁰

But there were also distinct differences between the Baltic peoples:

39 Hand Letter Litt. no. U A 23, August 7th 1928 from Captain Juhlin-Dannfelt to head GS/DFA, 1-2. GS/DFA, Baltikum, 200 EIa:3, Military Archives, Stockholm.

40 "V.P.M. Concerning Aspects on the Position as Military Attaché to the Baltic States and it's [sic] Maintenance," April 29th 1933 from Captain Juhlin-Dannfelt to the Swedish Minister in Riga P. Reuterswärd, 1-2. GS/DFA, Baltikum, 200 EIa:8, Military Archives, Stockholm.

After independence Estonians and Latvians have not been very fond of each other. Ultimately this relationship comes from their different psychologies. The Estonian is sluggish, suspicious, stubborn and bent for simplicity in manners, the Latvian on the other hand is quicker, maybe smarter, active, ruthless, yverboren [untranslatable] and has a taste for pomp and circumstance. Estonia have felt embarrassed and annoyed by the 'big brother' manners and bullying [of Latvia], which is hardly likely to have slowed down, since they became member of the council of League of Nations. A recent trend is a tendency for Estonia to liberate themselves from the imaginary Latvian leadership.⁴¹

These definitions of Estonians and Latvians also mentioned psychology as an explanation. It seems that the psychological explanations were just modernized versions of national characteristics, combined with race, which was just the other side of the coin. Race was the modern version of climate thinking.

The Polish-Lithuanian Relationship

Poland was a complicated actor in the region and Swedish understanding was divided. Poland was the strongest military power except for the Soviet Union, but she could not guarantee the independence of the Baltic States, but could perhaps deter Soviet aggression. At the same time, Poland was chauvinistic towards its minorities and towards its neighbors. The same qualities as for the Baltic military mentioned above also applied to the Poles. In December 1922, Major Fredrik Lovén in Warsaw reported that the relationship between Poles and the French was tense and that the French mission would diminish in the future. According to Lovén, the French complained about the Polish lack of punctuality and orderliness as well as their tetchiness. These traits did not even allow professional critique and instructors could not even correct errors. Lovén concluded that these characteristics were common among the Poles.⁴² In general, the Polish General Staff was said not to be accommodating with information and that relations often were tense. This was due to the Polish national character. At the same time, the Polish military attaché in Stockholm reported Swedish officers to be older, lethargic, retrospective, and vainglorious.⁴³

The primary problem in Baltic military relations was the relationship between

41 Message no. 27/1937, December 6th 1937 from Major Brunsson to head DS/DI, 1. Defence Staff, Department of Intelligence (DS/DI), Baltikum, 202:3 EI:2 vol. 1, Military Archives, Stockholm.

42 Report no. 86, December 10th 1922 from Lieutenant Colonel Lovén to Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Polen, 200 EIa:2, Military Archives, Stockholm.

43 Wawrzeńuk, Med osäker utgång (forthcoming).

Poland and Lithuania infecting all arenas. Lithuanian hostility was also directed to Estonia and Latvia as their relations to Poland were too good. Lithuania was generally seen as quite problematic to assess. The animosity to Poland meant that Lithuania sought alliances and support among the enemies of Poland, e.g. Germany or the Soviet Union. The relationship to Germany was equally strained due to the issue of the city of Memel-Klaipeda. The Memel question was very interesting as it made Swedish assessments based on race come to the fore. It was not seen only as antagonisms of foreign policy. The Memel question signified that Lithuanian culture was seen as inferior to German, as the Lithuanians had been stifled under Russian supremacy. Therefore the Germans in Memel refused to be "Lithuanized" as it was an inferior culture.⁴⁴ This statement by Juhlin-Dannfelt is vital as it shows how assessments worked. Firstly, it was based primarily on history and that German culture was perceived as older, mature, and more developed. Secondly, it was based on a division between West and East, East being the representation of evil as we have seen. Lithuanian culture was young, eastern, chauvinistic, and immature. The foundations of this assessment hinged on what the attaché knew, i.e., Germany and German culture. Germanic culture was the foundation of Swedish culture, and hence Lithuanians were seen as just as childish as the Fennomans in Finland. Sweden was perceived as an old and superior state in relation to Finland and was challenged by immature bullies.

Politics was seen in the same conservative way. Ideologies had developed through history and there were immature ideologies, e.g., socialism and social democracy. In the eyes of Sweden, Poland became the same kind of schoolyard bully as the Fennomans. One example of chauvinistic Polish manners came in a report from July 1938 by Major Karl Lindqvist in Riga concerning the visit by Brigadier Wacław Stachiewicz, the Polish Chief of Staff, to Latvia, Estonia, and Finland during June of 1938. Nothing particular was reported from Riga, but in Tallinn Lindqvist had met with Colonel Richard Maasing, the head of Estonian intelligence and received information on what Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck had said in Tallinn. The spirit was that Estonia and Poland had a much firmer relationship that could ever have been achieved by signing a formal pact. The reason was that Estonia was not a Catholic country, there was no Polish minority and there was no common border. Hence, all the ingredients for a frictionless relationship existed.⁴⁵ Maasing's interpretation is almost a parody as it bears witness of Polish chauvinism, because if Estonia had all of these traits then the relationship would be the opposite. The statement is puzzling but bears witness to the idea that all minorities had to be brought "home" or alternately be suppressed. In this case, the Polish idea of *Kresy wschodnie*, Finnish dreams of Eastern Karelia, German *heim ins Reich*, and Swedish

44 Outgoing no. 39, "Concerning the Memel-Issue", February 18th 1932 from Captain Juhlin-Dannfelt to head GS/DFA. GS/DFA, Baltikum, 200 BI:1 Outgoing from Riga, Military Archives, Stockholm.

45 Message no. 33, July 6th 1938 from Major Lindqvist to head DS/DI. DS/DI, Baltikum, 206, BI:3, Military Archives, Stockholm.

ideas of an irredenta on the Finnish coast in 1920, were all parts of the same kind of thinking. Minorities were a threat that could crush the imagined national unity that had grown from conservative ideas of naturally and organically developed nations.⁴⁶ Minorities could not be part of this “natural” and “historical” unity. It was the dominant thought patterns of the interwar period influencing assessments in international politics as well as particularities. Swedish attachés as well as everybody else saw the world through a grid where national characteristics and minorities were integral parts.

In general, the Swedish reports from Poland in the interwar period were characterized by uncertainty as information was limited. Accordingly the attachés had to evaluate military parades and other manifestations to be able to discern the quality of the Polish Army. During the early part of the 1920s, foreigners were sent to Poznań and the 14th Division commanded by a former Prussian general. He had introduced Prussian military drill and was consequently described positively.⁴⁷ In the 1920s, reports from Poznań were positive although the attaché often had a creeping suspicion that this was not entirely the truth. During the 1930s, the reports became increasingly positive, and the Polish soldiers were continually described as very hardy and sturdy, especially concerning their marching abilities. In a report from July 1930 on a visit to the 21st Infantry Regiment in Warsaw, the attaché Major Millqvist emphasized the quality of the marching; the reason was said that the Polish Army had to be mobile. Their orderliness and cleanliness were described with the favorite phrase “exemplary.” In a report from 1933, attaché Major de Laval wrote the same thing concerning the Polish marching capacity of 65 kilometers per day. One of the reasons was that the Polish conscripts were hardy and used to Spartan conditions. This quite common assessment has an edge towards Swedish conscripts and also against urbanization. It was in the cities that soldiers forgot the hardening country life and became softened in the city.⁴⁸ The general concept among Swedish officers was that the Polish Army was better than it was thought to be, at least concerning the individual soldiers. The officers were a different matter, especially their heterogeneous education and background. Major Henry Kellgren reported this from his visit to the officers’ course at Rembertów in 1932.⁴⁹ In one of the last reports before the war broke out in 1939, the attaché wrote to Stockholm, describing the mood in Warsaw.

46 Benedict Anderson, *Den föreställda gemenskapen: reflexioner kring nationalismens ursprung och spridning* (Göteborg: Daidalos, 1996), and Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

47 Fredrik Eriksson, *Från Viborg, till Narva och Lemberg Svenska militärattachéers bedömningar av Östersjöområdet under mellankrigstiden* (forthcoming).

48 Report no. 3, July 16th 1930 from Major Millqvist, and EIA:6, Report no. 46, September 20th 1933 from Major de Laval, both to the Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Polen, 200 EIA: 5, Military Archives, Stockholm.

49 Major at the General Staff Kellgren’s Report over Studies in Poland August 1st to 30th 1932, General Order 1931/1932, October 29th 1932. GS/DFA, Travel Reports, EIg:138, Military Archives, Stockholm.

The report flourished with references to the Polish national character. Many things described by de Laval came from the Polish press. The Poles were said to be good and death-defying soldiers characterized by Slavic fatalism -- durable and rugged. Weaknesses were the deficient education and a Polish lack of organization. The Poles saw themselves as individualists as opposed to the German "horde-people":

Concerning national character and military education the Polish army can be described as very high quality: brave, unsensitive to losses, tough, rugged in meeting challenges (for example, bad provisioning), very good marching capacity. It's morale ought to be particularly high in a war with Germany. Every Pole knows that such a war is a battle of life and death and that it concerns the very existence of the Polish state.⁵⁰

But these positive reports can be contrasted with earlier reports concerning minorities in Poland and the division between East and West. Polish soldiers from the western parts were described as good nationalists and with a "high level of culture." Eastern conscripts had a lower cultural level and there were also active separatists in the east.⁵¹ Commonplace was that "western" conscripts were sent east and vice versa as there was a concern that the conscripts from Silesia would not be trustworthy in a war against Germany, and that the Ukrainians and Belarusians would not be trustworthy in a war against the Soviet Union. Jews could not be trusted in any way according to several reports. Hence, the soldiers described by Swedish attachés as very good during the 1920s (in Poznań) were Ruthenians and therefore normally seen as belonging to a group of "lower cultural level." It illustrates the social visions of the attachés as well as their appreciation of education and agrarianism. The social dimension was that the soldiers became good as they were led by "western" officers, formerly Prussians -- well educated and with a civilizing mission.

Another common factor in Swedish reports was communist plots and infiltration. In Poland, there were few communist groups and parties but many communists. The Soviet Union was very active, according to Major Millqvist, especially in Galicia where the pacification had challenged the minorities. Millqvist defined the Communist threat as depending on the economic performance and the economic challenges, and also on the minorities who added centrifugal forces in Poland. The Germans in the Polish Corridor were directly opposed to the Polish state due to Polish hardliners and also because the Germans were culturally superior. The Jews was the most problematic group, according to Millqvist, because all other minority issues could be solved through border revisions, while the Jews were "everywhere." The Jews were also seen as commonplace among communists as among owners of small businesses. The Belarusians were the least problematic as they had "very low

50 Report no. 37, August 28th 1939 from Lieutenant Colonel de Laval to the Minister of Defence. DS/DI, Polen, 202:3, EI13:3, Military Archives, Stockholm.

51 Message no. 11, June 2nd 1931 from Major Millqvist to head GS/DFA. GS/DFA, Polen, EIa:5, Military Archives, Stockholm.

culture and were mostly illiterate.” There were, however, many Soviet emissaries and separatist groups active in the east. The most problematic group was the Ukrainians in Galicia, at war with the Polish state.⁵²

The understanding Swedish attachés had on the minority issue in Poland was that the minorities threatened to tear the state apart. The centrifugal forces were too strong. Sweden here became the opposite, and was described as homogenous and well organized, although run by Socialist defense nihilists, according to the attachés. Poland, on the contrary, was described as functioning quite well on a military level, but with enormous strategic and security problems. The understanding of the minority issue became an east-west dichotomy. The Germans were too developed on a cultural level to accept the Polish state, as they did not understand it. The Ukrainians were at a low cultural level, but were dominated by a small clique of hard-core nationalist terrorists. The Belarusians were uncultured in the extreme and were in the hands of Polish manor owners, without the organization to threaten the Polish state. The Jews were communists and everywhere and were a major threat to the integrity of Poland. Many minorities were also discarded as soldiers and the homogenous army was seen as a guarantee for the state. In a report from February 1935, then Major de Laval, wrote about the quality of Polish units using the common expressions concerning heterogeneous officers’ corps combined with sturdy and hardy peasant boys. The Polish soldiers were of very good “human stock” as opposed to the Jews who could only be used in administrative positions. The weakness were the minorities, as Ukrainians accounted for 16 percent of the population, Germans 6 percent, Belarusians 6 percent, and Jews 10 percent. The relations were however better now since conscripts were mixed together and sent to different parts of Poland.⁵³ Therefore, they would receive a better understanding for each other and develop a “true” nationalism.

National Characteristics and Determinism

Concepts of national characteristics were important in the Swedish assessments of her surroundings and were combined with historical notions of nationality, meaning that characteristics were strengthened by historical phenomena. National characteristics in general, however, were not deterministic as they actually changed over time. One important factor often mentioned by Swedish attachés concerning foreign officers was the concept of education or *bildung*. The problem arose when national characteristics were given priority, as had been the case in Finland when the *jaegers* were promoted over their capacity and in Poland with the legionaries. All

52 Message no. 18, June 10th 1931 from Major Millqvist to head GS/DFA; EIa:6, Message no. 6, June 10th 1933 from Lieutenant Colonel Millqvist to head GS/DFA; EIa:7, Report no. 1, January 15th 1934 [wrongly dated 1933] from Major de Laval to Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Polen, 200 EIa:5, Military Archives, Stockholm.

53 Report no. 5, February 3rd 1935 from Major de Laval to Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Polen, 200 EIa:9, Military Archives, Stockholm.

of these officers were good junior officers, and could perhaps command a company. Anything above that level required traditional education, which they did not have. Therefore, education could supersede national characteristics. Again, these assessments built on a traditional understanding of what a military organization was, i.e., a traditional and orderly system that included promotion, hierarchy, and uniformity. All of these are part of the ideal image of the military and the promotion above their rank, as jaegers and legionaries were all part of the recognition processes in the newly-established states.

It is my interpretation that the use of national characteristics really concerned social factors and social stratification. National characteristics often relate to soldiers and officers promoted past their education and rank. The soldiers were assessed according to the construction of an ideal national character. Officers were assessed though their social standing, status, and education, i.e., education made it possible for the officer to step into the international military culture and also negate national characteristics. These characteristics, however, rarely applied to officers of higher social status, and indeed, quite the opposite. National characteristics reappeared in the descriptions of, for example, Finnish jaegers but never for Marshal Gustaf Mannerheim. Social stratification only applied to “real” officers and not to lieutenants with a battlefield commission. In Finland, these assessments became extremely problematic as a large percentage of the Finnish officers, to include the jaegers, were Swedes, and both groups were promoted equally fast. One example was the dismissal of a former Swedish czarist officer Major General Tunzelman von Adlerflug (even if the name sounds very German). It was not about national characteristics per se, but the real issue was the discourse of education. Adlerflug was helped by the fact that he was of an old military family, had a traditional officers’ education, and was Swedish. The Finnish Army was described as:

It is [the dismissal of Adlerflug] part of the struggle between Eastern and Western opinion that now proceeds in Finland and threatens to be fatal for the army. It is the struggle between fear of responsibility, egocentric use of held rank, military ignorance about modern war, demands for the enforcement of formality and a certain laissez-aller system. On the other side is the will to take responsibility, the will to sacrifice personal gain for the greater good, military knowledge won through privations and suffering and an ability to see reality, even at the disregard for formality, and a serious ambition to imbue the army with patriotic and a sense of duty.⁵⁴

This is the definition of classical military education, and also of a social understanding as it were that the traditional elites that could distance themselves from egocentricity, a classic conservative opinion. It was the struggle between the

54 Report Litt. no. H. 87, September 7th 1925 from Major Rydeberg to Minister of Defence. GS/DFA, Finland, 200 EIa:16, Military Archives, Stockholm.

norms of Western civilization as opposed to Eastern autocracy. The division between East and West was equally as strong as between North and South.

A strong current among military attachés as well as in society at large were ideas of the “Bolshevik-Jew” and his “notorious unreliability.” This was common in reports from Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, but not in the reports from Finland. There was instead the Swedish minority which was seen as more civilized than the Finns. In this case, Swedes became nation-builders, but were not divisive in any way. Another group was the Baltic Germans who, in the Swedish reports, had a similar role as Swedes in Finland. Especially in the reports from Poland, minorities were described as a force threatening to blast the Polish state. But even in this sense there were hierarchies among the minorities. The Jews were described as the most dangerous since they were seen as sublimely intelligent and Moscow’s emissaries of communism. Germans were seen as intelligent, culturally superior, and hostile to the Polish state. The Swedish attaché understood that the Germans could not be loyal to Poland because it was in his eyes an inferior civilization. Ukrainians and Lithuanians were also primary threats to Poland, but not from the standpoint that they had culture or education but because they fought the Polish state with arms. Belorussians finally were assessed as too uneducated and uncivilized for even having a national movement. All of these assessments hinged on the notion of civilization between east and west.

These stereotypical characteristics concerning minorities did concern assumed soldierly qualities. These qualities also concerned majority populations, and Swedish attachés more or less always saw the military education as inadequate, but this did not necessarily depend on the national characteristics of minorities or majority populations. One important factor was the lack of knowledge of modern warfare among officers. In Finland and Poland, the victories in the civil war or Polish-Bolshevik war, respectively, became a manual for future wars. Swedish officers saw that these wars did not have anything to do with wars in the future, but rather were civil wars without relevance for “real” wars. It was noted that the Poles fought demoralized Red Army units in 1920, but that the modern Red Army was something else. This analysis was also part of the concept of strengthening hierarchies, through saying that a “real” officer, i.e., with the proper background and education, and not the medalled second lieutenant, should do the assessments. Otherwise the guerrilla warfare type of fighting became the pattern and according to Swedish officers this was not a proper way to fight a war.

The analysis also shows that the reports of the officers depended on the manifestation of military power and ability in their reports. The manifestations of military normality and national firmness were just as much about sending a message abroad as well as to the soldiers participating. Swedish officers’ assessments were intimately linked to international military culture, but with specific national traits. Finnish, Polish, Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian armies strove to manifest ability and normality, hence in Poland the foreign attachés were allowed to visit Poznań, since it was the most “Prussian” of the Polish garrisons. As it was “Prussian,” it was also recognized to what was seen as the international standard of military culture, at

least up until 1914. The Imperial German Army was the pattern for military culture and to play this card versus foreign military attachés was about normality, and tying yourself to the norm as much as possible, in the same way historical manifestations and rituals become important in these new states as it gave the possibility to “stretch” the nation back through history, i.e., “historizing” the nation. This created a historical acceptance for the states as it ritualized the nation and army for the citizens as well as soldiers. The state was normalized inwards as well as outwards, received by foreign officers using the international military culture as mediator. Visualisation of military power was a form of military “sign-language.”

All of the foreign examples were seen by the Swedish attachés using Sweden as the yardstick. It was a comparison that did not always come out to the advantage of Swedish soldiers. For example, it was often mentioned that Swedish soldiers were not as hardy and resilient as their Finnish, Polish, and Baltic counterparts and the primary reason was that Swedish soldiers were “welfare-damaged.” Life in Sweden was too good and this meant that soldiers were pampered, although they were well educated and civilized. In reports from Poland, it was stated that the Polish conscripts were very willing since they had a better life in uniform than in civil attire. This factor did not exist in Sweden, as it was believed that Social Democracy had levelled society in an unpatriotic direction.

Finally, the Swedish assessments pointed out that the low levels of “culture and civilization” in the east meant that the soldiers were incapable of making their own decisions. They could not function without a guiding hand, both in combat and in garrison. It also shows a distinct German influence in Swedish military thinking as independent activity was linked to German *auftragstaktik*. As opposed to this, in England drill was seen as important to enforce obedience while German combat education was about responsibility and action. These different visions were discussed by Swedish officers, even though they defined drill as Prussian, but at the same time concluded that there was not enough energy put on the individual soldier.⁵⁵ Oddly enough, the same thing was written about Sweden by foreign military attachés.

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55 Martin Samuels, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies* (London: Routledge, 2003), 284-285.

The Nationalist Idea: A Fundamental Factor in Bulgaria's Military Policy during the First Half of the 20th Century

by

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After its liberation from Ottoman rule, Bulgaria took part in two regional and three world wars -- five conflicts all in all: the Serbo-Bulgarian War in 1885; the Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913; World War I in 1915-1918; World War II in 1941-1945; and the Cold War.

The country emerged victorious only from the 1885 Serbo-Bulgarian War. The other wars ended in defeat and brought about four national catastrophes: in 1913, 1918, 1945, and the 1990s.

With the exception of the Cold War, all wars waged by Bulgaria were fueled by nationalism. One must note, however, that the country's participation in the Cold War was also indirectly linked to nationalism: Bulgaria became embroiled in the global conflict, not out of its free will, but due to its affiliation with the Communist Bloc of the former Soviet Union, a consequence of Bulgarian policies on the eve of and during World War II, when nationalism also played a leading role.

One may simplistically conclude that Bulgaria was the most nationalist state on the Balkan Peninsula. However, such a conclusion would be not only superficial but even erroneous, as Bulgaria's conduct entirely matched the logic and peculiarities of international relations in the Balkans and Southeastern Europe during the period in question: when nationalism was indeed the leading policy factor.

* * *

Modern nationalism emerged during the first half of the 18th century in Western Europe. France provided the classical model, followed by England. Modern nationalism is a complex, multifaceted process. For the purposes of this study, one will only point out that it was influenced by the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Industrial Revolution; it marked the end of the Middle Ages and became a symbol

of the Modern Period.

Modern nationalism is an extremely pervasive process. Over the course of centuries, it would dominate the historic evolution of the core of human civilization at the time: Western, and later all, of Europe, as well as North America. This unstoppable process would transform vast empires, such as those of the Habsburg and Ottomans, from multi-lingual and multi-cultural into multi-national entities and would eventually cause their disintegration. To this day, nationalism has been going strong on a world and European scale, to say nothing of in the Balkans. The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s should dispel any doubts about this.

Since modern nationalism was born in Western Europe, generally speaking it spread mainly from west to east: at first toward the lands that would later become Germany, and then farther to the east and southeast, toward the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires. There are, of course, exceptions, such as its northwestern spread toward Ireland.

Modern nationalism is both complex and many-sided. Within the limited scope of this study, it is impossible to present even a brief analysis of its varieties and characteristics. One must, however, emphasize an aspect of its typology, which has had a direct impact on the evolution of Balkan nationalism. The process follows a particular pattern in empires that have been powerful enough to deal with any national liberation movements, such as the British Empire or Austria-Hungary; it has a distinctly different model in a disintegrating empire, such as the Ottoman one. In other words, the Irish in the United Kingdom or the Czech, Croats, and Poles in Austria-Hungary faced a very different situation than the Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire, who managed to establish their small, yet independent states.

The emergence of contemporary Balkan states in the 19th century followed a similar pattern. Broadly speaking, the pattern involved an armed rising, the intervention of a powerful foreign factor (Russia), the proclamation of a Russo-Turkish War, and the establishment of a small independent monarchy, which becomes the foundation for subsequent expansion and recognition. All traditional historic Balkan states -- Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria -- went through this process.

The process was generally characterized by spreading from the periphery to the center of the empire, which was quite logical. Such logic objectively assigned Bulgaria the last place in the line of emerging Balkan states in the 19th century, which would entail dramatic consequences during the division of the Ottoman legacy on the Balkans. The Principality of Bulgaria was some fifty years younger than Greece or Serbia. Historically, the difference does not appear great, but in reality it would play a decisive role. During that half a century, the Serbian and Greek state systems, foreign policy skills, diplomacies, and national elites as a whole accumulated the experience that would let them gain the upper hand in Bulgaria during the Balkan Wars.

However, the proximity of the Bulgarian-populated lands to the capital of the Ottoman Empire had not only disadvantages, but also great strategic advantages for the Bulgarian state. Thrace, a region traditionally populated by Bulgarians, lies next to one of the most unique sites on our planet: the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. They

have always had a key strategic importance, especially from a Eurasian perspective.

* * *

We have mentioned already that modern Bulgarian states emerged and evolved according to a similar pattern: starting as small monarchies, invariably perceived by the corresponding Balkan nation as a foundation, core for future expansion and unification with the “enslaved brothers” that had remained under foreign domination. Therefore, as soon as they appeared on the political map, the new Balkan states fell into an insidious historic trap, in terms of both their internal and foreign policies. None of them has managed to escape this trap unscathed. A state nationally similar to, for example, Austria-Hungary was not an attractive model for the emergent Balkan monarchies. The ideal of modern nationalism was ethnically homogeneous France. The doctrine of a “single state roof” dominated the public consciousness of Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians during the 19th and the early 20th centuries. No one considered that the French nation had never been “liberated” piecemeal and “unified” after a “Balkan” model, but had emerged from an age-old amalgam formed of diverse ethnic parts from the era preceding the appearance of the modern nation phenomenon. Nor did anyone consider the violence, casualties, and vast human suffering accompanying that difficult, centuries-old process. The public consciousness of the Balkan peoples was permeated by a different, misleading stereotype: “The French are unified, France is great, France is rich!” Hence, one shall make a state like France and automatically become great and rich! (Such illusions have been common on the Balkans for the entire 20th century, up to this day.) Such misleading stereotypes in the public consciousness during the second half of the 19th century were a step away from the megalomaniac Balkan nationalist projects -- and no one failed to make this step.

The Greeks had by far the most notorious ideas. Because of their specific history from Antiquity through the Byzantine Empire to the 19th century, they were scattered across southeast Europe and Asia Minor. The doctrine “All Greeks under one roof” or the Megali Idea implied the rebirth of Ancient Greece. That would mean the emergence -- in the 20th century, in the East Mediterranean -- of a state centered around a sea and consisting of a relatively narrow land territory. Furthermore, this periphery was not ethnically homogeneous. In many places, the Greek population was a minority. Some elements were also borrowed from the grandeur of the Byzantine Empire. Since Athens paled before Constantinople, Greek nationalist dreams sometimes featured turning the Bosphorus city into the capital of Greater Greece. One could hardly come up with a more absurd project! That is why its failure was devastating. The 1922 Greek defeat was literally a catastrophe. After losing the Greco-Turkish War in 1922, a vast Christian population was banished from Asia Minor after having lived there for centuries (reports told of about a million and a half people, which amounted to one third of the population of the Greek nation at the time), and both the Greek and traditional Christian presence in that part of the world was thoroughly eradicated in an ethnic, cultural, religious, and civilizational sense. The Christian civilization that had been evolving there ever since Byzantine

times was destroyed forever.¹

Furthermore, all of this took place after a war in which the Greeks had been victorious. Greece had the historic fortune to bet on the “winning horse” during World War I, and its Megali Idea enjoyed strong foreign support. It even received international legal confirmation by the 1920 Sèvres Treaty. According to the treaty, the Greek state borders started at northern Epirus and Albania, continued east, encompassing southern and part of central Macedonia (territories obtained as a result of the Balkan Wars), western and eastern Thrace, reached the Black Sea and went south, dividing Asia Minor into two (the western part would belong to Greece), continued into the Mediterranean, the island of Crete, and finally bordered on Albania again. The only area that Greek statesman Venizelos did not dare ask for was Constantinople and its adjacent territories, because they were occupied by the Entente Powers. However, there was no doubt that the Greeks counted on annexing Constantinople in the future. Under the “Sèvres Project,” Greece spanned two continents, Europe and Asia, and touched on three seas: the Adriatic, the Black Sea, and the Aegean. The eastern Mediterranean was a sort of “internal sea” of the Greek state. Such a project could hardly be called anything but “insane,” considering the logic of state systems in the 20th century. How would communications work within such a state? How would it have a unified, common economy? How would it protect its borders? Nobody knew. Yet the project was backed by a Great Power, the British Empire. Yet nothing can make an insane idea less insane. Catastrophe came swiftly.

* * *

Modern Serbian nationalism has different characteristics. Serbia, like Romania and unlike Bulgaria or Greece, borders on a European Great Power: Austria-Hungary. This circumstance had a deep impact on the strategic directions of Serbian nationalism. It could not strive to expand to the north and west (the territory of Austria-Hungary); therefore, it had to look eastward and southward. Thus, the Serbian nationalistic doctrine was founded upon a sort of “ethnic engineering.” Since Serbia could not expand to the north or west (which were the natural directions), it was to expand to the east and south, despite having no ethnic justifications for doing so. The 1885 invasion in Bulgaria was partly fueled by this philosophy. The doctrine also incorporated strategic economic elements. Serbia needed access to a sea. Since the way to the Adriatic was off limits, Serbia had to go south, toward the Aegean, and Thessaloniki would become a Serbian port. Never mind that there was not a single Serb in the lands between Serbia and the Aegean coast. If there are none, we shall make some!

1 The banishment of Christians from Asia Minor after the 1922 Greco-Turkish War is the more well known aspect of those tragic events. What remains less known is that half a million Muslims were forced into exile, along the opposite road, from the lands in modern Greece to Anatolia. What these people had to face, Christians and Muslims alike, God only knows.

In terms of megalomania, Serbia kept up with Greece. Given the favorable conditions, the Great Serbia project would easily transform into a “mini” Great Balkan Empire project. Belgrade was also fortunate to bet on the winning horse. In 1919, the most maximalist dreams of Serbian nationalism were surpassed. Chiefly, with the support of France, an artificial state construct was born: the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, later renamed Yugoslavia. After its breakup in 1940, Yugoslavia was reconstituted in 1945, this time after the ideological model of Communism. However, one cannot flee from one's historic fate. The devastation following Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s is commensurate (except for the number of casualties) with the Greek catastrophe in 1922.

* * *

Returning to the Balkans in the 19th century reveals an aspect of the historic trap where each new modern national Balkan state fell stemmed from the motley, mosaic-like ethnic and religious structure of the population in southeastern Europe. Since the beginning of their independence, the young Balkan states found themselves forced to solve an unsolvable puzzle. On the one hand, even the small territory of each emergent monarchy was not ethnically homogeneous; there was no such territory in the Balkans at the time. On the other hand, the historic mission of each new Balkan state was to achieve national unification, that is, territorial expansion. Here lay the true insidiousness of the “trap”: when a state expanded, it added both its own nationals and new minorities, which means potential new problems. Frequently, the expansion brought along more problems than benefits. However, one should not expect the interference of common sense here; modern nationalism, as already pointed out, is an extremely powerful process which takes over the public consciousness akin to an urge, leaving reason behind. If reason were capable of keeping up, Ireland would not have been torn by a civil war for eighty years.

The national unification of modern Balkan states inevitably involved a military conflict. This was an even more insidious element of the “historic trap” mentioned above. War always makes the state seem less appealing, both to those who are about to be annexed and to the fighting “liberators.” Furthermore, war preparations cost a major portion of the energy and resources of the Balkan states, which had been poor in the first place. This in turn undermined the natural process of ethnic consolidation. There is no more natural, safe, and successful method for ethnic consolidation than economic and cultural progress. Everyone wants to be part of a prosperous and free society.

This applies even more to peaceful times, when war is over, even if it was a victory. The expenditure of enormous funds necessary for the assimilation of the annexed territories and the maintenance of a repressive state apparatus inevitably causes social, economic, and political complications and cataclysms that hinder the positive nation-generating processes. A telling example in that respect is the history of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes after World War I.

Notwithstanding, territorial expansion and unification is a historically determined destiny of modern national states. The drive to gather all your fellow countrymen

under the same “roof” is as compelling as a natural instinct and is acted upon, no matter the cost.

* * *

Compared to the Greek or Serbian nationalist programs, the Bulgarian version seems the most moderate and realistic. In all three historic regions comprising the idea of Greater Bulgaria -- Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia (except for its southern parts where there was a major concentration of Greeks) -- the predominant population was Bulgarian. Perhaps maximalism never found the right circumstances to surge; in any case, extremism played a secondary role in the Bulgarian nationalist program. While Bulgarians have not acted like angels, others, especially the Serbs and Greeks, have been the “devils.” On the contrary, I am convinced that had they had the chance, Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand I and his ministers would have treated Serbia or Greece just as mercilessly as Elefthérios Venizelos and Nikola Pašić treated Bulgaria after the end of World War I. Such a chance never occurred though. Circumstances did not allow Bulgaria to demonstrate nationalist atrocities, while Belgrade and Athens were given the chance and they used it. What matters here is that Bulgaria’s national trials had the historic prerequisites to be less severe or even be entirely avoided. The ethnic population was relatively consolidated by Balkan standards, centered in the three national regions: Moesia, Thrace, and Macedonia. The nationalist program was more modest compared to its Greek and Serbian counterparts; generally, it stayed within the confines of those three regions.

The grand question is why Bulgaria wasted its “golden” historic chances and entered the spiral of four national catastrophes in a row. The answer lies mostly in the relative immaturity of Bulgarian society at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It was this immaturity that prevented Bulgarians from outlining a proper and wise vision for the future evolution of the country, to order the strategic priorities of its national program. At the turn of the 20th century, during the crucial Balkan Wars, the relative immaturity of Bulgarian society let the collective reason of the nation be clouded by gambling maximalism and emotional nationalism, two trademarks of the 19th century. Reason would point out that Bulgaria’s chief strategic priorities should point east and southeast -- not west, at Macedonia. It was the Aegean Sea that was strategically invaluable for Bulgaria, not the Vardar or the Doiran Lake. There is no need to argue the economic, strategic, and military advantages of access to the Aegean coast, close to the Dardanelles, too. Furthermore, after the victorious First Balkan War, no one questioned Bulgaria’s right to rule over the Aegean coast from the mouth of the Maritsa to Kavala. Bulgarian society, however, was in thrall to emotional nationalism, of romantic “Bulgarian Exarchate” thinking: the freedom of our enslaved brothers in Macedonia and the Edirne region must be won at any cost. Note that people talked, not of Thrace and the Aegean coast, but of the Edirne region, because a compact mass of Bulgarians lived there at the time. Those sentiments permeated all of Bulgarian society, from illiterate peasants, through the intelligentsia, the political and military elite, all the way to the Palace.

In such circumstances, Bulgaria was doomed. The Serbian, Greek, and Romanian

joint action against Bulgaria was historically predetermined, not any sort of random coincidence. At one point in 1913, Bulgaria was at war with all four of its neighbors: Serbia, Greece, Romania, and Turkey. (Only the Black Sea stayed neutral!) Bulgaria met with its first, and fatal, national catastrophe.

In such situations, logic requires one to ask: who bore the historic responsibility for the outcome of the Balkan Wars? The answer given most frequently over the past hundred years has pointed to Tsar Ferdinand I. It is correct but incomplete. The responsibility lay with the entire Bulgarian society, which did not prove mature enough to face the challenges of the time fittingly. At the turn of the 20th century, Bulgaria was still a primitive, underdeveloped state, and Bulgarian society had not attained that degree of maturity that would allow it to make wise decisions and strive toward a bright future. The decisions in 1912 and 1913 were entirely Bulgarian. Whereas one may argue that Bulgaria's involvement in the two world wars was shaped by external circumstances, that was not the case for 1912-1913. Then, Bulgaria's fate was completely determined by Bulgaria's will. Herein lay the failure. From the ground to the top. From the illiterate peasants, through the intelligentsia and middle class, to the political elite and the Palace. Of course, the lower social strata, the broad masses bore the most diffuse, general, and indirect responsibility. The higher one goes, the heavier and more concrete the responsibility became, until one reached the top of the social pyramid: the Palace. Most regrettably, Tsar Ferdinand I also proved to be governed by emotion, by gambling, rather than clear judgment. The following generations have justifiably been accusing the then monarch for a hundred years. Because the Monarchy was the institution meant to be a pillar of reason and wisdom in state governance, a counterbalance to the lower strata's tendency to primal reactions. The Monarchy was the institution that should organically blend the care for a proper development and well-being of the state with the natural urge to provide a bright future for one's own people. Unfortunately, it was not so with Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand I. The "castle" was betrayed from the inside. The person who was expected to be the most responsible, wisest, and most cautious turned out to be the most impulsive, risk-taking, and irresponsible. Ferdinand arrived in Bulgaria with the mindset of a medieval autocrat, not of a modern constitutional monarch looking toward the 20th century. His entire rule was marked by an insatiable craving for more power. This largely predetermined his fate. In fact, his abdication was the least that could have happened to him.

* * *

The historic conclusion, and a great moral, is that nationalism has been a poor counselor for Balkan states. The "everyone under the same national roof" doctrine -- the drive to unify all Greeks, respectively Serbs or Bulgarians, in one country, regardless of their numbers and distribution across Southeastern Europe or even Asia Minor -- inevitably leads to national catastrophes. It does not matter whether one won or lost a regional or world war, nor does it matter which and how strong a Great Power supported one temporarily. The collective experience of Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians throughout modern and contemporary history testifies to that.

General Marian Kukiel¹ on the Mobilization of the Polish Armed Forces in the West in Case of the Outbreak of World War III

by

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Abstract

A peaceful post-war coexistence of former allies did not permit a change in the political situation of Poland. It seems a significant part of Polish society, both in the West and in the country under the Soviet influence and that of the new people's authorities, saw an opportunity for a change of their own fate in a future armed conflict. A new war could, in many people's opinion, bring back Polish sovereignty and independence. Among the commanders of the Polish Armed Forces, opinions concerning the possibility of an outbreak of the third world war were divided. Many believed that such a conflict was a natural consequence of the development of the international situation, while others believed that in the nearest future a new war would not take place. One of the most important documents concerning problems connected with a potential, new mobilization of soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West after World War II is undoubtedly the confidential study by the Minister of National Defense of the time, Maj. Gen. Marian Kukiel, entitled Polish Armed Forces in the Face of a Possible War, written in London in 1947.

A peaceful post-World War II coexistence of former allies did not change the fate of Poland and Poles. No wonder that a significant part of the Polish society, both in the West and in the country under Soviet influence and the new people's authorities, saw an opportunity for a change of their own fate in the future armed conflict. A new war could, in many people's opinion, bring back Polish sovereignty and independence.

1 Major General Marian Kukiel (1885-1973) was during World War II the Secretary of State and the Minister of National Defense. After the war, he remained in exile in London, and he served as the Minister of National Defense in the Polish government in exile until 1949.

Tens of thousands of Poles were forced by the situation of the time to refrain from returning to their homeland and remaining, as it was assumed -- only temporarily -- in exile until independence could be regained. The Polish government in the United Kingdom assumed the attitude of opposition and strong protest against the situation of the Polish state, and demonstrated an attitude of pertinacious fight for the state's sovereignty.

Among commanders of the Polish Armed Forces, opinions concerning the possibility of an outbreak of the third world war were divided. Some of these individuals believed that such a conflict was a natural consequence of the development of the international situation; another segment, however, on the basis of the analysis of the activity of contemporary key players on the international political scene, believed that in the nearest future a new war would not take place. By the way, it needs to be stated that one of the most accurate assessments was made by Col. Leon Mitkiewicz, a liaison officer of the Polish staff and the Joint Chiefs of Staffs. In his report sent on 8 March 1945 from Washington to the Chief of Staff of the Polish High Command, General Stanisław Kopański stated: "Hopes for near changes in the balance of power and for a near armed conflict between the West and Soviet Russia are illusory. Just like in 1918 -- or rather in 1815 -- the new balance of power and political system will not be lasting, but will be maintained for a longer period."² A very similar opinion was expressed a month later in one of the documents prepared in the Records and Studies Department of the II Staff of the Polish High Command by Lt. Col. Leon Bortnowski. The document signed by him reports: "Not only can we not see any concrete preparations of Anglo-Saxons to the war against the Soviets, but on the contrary, we observe all possible attempts to avoid any conflicts with the Russians which could now or later lead to the break in the coalition."³

The commander of the Polish II Corps, General Władysław Anders, in turn, belonged undoubtedly to the group of Polish military commanders who predicted a military conflict between the West and the Soviet Union in the near future. It was proved by both his numerous statements as well as real activities as the commander of II Corps, conducted directly after the war. In a letter of 9 May 1945 to Gen. Zygmunt Bohusz-Szyszko, he wrote: "I believe that God will allow us to win the second phase of the war for freedom and the integrity of Poland."⁴ This conviction of the inevitability of the imminent conflict which was supposed to bring back Poland's independence was the cause of W. Anders's activity aiming at developing the ranks of Polish II Corps, despite the lack of consent on the part of the British, to whom the

2 L. Mitkiewicz, *W najwyższym sztabie zachodnich aliantów 1943-1945* (London: 1971), 260-261.

3 Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum in London (hereinafter referred to as PISM), Records of Department II of the Staff of the Commander in Chief, Draft response of the Information and Intelligence Department to the query of one of Polish military attachés, no A.XII.24/57.

4 Z ostatniej chwili. Rozkaz gen. Andersa nr 5, „OB.” no 22 of 3 June 1945, p. 11, quoted after: A. Zaćmiński, *Emigracja polska w Wielkiej Brytanii wobec możliwości wybuchu III wojny światowej 1945-1954* (Bydgoszcz: 2003), 137.

Polish troops were subordinated from the operational point of view. Officers of the Polish II Corps Staff started preparations for World War III.

Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski also believed that military confrontation between the former allies would take place in the future. He was of an opinion that it would not take place directly after World War II, as the leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin, would first strive to strengthen his own, both military and economic, potential, and especially to obtain nuclear weapons.⁵

In the military environment there was a prevalent atmosphere of certain temporality. It was believed that the post-war international situation was not stable enough to guarantee the peaceful co-existence of the West and the East.

In the second half of the 1940s and at the beginning of the 1950s, Polish commanders prepared a number of interesting force structure and mobilization plans and analytical studies, in which authors considered a few, different variants of the development of the international situation and the potential engagement of the Polish Armed Forces in the future military conflict between the West and the East.

One of the most important documents concerning problems connected with the potential new mobilization of soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces in the West after World War II was undoubtedly the confidential study by the Minister of National Defense, Maj. Gen. Marian Kukiel, entitled *Polskie Siły Zbrojne wobec możliwości wojny* [Polish Armed Forces in the face of a possible war] ⁶. The document was written in London and dated 30 July 1947.

When characterizing the international situation of that time, M. Kukiel wrote of open and strong conflict between the Soviet Union and Anglo-Saxon superpowers, unofficially taking the form of armed clashes in many other locations (Greece, China, and Korea, for example).

M. Kukiel also drew attention to the actual division of Europe and the world into the democratic West and the block of communist countries, with the Soviet Union as its leader, adding at the same time that neither of the alliances planned to resign themselves to that situation. Gen. Kukiel, in his description of the political and military situation in the world, stated that the current policy of appeasement of the western countries towards the Soviet Union ended with total bankruptcy, causing only "increased aggression and brutality of the enemy."⁷

The real state of relationships at that time between the East and the West was defined by Kukiel as a potential state of war. In his July 1947 opinion, the projected war had not broken out yet for a few, fundamental reasons. Firstly, the Soviet Union, despite its overwhelming superiority of land forces and the possibility of rapidly capturing the rest of Europe, was not yet ready for war, as it did not have nuclear

5 See Zaćmiński, *Emigracja polska w Wielkiej Brytanii wobec możliwości*, 138.

6 PISM, Records of the Minister of National Defence [sic], confidential study of the Minister of National Defence Brig.-Gen. Marian Kukiel, 30 July 1947, entitled *Polskie Siły Zbrojne wobec możliwości wojny*, no A.XII.3/91, 1.

7 Ibid., 1. As supporters of such policy, Gen. M. Kukiel included U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and James Francis Byrnes, the U.S. Secretary of State from 3 July 1945 to 21 January 1947.

weapons, its long-distance air force was poorly developed, the navy was weak, the transportation system inadequately developed, and finally, its economic potential was at the much lower level than the potential of the United States. Secondly, Anglo-Saxon democracies “were still in full personal, material and moral demobilisation [sic].”⁸ Kukiel also believed that the United States “is only now regaining the technical ability to mobilise [sic] again; as for the United Kingdom it is also a doubtful thing.”⁹ Among factors which influenced the fact that by the middle of the 1947 the war between the East and the West did not start, Kukiel listed also an Anglo-Saxon “aversion towards war, especially the offensive one; the cause of their alleged inability to conduct a preventive war.”¹⁰ Simultaneously, Kukiel believed that such an opinion stood in contrast to the fact that for the United Kingdom, both participation in World War I, as well as in World War II, had a preventive character, and also that the United States engaged in both world wars in Europe preventively. “Undoubtedly, however,” wrote General Kukiel, deep peacefulness of Anglo-Saxon nations is enhanced (especially in the United Kingdom) by the feeling of being weary of war, the state of moral fatigue (in the United Kingdom also the material wakening). Moreover, the United Kingdom has a socialist government with the pacifist attitude coming from the deepest conviction and tradition. The Soviets’ prestige, imposed upon both nations during the last war by their own propaganda, is still strong, especially in the United Kingdom.¹¹

Apart from the aforementioned elements characteristic for the state of awareness of the Anglo-Saxon societies, Kukiel also indicated other, clear factors contradictory to these attitudes. These included: first, he noticed the rising awareness in both societies that the policy of concessions may lead the West to a disaster; second, he indicated the vanishing of faith in the lasting peace in the world without removing the Soviet threat; and finally, he believed that a gradual accustoming of the Anglo-Saxon societies with the thought of the possibility of war, which, still one year earlier (1946), they “did not want to think about.”¹²

In his study, Gen. Kukiel stated that the war preparations conducted at that time by the United States had still at that moment a defensive character; however, the U.S. was in possession of the most terrible offensive weapons (naturally, what Kukiel had in mind was nuclear weapons), and announced possible usage of other, not less dangerous and unknown ones.¹³ According to Kukiel, the Americans were absolutely aware that time worked to the advantage of the Soviet Union, and this, in turn, was the cause of the fact that in various statements of the representatives of the world of politics in the United States, the thought of preventive war appeared more and more often. “In these conditions,” wrote M. Kukiel, “the possibility of war depends on how

8 Ibid., 2.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

far the Soviet aggressiveness towards Greece, Turkey, Italy, China and so on will go. Since it should not be believed that America is inclined to keep peace regardless of the cost.”¹⁴

Kukiel believed that the United States was the main force of the West, certainly on account of their human and material power and potential, but it was also, in his opinion, the ability of the United States “to act decisively and boldly and the already taken serious attitude towards the Soviets”¹⁵ that was of primary importance.

Kukiel believed that the possible participation of Poland in World War III should be considered above all on the United States’ side and it was there that Poland should “look for understanding of our potential role.”¹⁶ Kukiel supposed at the same time that transferring the burden of the Polish issue onto the United States would suit the British, as such a direction of situation development would mean that to a significant extent they would become free from a difficult problem of Polish emigrants and about a quarter of a million of soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces living in the territory of the British Isles.

Further in his study, Gen. Kukiel characterized the potential role of Poland at that time: “Due to the fact that by the decisions of Yalta and Potsdam Poland was pushed into the Soviet sphere of influence and the rule of Soviet agents was imposing upon it, Poland is today, against the will of its nation, the satellite of Russia and will be forced to serve it in the fight against the West. Every armed movement in Poland against Russia would today mean also the civil war.”¹⁷

What seems unusually interesting is Kukiel’s supposition that an active role of Poland could be considered only if American or British troops entered its territory earlier. One of the most important tasks after their entry would be the necessity of controlling as soon as possible the chaos which -- in accordance with Kukiel’s prediction -- would undoubtedly break out. It would be necessary to be ready in advance for such a situation, and in this he saw an important role of Polish emigration in the West, including mainly its military potential.

Kukiel strongly indicated the necessity to take over the leadership of the Polish Army in the country under reconstruction, freed from the Soviet rule, with the use of the military factors coming from the Polish Armed Forces (PAF) in exile. Soldiers of the new army, police, and security forces would be earlier prepared in the spirit of western democracies, by a common effort of the Polish emigrants, both civilian and military. He saw appropriate candidates for those needs within the ranks of the Polish Resettlement Corps formed by the British in 1946, in the Polish guard formations in the British Army and among dispersed soldiers of the PAF. Kukiel believed that Americans and the British would surely undertake an effort to prepare selected Polish personnel to take over control of the liberated country.

In his analysis of the potential of the Polish element in exile, Gen. Kukiel drew attention to a few dozen members of the intelligentsia, who in case of a military

14 Ibid., 3.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 4.

conflict would become an especially valuable element, mainly thanks to their knowledge of the countries, relations, and languages of Central and Eastern Europe.

While discussing the role and tasks of the Polish Armed Forces in exile in case of an outbreak of a military conflict between the West and the East, Gen. Kukiel believed that their task, like during World War II, would be dual. Firstly, they would represent Poland among nations fighting in the name of freedom, preserving and strengthening the brotherhood of arms between Poland and the Western nations. Secondly, they would constitute the foundation for the armed forces rebuilt after the end of the military conflict, in the reborn Republic. Kukiel also stressed that the first of the proposed tasks would have a significant political meaning, and at the same time, however, it would require not only symbolic, but rather the really significant and devoted participation of the Polish Armed Forces in the war.

Writing about the future military effort of the army in exile, Kukiel also mentioned the role of the specific services of the armed forces. Being perfectly aware of the merely symbolic state of the Polish Navy at that time, the General stated that the issue of the number of vessels was rather of secondary importance; however, it was crucial that the Polish Navy should exist again and take up arms. Its participation in a war would in this situation have only a symbolic, political meaning. The General did not obviously forget about the Polish Air Force. He claimed at the same time that a few fighter squadrons and one or two bomber squadrons were enough for the Polish Air Force to remind the world that it continued to exist and gain valuable experience with the new equipment.¹⁸ As for land force units, according to Kukiel, the best solution would be to create at least a corps, as it would allow for relatively independent operations.

Moving to the analysis and evaluation of the possibility of a remobilization and rebuilding of the Polish Armed Forces, Kukiel firstly referred to the problem of human resources, i.e., the personnel that were supposed to constitute the basis for the rebuilding of the force. Above all, he drew attention to the fact that the Polish Armed Forces in exile in 1946 were already in the process of demobilization. Nearly half of the 250,500 soldiers in the Polish Armed Forces in exile returned to Poland or prepared to return in the near future. Some planned to go back to the countries in which they lived before joining the Polish ranks. Kukiel assumed at the same time that the number of those who would decide to leave the British Isles and return to Poland would increase even more. From the remaining group of about 120,000 soldiers, some already started civilian life, taking up work in different sectors of the British economy.

Kukiel assumed that in the contemporary situation, in case of an outbreak of a military conflict, mobilization could first involve soldiers remaining in the records of the Polish Resettlement Corps and the Air Resettlement Corps. In accordance with Kukiel's estimates, such a draft could amount to approximately 90,000-95,000 soldiers. The second group, from which, according to the General, the mobilization could be conducted, were demobilized soldiers, who travelled to Western European countries or overseas, mainly to the United States. Kukiel assumed that about 20,000

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

soldiers could be mobilized from there. He believed that both Corps were a more realistic manpower source. In his opinion, this element was characterized by a higher level of moral engagement, and easier to make a record of.

As another source of obtaining soldiers, Kukiel indicated guard and workers' companies, estimating that they could provide around 50,000 soldiers. Another 5,000 men could be found among the ranks of remaining prisoners of war. A certain number of people could be obtained from among exiled youth outside the military formations and camps, among others, and from the group of a few thousand young Poles studying at that time at the West European (mainly British) universities.

Kukiel surmised that theoretically, available personnel resources would amount to about 150,000 people. He was also aware that the result of mobilization would to a significant extent depend on the moral state of Poles in exile and their readiness to join the ranks and fight for the cause. Another factor in the estimates presented by Gen. Kukiel was their physical state (health) and age. People aged each year, and the potential manpower pool for Polish troops diminished naturally. Kukiel assumed that in the period 1947-1948, he could realistically count on the mobilization of 50 percent of manpower at that time; hence, out of a force of 150,000 soldiers he envisioned, it would be possible to mobilize about 75,000. Out of that number around 70,000 would be absorbed by the land forces, 4,500 by the air force and 500 soldiers by the navy. Out of 70,000 troops, there would be 15,000 officers and officer cadets and 55,000 privates. Assuming the possibility of the potential war spreading throughout Europe and isolating the guard units, personnel resources would diminish to only 50,000 people, insufficient to organize a full-strength corps. From those Poles in exile at that time, probably only one armoured division, a parachute formation, and the cadre of future formations could be formed.

As mentioned above, Polish mobilization possibilities were conditioned to a significant extent by the moral state of the emigration environment. Many former soldiers were not willing to return to the ranks of the army, while another part of the potential manpower pool was young Poles who did not have, due to their age, the chance to fight during World War II and were not willing to serve in potential combat. They were young, the war was over, and it was absolutely understandable and natural that they wanted to enjoy the peace. They worked, studied, started families, and a war was the last thing they were willing to participate in.

Kukiel started this part of his study with a few remarks on the legal situation of the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces: "from our (not the British) point of view our soldiers, either formally demobilized from the Polish Armed Forces in exile, or listed as being in active service or reserve of the Polish Resettlement Corps or Air Resettlement Corps are for an indefinite period on holiday and may be summoned with a summons by name, or by the appropriate announcement." Kukiel was fully aware that the mobilization conducted in those incredibly difficult conditions would have to be only voluntary as mobilization orders were not supported by any executive power. The only factor that could make soldiers answer positively to mobilization would be a moral obligation and sense of duty. There was no Polish administrative power at that time, so joining the ranks would be an independent soldier's decision.

Kukiel also pointed out a very significant problem, one that could have a decisively negative influence on the plans to mobilize Polish citizens in exile to participate in a new war. While soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces were at that time formally demobilized, there was a large number, perhaps the majority, who were also “morally demobilized.”¹⁹ Kukiel noticed the necessity to fulfil three conditions in order for the mobilization of Polish Armed Forces soldiers to be able to be successful. First, it was necessary to change Polish public opinion; second, to prepare the command and control and management systems to be able to execute new, expected tasks; and third, to systematically make soldiers aware of and accustom them with the possibility of another conscription.

In order to be able to think about mobilization in case of an outbreak of war, it was necessary to achieve agreement with the government of the country where it was supposed to be conducted. Kukiel believed that it could even be a form of an unofficial, at least for the time being, agreement. He had particularly two countries in mind: the United States and the United Kingdom. They could, in the first place, “provide shelter and support.”²⁰ In the second place, it was necessary -- in his opinion -- to conclude agreements with countries where there were significant Polish communities, constituting a potential personnel base for the rebuilt armed forces. Kukiel listed France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Canada in this category. As for military agreements, Kukiel pointed to the precedents of the previous war. In his opinion, the most favorable for the Poles was the agreement concluded by Poland during World War II with France, an ally on whose territory the Polish Army was being rebuilt after the defeat in 1939, as it included all the Polish citizens on French territory in the decisions concerning the French general mobilization. Such a resolution contained, however, certain solutions unfavorable for the Polish side; mainly, it excluded from mobilization ten thousands of Poles working in a few critical areas of French heavy industry, in particular in mines, mills, and the armaments industry. Hence, Gen. Kukiel suggested that future agreements of that type should include a condition that all former soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces on the territory of allied countries or occupied by the troops of those countries needed to remain at the disposal of the Polish authorities who would have an unlimited right to mobilize all Polish citizens. He believed simultaneously that the Polish authorities should not agree to solutions giving Polish citizens, on the territory of allied countries or occupied by their troops, the possibility of choice between the service in the Polish ranks, in the ranks of allied troops, or work in industry or on the land.

In this study there is also a section dedicated to the issue of borrowing, or possibly leasing, equipment, gear, food, etc. Kukiel opined that it should all be a form of help-in-kind, transferred to the Polish side on the basis of a lend-lease-type agreement or a non-returnable service, or perhaps a credit for payments and other expenditure as a loan similar to the one granted by the United Kingdom during World War II.

Further in his study, Kukiel returned to the problem of officers' number and

19 Ibid., 10.

20 Ibid., 11.

reserves. He predicted that during the re-establishment of Polish troops in exile, there might appear a problem of surplus officers. It must be added that the chief military authorities experienced earlier that situation both when rebuilding units in France in 1939-1940, and later again in the United Kingdom. Kukiel predicted that in the event of recreating the Army, only some officers in exile would be integrated into large units, military services, and training centers. In his opinion about 30 percent of officers at different levels, especially at the highest echelons, would not be granted any assignment. There would be in this group many valuable officers with high qualifications, who, however, should be used after the liberation of the country.

Moving to conclusions, Gen. Kukiel noticed that due to the political and military situation, it appeared to be necessary to undertake an effort of sounding out in the future allies' government circles the possibilities of recreating the Polish Armed Forces. In the future war they should represent Poland as real fighting powers, but also prepare in the field of security and administration the military personnel necessary to take control of the situation in the country at during its liberation. This was both in Poland's as well as in the West's interest.

According to Kukiel's estimations, the human potential represented by the Polish community in exile would be valuable and beneficial for allies for at least a few reasons, among others: their knowledge of languages of Eastern Europe, countries, and relations. These values, according to Kukiel, needed to be emphasized, identified, and fully utilized. The General believed that Polish people in exile facilitated the completion of the tasks he described, under the condition, however, that appropriate preparations be made early enough. He foresaw a wide scope for activity of the General Staff.

Gen. Kukiel saw the moral state of the Polish community of that time, both military and civilian, as a serious obstacle in conducting these preparations, which might have a negative influence on the size of a future Polish military effort. The Polish Armed Forces were, as noted, in the state of military demobilization, but, unfortunately, were also in the state of moral demobilization. The remedy for this state of affairs would require significant engagement and energy on the part of the Polish military and political authorities. It was necessary to undertake this task immediately in order to stop the process of further slackness and demoralization.

Kukiel also believed that it was necessary to quickly undertake talks with the allies, concerning possible military agreements in order for emigration authorities not to be surprised by the possible development of the situation. He indicated the General Inspector and the General Staff as responsible for the plan of future mobilization and the organization of the Polish Armed Forces.

Due to the development of the international situation, and especially certain detente which took place in the relations between democratic West and the communist East after the end of the Korean War in 1953, the predictions and forecasts of some representatives of the Polish political and military circles concerning the future conflict did not come true. There is no doubt that in the first years after World War II, the conditions for an outbreak of World War III were very clear. The tension in international relations was rising rapidly, and reached its apogee in 1950, when

the war in Korea broke out. It seemed at that time that the world unavoidably was drawing to a new global war. Many in Polish emigration circles counted on such a scenario, seeing in it a chance for the change in the fate of Poland and all of Europe after 1945, and for freeing the country from the grip of the post-Yalta order.

There is one more very important and positive aspect that is worth highlighting. The hope for a new military conflict became a factor which focused the majority of Polish military and political emigrants on the issue of fighting for Poland's independence, for restoring the homeland's freedoms, for democracy, and for liberation from the Soviet occupation. For a part of the Polish community the threat of war was a sort of bond which united them in the fight for a free Poland. When in the international arena the atmosphere of detente started to prevail and the threat of war was slowly passing, many Poles in exile did not stop their activity for independence, conducting it for the next few decades, until 1989, when in a peaceful way there were political system changes introduced in Poland which came back to the European and world family of democratic countries. There is no doubt that a significant amount of credit for this work goes to the Polish military and political emigres.

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Military Participation of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi Aggression against Poland and the Soviet Union: Reasons, Processes, and Consequences

by

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Abstract

This paper generally examines the military participation of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi aggression against Poland (1939) and the Soviet Union (1941-1945). The study pays relevant attention to political reasons, military process, and consequences as well. The author states that the political system of the then-Slovak Republic (1939-1945), bearing the stamp of a totalitarian regime, and its position in the Nazi sphere of influence, had a great influence on Slovakia's involvement in the Polish Campaign and also in the war against the Soviet Union. However, there were differences between these two Slovak military campaigns. Accordingly, the author focuses on combat operations of the Slovak army in Poland and in the Soviet Union during the Second World War. Finally, he describes the consequences of these affairs and their meaning in the nation's memory.

Military involvement of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi aggression against Poland (1939) and against the Soviet Union (1941-1945) as a phenomenon has been relatively thoroughly studied and summed up in the contemporary Slovak military historiography.¹ In spite of the fact that a comparatively broad range of issues is

1 Igor Baka, Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku [Slovak Republic and Nazi Aggression against Poland] (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2006); František Csefalvay, ed., Vojenské dejiny Slovenska, V. zväzok, 1939-1945 [Military History of Slovakia, vol. V, 1939-1945] (Bratislava: Magnetpress, 2008); Pavel Mičianik, Slovenská

concerned, including a number of partial problems, we would like to address at least the most important ones in this paper.

Principally, it should be stated that the Slovak Republic was formed as a new state through its secession from the truncated “post-Munich” Czecho-Slovakia. Officially, this state originated on the basis of the decision of the Slovak Autonomous Assembly, taking place on 14 March 1939; however, the decisive impulse in this direction was the sharp diplomatic and political pressure from Nazi Germany. Along with the western part of the former Czecho-Slovak Republic, transformed to the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, the Slovak Republic became a part of the Third Reich’s sphere of power, in fact, even the tool and partner for its expansive politics. Also, from its very origin, the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic was limited by the so-called Protection Agreement with Germany of 23 March 1939. In this document, the Slovak Republic undertook to conduct foreign policy in compliance with the interests of Nazi Germany, which in return guaranteed political independence and integrity, even if in restricted form. In particular, this was evidenced for example by the fact that under this agreement, the so-called “Protection Zone” had been created in the west of Slovakia, where the German Army was allowed to establish its garrisons and exercise other military powers.

Moreover, one considers it necessary to emphasize that the political regime of the Slovak Republic of 1939-1945 was a specific form of right-wing dictatorship of the totalitarian type, with strong fascist elements and features in the political, power, state, ideological, and executive, as well as in other areas of state functioning.² Moreover, the Slovak Republic belonged to the smallest states in Europe, with an area of 38,055 square kilometres and a 1940 population of 2,655,596.³

The constituted armed forces of the new state, the Slovak Army, should have been gradually built in accordance with the German Army. However, the early days of this process were relatively complicated. Since the German Army, after having occupied Bohemia and Moravia, had also occupied a part of western Slovakia, confiscating significant amounts of property, material, and armaments of the former Czechoslovak Army. The situation was also further complicated by the transfer of former members of the Czechoslovak Army – Czechs -- to the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia.

armáda v ťažení proti Sovietskému svazu, I-IV (1941-1944) [Slovak Army in Campaign against the Soviet Union, I-IV] (Banská Bystrica: DaliBB, 2007-2012). Regarding works in the English language, providing the reader with basic outline of the issues, see Michael Axworthy, *Axis Slovakia, Hitler’s Slavic Wedge, 1938-1945* (New York: Axis Europe Books, 2002); Charles Kliment and Bedřich Nakládal, *Germany’s First Ally, Armed Forces of the Slovak State, 1939-1945* (Atglen: Schiffer, 1997); and Vladimír Segeš, ed., *Slovakia, Military Chronicle* (Bratislava: Perfekt, 2007), 102-115.

2 Ján Korček, *Slovenská republika 1939-1945. K pôsobeniu mocensko-represívneho aparátu a režimu*. [Slovak Republic, 1939-1945. On Operation of the Power-repressive Apparatus and Regime] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo obrany SR, Vojenská informačná a tlačová agentúra, 1999), 6.

3 František Cséfalvay, ed., *Vojenské dejiny Slovenska, V. zväzok, 1939-1945*. [Military History of Slovakia, vol. 5, 1939-1945] (Bratislava: Magnetpress 2008), 5: 10.

Thus, another negative factor was constituted by the shortage of Slovak officers. In this situation, the Hungarian-Slovak armed conflict broke out on 23 March 1939. The Hungarian aggression in eastern Slovakia started early in the morning of the aforementioned day, while the Hungarian troops invaded up to 10-20 kilometers into Slovak territory. In spite of the fact that the Slovak counterattack began the following day, 24 March 1939, the Germans did not wish to increase tensions between Slovakia and Hungary. That was one of the reasons why the Slovak Army, upon Germany's intervention, was forced to stop its offensive military operations. Therefore, at the subsequent political negotiations in April 1939, Slovakia was obliged to convey a piece of border area with a population of 40,000 to Hungary.⁴

It is apparent that the foreign status of the Slovak Republic was initially relatively unstable. This was caused by the fact that even its "protector," Adolf Hitler, was not entirely clear about the future of this "nation," and actually considered its division among Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Particularly, in relation to Poland, Hitler considered Slovakia as a convenient exchange article regarding the German requirements towards Poland concerning the Danzig (Gdańsk) seaport and the so-called corridor to eastern Prussia.

However, the intention of Germany to preserve the existence of the Slovak Republic gradually prevailed. Slovakia should have provided concrete evidence of the fact that even a small state can "actualize" itself in alliance with Germany. The Slovak Republic consolidated its position in the German sphere of influence only by actively participating in the war against Poland in 1939.

Initially, the German command fully utilized the aforementioned Protection Zone in western Slovakia in its preparations for the war against Poland. In this region, for example, the road network had been improved for the needs of the German Army. With the eventual participation of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi attack on Poland, Slovak communications systems were similarly used by the Germans.

Until the last days of August 1939, the question of using the Slovak Army in the upcoming field campaign remained open. A request for its subordination to the Wehrmacht was submitted by the German party as late as 24 August 1939, which was literally just before the planned attack on Poland, which should have started on 26 August. In this connection, the Slovak Army should have been utilized exclusively to defend its own territory.⁵

Mobilization of the Slovak Army started on 26 August 1939. Three days later, the Slovak Field Army Command was constituted in Spišská Nová Ves. Three infantry divisions and the so-called "Fast Group" belonged to its subordinate. Considering the fact that numerous Slovak units were still insufficiently formed even after induction of several years' of reserves, the mobilization continued. It meant that by 20 September 1939, more than 115,000 reservists had entered the Army. Thus, in September 1939, along with the conscripts and professional soldiers, the Slovak Army consisted of

4 For more details, see Ladislav Deák, *Malá vojna* [Little War] (Bratislava: SAP, 1993).

5 Igor Baka, "Slovensko ako nástupný priestor vo vojne proti Poľsku," *Slovensko vo vojnách a konfliktoch v 20. storočí*. [Slovakia as the Entrance Area in War against Poland] (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2003), 130.

about 148,000 men. However, “only” slightly more than 50,000 men were included in the operating forces. It is quite interesting that such extensive mobilization of the Slovak Army was never repeated again in subsequent years.

On 1 September 1939, the German Army attacked Poland, from Germany as well as from Slovak territory. Part of the Slovak Field Army forces was deployed in combat operations against Poland on the first day of the offensive, in particular on the direct order of the Minister of National Defense, General Ferdinand Čatloš. However, the Slovak Republic did not declare war on Poland. The Slovak Army units, attacking Poland to a maximum depth of twenty kilometers, met with the retreating units of the Polish Army in several engagements. Overall, the combat operations of the Slovak Army were not overly extensive, which is evidenced also by relatively slight losses: 18 dead, 46 injured, and 11 missing.⁶

At the end of the offensive, the Third Reich “rewarded” Slovakia for participating in the campaign against Poland. The border areas acquired by Poland in 1920, 1924, and 1938 were returned to Slovakia through an interstate agreement of 21 November 1939.

Military participation of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi aggression against Poland had been conveyed to the public mostly by framing it through territorial issues – “rectifying” the borders with Poland.⁷

In summer 1940, the position of the Slovak Republic as the satellite of Nazi Germany became even more limited. During negotiations in Salzburg, the German faction pushed through changes in the Slovak government in favor of the radical pro-Nazi wing, led by the new Prime Minister, Vojtech Tuka, and the new Interior Minister, Alexander Mach. On 24 November 1940, the Slovak Republic, in a manner similar to other satellite states in central and southeastern Europe, acceded to the Tripartite Pact, whereby they confirmed their alliance with Germany, Italy, and Japan. Slovakia thus undertook to lead identical foreign politics as the powers of the Pact. This resulted in involvement in the war against the Soviet Union and declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States of America in December 1941.

In the German plans for attacking the Soviet Union, Slovakia should have provided mainly the connection between the German armament industry and the occupied countries in the East. Immediately prior to the attack against the Soviet Union, Hitler decided to also directly involve Slovakia in the war.

On 21 June 1941, President Jozef Tiso and Prime Minister Vojtech Tuka agreed to the German request to participate directly in the offensive. General Ferdinand Čatloš, in May 1941 in front of the German military attaché, requested Slovak Army participation in the operation, if Hungary would do the same. On the Slovak part, the entry into war was, paradoxically, also connected with the possibility of revising

6 Igor Baka, *Slovenská republika a nacistická agresia proti Poľsku* [Slovak Republic and Nazi Aggression against Poland] (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2006), 105.

7 Igor Baka, „Návrat odtrhnutých bratov, Protipolská propaganda v roku 1939,” in *Storočie propagandy, Slovensko v osídľach ideológií*. [„The Return of Separated Brothers,” in *Anti-Polish Propaganda in 1939*] (Bratislava: AEPress 2005), 137-138.

the borders with Hungary. In general, it may be stated that even if both the Slovak Republic and Hungary participated in the field campaign against the Soviet Union, this was a relatively "weird" alliance.

On the official level, the military participation of the Slovak Republic in this campaign used to be interpreted or justified as a necessity of fighting against the threat and crimes of Bolshevism, or as the "fight to save Christianity, nation and national honour [sic]."⁸

In the afternoon of 22 June 1941, the Slovak Republic government broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The Slovak Army was brought to the state of combat alert and mobilization was ordered by the Minister of National Defense. Within the so-called "hidden mobilization" from 22 June to 4 July 1941, more than 56,000 soldiers entered the Army.⁹

Because of the frontline deployment, the "Fast Group" and the Army Group were formed from the Slovak Army units. The motorized Fast Group crossed the Soviet border on 24 June 1941. It was commanded by Colonel Rudolf Pilfousek, while being subordinated to the command of the German 17 Army. On the contrary, the Army Group commanded by the very proactive Minister of National Defense, General Ferdinand Čatloš, was slowly advancing in the rear of the German units after having crossed the border on 1 July 1941.

On 7 July 1941, the Fast Group was redesignated the Fast Brigade. On 22 July 1941, this Brigade was deployed to fight in the front line, near the Ukrainian town of Lipovec, which was defended by the Soviet 44th Mountain Rifle Division. Although the day-long fight ended in a draw, at the end, the Brigade registered losses of as much as 75 dead and 167 wounded soldiers. This was the highest number of soldiers killed in action recorded by the Slovak Army on the Eastern Front in a single day.

Compared to the motorized Fast Brigade, the Army Group, consisting of two infantry divisions, as well as army and air units, proved to be unsuitable for direct front deployment. Ground troops of this field corps took part in several smaller missions against scattered units of the Soviet Army, as well as assaulting several sections of the fortified "Molotov Line."

Within the Field Army, the Slovak soldiers also had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Soviet "reality" they had only heard about before. Considering the similarity of the Ukrainian and Slovak languages, the vast majority of Slovak Army soldiers felt sincere sympathy for the local civilians.

The Slovak experience at the Battle at Lipovec, coupled with limited opportunities of operational deployment of the Army Group, dictated the overall reorganization of the Slovak units on the Eastern Front. On 25 and 26 July 1941, two divisions were ordered to be formed. While the Fast Division should have operated in the front lines of combat, the Security Division should have operated in the occupied territories

8 Zoltán Katreba, „Beštia z východu, Ťaženie proti ZSSR v slovenskej štátnej propaganda,” in *Storočie propagandy, Slovensko v osídľach ideológií*. [„Beast from the East,” in *Campaign against USSR in the Slovak National Propaganda*] (Bratislava: AEPress, 2005), 143.

9 Zoltán Katreba, „‘Skrytá’ mobilizácia na Slovensku v roku 1941” [„Hidden“ Mobilization in Slovakia 1941], *Vojenská história* 3, no. 4 (2000): 3-4, 87-100.

and performed guard duties there. The remainder of the Slovak Army, not included in these two field units and numbering more than 35,000 men, was sent back to Slovakia. This action ensured considerable popularity for the Minister of National Defense, especially in the Slovak rural areas, because of the harvest work taking place at that time.

Meanwhile, in August 1941, the Fast Division, commanded initially by Colonel Jozef Turanec, was subordinated the following month to German Army Group South as a component of the German 6th Army. It deployed into combat soon thereafter -- in September 1941 -- south of Kiev, securing the western bank of the Dneper River. Subsequently, it operated under the command of the 1st Tank Army. As early as October 1941, the Fast Division participated in the siege of two Soviet armies north of the Sea of Azov. It later underwent exhaustive movement as well as periodic engagements. In December 1941, the Division had to withdraw to the Mius River, about sixty kilometer from Taganrog, and established defensive positions.¹⁰

During the German Summer Offensive of 1942, the Fast Division was included in the German 17th Army order of battle and in July the same year, participated in battles for Rostov on Don. The Division earned praise and several awards from the German command, for excellent combat performance. The Fast Division subsequently continued further southeast and took part in the German Army's Caucasian offensive. After crossing the Kuban and Pshish Rivers, the Slovak Division advanced into the rough terrain of the northern foothills of the western part of the Caucasus. In this area, the Soviet corps managed to stop the enemy's advance. The Slovak Fast Division was exhausted by operations in the front line, especially fighting in woods against nightly partisan attacks. The morale of Slovak soldiers was also influenced by Soviet propaganda as well as personal experience from establishing the "new order" in the territory occupied by Germans. Following the German Army's siege of Stalingrad, troop rotations in the Caucasus were conducted. In this situation, the Fast Division commander, General Štefan Jurech, tried to organize a transition to the Soviet side, mostly due to concerns about its depletion.¹¹ This attempt, originally planned for 22 January 1943, failed due to several reasons. In the same month, the Fast Division withdrew and redeployed through the Kerch Strait to Crimea. Since it had lost part of its equipment and material during the transfer, it was deprived of the motorized unit functions and character. In April 1943, the Fast Division was redesignated the 1st Infantry Division. During this period, the Slovak military and political leaders recalled it from the frontline. In spite of this, in October 1943, it was repeatedly deployed in the front line at Melitopol. The Slovak Division suffered defeat, while 45 officers and about 2,300 men were captured by the Soviets.¹² During

10 Jozef Bystrický, "Ťaženie slovenskej armády na východnom fronte v roku 1941" [Slovak Army's Campaign on the Eastern Front in 1941], *Vojenská história* 2 (1998): 39-61.

11 For more details, see Štefan Jurech, 1898-1945 (Bratislava: Vojenský historický ústav, 2008).

12 Jozef Bystrický, "Rýchla (1. pešia) divízia na Kryme a v bojoch na juh od Kachovky" [The Fast (1st Infantry) Division in Crimea and in Battles south of Kakhovka], *Vojenská história* 3 (2003): 71.

the coming months, the Division was withdrawing along with the German units. In April 1944, its operational activities in the territory of the pre-war Soviet Union ended. Subsequently, through the regulation of 25 May 1944, the Division was reorganized as the 1st Technical Division.

In addition to the Fast Division, another Slovak Division -- the Security Division -- operated on the Eastern Front from 1941 to 1943. From September 1941, this unit was operating in a relatively large region of occupied Ukraine and Belarus. Initially, the Security Division was mostly focusing on protecting communication lines and other sites in the area of Zhytomyr-Mozyr. Later, its units were also carrying out anti-Partisan and "disciplinary" actions. It should be noted that during these actions, some of these officers were also responsible for several war crimes committed against defenseless civilians. At the end of June 1943, the transfer of division units to the Minsk area began. Morale and discipline in the units significantly declined at this time, characterized by cooperation with Soviet Partisans as well as a growing number of desertions to their side. Desertions were caused by the general situation on the Eastern Front, resistance against atrocities committed by the German Army against civilians, the long duration of the combat deployment, etc.¹³ On 1 August 1943, the Security Division was renamed the 2nd Infantry Division. Finally, in October 1943, this Division was reorganized as the Technical Brigade and transferred to Italy. Its weaponry and equipment, released at reorganizing, were sent to Slovakia.

The Slovak Air Force -- Slovak Air Arms -- also participated in the combat operations on the Eastern Front in 1941-1943. Experience from the 1941 summer campaign, when the Slovak pilots flew obsolete Czechoslovak military aircraft, indicated the urgent need of rearming at least of some air units with modern (German) technology. Therefore, in 1942, the Slovak fighter squadron 13 was preferentially rearmed with modern fighter aircraft Messerschmidt Bf 109 (E and G variants). In 1942-1943, this squadron operated within the range of the Fast Division's operations as well as later from several airfields on the Black Sea coast (Anapa, Taman, Kerch, etc.).¹⁴ Slovak Air Force activity ended in November 1943, with the withdrawal of the last unit from the frontline. Slovak fighter pilots on the Eastern Front shot down 215 Soviet aircraft. The most successful Slovak fighter pilot was Ján Režňák, achieving 32 confirmed victories.

Slovak Army losses on the Eastern Front totalled about 1,800 Slovak soldiers killed in action.

Conclusion

In general, it may be stated that from the Slovak Republic's point of view, its

13 For more details, see Martin Lacko, *Dezercie a zajatia príslušníkov Zaisťovacej divízie v ZSSR v rokoch 1942 – 1943*. [Desertion and Captivity of the Security Division Members in the USSR from 1942-1943] (Bratislava: Ústav pamäti národa, 2007).

14 For more details, see Peter Šumichrast and Viliam Klabník, *Slovenské letectvo 1939-1945*, 2 [Slovak Air Force 1939-1945, 2] (Bratislava: Magnet-Press Slovakia, n.d.), 2: 89-117.

active participation in aggression against Poland and the Soviet Union represented a deepening collaboration with the Nazi Germany. However, in a longer time horizon, these were in both cases manifestations of the policy proven as necessary and without alternative. Thus, at the end of the War in 1945, the Slovak Republic as a state remained completely dependent on the fate of the Third Reich.¹⁵

Regarding the Slovak Army's participation in both of these invasions, it should be further noted that it corresponded with its contemporary options. This was also relatively aptly expressed by the German envoy in Slovakia, Hans Elard Ludin, who wrote the following in a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop: "Participation and performance of the Slovak armed forces do not have a great practical significance for us, however they do have an essential propaganda and moral value."¹⁶ The Slovak Army on the Eastern Front did not suffer such catastrophic defeats as the Romanian Army, for example, at Stalingrad, or the Hungarian Army at Voronezh. At the same time, compared to its operational deployment on the front lines, the Germans did appreciate the communication and economic contributions of the then Slovak Republic much more, especially the production of several gun factories and the peaceful atmosphere in the Slovak background.

At the very end it should be pointed out that through the outbreak of the Slovak National Uprising on 29 August 1944, against the domestic collaborationist government and the German Armed Forces, the Slovak nation subscribed to the broad Anti-Fascist coalition and the program to restore the Czechoslovak Republic.

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15 Igor Baka, "K vstupu Slovenskej republiky do vojny proti Poľsku v roku 1939 a ZSSR v roku 1941," in Okupace, kolaborace, retribuce [On the Entry of the Slovak Republic into War against Poland in 1939 and USSR in 1941] (Prague: Ministry of Defence of the Czech Republic, Presentation and Information Centre of the MO, 2010), 220.

16 Vilém Prečan, Slovenské národné povstanie, Nemci a Slovensko 1944, Dokumenty. [Slovak National Uprising, Germans and Slovakia 1944, Documents] (Bratislava: EPOCH 1970), 60.

Everyday Life during the Crisis: The Yugoslav Military Government in the Julian Region, 1945-1954

by

Major Dr. Miljan Milkić
Serbian Army

Abstract

In the following article, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the population in Zone B – the territory of Julian Region under Yugoslav Military Government. The analysis includes: the attitude of the military government towards population, social, national and religious structure of the population, population movement, health care, political, civil and religious liberties. The article includes the findings based on documents from the Military Archive in Belgrade, Diplomatic Archive in Belgrade, Archive of Yugoslavia and corresponding bibliography in Serbian, Slovenian, English and Italian language.

The entry of Yugoslav Army troops into Trieste, Monfalcone, and Gorizia on 1 May 1945 reawakened an old territorial dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy.¹ At the same time, Anglo-American military units entered these cities.² Diplomatic consequences of military operations in the Julian Region seriously jeopardized relations between Yugoslav government on the one side and American and British governments on the other. This crisis included finding solutions for geopolitical and

1 The state border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the area of the Julian Region was formed after the First World War pursuant to the Rapalo Treaty of 1920 and the Rome Treaty of 1924. This territorial division did not suit Yugoslav administrations and they tried to integrate these regions in the Yugoslav state. During the Second World War, territorial pretensions toward this region were seen in the Yugoslav royal government-in-exile as well as in the administration formed by the Yugoslav Communists.

2 Geoffrey Cox, *La corsa per Trieste* (Gorizia: Libreria Editrice Goriziana, 2005).

strategic issues. Differences among the American, British, and Soviet governments were becoming more and more obvious in relation to the territorial status of the Julian Region. From May to June 1945, the American and British governments faced communication problems with the Soviet government. Established arrangements about spheres of interests were brought into question and survival of the war coalition was seriously jeopardized. The Trieste crisis was temporarily pacified by signing Belgrade Agreement on 9 June 1945 between Yugoslavia on the one side and the United States and the United Kingdom on the other. The Duino Agreement, which was signed on 20 June 1945, contained military issues from the Belgrade Agreement. Under pressure from the American and British governments, the Yugoslav government was forced to accept an unfavorable demarcation line. The Julian Region became occupied territory divided between the Anglo-American (Zone A) and Yugoslav Military Governments (Zone B). The Yugoslav Government expressed in their statements their dissatisfaction and hope that these negotiations did not solve the final status of the Julian borderland. After signing the Peace Treaty with Italy in Paris on 10 February 1947, the Free Territory of Trieste was established.³ Pursuant to the Standing Statute of the Free Territory of Trieste, which is an integral part of the Peace Treaty, this territory was put under the authority of the international governor and supervision of the UN Security Council. Due to the impossibility of reaching an agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy on the selection of the governor, the Governor of the Free Territory of Trieste was not elected.⁴ The division between Zone A and Zone B existed until 5 October 1954 when, in line with the Memorandum of Understanding made between Yugoslavia and Italy, Zone A was acceded to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia -- and then the Trieste crisis was settled. According to the Order of the Yugoslav Armed Forces Supreme Commander, Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav Military Government of the Free Territory of Trieste was abolished and stopped its operations on 26 October 1954.⁵

Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste

On the basis of the agreements signed in Belgrade and Duino, the Supreme Commander of the Yugoslav Army, Tito, directed on 23 June 1945 the establishment of the Yugoslav Military Government in the Julian Region. After 15 September 1947, when the Paris Peace Treaty came into effect, the border was established between the

3 Annexes VI, VII, VIII and IX to the Peace Treaty in Paris define the status of the Free Territory of Trieste: "Decree on Ratification of the Peace Treaty with Italy," Official Gazette of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia (29 August 1947), 1047-1068.

4 "Official communication of the UN Security Council regarding appointment of the governor of the Free Territory of Trieste, New York, December 18, 1947," Documents about Foreign Policy of Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, 1947 (Beograd: Jugoslovenski pregled, 1986), 2: 530.

5 Miljan Milkić, "Das Freie Territorium Triest unter jugoslawischer Militärregierung 1947 bis 1954," in *Die Alpen im Kalten Krieg: Historischer Raum, Strategie, und Sicherheitspolitik*, ed. Dieter Krüger and Felix Schneider, 336 (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2012).

Federal People Republic of Yugoslavia and the Free Territory of Trieste. Pursuant to the order of the commander of the detachment of 16 September 1947, the Yugoslav Military Government was restructured according to the emerging circumstances with respect to the civil authorities which operated on the ground.⁶

The Yugoslav Military Government exercised control of the civil authority work and solved issues important for the population in the Yugoslav zone of the Free Territory of Trieste. General control was carried out by the chief of the Yugoslav Military Government through his assistants who were appointed the heads of departments. The majority of the desk officers, heads, and clerks were civilians from the territory of the Zone B. The immediate control of the border with Yugoslavia and demarcation line with the Anglo-American zone was carried out by the National Militia. The Military Administration Command included the Military Administration Commander, Political Advisor who was the Yugoslav government's representative, Assistant Commander, head of the administrative department, and advisors. The Military Administration had a Legal Section, Financial Section, Economic Protection Section, Information Office, and Military Prosecutor's Office.⁷ The Political Advisor to the Commander of the Yugoslav Military Government was in the personnel records at Yugoslav Government. Other advisors were appointed by governments of the Socialist Republic of Croatia and the Socialist Republic of Slovenia. As of 21 July 1950, there were 107 military and civil personnel employed in the Yugoslav Military Government.⁸ The Yugoslav Military Government represented the armed forces through which the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia exercised its international mandate in the grounds of the Zone B. The Yugoslav Military Government relied completely on the state authorities of Yugoslavia, especially the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Finances. The budget of the Yugoslav Military Administration was provided mainly by loans from the Yugoslav Ministry of Finances and by donations from the Yugoslav Government.

The section of the Julian Region which was controlled by the Yugoslav Military Government was divided into two counties, Koper and Buje, with towns and villages. Civil authority in Zone B was exercised by the Istrian County People's Committee through its departments. People's committees were established by Yugoslav partisans during the Second World War. Elected representatives of the people were included in county national assemblies in Koper and Buje, while those two assemblies represented the District National Assembly, which was the highest body of civil authority in Zone B. Judicial authority was represented by a high court, district court, and three county courts in Koper, Buje, and Piran. Apart from civil courts, there were Yugoslav Military Government courts – the Military Court and High Military Court of the

6 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/1.

7 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 2/1. "Resolution on the organization of the Military Administration of Yugoslav People's Army on January 12, 1953."

8 Milkić, "Das Freie Territorium Triest unter jugoslawischer Militärregierung 1947 bis 1954," 329.

Yugoslav Military Government.⁹

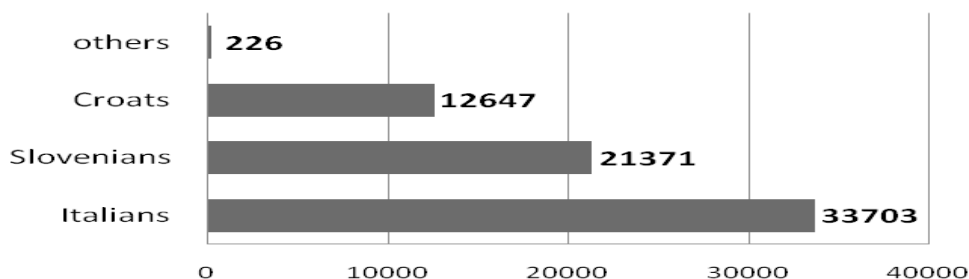
The area of the Free Territory of Trieste amounted to 738 km², with 222 km² in Zone A and 516 km² in Zone B. In late 1947, there were around 282,000 people in Zone A, while 240,000 of them lived in Trieste City. The number of inhabitants in Zone B was being reduced constantly due to population migration. According to the official data of the Yugoslav Military Government, 10,125 people legally migrated to Trieste from June 1945 to September 1953. Around 85 percent of them were Italians (8,511 from county Koper and 1,614 from county Buje). Apart from legal migration based on the approval of Yugoslav military authorities, there were many examples of illegal transfers from Zone B to Zone A.¹⁰

	Zone A
	Zone B

Number of Citizens¹¹

The Peace Treaty with Italy guaranteed equality of all nationalities within the Free Territory of Trieste and Italian and Slovenian languages were proclaimed as official. In some cases, Croatian was included as the third official language. On 14 November 1947, a Decision on Amendments and Supplements to the Decision on Prohibition of Arousal of National, Racial, and Religious Hatred and Division was adopted in Zone B.

National Structure



Zone B National Structure 1948¹²

⁹ Ibid., 328.

¹⁰ Raul Pupo, "Eksodus iz Cone B Svobodnega tržaškega ozemlja 1945-1958" [Exodus from Zone B of Free Territory of Trieste, 1945-1958], *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino Letnik LIII, Številka 1* (2013): 173-185.

¹¹ Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

¹² Ibid.

Political rights

The Yugoslav Military Government emphasized that there were political and civil liberties and brotherhood in Zone B between all the three nationalities living in this territory. In September 1949, in Zone B, seven political parties and 101 different associations were registered.¹³ All permanent residents of the Zone were entitled to vote in the Yugoslav zone of the Free Territory of Trieste. During the elections for administration bodies in Zone B held on 16 April 1950, three parties participated: the Slovenian-Italian National Front, which was in favor of the accession of Zone B to Yugoslavia (they won 183 seats), the pro-Italian Christian-Socialist Party (1 seat), and the Socialist Party which advocated the union between the Zone A and Zone B (two seats).¹⁴ The second local elections in Zone B were held on 7 December 1952, on the same day when the elections were held in the People's Republic of Slovenia and based on the same election law.¹⁵ Ninety-seven percent of the population voted. Opposition parties did not participate.

Religious Rights

Within the church organization, Zone B was a part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Trieste, headed by Bishop Antonio Santin. In Zone B, in September 1949, eight Roman Catholic religious organizations and seven sections were registered. Religious rights of the population were respected to the extent religious freedom did not jeopardize security from the standpoint of the Yugoslav military authorities. Military authorities often kept their eye on Roman Catholic priests and even on Bishop Santin. In early June 1952, eleven Roman Catholic priests from Zone B were interrogated in the premises of the Yugoslav Military Government.¹⁶ The only charge against them was for participating in the conference held on 28 April 1952 organized by the Trieste Bishop Santin. In early July 1952, when the bishop started assigning young priests within Zone B, the commander of the Yugoslav Military Government decided not to issue permanent residence permits in Zone B for these priests.¹⁷ He did it in agreement with the assistant minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia. Religious rights of the Zone B residents were a matter of consideration in the diplomatic communications between Yugoslav and Italian representatives. Therefore, on 19 February 1949, the Italian mission in Belgrade sent a note on the requisition and departure of the priests from the monastery of Saint Ana in Koper to the Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressing the importance of the monastery

13 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

14 Ibid.

15 Nevenka Troha, „Volitve v Okraju Koper cone B Svobodnega tržaškega ozemlja,“ *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 3 (2002): 61-74.

16 Diplomatic Archive, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia, Political Archive, 1952, box 85, No. 47729 (cited hereafter as: DA, MFA, RS, PA).

17 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1952, box 85, No. 49554.

as a religious center and its importance in artistic and cultural terms.¹⁸ Returning the priests to the monastery was demanded. What happened there in fact? Pursuant to the Law on Apartments, the Residential Office in Koper adopted a decision to move the brotherhood of the monastery to another location. The monastery was planned to be ceded to several institutions of public interest. Yugoslav military authorities rejected an appeal where religious reasons were given against moving the monastery to another location. A similar case was seen on 3 August 1954 when the Koper County People's Committee decided to transform the Saint Francis monastery in Piran into a home for senior citizens.¹⁹ The Yugoslav Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted and demanded cancellation of that decision. With reference to solving the Trieste crisis, the Yugoslav Military Government warned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 15 July 1954 about the need to define the competence of the Diocese of Trieste within Koper and Buje in the future.²⁰

Health Care

The Health and Social Care Department of the Istra County People's Committee was in charge of health care in Zone B.²¹ There was one social care office in both Koper and Buje. Health officers worked in villages within town civic committees. In towns, there was a town doctor controlling a health and hygiene office. In 1948, there were hospitals in Koper, Izola, and Piran, as well as one home for senior citizens and an anti-tuberculosis dispensary in Buje. The Institute for Social Insurance began adapting the Institute for Tuberculosis in 1949. In the period from 1947 to 1948, there were eighteen physicians, nine dentists, twenty-one midwives, ten pharmacists, and eight laboratory technicians in Zone B.²² The number of medical workers did not change significantly in the following years. According to data from September 1950, total capacities in the hospitals in Zone B were as follows: 260 beds for internal medicine, 65 of them for surgery, 38 of them for childbirth, 100 of them for lung tuberculosis, 16 village clinics, and 3 factory clinics.²³ The cities with the best developed health care were Koper (with a pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary, while a central medical and diagnostic laboratory was established in 1950); Izola (with a pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary); Piran (pediatric advisory center); Buje (pediatric advisory center and anti-tuberculosis dispensary); Umag (pediatric advisory center); and Novigrad (pediatric advisory center). Special attention was paid to child health care. First aid centers were also established and served as independent institutions with three ambulance cars. A certain number of more serious patients were sent to hospitals in Trieste and medical treatment for them was covered by health insurance. Treatment costs for patients in Zone B

18 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1949, box 105, Trieste, No. 42984.

19 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box 91, Trieste, No. 411974.

20 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box 92, No. 49695.

21 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

22 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

23 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

in Trieste hospitals in 1952 amounted to around 15 billion liras.²⁴ In comparison, monthly export data from Zone B to Zone A averaged 63 billion liras in the same period, while the monthly import from Zone A to Zone B averaged 52 billion liras.²⁵

Social insurance was organized in Zone B. In 1949, the number of insurers was increased by 25 percent, while family pensions were introduced on 1 January 1949. According to data from 15 September 1949, different types of pensions were disbursed to 1,300 people. The report of the Yugoslav Military Government states that in the period from September 1948 to September 1949, there were no insurance disbursements for unemployment cases since, as it was indicated, there were no unemployed people in Zone B.²⁶ To the contrary, there was a lack of a work force. The provisions on financial assistance to families with several children entered into effect on 1 April 1950. Assistance was introduced for families with three children and more. In 1950, provisions for the protection of pregnant women and nursing mothers enabled the introduction of more rights for women during pregnancies.²⁷ During maternity leave, a woman was entitled to full salary disbursement. In Zone B, there was the Red Cross for the Julian Region, which was recognized by the Yugoslav Military Government as a legitimate successor of the Italian Red Cross.²⁸

Economy and Market

In addition to the difficulties which followed the separation of trade on the Free Territory of Trieste, in the period of one year of its existence, the Yugoslav Military Government achieved with the Anglo-American military administration trade of over 255 million yugo-liras. Of this amount, exports to the Anglo-American zone was 2.8 times higher than imports. Wine and brandy accounted for the highest percentage of the exports, followed by foodstuffs, fruits, and vegetables. The area under the authority of the Yugoslav Military Government imported mainly cars and motorbikes, then fruits, vegetables, and medications.²⁹

In the Zone B market, most of the goods were of Yugoslav origin and those items were exempted from customs limits. Exchange of goods between this zone and Yugoslavia was carried out over a clearing account at the National Bank of Yugoslavia and the Istrian Bank in Koper. In July 1949, the Yugoslav dinar was introduced as the official currency and thereby, Zone B became fully dependent of Yugoslavia. On 1 August 1951, economic measures were introduced to revive the exchange of goods between Zone B and Yugoslavia and to reduce the administrative limitations for crossing the border.³⁰

24 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box. 91, Trieste, No. 41958.

25 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1954, box. 91, Trieste, No. 41958.

26 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 3, No. 1/4.

27 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

28 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18.

29 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/85.

30 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 6, No. 3/1.

Customer supply in basic food products was irregular. The Yugoslav Military Government indicated problems in the trading network in their reports.³¹ There was a wheat flour and sugar shortage prior to Easter 1953. In the context of population requirements, some 32,700 kilograms of meat were sold in Koper during the same period.³²

The main characteristic of the economy in Zone B was its connection with and dependence on the Yugoslav economy.³³ In Zone B, as opposed to Zone A, the Marshall Plan was not accepted. The Yugoslav Military Government was fully relying on Yugoslavia in their economic policy and they tended to enable economic linking between this territory and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav approach to economic development was introduced in 1949 through a one-year economic plan in Zone B.³⁴ Yugoslavia assisted in the introduction of a planned economy. Agriculture was the most important economy branch. Out of the total number of people capable of work, which was 67,947 people in 1948, 41,828 of them worked in agriculture.³⁵ Fishing was another important economic branch. Fishing was important for the commercial development of Zone B since fish were supplied for local consumption and for a canned food factory. On 15 September 1947, when the Peace Treaty with Italy became effective, there were 121 fishing ships and 107 small fishing boats registered in Zone B.³⁶ The most developed industrial branch was the food industry, which had the highest number of employees. The construction material industry, chemical industry, wood industry, and mining were also developed. Industry lacked a work force, especially a qualified workforce.

31 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, box 93, No. 45958.

32 DA, MFA, RS, PA, 1953, box 93, No. 45898.

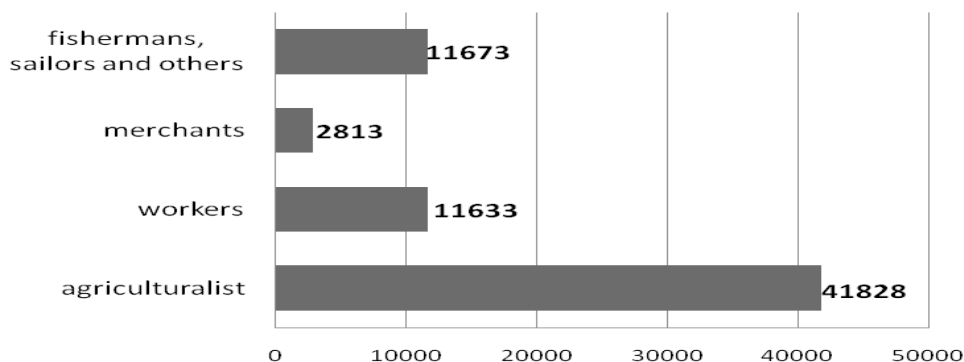
33 Darko Dukovski, „Politički atributi gospodarstva istarskoga porača,“ in *Vojna in mir na Primorskem: Od kapitulacije Italije leta 1943 do Londonskega memoranduma leta 1954*, ed. Jože Pirjevec, Gorazd Bajc, and Borut Klabjan, 183-199 (Koper: Založba Annales, 2005), and Jože Prinčič, „Primorsko gospodarstvo v času vojaških zasedbenih con (1945-1954),“ *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 1 (2008): 147-160.

34 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 4, No. 1/2.

35 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/1. Also see Prinčič, „Primorsko gospodarstvo v času vojaških zasedbenih con (1945-1954),“ 425-432.

36 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/44.

Social Structure



Zone B Social Structure 1948³⁷

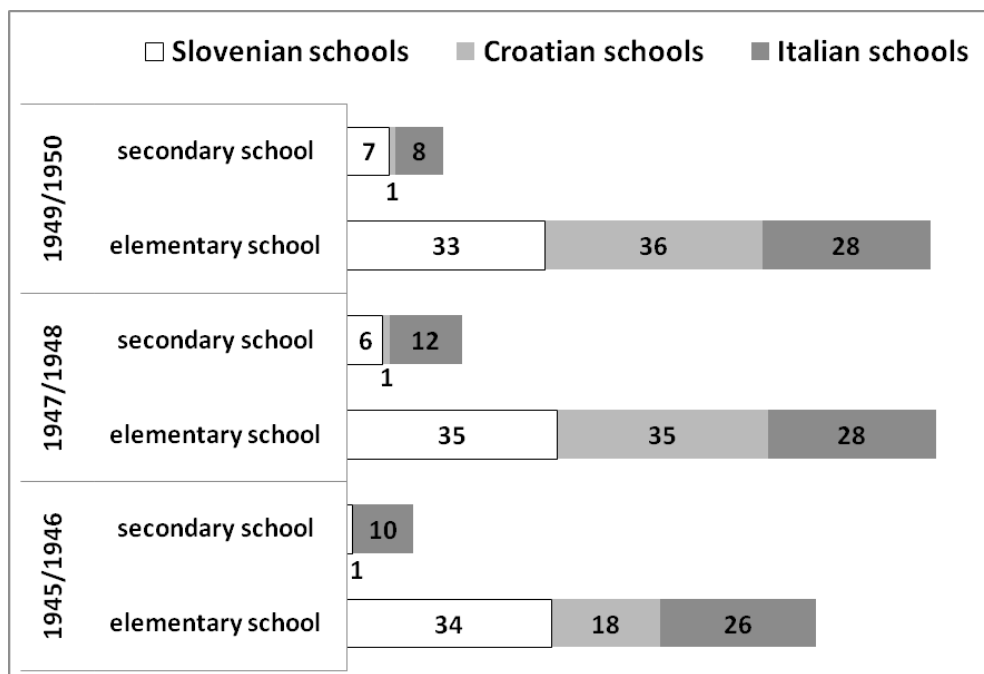
School System

Equality between all the three nations was generally present in schools as well. There were schools for Italian, Slovenian, and Croatian-language speaking pupils.³⁸ However, political relations between Italy and Yugoslavia had a negative impact on the school system in Zone B. The two governments, Yugoslav and Italian, accused each other of endangering the rights to a “mother-tongue” school system. School system reforms and changes in the curricula in Zone B were the issues dealt with by Yugoslav and Italian diplomatic representatives.³⁹

37 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

38 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368, folder 2, No. 1/18. Nevenka Troha, „Oris položaja v koperskem okraju cone B Julijske krajine v letih 1945-1947,” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 1-2 (1996): 67-93.

39 Archive of Yugoslavia, 836 (KMJ), I-3-d/71.

*Zone B School System*⁴⁰

Freedom of Movement

The decisions adopted by the military administration sometimes directly endangered basic human rights. Freedom of movement is one of these examples. The movement of people between Zone A and Zone B was huge and it amounted to between 10,000 and 15,000 people daily. Movement from one zone to another was more difficult due to the fact that one's identity had to be verified. Miloš Stamatović, the commander of the Yugoslav Military Government, agreed on 24 July 1951 in talks held in Bled (Yugoslavia) with the Vice President of Yugoslav Government, Edvard Kardelj, and Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs Vejvoda, to reinforce the security of the demarcation line towards the Anglo-American Zone.⁴¹ An agreement with the State Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the State Secretariat of National Defense, approved on 10 July 1953, further strengthened the border regime between Zone A and Zone B.⁴² A drastic threat to freedom of movement was seen when the Yugoslav Government asked the Yugoslav Military Government to prohibit the transfer via demarcation line between Zone A and Zone B, as their reaction to the political decision of 8 October 1953 when the United Kingdom and the U.S. announced their

40 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 1368.

41 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 6, No. 3/1.

42 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 11, No. 1/1.

decision to terminate the Allied Military Government of Zone A and to hand over that zone to the Italian Government.

In line with the determination of the Yugoslav Government to integrate the territory of Zone B, crossing the border between the Zone B and Yugoslavia was fully liberalized over time. The commander of the Yugoslav Military Government, Colonel Miloš Stamatović, sent on 24 April 1953 to the Yugoslav State Secretary of Foreign Affairs his proposal on the successive abolition of the border line between Zone B and Yugoslavia.⁴³ At that time, the state border was crossed by people using only personal documents, and goods and the money trade were not controlled because Zone B had been earlier integrated into the Yugoslav customs and monetary system. Colonel Stamatović recommended that border units be withdrawn from the state border to reduce them to the minimum, and later to be replaced with the national militia of the Social Republic of Croatia and the Social Republic of Slovenia. The order to transfer the border control responsibility between the border units of the Yugoslav People's Army and National Militia was issued by the State Secretary for the National Defence, General Ivan Gošnjak, on 10 July 1953.⁴⁴ Pursuant to the decision of the State Secretary for National Defence, General Ivan Gošnjak, the units which secured the demarcation line between the Zones A and B were subordinated on 25 October 1954 to the command of the 436th Border Brigade of the Yugoslav People's Army.⁴⁵

* * *

These are only some of the answers to the question what the everyday life of the population in Zone B was like. It is important to stress that the Yugoslav Military Government was not guided solely by the interests of the population in the decision-making process. The political situation which was the result of the unsettled international status of the Free Territory of Trieste effected the everyday life in the areas under the Yugoslav Military Government. Yugoslav military authorities had to adjust the interests of the population with the political and security interests of Yugoslavia in the territory of the Julian Region. The daily life of the population in this area was influenced by political relations between Yugoslavia and Italy, as well as by the relations between the Yugoslav Military Government and the Anglo-American Military Government.

43 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 6/2.

44 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 10, No. 6/8.

45 Military Archive, Belgrade, Military Administration – 1, box 524, folder 11, No. 5/1.

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Lessons Learned from the Indochina War: The Ely Report

by

Captain Ivan Cadeau
French Army

Foreword and Historical Background

In the middle of the nineteenth century, France intervened in the Far East. Under the pretext that Christian missionaries were persecuted, Napoleon III, Emperor of the French, decided to conquer the territories which later became Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Until 1940, France exploited its new colonies without any trouble, apart from some revolts -- which were harshly repressed -- at the beginning of the 1930s. The fall of France, in May-June 1940, sounded the death knell for the belle colonie as Indochina was called at this time. With the Japanese occupation and the Vietminh's seizure of power, French sovereignty was swept aside. From 1945 to 1949 France tried to reconquer its colonies by sending the French Far East Expeditionary Corps. Beginning in 1950, in the context of the Cold War, France, supported by the United States of America, fought the Vietminh, which was assisted by the People's Republic of China. The aims of the French governments were not very clear: did they want to restore the ancient status of France? Did they want to fight against communism or defend primarily the independence of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, which formed since 1949 three states "associated" with France? Anyway, the Battle of Diên Biên Phu, which ended in May 1954, even if it had not been the catastrophic military defeat described by some people, public opinion nevertheless experienced a true psychological shock on 20 July 1954, when the Geneva agreement ended the First Indochina War.

Introduction

Compared to other wars in which France participated, the French Indochina War represented an unusual experience for the French Army. Indeed, the physical and natural environment, as well as the Vietminh warfare, surprised and unsettled the

French troops.

When European soldiers discovered the Far East late in 1945, they were first of all exposed to a vast and special environment, where water was the predominant element. World War II fighters had never seen such a theater of operations, not in Northern Africa, Italy, France, or Germany.

Secondly, after the confrontation with the environment, the French Far East Expeditionary Corps discovered the enemy and its guerrilla warfare. The Vietminh (which means League for the Independence of Vietnam, founded in 1941) was a subversive organization practicing new forms of war basically unknown to Western forces. Indeed, after 1945, French soldiers had to deal with a “frontless” war, where the enemy was everywhere. Warfare employed by the Vietminh aimed at two objectives: erosion and paralysis of opposing forces and control of the population. The attack and the destruction of communication routes allowed them to achieve these two objectives.

The Vietminh understood and applied this warfare in no time at all. Indeed, the French forces were dependent on communication routes. Without road networks, tanks, armored cars, or bulldozers were immobilized and relatively powerless. The enemy recognized the superior strength and better supply system of the French and understood that it had to avoid major engagements, should conduct a defensive war and, simultaneously, maintain the initiative by conducting a series of coordinated tactical operations to control the population and ensure victory. Moreover, from 1950 until 1951, General Vo Nguyen Giap, the Vietnam People’s Army’s commander, created powerful field forces. At the end of the war, they had organized six infantry divisions and one heavy division, including artillerymen and engineers.

For the French task force in Indochina, the history of the war is the story of a constant effort to adapt men and means and employ arms to the different forms of warfare encountered during the campaign. A few weeks after the Geneva agreement, General Ely, the commander-in-chief, decided to write a report to draw lessons from the war. This report had two objectives. First, it should be used as a working document for all the officers, particularly in case of the resumption of hostilities. Secondly, the report should be used for the European theater of operations, because several methods used by the Vietminh in the Far East could have been employed by Soviet forces in a war against NATO forces.

This document, published in July 1955, officially called “Lessons Learned from Indochina War” is also well known as the “Ely Report.”

I. The Genesis of the Ely Report

In early August 1954, General Ely, High Commissioner and commander-in-chief of French forces in Indochina, demanded all officers that fought in the Far East to relate the experiences of their combat experiences and to extract the most important lesson. The result was quite disappointing: only 1,400 out of almost 6,000 officers responded. The others returned to France or Germany or were sent back to North

Africa. Moreover, these accounts were written principally by young junior officers, without sufficient strategic or operational skills or experiences. Consequently, many records were not about lessons learned, but a series of complaints or criticism denouncing the lack of means and strength and which focused on the command's failures, etc.

To achieve the commander-in-chief's goal, only the best responses were chosen and completed by operation reports of General Staff 2 documents. In the end, to lend credibility to the final report, several senior officers who held important positions during the war were asked to provide statements. In total, 1,500 documents were needed to write the Ely Report.

At the beginning, this report was to be divided in three parts. However, only two were published. The second section covered tactical and operational topics and highlighted the new forms of warfare, such as psychological warfare or war without frontlines. The third section emphasized the potential lessons for Western Armies in case of a war against the Soviet Union. Thus guerrilla and counter-guerrilla warfare were particularly studied in this volume. Concerning the first section: if it ever was written, it seems to have never been published. Indeed, this document dealt with the political-military aspects of the war. This very sensitive issue concerning the conduct, or rather the non-conduct of the war by successive French governments, implicated the political establishment of the Fourth Republic too much. That is why General Ely, who certainly wanted his career to continue, ensured the document was destroyed.

Altogether, about 2,500 copies of the Ely Report were published in Saigon and distributed to the principal staffs and units of the French Army, in Indochina, as well as in France. Despite the large number of copies, this fundamental source for the understanding of the First Indochina War remains largely unknown by most historians of the conflict.

II. The Nature of the War in the Eyes of the French Command

Contrary to what many people said just after the end of the war, the understanding of the new form of revolutionary warfare used by the Vietminh was readily understood by the French command, even in 1945. The lack of frontlines, the involvement of the population by threat or persuasion, the use of vigorous propaganda, and the widely practiced guerrilla warfare were well identified. Since the beginning of the war, French soldiers experienced a frontless war which disconcerted them a lot: the Vietminh was everywhere, its fighters embedded in the civilian population. Throughout the entire conflict, the goal was to free this population from the Vietminh. For the French command, this remained an important challenge.

Two responses were developed. The first was to keep free and unfettered passage on the routes or waterways, indispensable for unit supply operations as well as for troop movement. The control of communication routes by military forces is necessary for all further action. This control aims at allowing the second step of counterinsurgency: the policy step, the most important step. That is the reason why,

and that is the second point, the French tried to put in place an efficient policy of pacification, one facet of the “*guerre en surface*” -- the surface war.

To achieve real effects, however, the available military strength should have been much more important. Only the major routes were controlled, and only during the day, because of a lack of troops. The night belonged to the Vietminh. This situation forced French soldiers to continual daily road clearing operations that caused many casualties because of mines and booby traps laid by the enemy -- very nerve-wrecking for the soldiers. In January 1954, in North Vietnam, about 85.000 French and Vietnamese soldiers were immobilized in bunkers while about 35.000 Vietminh -- belonging to autonomous units -- were inserted in the Red River Delta. This negated the purpose of the fortifications, because they did not conserve French forces' strength, but quite the opposite. Besides, from a military point of view, the pacification resulted in the building of thousands of watchtowers and military posts, immobilizing many fighters. After 1950, most of the bunkers were outmoded because of the growing firepower of the new Vietminh weapons, supplied by the People's Republic of China. Facing a numerous, well-armed and well-trained enemy who enjoyed considerable support of the population, the French system -- based on the experience of the colonial wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries -- failed.

To sum up and to cite the Ely Report, “the control of the major routes and the defence of military posts are just one of the aspects of the surface war; it's a necessary initial investment but does not solve the problem,” which remained the destruction of the enemy. In order to achieve this goal, the French command tried to establish mobile forces to search out and destroy Vietminh units. But in this area as well, there was a lot of disappointment. Except for some elite troops, such as paratrooper battalions or French Foreign Legion units, most of the soldiers were not able to oppose Vietminh fighters. After 1951, with the strengthening of the Vietnam People's Army, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny developed the concept of “*Groupe mobile*” that was the French adaption of the U.S. Army regimental combat team used during World War II and the Korean War. The mission of these new units was clear: the French soldiers had called it “*casser du Viet*,” which could be translated as “smashing Viet.” The “*Groupe mobile*” consisted of three infantry battalions, one cavalry squadron, one artillery group, and several supply units.

Generally speaking, all key operations were conducted basically identically: units had to find, encircle, and destroy the enemy. This tactic failed for many reasons. First of all, it was very difficult to ascertain the position of Vietminh units, because the Vietminh, well informed by its intelligence services and the local population, usually learned about French battle preparations. Secondly, the assembly and deployment of French forces revealed their intentions to the enemy. Thirdly, even if the enemy was encircled, it was generally able to escape under the cover of darkness. Between 1945 and 1954, very few operations provided interesting results to the French. This, with the failure of the pacification policy, made an officer say at the end of the war: “It's not the Vietminh which is infiltrated in the Red River Delta, but us.”

The Ely Report concluded that the French intervention units were too heavy and

badly adapted to the terrain and to the Vietminh warfare. This search for adaptation of services and weapons is also one of the greatest lessons of the First Indochina War.

III. The Necessary Adaptation of a Western and Modern Army

Adapting the combat methods or the structure of the units to changing warfare conditions is a constant requirement. The operations conducted in Indochina demonstrated the total maladjustment of a western expeditionary force to an Asian theater of operations.

What is called in the French Army “the tyranny of the terrain” was confirmed in Indochina. Even for an enduring branch as Infantry, the maladjustment was very important. Captains commanding companies wrote: “We are too heavy, not enough mobile and unprepared for the terrain.” For the cavalry, artillery, quartermasters, or transportation corps, the situation was worse: their units were literally “stuck” on the main supply roads, without any mobility, except in some areas.

Furthermore, the diversity of the enemy’s actions -- from individual attacks to operations conducted by regular regiments -- forced the French command to form units of different sizes. This complicated considerably the force structure of French Far Eastern Expeditionary Forces. Political considerations of the Indochina War also limited the military courses of action. The final objective was to maintain the population on our side and not push them into the arms of the Vietminh by destroying their villages. Under these circumstances, the adaptation of the services and units was very difficult and the solutions found were not viable in all regions.

During nine years of war, France did succeed in some areas. Successful examples of tactical adaptation, which also take into account the aquatic dimension of French Indochina’s three countries, are enumerated below. Of course, the aquatic dimension concerned rivers and deltas, but also the climate which had an acute impact on human beings and material means. An engineer officer evoked “the debilitating climate” of Far East.

Paratroopers. For the French Army, the Indochina War represented the real birth of this branch. As noted previously, the Infantry was too heavy, so the employment of paratroopers allowed the soldiers to overcome the constraints of the communication routes. Indochina offered important drop zones: 2,400 were identified, 900 of which were in northern Vietnam. Employed separately or as a half-brigade (of three battalions), airborne units were the “firemen” of the French command, intervening everywhere where the situation was critical.

Groupeement mixte d’intervention (GMI) (translated as “joint intervention group,” “joint” because these units contained Europeans and natives from Indochina). In the same way, as part of psychological warfare, since 1951, the French command developed special units composed of selected officers or NCOs and native soldiers. The missions of these men were to operate in the Vietminh rear by attacking its political, economic, and military infrastructure. Soldiers dropped in areas controlled by ethnic groups bitterly anti-Vietminh. Even if efficient, these commandos were

created too late and were too few in number to exert any real influence on the fight. As light infantry units, the members of the GMI were not able to counter regular Vietminh fighters.

Traditional branches. The physical and natural environment was an obstacle to the use of traditional troop units. Every branch had to adapt itself and was forced to develop amphibious units. From the armor perspective, Indochinese terrain had often been impracticable to tanks and armored cars and the inadequacy of the road network did not allow operations everywhere. Accordingly, in 1947, it was decided to create amphibious units. Some of the vehicles used had been initially constructed for polar expeditions, such as the M29 Weasel (called “crabe” in French). Other vehicles were based on an amphibious transport used in the flooded areas of the Mississippi River (LVT 4 Water Buffalo, called “alligators” by French soldiers). These vehicles used in the amphibious task forces achieved good results. The M29 Weasels patrolled, screened areas, and pursued Vietminh units, whereas LVT 4 Water Buffalos then destroyed them. Furthermore, with the transportation corps or the corps of engineers, the armor developed riverine units responsible for the securing of waterways, escorts, or the re-supply of outposts.

The Indochina War also provided the opportunity to use new equipment like helicopters. Despite their obvious usefulness, they were used very late. In 1950, only two of them were in service and this was the result of private donations. At the end of the war, 25 helicopters were operational. They were mainly used to evacuate severely wounded soldiers. During the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, for example, between 14 and 25 March 1954, helicopters evacuated 101 wounded soldiers. Other missions were also conducted. Thus, 80 escaped soldiers were taken back by helicopter and, for the first time in its history, French Army special forces units infiltrated the enemy's rear by this means.

Conclusion

For the French Army, the Indochina War had been a field for experimentation. Suffering from a very low troop strength and a general lack of (financial and material) means, the expeditionary corps had to face an enemy committed to an efficient communist ideology and supported by the majority of the population. The guerrilla warfare used by the Vietminh was a problem for the French command, which was not able to find appropriate responses: the GMIs, for example, were established too late. The same applies for the psychological warfare carried out by the French only after 1953 and which was neither approved nor understood by all officers. Despite some local successes, psychological warfare failed.

Concerning the branches' adaptation, regardless of some satisfying results, the French neither had sufficient means nor an adequate military doctrine in order to be truly effective. The Ely Report, which enumerates the failures and successes, is a precious source of knowledge and understanding of the First Indochina War, as well as of other “subversive” or “non-conventional” wars. Some of these lessons were profitably used during the Algerian War.

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The “Six-Day War” of 1967: Behind Bucharest’s Decisions

by

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Abstract

Romania’s stance during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War remains a controversial chapter in Bucharest’s foreign policy during the Communist regime. This paper seeks to develop possible rationales behind Ceausescu’s decision to follow a distinct political/diplomatic path towards the crisis. The commonly-agreed view focused on Ceausescu’s intention to use the crisis as a way to defy Moscow and affirm his “independence” in a well-articulated political show. Yet, looking at the evolution of the Romania-Israeli relations in the aftermath of the crisis, one might consider another important rationale when analyzing this historical episode. The economic dimension seems to have significantly influenced Ceausescu’s political thinking. Although it remains of secondary importance in the overall conduct of events, the economic card should not be missed from Bucharest’s political calculus as regards the Six Day War.

On 5 June 1967, the “Six-Day War” between Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt (known at the time as the United Arab Republic), Jordan, and Syria was launched that ended in a decisive Israeli victory. Israel took effective control of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Golan Heights from Syria.¹ Through a rapid and well targeted offensive, the Israeli military put an end to a series of provocations and threatening

1 Romania-Israel. 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations, Diplomatic Documents, vol. I, 1948-1969, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic Archives Direction (Bucharest: Sylvi Publishing House, 2000), 286.

messages coming constantly from Egypt that, under the lead of Gamal Nasser, adopted an assertive policy against Israel, even calling for the “total annihilation of the Israeli state.”

Therefore, on 9 June 1967, Moscow summoned the Warsaw Pact countries to an urgent meeting to discuss the emerging developments in the Middle East following Egypt’s dramatic and unexpected defeat and to forge a common position of the Soviet bloc towards the events. At the end of this urgently convened conference, a communiqué was issued condemning Israel as an aggressor, and calling upon the Israeli government to stop the offensive and pull its troops out of Syrian territory without delay.² Moreover, on 10 June, the Soviet government broke off diplomatic relations with Israel. The other Eastern European countries followed suit and adopted a similar decision.

All countries did except Romania.

This paper focuses on analyzing the main rationale behind Ceausescu’s decisions whose position on the issue remains the subject of controversies and intense debates among historians. So, what did happen in Bucharest that motivated Ceausescu’s reluctance and at the end his refusal to follow Moscow’s overall political line on the matter? Was it only the desire to defy Moscow in an attempt to strengthen the Western card or were there other practical reasons that motivated Bucharest’s position? Was it only Ceausescu’s desire to affirm his “independence” in a well-articulated political show and, therefore, to overcome the country’s status of Soviet satellite or were there other identifiable messages that were targeting a more complex political and economic agenda?

1. Bucharest’s Foreign Policy Agenda: A Few Considerations

Beginning in the 1960s, Romania’s policy towards Moscow had been shaped following particular coordinates aimed at achieving more space of maneuver and an increased autonomy within the Warsaw Pact, reducing the economic dependence towards Moscow, and projecting its own economic path of development, as well as forcing a national ideology focused on strengthening the internal control of the party, synthesized as “the national Communism.”

Romania’s new posture within the Communist bloc was officially promulgated through the April Declaration of 1964 that contains the main principles that were to guide the country’s foreign policy throughout the communist regime: independence, sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, equal relations among all countries regardless their size and political stature, exclusion of force and of the threat to use

2 e-Dossier No. 8 - The Soviet Union and the Six-Day War: Revelations from the Polish Archives, Cold War International History Project, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/e-dossier-no-8-the-soviet-union-and-the-six-day-war-revelations-the-polish-archives>, accessed 12 May 2013.

force in relations between states, etc.³ What is less emphasized is the fact that the rationale behind the declaration was mainly connected to Bucharest’s discontent towards increased Soviet pressures for economic integration of the satellite countries based on an economic-specialization formula and international division of labor. In fact, Bucharest leadership was seeking to consolidate its own power by gradually distancing itself from the hegemonic domination of the Soviet “master.” Following this path, the achievement of additional flexibility, or even independence, in its economic policy was seen as a key component of the newly-assumed autonomous policy within the Communist bloc. Nevertheless, Bucharest acknowledged that for successful implementation of the new economic agenda, it had to reshape its approach in dealing with the West, in order to be able to attract significant economic and financial support.

The Romanian leadership was fully aware that, given the tight political and strategic constraints that existed at the time, it needed to maintain a complicated balance between its “autonomous” political ambitions and Moscow’s unwillingness to tolerate its satellites having an independent behavior beyond the strict Soviet control.

For that reason, in implementing its political strategy, the Communist leadership focused on the economic dimension and the need to diversify its economic opportunities, carefully avoiding any political situation that could raise Soviet suspicions. In such a way, the Romanian leadership could justify to Moscow its interest towards the Western countries whose economic and financial support was crucial in pursuing the economic strategy envisaged by Bucharest. Following the intense process of industrialization during the 1950s and 1960s, Romania needed large quantities of raw materials and markets for its products. It was vitally important for Bucharest to convince the West of the credibility of its new political course aiming at distancing itself from Moscow with a purpose of mobilizing important economic and financial resources from the Western countries. The “game” of perceptions was to play a decisive role in establishing the type of relations to be developed between Romania and the West. On one side, the Western countries sought to use the Romanian leadership’s political ambitions for creating a fracture inside the Warsaw Pact and weakening the Soviet control over its immediate sphere of influence. On the other side, Bucharest was to use Western backing to increase its profile as an independent actor on the international stage and to get rid off its subordinated status within the Soviet alliance. In this complex equation, the economic “umbrella” had a double significance: to allow the Romanian regime to enlarge its space in relation to Moscow by increasing its economic independence and to provide the cover for approaching the West without raising Moscow’s concerns.

Bucharest’s strategy was two-fold. On the international scene, it undertook a series

3 “Stenographic transcript of the meeting of the Central Committee of the Romanian Workers’ Party held between 15 and 22 April 1964,” in Florian Banu, Liviu Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964. „Primăvara de la București”. Cum s-a adoptat „Declarația de independență” a României? (April 1964. “Bucharest Spring”. How was Romania’s “Declaration of independence” adopted?)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), 105.

of actions that greatly increased Romania's international prestige and credibility in the West that reached its climax with the decision to condemn the military invasion against Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Within the Warsaw Pact and COMECON, the Romanian leadership started to question the Soviet dominance over the economic and political integrated structures arguing that each socialist country should be able to choose its own path of internal development according to its own internal conditions based on the already voiced principles of sovereignty, independence, and non-interference in internal affairs.

According to Ambassador Mircea Malita, former deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, the Romanian leadership agreed to and began by 1963, a well-targeted plan of actions aiming at: (1) getting the agreement of Western countries and the United States -- a kind of "tacit and discreet partnership" -- towards Romania's new internal and external orientations; (2) communicating to Western powers that Romania would not join its allies (Warsaw Pact) in any conflict if it was not previously consulted on the action to be taken; (3) voicing Romania's right to have its own position concerning the political issues within the UN framework, even if it is opposing the Soviet Union and its allies.⁴

Among the most striking foreign policy decisions that greatly increased Ceausescu's international prestige and even popularity were the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1967, the distinct position adopted during the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967, the public condemnation of the military invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the distinctive position in the Sino-Soviet conflict

The decision of 31 January 1967 to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG signaled Romania's commitment to initiate a distinct political course. The major crisis that broke out within the Warsaw Pact due to Romania's political action, paradoxically, came to strengthen Ceausescu's personal standing in the Western world. It is no less true that the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Bonn government and the positive answer given to Brandt's Ostpolitik opened new economic and political opportunities for the Bucharest leadership, shaped by a generous opening of the Western market to Romania's economy. From the Western perspective, it was obvious that Romania's behavior should be encouraged even further by responding to its constant requests for economic and financial assistance.

Therefore, Romania's position regarding the Israeli-Arab conflict that broke out in 1967 needs to be contextualized, taking into consideration the general features of Bucharest's political agenda assumed by the Romanian leadership starting in 1964.

2. Romanian Approach towards the Israeli-Arab Crisis

According to available documents, during 1967, before the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli crisis, the political agenda of the relations between Tel Aviv and Bucharest

4 Mircea Malita and Dinu C. Giurescu, *Zid de pace, turnuri de fratie. Deceniu deschiderii, 1960-1972* (Bucharest: Compania, 2011), 190.

included the following major priorities: to get Israeli agreement to support Romanian Foreign Minister Corneliu Manescu's candidacy for the presidency of the 22nd United Nations General Assembly; to conclude a bilateral trade agreement; to open an Israeli channel to China; and to raise the level of Israeli diplomatic representation in Romania.⁵

The Israeli proposal of raising the diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level was mentioned by Israeli Foreign Minister Golda Meir in 1964 when she expressed her readiness to appoint an ambassador to Bucharest at any time, acknowledging the positive trend of Romanian-Israeli relations.⁶ Moreover, according to the existing documentation, it was an obvious Israeli interest in establishing relations with China and Bucharest's assistance on this matter could prove a valuable asset.

Romania was also interested to get Israeli support and use its network of relations and influence, as noted, to secure Manescu's candidacy at the UN General Assembly.⁷ From Romania's perspective, the possibility of appointing a Romanian foreign minister in such a high and prestigious international position was seen as an important achievement, providing increased respect and esteem at the international level and the recognition of the particular political course promoted by Bucharest within the communist bloc. Regarding the economic dimension of the bilateral relations, both countries expressed, on various occasions prior to the 1967 crisis, their mutual interest in increasing the level of economic and commercial exchanges that was considered limited in comparison with the economic relations between Israel and other Socialist countries.

In addition to the strategic realities and Bucharest's internal political agenda, there were other specific concerns that grounded Romania's approach towards Israel and helps decipher the overall policy adopted by the Romanian leadership in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli crisis.

Since the beginning of the crisis, Romania adopted a pro-active approach towards it that distanced itself from the common position of its allies, bringing it more closely to Western countries. The crisis reached its peak during the Warsaw Pact conference held in Moscow on 9 June 1967 in order to discuss the political dynamics in the Middle East and to formulate a common plan of action to be jointly assumed by the Communist bloc.

What did actually happen on 9 June 1967? According to Ceausescu's briefing to the

5 Mihail E. Ionescu, "The Six-Day War and Romania's Relations with the West," paper presented during the Romanian-Israeli bilateral military history seminar, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2008.

6 Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs/ Diplomatic Archive Office (hereafter AMFA), Fond Telegrams, Tel Aviv, vol. 2/1964, Telegram no. 74624/A-B-C from Tel Aviv to Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the position of the Israeli government towards Romania and the relations with the other Socialist states, ff. 37-40, in Romania-Israel. 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations, 221-222.

7 AMFA, Problem 20E/ 1967/Israel, Direction V Relations, "Meeting between Vasile Gliga, deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, and Eliezer Doron, Israeli minister in Bucharest. Note of audience," 19 January 1967, ff. 17-18.

Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (CC of RCP), on 8 June 1967, he was called by Brezhnev who asked him to agree with Ulbricht's proposal to summon a meeting of the Warsaw Pact countries to discuss the situation in the Middle East.⁸ The Romanian delegation that attended the Moscow meeting included both Nicolae Ceausescu and his prime minister, Ion Gheorghe Maurer.

According to Ceausescu, Brezhnev's guidelines concerning the political-military dynamics in the region could be summarized as follows: (1) the events were the consequence of Israel's aggressive behavior, with American backing; (2) the USSR sought to moderate Nasser in his actions but the Egyptian leader did not consider the Soviet advice. Moreover, the Soviets found out from media sources about some of Egypt's military actions; and (3) despite his errors and intransigent behavior, the support provided to Nasser should be further continued, otherwise the "socialism fate" could be put in jeopardy.⁹

Ceausescu was skeptical about the Soviet allegations, arguing that the Soviet ambassador had met Nasser two or three times per day and, additionally, the Soviet leaders had various meetings with many Arab leaders from the region so that the Soviets would have had accurate sources of information without relying on media insights only. The main differences between the Romanian and Soviet delegations emerged around the following points: the reasons that caused the Arab states' defeat; the real balance of forces between the belligerents; and the side to be blamed for launching the aggression.

From Ceausescu's point of view, two facts were obvious: (1) accurate information concerning the Israeli military potential was missing; and (2) despite the Soviet support, Egypt was not able to respond to or counterattack and faced a dramatic defeat. Based on his own assessment, Ceausescu came up with a different appreciation regarding the course of events, stating that calling Israel an aggressor was not clearly supported by the existing facts and information. It is interesting to notice that during his briefing in front of CC of RCP, Ceausescu was very cautious not to use the term "aggression" to describe Israeli actions when his own opinion was into discussion. Instead, the Romanian leader recognized the efficiency of Israel's attack grounded by the military errors and lack of preparedness of the Egyptian troops.

Ceausescu's position answered to a few considerations: (1) Egypt's aggressive declarations against Israel, claiming its complete annihilation, highly complicated the international posture of Egypt and its Arab allies. Moreover, Romania could not agree with the aggressive rhetoric that voiced the destruction of the state of Israel; (2) it was difficult to identify who is responsible for launching the attack and, in fact, all parties involved contributed to the final outcome.¹⁰

Therefore, Ceausescu refused to comply with the Soviet proposal supported by

8 Central Historical National Archives (hereafter CHNA), Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 88/1967, "Stenographic transcript of the meeting of CC of RCP," 10 June 1967, f. 4.

9 CHNA, Fond CC of RCP, Chancellery Section, File no. 88/1967, "Stenographic transcript of the meeting of CC of RCP," 10 June 1967, ff. 4-16.

10 *Ibid.*, ff. 10-11.

the other participating Socialist countries, including Yugoslavia, to issue an official declaration of supporting Egypt and its Arab allies and condemning Israel as an "aggressor." The Romanian leader acknowledged that by continuing to express public support for the Arab states involved in the conflict would mean accepting and encouraging their "unjust" actions, and that would send the wrong message to the Arabs and their supporters. Moreover, the Romanian delegation refused to join the Socialist "chorus" asking for the public condemnation of Israeli aggression. The Romanian delegation stuck with its initial position, regardless of Brezhnev's efforts to secure Ceausescu's agreement, stating that there were not enough facts to justify such a condemnation and, on the contrary, such a decision would complicate the situation even further. The Romanian participants insisted on a short communiqué to be released at the end of the conference that would state solidarity with the Arabs (without other firm commitments), the need of ending the hostilities, the withdrawal of troops to their own frontiers, and finding a solution through negotiations with all parties involved.

The Romanian delegation stubbornly defended its position and refused to accept any compromise on the issue. As Ceausescu later explained: "I could not adopt a position that we consider to be principally unjust, as related with our conception . . . approving this policy of war for the annihilation of a state, regardless the way it has been created, justly or unjustly, this is an issue that belongs to history."¹¹

On 11 June 1967, the Declaration of CC of RCP and of the Government of SRR concerning the situation in the Middle East was publicly released. The statement established Romania's position on the Middle East crisis asking for: renunciation of force or the use of force, respect of independence and sovereignty of all states in the region, and finding appropriate solutions through negotiation and dialogue. Basically, Romania's decision to maintain normal diplomatic relations with both parties involved in the conflict, Israel and the Arab states, was reiterated.

Finally, Romania did not attend the summit of the signatories of the Moscow Declaration, held in Budapest in July 1967, but supported the Soviet project for the UN Resolution that was adopted on 21 November 1967 urging the end of hostilities and the withdrawing of Israeli forces from the occupied territories back to the 1949 line. Although they agreed on the Soviet resolution, the Romanian representatives at the UN let it be known that this did not change its approach regarding Israel and the perception of its role in the conflict. In this context, the Romanian delegation at the UN refused to accept the Arab proposal calling for an UN representative to be appointed as to manage the former Arab territories occupied by the Israeli forces, for such a measure would be against the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another state. This was to cause additional tension between Moscow and Bucharest.

A few months later, in December 1967, the Warsaw Pact countries gathered in Warsaw to discuss again the political course to be adopted regarding the Middle East affair. According to an MFA analysis on the subject, the document adopted on that

11 Ibid., ff. 13-14.

occasion underlined “the necessity of a peaceful solution of the situation in the Near East is in compliance with the UNSC resolution of November 1967.” Two points were emphasized in the Romanian analysis on the matter: the Socialist countries called for a peaceful, political solution of the conflict, and they refrained from naming Israel as the aggressor. The MFA document observed that “the brotherly countries, which in June 1967 criticized Romania for her position, after several months had to recognize that they were wrong.”¹²

Through its assumed political course in the Arab-Israeli crisis, Romania achieved a high level of prestige and credibility on the international scene. On 19 September 1967, as an expression of the increasing status of the country, Manescu was elected president of the General Assembly of the United Nations, being the first senior official from the Socialist/Soviet bloc to hold such a significant international position.

Despite Moscow’s criticism, relations with Israel continued to be an important dimension of Romania’s diplomatic agenda. The decision announced on 19 August 1969 concerning the bilateral agreement between Romania and Israel to raise the level of Romanian diplomatic representation from the status of legation to that of embassy, exacerbated the tensions within the Warsaw Pact. Consequently, some Arab countries decided to sever diplomatic relations with Romania while the Socialist countries expressed their dissatisfaction towards Bucharest’s policy.

Ceausescu’s refusal to cut off diplomatic relations with Israel provided new and large opportunities for Bucharest from a diplomatic, political, and economic perspective. Ceausescu was encouraged to assume an increased role in Middle East affairs, even playing the role of mediator. According to some documentation, there were messages sent through various Israeli channels that suggested that if the negotiations of the four great powers held in New York would end in failure, the discussions on the Middle East would be continued bilaterally with only the USA and USSR participating. In that case, the countries that have relations with both Israel and Arab countries, like Romania or Netherlands, might play a crucial role in the overall Middle East peace process.¹³ Romania actively encouraged the peace process between Egypt and Israel and supported the Israel-Egypt Peace Agreement. There are also interesting pieces of information concerning Bucharest’s efforts to facilitate the diplomatic visit of the Egyptian president to Israel.¹⁴

Newly declassified documents revealed the magnitude of Soviet discontent towards Romania’s actions and the deep rift that emerged due to Ceausescu’s actions. The stenographic transcript of the meeting between Ceausescu and Brezhnev on

12 AMAE, Fond Telegrams, Problem 224/1968/Israel, Direction V Relations, “Analysis on the situation from Middle East after the approval of UNSC Resolution,” 21 May 1968, f. 18. See also Ionescu, “The Six Day War and Romania’s Relations with the West.”

13 AMFA, Fond Telegrams, Tel Aviv, vol. 1/1969, Telegram no. 71140 from V. Georgescu to MFA, 28 April 1969, f. 264-266

14 Yosef Govrin, *Israel’s Relations with the East European States: From Disruption (1967) to Resumption (1989-1991)* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2011), 4.

19 May 1970, held in Moscow, provides valuable insight on the issue. Brezhnev harshly criticized Romania's decision to refuse to "step alongside the other brotherly parties." His discontent can be summarized by Romania's refusal to support the collective action of the brotherly parties during the Moscow conference of 9 June 1967; the position adopted by the Romanian representative at the UN that demanded, during the extraordinary meeting of the UN General Assembly, the elimination of any foreign intervention in the Near East affairs; the refusal to condemn Israel as an aggressor; Ceausescu's stubborn position to maintain the diplomatic relations with Israel, even to raise the level of diplomatic representation despite the political actions of the other Socialist countries; and the refusal to participate in further exchanges of views concerning the Middle East as happened during the meeting of the general secretaries of the Central Committees and deputy foreign ministers held in November 1969. Indirectly, Brezhnev held Romania responsible for pursuing its own agenda at the expense of its own allies, questioning the real reasons behind Bucharest's moves toward Israel's: "according to some Arab sources tens of thousands of Romanian citizens, some at the age of recruitment, and military specialists go to Israel . . . the economic relations are expanding . . . Israel provides Romania important loans and credits." The Soviet leader cautiously added that, "of course we do not check all these things, but, it seems, that there is some truth in all this."¹⁵ From Brezhnev's perspective, Romania distanced itself from the common ideological position, and he expressed his hope that the RCP would agree to have an exchange of views with the other brotherly parties on the Middle East issue. Ceausescu dismissed Brezhnev's allegations stating that, "it's difficult to reach real conclusions if you take into consideration and trust more some Arabs circles than the RCP and Romanian government."¹⁶ Moreover, Ceausescu emphasized that Romania would not change its political course towards Israel since the position adopted in the context of the Six-Day War responded to the national interest of the country despite all controversies that emerged on the matter.

3. Conclusions

In a general perspective, the political position of the Bucharest Communist leadership concerning the Israeli-Arab conflict needs to be analyzed by taking into consideration the overall picture of Romania's political agenda in the mid-1960s. The core dimension of Ceausescu's political philosophy was driven by both his fears and his personal political ambitions. Being afraid that Moscow might attempt to remove him from power, Ceausescu designed a genuine strategy aimed at distancing himself from his Soviet "patron" and at voicing his autonomy of action on the international arena. Implementing this strategy, Ceausescu undertook a series of

15 CHNA, Fond CC of RCP, Foreign Relations Section, File no. 19/1970, "Stenographic transcript of the meeting between Brezhnev and Ceausescu," 19 May 1970, Moscow, ff. 26-28

16 *Ibid.*, ff. 65-66

actions that highly increased his personal prestige in the West and the created an image of an “independent” and credible political partner. Ceausescu acknowledged that getting Western political support was crucial in pursuing his policy. In doing so, the Bucharest Communist leadership had to manage carefully the Soviet sensitivities and avoid gestures that might be challenging to Moscow. Any attempt to discuss Romania’s allegiance to the Warsaw Pact was undoubtedly considered a red line by the Soviets that Ceausescu never intended to cross.

The existing documentary evidences underlines that Ceausescu had a limited space of maneuver during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and he had no other choice than to adopt a neutral position in that conflict. This thesis is based on a few considerations that might provide a basis for further discussions and analysis: (1) Ceausescu could prove the credibility of his assumed political agenda and raise his profile on the international arena; (2) Bucharest had to show its commitment concerning the principles adopted by the April Declaration of 1964; and (3) Bucharest’s reluctance towards Moscow and the threat consisted in the possibility of replacing the existing leadership from power. After the 1956 destalinization process, mutual suspicion dominated Romanian-Soviet relations. According to some historians, there is another hypothesis that should not be eliminated: the possibility that Bucharest intended through defiance to test the limits in applying its own principles of foreign policy and assess how large was the space for maneuver in relation with Moscow.¹⁷ Despite the cynicism of such an assertion, Ceausescu learned that his policy brought significant advantages, on both the political and economic levels, while Moscow’s rhetoric was not to be translated into practical measures of retaliation.

In addition to the aforementioned political rationale, never assumed officially, there was another key interest that motivated Bucharest’s political discourse, namely to get Western economic and financial support that was vital in the successful implementation of its political agenda. In fact, the economic discourse was used by Ceausescu and his team to strengthen the channels of cooperation with the West without raising Moscow’s apprehensions concerning Bucharest’s political ambitions. The economic matters came to dominate Bucharest’s political thinking and motivated many of the actions taken by the Romanian leaders on the international arena. Ceausescu launched an ample plan of industrialization of the country, contrary to the Soviet COMENOM agenda, with a special focus on heavy industry and other related-industrial sectors. Given Moscow’s reluctance to support Bucharest’s new economic programs, Western financial and technological support became critical.

A more economically self-sustaining country might have been even more politically defiant, of course within the limits imposed by the geopolitical constraints existed at the time. This led to a real metamorphosis of the Romanian political regime. RPR political elite sought the further strengthening of the country’s economic independence, which would gradually forge a genuine political independence within

17 Mihail E. Ionescu, *The Six Day War and the relations between Moscow and Bucharest*, Proceedings of Israeli-Romanian International Seminar, Tel Aviv-Bucharest, 2011-2004 (Tel Aviv: Israeli Defense Forces, Department of History, 2006), 219-237.

the communist world.

The decision to establish diplomatic relations with the FRG announced on 31 January 1967, and the refusal to follow Moscow's policy of condemning Israel in the aftermath of the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967, brought Ceausescu significant international visibility and respect that immediately was translated into important and profitable economic and financial advantages and grounded a remarkable opening in the economic field with the Western countries, especially with the United States and FRG.

The share of trade with capitalist states became a central goal of the economic policy adopted and implemented by Bucharest that, during the same period, exceeded its economic trade with the countries from the communist sphere. It is interesting to mention that before World War II, the West accounted for more than 80 percent of Romania's foreign trade. During the postwar period up to 1959, however, nearly 90 percent of its trade involved COMECON nations. The Soviet Union was by far the most important trading partner during this period. Starting in 1964-1965, the trade balance started to change. By 1964, the trade with Western powers accounted for nearly 40 percent of Romania's imports and almost one-third of its exports. When Ceausescu came to power in 1965, it was recognized that Romania needed a rapid rate of economic growth generated by an efficient and modernized industry.

The economic growth during the first twenty-seven years of communist rule was impressive. Industrial output increased an average 12.9 percent per year between 1950 and 1977, owing to an exceptionally high level of capital accumulation and investment, which grew an average 13 percent annually during this period.¹⁸

Therefore, the importance of the economic dimension should not be missed from the overall political equation that marked the relations between Tel Aviv and Bucharest during the critical year of 1967. Beside the political rationale, the way Bucharest positioned itself towards Israel during the Six-Day War responded to a specific economic agenda and the developments that followed after 1967 provide an accurate image of the Romanian list of priorities in relation to Israel. In May 1967, Romania and Israel signed the agreement on economic and technical-scientific cooperation. In December 1967, the Minister of Foreign Trade, Gheorghe Cioara, visited Israel and on this occasion the first meeting of the Inter-governmental Bilateral Commission was organized, an event that signaled a new level of cooperation between the two countries. The dynamic of trade exchanges between the two countries reveals spectacular achievements in the economic field and shed new light on Bucharest's priorities regarding the Israeli dossier: if in 1966 the trade volume was \$5.348 million, one year later, in 1967, the volume doubled to \$11.207 million; in 1968 it reached \$20.103 million, and in 1969, the total trade volume increased to \$32.441 million. An analysis of these figures economic cooperation reached a spectacular level of development in only four years. Such an achievement cannot be separated from political events that marked Bucharest's standing in Middle East affairs. To be

18 G. Trond, *Modernisation in Romania since World War II* (London: Praeger, 1975), 89-101.

sure, Ceausescu was fully aware that his refusal to cut off diplomatic relations with Israel would attract not only the Israeli political goodwill in international affairs, but also its financial generosity, shaped in important credits and economic and financial assistance. This is why when the Soviets reproached Ceausescu for not considering the common interests of his allies, he preferred Israeli credits and other financial rewards.

For that reason, in analyzing Romania's approach during the Six-Day War, the economic card should not be missed. Economic interests were deeply connected to a more ambitious political project designed by Bucharest as a survival strategy as well as a political platform used by the Romanian Communist team to secure its own recognition and credibility in the international arena. But the economic priorities shaped Romanian political thinking in a particular way. Building an efficient and attractive economic model was a rational motive that targeted several important goals: to ground a more independent policy in relation with Moscow by reducing its possible means of coercion over Romania and to secure Western financial and economic support that was vital for the successful implementation of Romania's industrialization and economic modernization process. Therefore, the position adopted by the Romanian political leadership towards the 1967 conflict, besides the clear political considerations that were related to its ambitious foreign policy agenda, answered also to its growing needs for financial and economic assistance. From this perspective, Israel's likely financial support also acted as an important incentive in modeling Romania's final approach, as shown by the impressive economic dynamics that emerged between the two countries following the 1967 crisis.

One might say that Ceausescu accomplished important objectives by acting as the main defender of Israel within the Warsaw Pact: this increased his prestige and credibility at the international level, voiced his independence towards Moscow, secured important credits and financial assistance from Israel, as well as Israeli support in international affairs (as in Manescu's candidacy as president of UN General Assembly), and allowed him to assume an active role in Cold War political dynamics (Middle East peace process).

The way in which this important political and economic platform built in the 1960s was to be further used by the Bucharest Communist leadership is a distinct and a more complex topic of analysis.

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Defending Slovenia: Why Was It Difficult to Decide?

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1 Introduction into the Problem of Slovenian Independence Process

On three occasions in the 20th century the Slovenian nation and its leadership were in the position where Slovenia had to enter the war: in 1914, 1941 and 1991. However, only on the last occasion this difficult decision had to be made by the national representatives/elites. In 1914 the decision was reached by the leadership of the common Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, while in 1941 the leadership of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was at the helm. In 1991 – a day after the declaration of independence – the Slovenian state leadership had to decide by itself.

On 26 June 1991 the first tanks and soldiers of the Yugoslav People's Army (hereinafter YPA) left the barracks with the goal of occupying the border crossings of the Republic of Slovenia, which had declared its independence on 25 June, and thus protect the integrity of the Yugoslav state. Despite the fact that the units of the YPA used force in order to remove obstacles and roadblocks, the leadership of the Slovenian state adhered to its decision not to use armed force for another day. This so-called strategy of delay was crucial to emphasise a clear line between the defenders, i. e. the Slovenian defence forces, and the aggressors, i.e. the YPA. As late as at the quite dramatic session of the presidency and government of the Republic of Slovenia, taking place on the forenoon of 27 June, Slovenia reached the decision that it would

also defend itself with weapons.¹

Such delay could have been fatal, since at the initial stages of the conflict the initiative was left to the opposing side. Simultaneously delaying the adoption of such an important imperative decreased the morale of the Slovenian defence forces. Nevertheless, Slovenian leadership was not indecisive: the delay was caused by the gravity of the decision to enter into war, but it was also a result of the agreed-upon and planned protraction. Despite labelling the intervention of the Yugoslav armed forces as an aggression against an independent state, the decision to organise an armed defence involved the resolution of many questions, still open at the time. Furthermore, the following issues had to be addressed: various fields of international law, actual battle preparedness of the defence system of the Slovenian state, the geostrategic situation in the region as well as Europe, and the lack of reliable information about the plans and decisions of the political leadership of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the military leadership of the YPA.

2 Circumstances

The Slovenian independence process started in late 1980s. The Yugoslav political crisis was determined as a constitutional crisis.² The decisive intensification of the circumstances in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia took place as early as in March 1988, when the political leadership of Slovenia prevented the move of the Yugoslav military leadership, which tried to politically interpret the democratisation in Slovenia as counter revolution in order to justify the necessity for a military and political intervention in the situation in Slovenia. The first serious public tensions followed in June 1988, when the Slovenian and Yugoslav federal authorities had a completely opposite attitude to the first mass protests against the arrest and trial of four persons charged with revealing a classified military document.³

All of these intensifications were reflected by the major process: the constitutional emancipation of Slovenia. The Yugoslav constitutional order was federal, but lacked the direct means of enforcing a single constitutional order. Slovenia took advantage of this situation in order to draw up changes of its own constitutional order in accordance with its aspirations for greater independence and control over matters

- 1 Damijan Guštin, »Vojaškopolično dogajanje v jugoslovanski krizi in osamosvojitvi Slovenije,« *Slovenska osamosvojitev 1991: pričevanja in analize: simpozij Brežice 21. in 22. junij 2001: zbornik*. (Ljubljana: Državni zbor RS, ZZDS, 2002), 191-214; Tomaž Kladnik, Boris Bolfek, and Albin Mikulič, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije: 1990-1991*. (Ljubljana: Defensor, 2011), 105-107; Božo Repe, *Jutri je nov dan: Slovenci in razpad Jugoslavije* (Ljubljana: Modrijan, 2002), 286-289.
- 2 Božo Repe, *Slovenci v osemdesetih letih* (Ljubljana: Zveza zgodovinskih društev Slovenije, 2001), 47-50.
- 3 Ali Žerdin, *Generali brez kape: čas Odbora za varstvo človekovih pravic*. (Ljubljana: Krtina, 1997); Milan Balažic, *Slovenska demokratična revolucija 1986-1988: civilna družba, nacionalni program in ljubljanski proces*. (Ljubljana: Liberalna akademija, 2004).

that the Yugoslav state was no longer able to manage. In light of a severe political crisis, in September 1989 Slovenia adopted numerous constitutional changes in the form of constitutional amendments, allowing it to legally secede from the socialist system.⁴ On the basis of these amendments the political forces of the regime and the opposition agreed (round table process) on holding multi-party elections. In this manner Slovenia gradually established a system allowing it to abolish the previous communist self-management system and carry out multi-party elections.⁵ One of the initial and decisive factors which led the state leadership of the Republic of Slovenia to believe that this republic would have to be defended was a widespread suspicion that the Yugoslav military leadership, supported by a fraction of the political leadership, would resort to using military force to put a stop to the intensifying Yugoslav crisis, that is, that it would carry out a softer or harder coup d'état. It is essential that due to the specific system of national defence in Yugoslavia not all defence structures were controlled by the state and directly by the military leadership of the federal state. Instead they were at least partially controlled by the leaderships of the individual republics. This was made possible by the system established in 1968, which divided the defence capabilities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into state and territorial forces. The latter were equipped, trained and organised in all aspects by the individual republics of the Yugoslav federation⁶.

Already during the elections, when it became clear that the Slovenian opposition would win, the Yugoslav military leadership attempted to decrease the security risk by taking a passive measure. It ordered the removal of Territorial Defence weapons and

4 Božo Repe, »Ustavna osamosvojitve Slovenije,« *Slovenci in Makedonci v Jugoslaviji* (Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, Oddelek za zgodovino; Skopje: Institut za nacionalna istorija, 1999), 137-154; Milan Balažic, *Slovenska demokratična revolucija 1986-1988: civilna družba, nacionalni program in ljubljanski proces*.

5 Repe, *Slovenci v osemdesetih letih*, 51-67.

6 The 1968 military intervention of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia was an important reason for the reformation of the defence capabilities of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the same year the Federal Assembly of the SFRY adopted the legislation that transferred some of the jurisdictions in the field of defence to the individual republics. Thus the Territorial Defence of the Republic of Slovenia was also established. Although the Territorial Defence units were envisioned as a territorial component and organisation supporting the otherwise federal Yugoslav People's Army in a certain territory, the differences between the Territorial Defence in the individual republics in the SFRY were considerable. The Socialist Republic of Slovenia allocated the largest amount of financial resources to the constant training, education, arming and all-round organising of the Slovenian Territorial Defence. Therefore in terms of quality the Slovenian Territorial Defence notably differed from the rest of the Territorial Defence organisations in the other republics. In the beginning of 1990 approximately 75,000 reservists were mobilised and assigned to the Slovenian Territorial Defence units. Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije: 1990-1991*, 21-96.

their storage in warehouses under the supervision of the YPA. The action was mostly successful, even though success in Slovenia was relative, as the Territorial Defence and other bodies had quite a large quantity of weapons left in their possession. Only 30 % of all weaponry remained in the possession of the Territorial Defence⁷. As it was, the Slovenian leadership had achieved a high degree of internal political consolidation and started preparing its own defence capabilities in the event that the emancipation would have to be protected by armed forces. In as little as three months, between July and September 1990, Slovenia clandestinely established a substitute defence system – Manoeuvre Structure of National Defence, including 30,000 men and ensuring weapons for them. At the same time the Slovenian political leadership warned the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia that any violent operations or interventions of the YPA would be deemed as hostile acts.⁸ And vice versa: the YPA gave assurances that it would only use force to intervene into the political and constitutional transformation of Yugoslavia in case it was attacked.⁹ However, at the same time it was worried that it would be dissolved and that the so-called republican armies would be established, while indirectly it was held captive by the dominant communist principles.

The increasing tensions led to the conviction that a civil war would soon break out in Yugoslavia. As the opinion that Yugoslavia would disintegrate with or without Slovenia prevailed, the Slovenian political elite decided to take further steps in order to attain the independence of the republic. On 4 July 1990 the Slovenian Assembly adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty of Slovenia.¹⁰ This was a clear message to the Yugoslav state authorities and to the other republics that the only acceptable solution for Slovenia is a confederation or an independent state. The sharp political reaction to the declaration of sovereignty has caused a severe polarization of the outlooks on the future path of the country which was falling apart.¹¹ At that moment Slovenia started building its own defence system (and planned to establish the Army of the Republic of Slovenia), but it adapted this plan to the framework of the Territorial Defence – simply because from the viewpoint of the Yugoslav defence system this military formation was legal. Slovenia began acquiring additional weapons abroad illegally¹².

7 Albin Mikulič, *Rebels with a cause : national defence manoeuvre structure* (Ljubljana: Ministry of Defence, 2007).

8 Janez Janša, *Premiki: Nastajanje in obramba slovenske države 1988-1992* (Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 1992), 68; Letter of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia to the Presidency of the SFRY, 5 December 1990. AS 1944, Archive of Republic of Slovenia in Ljubljana, Slovenia (hereafter ARS, SI).

9 Minutes of 21st session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 26 November 1990. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

10 Rosvita Pesek, *Osamosvojitve Slovenije: »Ali naj Republika Slovenija postane samostojna in neodvisna država?«* (Ljubljana: Založba Nova revija, 2007), 186-196.

11 Ibid, 205-206; Repe, *Jutri je nov dan*, 185.

12 Matej Šurc and Blaž Zgaga, *V imenu države : trilogija. Knjiga 1, Odprodaja* (Ljubljana: Sanje, 2011), 80-85.

The Slovenian political elite expected Yugoslavia to disintegrate with or without Slovenia (in November 1990 a similar analysis on the probable dissolution of Yugoslavia within 18 months was also published by the CIA). As the political elite was unable to draw up and adopt a new constitution quickly enough, it decided to call a referendum, where the population would decide whether it agreed with the establishment of an independent state.

Therefore a national referendum on 23 December 1990 was adopted as a new step on the path towards independence. At this referendum the population of Slovenia would vote whether it supported the establishment of an independent state. This is precisely what happened, and with a great binding majority of 89 %. When the referendum was carried out, Slovenia itself set out the deadline for the realisation of this decision: half a year, that is, until 26 June 1991.¹³ The attempts to discuss the dissolution of the federation with the other republics were not successful. Only Croatia accepted the Slovenian suggestion and argued for the establishment of a confederacy.

Therefore since 1991 the Slovenian state leadership pursued the policy with two main goals: to politically prepare for independence; and to simultaneously build a defence system which would hopefully reduce the security risk resulting from the proclamation of independence as much as possible. The Minister of Defence Janez Janša was in the centre of the effort to build this system. His outlook on the preparations was that the use of force during the emancipation process was a very real possibility. Therefore, in his opinion, "the fact that we are not preparing seriously enough for a possible conflict is a serious deficiency"¹⁴. As a politician he was one of those members of the Slovenian political elite who argued for the military strengthening of Slovenia, and he also decisively influenced the direction and development of the Slovenian national security planning in the period until the proclamation of independence. Later Janša published his strategic plans from the beginning of 1991, which indicated that Slovenia was simultaneously preparing for several scenarios after its proclamation of independence: high-risk (military intervention of the YPA), medium-risk (limited military intervention of the YPA), and low-risk scenarios (military pressures without intervention).¹⁵

The fundamental dilemma was to what degree the use of weapons should be included in the plan of declaring the Slovenian independence. It was expected that in case of a favourable outcome the attainment of independence would also be possible without the use of arms, which was also a politically acceptable goal for the political elite. It should be underlined that the political elite was not united in its emancipation strategy – instead it was divided, also as far as this goal was concerned, into the more radical side and the supporters of a less aggressive, less perceptible emancipation. A part of the political elite did not want to openly discuss the issue of the use of force, trusting that this was only a remote and extreme possibility. The question of budgetary resources for the defence was addressed in this manner as

¹³ Pesek, *Osamosvojitve Slovenije*, 231-274.

¹⁴ Janša, *Premiki*, 60.

¹⁵ Janša, *Premiki*, 108-116.

well. However, the use of weapons was not excluded, and certainly neither were the defence operations in case that the YPA intervened. The Slovenian defence system was in its infancy and it lacked the expert support. The need for the establishment of a National Security Council was identified, but it did not have any constitutional basis.¹⁶

One of the ways of reducing the risk was also to find allies. Croatia, which was in a similar position, was the most important of them.¹⁷ As in January 1991, due to the attempt of disarming the paramilitary forces in Yugoslavia (in reality the armed forces of Croatia and Slovenia), the situation became increasingly tense and the Slovenian and Croatian Ministers of Defence and Internal Affairs entered into an ad hoc agreement on joint defence. In the form of measures, listed in eight points, the Agreement stated that in case of the YPA intervention both of the republics would “use all legal means, including the Territorial Defence and the internal affairs bodies, and call for the protection and defence of the democratic system and sovereignty”, interrupt the supply of the YPA in the territory of both republics, request that the citizens of both republics leave the YPA, inform the Organisation of the United Nations, and demand the intervention of the UN peacekeeping forces. The joint statement of the presidencies of Slovenia and Croatia at the time stated: “In case that the armed forces of the Yugoslav People’s Army should be used in breach of the arrangements and measures of the legitimate and lawful authorities in both republics, the presidency of the Republic of Slovenia and the presidency of the Republic of Croatia will take steps within the scope of their constitutional powers.”¹⁸ This also implied the use of armed forces for the defence of both republics. However, at the same time, at the meetings with the federal presidency, the presidencies of all the republics agreed “that the Yugoslav crisis should be solved calmly and democratically, without resorting to the use of force.”¹⁹

One of the dilemmas with regard to the use of armed force was also how this would be seen by the international community. Slovenian leadership may have had limited access to international actors, but it did see an increasing support, especially from Austria and Germany. On 14 February 1991 the Ministers of Defence and Foreign Affairs of the Slovenian government met informally with a NATO representative.²⁰ However, the Slovenian leadership did not foster any false hopes with regard to the international support of the use of arms for defence purposes. It was clear that

16 Minutes of 25th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 14 January 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

17 Damijan Guštin, »Slovenija, saveznica Hrvatske tijekom razlaza s jugoslavenskom državom (od nenačelne koalicije do raspada vojnog saveza 1989.-1991«. Časopis za suvremenu povijest – Journal of contemporary History, Zagreb, 40, no. 1 (2008), 85-106.

18 Minutes of 26th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 22 January 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

19 Report of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia for the Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 19 February 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

20 Janša, Premiki, 96-98.

the international community mostly wanted to restrict the situation to an internal Yugoslav conflict, which should also be prevented from escalating into military confrontations or civil war.²¹

March 1991 was a turning point also due to the dynamics of the developments at the opposing side. On 1 March the YPA units intervened in Pakrac in the Republic of Croatia in order to prevent an inter-ethnic conflict, while on 10 March it acted against the Serbian non-communist opposition in order to keep the Serbian regime in power. In the beginning of this month the Yugoslav military leadership decided to take over the power with a soft military coup (by introducing a state of emergency at the whole of Yugoslav territory and adopting a decision on the mobilisation as well as disbandment of all military forces not commanded by the Presidency of the State). However, it failed to get an approval for its intervention from the Yugoslav Presidency on 12 and 14 March 1991, so the proposed state of emergency was not introduced. Instead it announced to the public that it would protect the state borders and prevent any conflicts between the Yugoslav nations or any attempts to solve the disagreements between the republics by force.²²

The Slovenian state leadership publicly and as a principle emphasised that the YPA had been used contrary to the wishes of the Republic of Slovenia, and that in view of the circumstances "all the actions and procedures required for the authorities of the Republic of Slovenia to take over the administration of all the state functions" should be expedited.²³ The establishment of the operative body for the management of all defence preparations (the Emergency Situation Coordinating Body) was an immediate consequence of the decision that preparations were to be undertaken for the events after the attainment of independence. As it was, this body, quite unusual for defence preparations, was provided for by the legislation, and in accordance with the regulations it was headed by the Minister of the Interior.²⁴

The middle of May 1991 was high time to coordinate the standpoints and measures with regard to the attainment of Slovenian independence, which was at that time only slightly more than a month away. The strategic discussion took place at the session of the extended Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia on 15 May 1991. The Slovenian leadership established that it was still facing several versions of the emancipation process: consensual dissolution; violent accelerated dissolution before 26 June; and unilateral dissolution on 26 June 1991. There was no longer any hope that the situation could be resolved consensually and armed conflict became increasingly probable.²⁵

21 Repe, Jutri je nov dan, 330-332.

22 Repe, Jutri je nov dan, 264-268.

23 Letter of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia to the Executive Council of the Republic of Slovenia, 20 March 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

24 Decision of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia on the establishment of the Operative emergency situation coordinating body, 18 March 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

25 Minutes of the 37th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 15 May 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

Less than a month before the Presidency had ultimately adopted the basic legislation for the new defence system. After many months of adjustment and thus delays in the Assembly, both the Defence and Protection Act and Military Service Act were finally adopted.²⁶ The Presidency also confirmed the basic outlines of Territorial Defence reorganisation, military exercises for the preparation of the defence system, and introduction of the trial military service in the Territorial Defence. The President of the Presidency established that the whole situation had boiled down to three possibilities: consensual dissolution; violent accelerated dissolution before 26 June; and unilateral dissolution on 26 June 1991.²⁷

The latter was supposedly the most sensitive option, resulting in possibilities for violent interventions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs predicted that a civil war in Yugoslavia was a very realistic possibility, while the Slovenian emancipation bothered certain factors of international politics precisely due to the strategic struggle for the Western Europe's eastern border, as Slovenian independence would result in the disintegration of the unified Yugoslav position. The Minister of Defence stated that the project group for defence and security had already drawn up an analysis of necessary measures before 1 May 1991 and prepared the steps that would have to be taken by the Presidency or partly by the Assembly. The (political and military) pact with Croatia was most two-sided. Several members of the Presidency believed that on one hand cooperation with Croatia in the emancipation efforts meant a decreased security risk, since the forces of the YPA would have to divide and the resistance forces of both republics would be much stronger. However, on the other hand this cooperation involved a severe political risk for the Slovenian position, as an "immediate civil war and the opening of the complete front in Yugoslavia" was a very real possibility. Thus Slovenia would only represent a single segment of this civil war, so it could be seen by the international community as (co)responsible for the bloodshed as it had failed to exhaust all the options for negotiations.²⁸

A week later, on 21 May, the state leadership discussed the state of the preparations for the functioning of the independent Slovenian state. The President of the Presidency underlined that certain decisions could also imply the defence of Slovenia through armed force. The Minister of Defence explained that the Slovenian guidelines were to deploy a part of its armed forces in order to protect the vital facilities and control the borders. "However, nothing, by any means, compels us to be the first to use force or to effectively take over the power by force in any area."²⁹ Slovenia could not

26 Janša, Premiki, 98-107; Damijan Guštin, »Oborožene sile Republike Slovenije v prelomnem trenutku: nacionalna obramba – dosežek samostojne slovenske države?«, Mitja Ferenc, Jurij Hadalin and Blaž Babič (ed.), *Osamosvojitev 1991: država in demokracija na Slovenskem v zgodovinskih razsežnostih*, (Ljubljana: Znanstvena založba Filozofske fakultete Univerze v Ljubljani, 2011), 254-257.

27 Minutes of the 37th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 15 May 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

28 Ibid.

29 Minutes of the 39th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 21 May 1991, AS

afford to cause an armed conflict, because it did not have the necessary forces at its disposal. However, according to the order of the President of the Presidency the concrete measures were not discussed, not even with the state leadership. In the end the President simply reminded the state leadership that a possibility of war existed, but that Slovenia had been preparing to take steps in order to “overcome the danger of war”.³⁰

Only three days later the situation became tense in Maribor, where one of the two centres for the trial training of recruits operated. The YPA forces surrounded the centre, demanded that the recruits and officers surrender, and even arrested the regional Territorial Defence commander.³¹ The state leadership estimated that in accordance with the Slovenian strategic goals it was better not to respond to the YPA challenge by using force. Instead it introduced a number of preventive measures with the aim of obstructing the YPA, which had already been prepared earlier: the YPA military barracks were disconnected from the electricity power and water supply network, and the mobilisation of special Territorial Defence units was carried out.³² The state leadership also assessed that the state and political elements of the attainment of independence should not rely on the defence measures, and that instead all of these aspects should be carried out simultaneously. The reaction supposedly depended on the strategic estimates with regard to the YPA activities in the last week of May – whether these activities were simply provocations or actual preparations for the attempt to prevent the emancipation process by force. Certain members of the state leadership theorised that the military defence measures may have been prepared, but that political measures should also be taken, since the situation was very unfavourable as the Presidency of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not functioning and the YPA no longer had a supreme commander. However, the state leadership did not decide to activate the population politically (mass gatherings), which could have negative implications. Instead only a gathering of political parties with the motto For Peace and Independent Slovenia! was organised.³³

Shortly before the attainment of independence, the international circumstances worsened for Slovenia. The international community was worried about the possible consequences of the declaration of two new states in the territory of Yugoslavia. During the visits from European leaders, especially from the European Community countries as well as U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in the middle of June 1991, the pressure against all the state elites in Yugoslavia increased.³⁴ The leaders urged Yugoslavia to solve the problem internally and offered their good will as well as

1944, ARS, SI.

30 Ibid.

31 Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije 1990-1991*, 176-187.

32 Minutes of the 40th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 24 May 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

33 Minutes of the 41st session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 29 May 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

34 Repe, *Jutri je nov dan*, 334-335.

concrete material assistance under the condition that the republics put a stop to the process of transforming themselves into independent countries.³⁵ The Slovenian leadership assumed that the international community would even be willing to tolerate a military intervention of the YPA in Slovenia, in case it was supported by the Yugoslav government. As far as it was evident from the messages during the visit from Jacques Santer and Jacques Delors in Belgrade (the presence of the Slovenian leadership here was limited), the European Economic Community was concerned that European security would be threatened, as they obviously predicted that the Yugoslav conflict would lead to war, so they saw the independence efforts of Slovenia from this viewpoint. Therefore Slovenia urgently had to do everything to discourage the appearance and accusations that its secession caused a civil war in Yugoslavia. However, at the same time Slovenia could not create an impression of derogating from its independence project.³⁶

On 4 June 1991, the presidents of the government and Presidency of Slovenia met in Belgrade with the president of the federal government Ante Marković and defence minister general Veljko Kadijević in order to discuss the situation. They found out that since that moment the role of the YPA was only “to prevent the possibility of violent and armed conflicts in the process of resolving the crisis”.³⁷ Therefore the Army would only carry out peacekeeping tasks. However, the Slovenian side underlined that the YPA should demonstrate this new role and actually stop supporting the Serbian agenda of Milošević, thus putting an end to distrust. Hereby the Slovenian representatives demanded an explanation about the military exercise under the code name “Bedem”, based on the scenario of an attack against Yugoslavia and deployment of the Army at the western state borders. The explanations were unconvincing and the distrust of the Slovenian side even worsened. It was clear to everyone that in case of Slovenia unilaterally declaring secession and independence, the Army would intervene in accordance with its guidelines. However, it was up to the Slovenian side to assess whether it would be capable of such an intervention.³⁸ In fact it was relatively difficult for Slovenia to make this assessment, since the information provided by the intelligence services were uncertain at best.

Final decision of the use of defence forces

Less than a month before the D-day the Presidency of Slovenia ultimately adopted the basic legislation for the new defence system. After many months of adjustment and thus delays in the Assembly, in March and April 1991 both the Defence and

35 Ibid, 337-338.

36 Minutes of the 41th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 29 and 31 May 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

37 Minutes of the 42th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 5 June 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

38 Minutes of the 42nd session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 5 June 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

Protection Act and Military Service Act were finally adopted. The Presidency also confirmed the basic outlines of Territorial Defence reorganisation, and introduction of the trial military service in the Territorial Defence.³⁹

The latter was supposedly the most sensitive option, resulting in possibilities for violent interventions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs predicted that a civil war in Yugoslavia was a very realistic possibility. Certain factors of international politics estimated that Slovenian independence would result in the disintegration of the unified Yugoslav position, he said.⁴⁰

Due to security problems the Presidency decided to implement the final declaration of independence a day earlier, on 25 June. Shortly before that moment the final decisions had also been reached. It was more or less clear that the unilateral declaration of independence would not be possible without incidents. On 21 June the Presidency of Slovenia adopted a decision on the implementation of measures for the preparedness and protection of the sovereignty of the Republic of Slovenia, but only provided for a partial mobilisation of Territorial Defence members and introduction of the state of emergency. Slovenian activities were very reserved in accordance with the plan not to provoke a conflict.⁴¹ However, already on the day before the attainment of independence intelligence information revealed that the military leadership decided to intervene with a limited support from the Federal Executive Council (Yugoslav government), which was actually not at all competent to make any decisions about the use of military force or with regard to war.

On 25 June 1991 Slovenia adopted the legislation on the declaration of the independent state of Slovenia.⁴² Already a few hours before the acts on independence had also been adopted by the Republic of Croatia.⁴³ For Yugoslavia the declaration of two independent countries in its territory (officially still the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) on 25 June 1991 was certainly a development bringing its very existence in question. Supported by the federal government, the YPA intervened with the goal of occupying the borders. As it became known later, the YPA intervention plan anticipated that all of the border crossings in Slovenia would be taken over by 27 June 1991 until 15:00.⁴⁴

On 26 June 1991 afternoon two motorised columns of the YPA, including tanks,

39 Damijan Guštin, »Oborožene sile Republike Slovenije v prelomnem trenutku: nacionalna obramba – dosežek samostojne slovenske države?«, 254-257.

40 Dimitrij Rupel, *Skrivnost države: spomini na domače in zunanje zadeve 1989-1992*, (Ljubljana: Založba Delo-Novice, 1992), 135-137.

41 Minutes of the 43th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 21 June 1991, AS 1944, ARS, SI.

42 Pesek, *Osamosvojitve Slovenije*, 372-384.

43 Zdenko Radelić, Davor Marijan and Nikica Barić, eds., *Stvaranje hrvatske države i Domovinski rat* (Zagreb, 2006); Kosta Nikolić and Vladimir Petrović (ed.), *Rat u Sloveniji: Dokumenta Predsedništva SFRJ 1991*, Tom II (jun – jul 1991), (Beograd, Institut za suvremenu istoriju, 2012), 35-36.

44 Nikolić and Petrović (ed.), *Rat u Sloveniji: Dokumenta Predsedništva SFRJ 1991*, 38-41, 88-95.

departed from the Pivka and Ilirska Bistrica barracks and headed towards Koper and Nova Gorica. On the way towards their goals the military columns encountered two factors signifying that a different development of the events should also be expected: improvised road blocks and protests of the local population along the way.⁴⁵ Early in the morning of 27 June other motorised columns of YPA headed from their garrisons in Slovenia and in the neighbouring Croatia towards border crossings and the Ljubljana airport.⁴⁶

After it had received the first news about the YPA movements, the Presidency of Slovenia together with the presidents of the parliament and the government as well as the most important ministers gathered in order to review the situation. Despite the fact that in the individual cases the units of the YPA used force in order to remove obstacles and road blocks, the Slovenian state leadership would only now decide about the use of arms. Despite the fact that the session was quite dramatic, there was no significant indecision whether to use force in the key moment. According to the reports of the Ministers of Defence and Interior, the communication to the commanding general Konrad Kolšek stated that the intervention was “deemed as an attack against Slovenia, that the challenge has been accepted, and that the attack will be met by force”.⁴⁷ However, the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia waited another two hours for the outcome of telephone negotiations and potential termination of the intervention. In the middle of the forenoon the Presidency adopted a decision “ordering the deployment of Territorial Defence to protect facilities and communications”. Slovenian defence forces received the decision stating that “in case of contact with the YPA they should open fire”.⁴⁸ Territorial Defence commanders interpreted the orders in the sense that they could only use arms in case the YPA units opened fire first, and they acted in this manner until late afternoon. At that point, after several interventions and explanations of the Slovenian defence leadership, a different interpretation prevailed: that force should be used in order to prevent the YPA from achieving its goals.⁴⁹

The Presidency resolved to inform the public about this decision, and it recalled the Slovenian citizens and all Slovenians from the YPA units. Nevertheless it also decided to demand that the President of the federal government Marković should immediately terminate all of the YPA military activities. Regardless of these efforts, during the afternoon session the Presidency established that the YPA was intensifying its military activities. Potential negotiations were still an option, but only under the condition that the military operations were suspended. At 19:00 general Brovet, assistant to the Federal Minister of Defence, informed the public that the YPA

45 Silva Križan, Leon Horvatič and Maks Hožič, eds., *Dan prej* (Koper: Primorske novice, 1992), 29-40, 54-56, 109-118; Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije*, 293-298.

46 Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije*, 207-215, 255-256, 326-341.

47 Minutes of the 44th session of of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 27. June 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

48 Territorial Defence of Slovenia Headquarter circular, 27 June 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI.

49 Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije: 1990-1991*, 105-107.

achieved the envisioned goals and that the intervention was thus complete. However, the Slovenian side did not agree with such an interpretation, and the counterattack of the Slovenian defence forces was ordered.⁵⁰

The war started.

Conclusion

All of this demonstrates how difficult the decision on the use of force was, despite the clear guidelines of the state leadership, agreed on in advance. It seemed that the reservations and reluctance of the Slovenian Presidency were based on the fear of the YPA's considerable military might and lack of support by the international community, especially the USA, which invested much effort in preventing the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. However, a more detailed look behind the scenes and the analysis of further developments have revealed other facts that had to be and have been carefully taken into account when making the decision whether to use force while defending the homeland, i.e. Slovenia.

The Slovenian political leadership made sure to strictly adhere to the international law. The United Nations Charter does not condone the use of force and therefore war in order to resolve conflicts. The only exception to the rule is the right to self-defence, which is stated clearly in the Article 51 of the UN Charter. The rather late decision on the use of military force against the YPA units, despite their brutal attitude and regardless of the fact that they had opened fire on the roadblocks, sent a message to the international community: although not formally recognised, the new state of the Republic of Slovenia followed the legal standards even in such critical moments as a military intervention.

When the decision was adopted, the Slovenian leadership only opted for a limited use of force against the YPA units. The Slovenian Presidency was strongly convinced that such attitude would not provoke the federal government and YPA generals to impose a total war concept on Slovenia. This was important in order to prevent damage and destruction within the state as well as unnecessary casualties among the Slovenian population. The aim of the Slovenian leadership was to get the independent Slovenia on the track of economic development. The adherence to the international military and humanitarian law precluded the Serbian communist leadership (Slobodan Milošević) and the YPA, who undertook a campaign of accusing the Slovenian defence forces of numerous war crimes, from succeeding in their manipulations. Furthermore, the strict supervision of the use of firepower left the possibilities for dialogue in the resolution of the conflict open, which was evident from the many examples of the YPA soldiers surrendering. At the same time the Slovenian Independence War became the basis for a swift and successful recognition of the young state and its admission into the international organisations. However,

50 Minutes of the 44th session of the Presidency of the Republic of Slovenia, 27 June 1991. AS 1944, ARS, SI; Kladnik, eds., *Vojaška obramba Slovenije: 1990-1991*, 123-125.

considerable risks were involved as the late decision about defending Slovenia might have resulted in a significant military initiative, which could in turn cause the military collapse of the Slovenian defence forces. Ultimately the gamble paid off: after the successful defence and diplomatic flexibility, in January 1992 Slovenia was already recognised as an independent state.

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Multi-nationality as a Strategic Challenge for Coalition Operations: A Case Study of Polish Military Contingent Experience in Iraq, 2003-2008

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Abstract

This paper examines the phenomenon of multi-nationality as a strategic challenge for coalition operations occurring in the Multinational Division Center-South in the Republic of Iraq for coalition operations in progress of activities of the Polish military contingent 2003-2008. The challenge of multi-nationality was introduced with reference to the national composition the above-mentioned divisions, the environment of the local population with the regard of its influence on the cooperation within the framework of coalition forces, and their relation with authorities and the local population in the area of the operating-responsibility. In this article, reasons of such juncture and the relations of participants (soldiers) of the stabilization operation to this problem are based on unique research results conducted by the author in the Republic of Iraq.

Poland's commitment to service in peace operations of the UN, NATO, OSCE, and EU has resulted in Polish soldiers' participation on various continents in multicultural environments for decades. In addition to typical military training, intercultural communication skills become very important importance.¹ It must be

¹ Intercultural communication takes place when a representative of one culture creates and passes clear and understandable information to the representative of a different culture; see: A. Zaporowski, Czy komunikacja międzykulturowa jest możliwa? Strategia

stressed that “multiculturalism” is neither a narrow nor explicit term.² According to Piotr Sztombka, multiculturalism, on the one hand, may be regarded as a multitude and diversity of cultures in an historical and modern co-existential dimension. On the other, it is an ideological position stressing the right of various communities to different ways of life, and advocating a real equality of cultures.³ Multiculturalism may also be perceived as diversity of cultures within one community, which unrepetitiveness and uniqueness should be treated with great tolerance.

With regard to the preparation and conduct of international peace⁴ and stability operations, the multiculturalism problem becomes important. The intercultural contacts and relations⁵ that occur between the representatives of different cultures (within international contingents or in contacts with local population) may critically influence the effectiveness of the stability force task execution and security in a particular operational area. Thus, the inter-cultural communication competences of international contingents’ personnel (especially officer’s cadre)⁶ are of no less importance in the preparation process than typical military training.⁷ In order to achieve that goal, multicultural education⁸ should be an important factor during the formation of international force elements from uniformed groups.⁹

kulturoznawcza Poznań: Wyd. UAM, 2006), 98-101, and M. Zuber, Komunikowanie międzykulturowe, in *Studia z teorii komunikowania masowego*, ed. B. Dobek-Ostrowska, 24 (Wrocław: 1999).

- 2 The specialist literature describes multiculturalism, depending on different interpretations of the term, as transculturalism, multiculturalism, or culture pluralism.
- 3 P. Sztombka, *Socjologia* (Kraków: Wyd. Znak, 2005), 255.
- 4 It must be emphasized that there is no universal definition of “peace (mission) operation.” In this paper, that term is understood as: preventing, reducing, calming, and ending armed operations between countries or within countries with the assistance of peaceful third party intervention, organized and directed by an international organization, with participation of military, law enforcement, and civilian personnel, in order to restore and keep peace. W. E. Gilman and D. E. Herold, *Peacekeeping Challenges to Euro-Atlantic Security* (Rome: NATO Defence College, 1994), 21, and *Słownik terminów z zakresu bezpieczeństwa narodowego* (Warszawa: 2002), 92.
- 5 A culture contact may be considered as establishing an interaction and social relations between communities (their representatives) living in the different cultural circles. Sztombka, *Socjologia*, 254.
- 6 See D. S. Kozerański, “Rola i zadania oficerów Wojska Polskiego w międzynarodowych operacjach pokojowych i stabilizacyjnych w latach, 1953-2007,” in *Oficerowie grup dyspozycyjnych. Socjologiczna analiza procesu bezpieczeństwa narodowego*, ed. T. Kolodziejczyk, D. S. Kozerański, and J. Maciejewski, 69-70 (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2008).
- 7 See D. S. Kozerański, Rola komunikowania się żołnierzy sił pokojowych ze stronami konfliktu zbrojnego, *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Oficerskiej im. T. Kościuszki „Poglądy i doświadczenia,”* Special edition (Wrocław: 1997), 161-164.
- 8 See Z. Melosik, *Teoria i praktyka edukacji wielokulturowej* (Kraków: 2007), 11-12.
- 9 The term “uniformed group” is not unambiguous, and may be understood as a specific

The Polish soldiers' participation in international peace processes dates back to the mid-20th century, when, after the end of combat in the Korean War in 1953, a group of Polish officers was dispatched to work within the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) in Korea.¹⁰ One year later, in April 1954, Polish representatives entered the International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) that was created to resolve the armed conflict encompassing the territories of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.¹¹ The next mission of Polish military personnel was within the International Military Observer Team in Nigeria (OTN) (until March 1970).

The first case of Polish Military Contingent (PMC) participation in international peace operation was connected with the formation of the Polish Special Military Unit (PSMU) for service in the international peacekeeping force UNEF II in the Middle East.¹² Subsequent UN operations with Polish participation were UNDOF (since 1974) on the Golan Heights¹³ and UNIFIL in Lebanon (since 1992).¹⁴ An operation that

social group, because of its structure and hierarchic organization (within one group, the smaller subgroups compose the larger) that makes its availability, which is defined as a mutual relation of subordination and superiority of social entities. The "uniformed groups" are subordinated to superior actor, which, with regard to the largest of them -- armed forces, are state, or, in some instances, international organizations. See Z. Morawski, *Prawne determinanty pozycji, roli i statusu warstw dyspozycyjnych społeczeństwa Polski na przykładzie trzech organizacji formalnych* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2005), 22, and Z. Zagórski, *Społeczeństwo transformacyjne. Klasy i warstwy Polski postkomunistycznej* (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 1997), 25.

- 10 The ceasefire agreement supervision was entrusted to an international commission that consisted of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Switzerland, and Sweden. The commission worked in twenty four-person stationary and mobile inspection groups, which were located in seaports, airports and railway stations of both former warring countries' territories, and also patrolled the demilitarized zone. Therefore, multicultural contacts happened with varying frequency every day. In February 1995, Polish personnel were redeployed from Korea as a consequence of the withdrawal of permission to stay on its territory by North Korean authorities. It is estimated that within the Commission, 1,065 members of Polish civil-military personnel served (including 796 regular soldiers). F. Gągor and K. Paszkowski, *Międzynarodowe operacje pokojowe w doktrynie obronnej RP* (Torun, 1999), 147-148.
- 11 Two separate commissions were created for the purpose of the supervision of armistice agreement proceedings, which operated in Cambodia until 1969, Laos until 1975, and Vietnam until 1972. The commission with similar tasks was, created under the Paris Agreement in January 1973, the International Commission of Control and Supervision in South Vietnam, operated until 1975. Polish representatives (including 1391 regular soldiers participated in all of commissions in Indochina after 1948. Gągor and Paszkowski, *Międzynarodowe operacje pokojowe w doktrynie obronnej RP*, 148-149.
- 12 UNEF II: Second United Nations Emergency Force, the U.N. intervention forces, which were the continuation of UNEF I that operated in 1956-1967.
- 13 UNDOF: United Nations Disengagement Observer Force.
- 14 UNIFIL: *United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon*.

functioned in a very different socio-cultural environment was UNTAG in Namibia in 1989-1990, and was conducted with Polish military contingent participation.¹⁵

After a military reorganization in Poland in 1989, Polish soldiers participated in international peace and coalition military operations in the Persian Gulf (1991), former Yugoslavia (1992-1995), Cambodia (1992-1993), Haiti (1994-1995), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (since 1995).

Polish military participation in such operations since 1953 was characterized by the necessity to operate within multinational and multicultural environments in Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Poland's accession to NATO on 12 March 1999, preceded by its cooperation with the alliance's members and other countries within the framework of the "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) program (since 1994), formalized and broadened a spectrum of Polish military personnel cooperation while operating within multinational and multicultural environments. A confirmation of that was the Polish military contingents' participation in peace and stability operations in Albania (1999), Kosovo (since 1999), and Afghanistan (since 2002).¹⁶

The Republic of Poland joined the European Union in 2004, and this was an important factor that began Poland's increased involvement in operations conducted by this organization in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2004), Congo¹⁷ (2006), and Chad (2007-2009).

The vast majority of the aforementioned international operations with Polish military participation was conducted under auspices of the UN, OSCE, NATO, or EU, and therefore, their activities were legitimized by these international organizations.

Throughout ten rotations of the Polish Military Contingent in the stability operation in Republic of Iraq, both its character and range of fulfilled tasks had been subject to major changes. The type and scale of the threat effecting coalition forces, including soldiers of Multinational Division Central-South, should be considered as one of the key elements.

15 UNTAG: *United Nations Transition Assistance Group*.

16 See D. S. Kozerański, "Zaangażowanie Polski w międzynarodowe operacje pokojowe na Bałkanach w XX wieku a bezpieczeństwo militarne państwa," in *Polityka bezpieczeństwa Polski w XX i na początku XXI wieku (wybrane problemy)*, ed. T. Panecki, 159-170 (Częstochowa: Wyd. Akademii im. J. Długosza, 2008); *Działania wojenne, pokojowe i stabilizacyjne prowadzone w warunkach szczególnych w XX i XXI wieku. Konflikty – doświadczenia – bezpieczeństwo*, ed. D. S. Kozerański (Torun: 2007), 17-18; and *Operacje pokojowe i antyterrorystyczne w procesie utrzymania bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego w latach 1948-2004*, ed. D. S. Kozerański, 110-111 (Torun: 2006).

17 See D. S. Kozerański, "Kontyngent Wojska Polskiego w międzynarodowej operacji pokojowej Unii Europejskiej w demokratycznej republice Konga w 2006 r. jako forma zaangażowania Polski w ponadnarodowy system bezpieczeństwa," in *NATO w dobie transformacji. Siły zbrojne w transatlantyckim systemie bezpieczeństwa początku XXI wieku*, ed. K. Kubiak and P. Mickiewicz, 148-149 (Torun: Wyd. "Adam Marszałek," 2008).

Threats in the Area of Iraqi Operation

Historical, political, socio-cultural, religious, and climate factors, as noted earlier, had created a number of threats to civilian and military personnel of the PMC in Iraq. The most dangerous developed from these rebel tactics:¹⁸

- attacking convoys and patrols of the coalition forces and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) with Improvised Explosive Devices;¹⁹
- using car-bombs when attacking coalition forces;
- ambushing convoys and patrols;
- conducting attacks on single coalition forces soldiers in public and populated areas with small arms, blades, hand grenades, typical antipersonnel mines, and sniper weapons;
- conducting attacks on coalition forces and ISF bases and checkpoints with rockets, mortars, grenade launchers, and small arms;
- attempting to break through the barriers and fences of coalition force bases with cars filled with explosives driven by suicide-drivers;
- conducting sabotage activities in order to destroy an industrial infrastructure;
- assassinating new Iraqi authority members, police commanders, and members of the newly-created Iraqi Army.

Since the area of responsibility (AOR) of the Multinational Division Central-South (MND-CS) was inhabited by a Shia majority, in the opinion of the coalition, it was considered one of the most stable, which in the case of operation "Iraqi Freedom" meant a slightly smaller number of attacks and casualties among coalition forces. In order to maintain that situation, the MND-CS command and Iraqi authorities focused on an effective resolution of problems considered by the local population as priorities, including public security, electricity and water supply, and sanitation and health care improvement.

The MND-CS AOR was also the arena of a power struggle between religious factions. Rebel forces were conducting frequent attacks on coalition forces, mainly with small arms and anti-tank grenade launchers, mortars, and booby-traps.²⁰ The organized criminal groups were also active trafficking weapons and drugs. There were cases of intimidation, murder, and kidnapping of individuals cooperating with coalition forces and local authorities.

18 Działania wojenne, pokojowe i stabilizacyjne prowadzone w warunkach szczególnych w XX i XXI wieku. Konflikty – doświadczenia - bezpieczeństwo, ed. D. S. Kozerański, 161-167 (Torun: Wyd. „Adam Marszałek,” 2007).

19 IED: Improvised Explosive Device.

20 After two months of relative quiet, without taking into account a terrorist attack attempt on Al Hillah base (18 February 2004), attacks on coalition patrols, police precincts, and administration buildings in the area were subject to booby-traps, indirect mortar fire, and attacks on Shiites during the religious holidays of Ashura and Arbacean. Hundreds of people were injured or killed in the course of these incidents.

A characteristic example presenting the hazards while serving in coalition forces might be an enumeration of the attacks in the MND-CS AOR in 2006-2007. For example, during the seventh rotation between September 2006 and March 2007 in the Polish AOR, there was an average of sixty attacks per month. The situation deteriorated, when during next – eighth rotation -- this number increased to some eighty attacks per month.²¹ The situation improved again, when during the ninth PMC rotation the mission character and tactics of coalition forces were changed.

It should be emphasized that political decisions on gradual MND-CS force reductions caused a crucial impact on the PMC soldiers' risk level. It is also necessary to highlight that this was a result of an erroneous threat assessment in Iraq.

Polish Military Contingent Main Tasks

The main tasks of the PMC, as a military contingent in Multinational Stability Forces (MSF) Iraq, was conducting stability and mentor-training operations and at the same time being ready for providing security to PMC personnel, as well as supporting the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) with planning and executing antiterrorist activity. Additionally, it conducted humanitarian aid and reconstruction tasks in Al Quadisiyah province. The character of these tasks -- combined with the threats faced in Iraq and MND-CS AOR, climate conditions, and deadlines to reach full combat readiness and taking over the area of responsibility -- created in 2003, a huge challenge for a leadership of the Ministry of Defense and the military personnel tasked with building the MND-CS. They also affected a range and ways of executing tasks by particular Polish Army contingent rotations participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The tasks performed by consecutive rotations of the PMC in during 2003-2008 were evolved substantially depending on changes of the operation character, area of responsibility, and rebel units' tactics. During the first three rotations, the operation was a stability operation.

During its mission, MND-CS activity was mainly conducting a stability operation in order to assuring a stable and secure environment for developing an effective administration and promoting regional stability, as well as eliminating a threat created by rebel forces and weapons of mass destruction by conducting well-prepared precision low-intensity operations.²²

The main tasks conducted by PMC within this stage of the operation were:

- providing security and maintaining public order;
- de-mining and removing war damage;
- protecting important infrastructure and weapon and ammunition depots;
- providing humanitarian aid;
- helping in creating local authorities and supporting an administration;

21 In April 2007, about 110 attacks were made on the coalition forces in the MND-CS AOR.

22 Including raids, detentions, and cordon and search operations.

- supporting the creation and training of Iraqi armed formations (military, police, security services).

During the fourth and fifth PMC rotations, the character of the operation changed slightly into a stability and training mission. The vital mission of MND-CS activity was to conduct mentoring and training mission, support the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in counterinsurgency operations, monitor ISF activities, and initiate reconnaissance-neutralizing operations against an anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) in Ad Diwaniyah and Wasit Provinces in order to establish conditions to allow control by local authorities and ISF at the province level.

The main tasks executed during this period by MND-CS were:

- mentoring, monitoring, and training Iraqi forces;
- promoting coalition operations in AOR;
- developing Iraqi police and border guard;
- transferring tactical responsibility to and supporting ISF with necessary assets;
- continuing an information campaign in order to weaken Iraqi population support for rebel forces;
- supporting a process of political stabilization of the country;
- continuing close cooperation with partner Iraqi military units.

The following three PMC rotations in Operation Iraqi Freedom (6th, 7th, and 8th rotations) were focused on mentoring and training tasks, with maintaining, at the same time, a readiness to providing security to PMC and supporting Iraqi Security Forces in specific situations, as well as helping with country reconstruction and providing humanitarian aid.

The Polish-led main MND-CS main tasks included:

- developing capabilities of Iraqi Police (IP) in order to prepare it to assume responsibility for security in both provinces supervised by the division forces;
- training and advising the 8th Iraqi Division (8 ID), as well as supporting it in various activities;²³
- coordinating activities with newly-established provincial reconstruction teams (to ensure unity of effort);
- supporting a developing government and promoting Iraqi free market and economic development environment;
- building of ISF and provincial authorities' capabilities to be able to transfer to them responsibility for governance and subordinated state's administration structures;
- providing an appropriate internal and external base security level was considered as one of the priorities.

23 Mainly in operations exceeding its capabilities, until the neutralization of the threat inside both provinces by MND-CS forces.

During the 9th and 10th PMC rotations in Iraq, units again conducted stability and advisory-training tasks. They were basically:

- maintaining a high state of readiness that provided security for PMC;
- supporting the Iraqi Security Forces in planning and conducting combat operations;
- providing assistance in Iraqi state reconstruction and delivering humanitarian aid to the local population.

Moreover, it should be emphasized that during the 10th PMC rotation, the contingent had to conduct a wide range of tasks including transferring the AOR to the U.S. forces and Iraqi authorities, and withdrawing and terminating of Polish military mission in Iraq.

The main tasks of PMC during the last -- 10th -- rotation included:

- providing, in cooperation with ISF, security to the local population and coalition forces in the AOR, focusing its efforts on the capital of Ad Diwanyiah Province;
- cooperating with Shia leaders in order to reduce their influence on local and incoming Shia extremists;
- supporting ISF and a continuous assessment of their operational effectiveness, including maintaining surveillance of a local command, control, and crisis management structure activity;
- organizing cooperation with military, central and local administrations, and with mass media operating within the AOR;
- supporting militarily new ISF military forces structures creation and forces' training;
- dispatching trained PMC elements, in cooperation with local military and non-military forces, for participation in activities that resulted from crises situations;
- transferring the responsibility for Al Quadisyiah Province to Iraqi Security Forces (Provincial Iraqi Control, PIC), and then;
- creating, in cooperation with ISF, freedom of movement for coalition forces along the Main Supply Route (MSR) "Tampa" within the MND-CS AOR;
- maintaining security of MND-CS personnel on bases and during the execution of tasks (by readying reaction forces, patrols, security posts and checkpoints, and Joint Security Stations);
- monitoring of current security situation in the PMC AOR;
- maintaining a constant readiness of forces and assets to carry out the coalition responsibilities;
- maintaining a constant combat and training readiness of subordinate units and command and control systems in order to maintain constant operational readiness;

- reacting to threats and demonstrations of a military presence throughout the Division's AOR;
- maintaining designated rapid reaction forces to being capable of responding to threats;
- planning and controlling a training program, carrying out tasks from superiors' orders and coalition obligations;
- planning and preparing reconnaissance and command and control systems, and providing security within all PMC elements;
- providing assistance in detaining individuals in AOR suspected of committing war crimes or other crimes;
- maintaining a constant combat readiness of designated forces and assets in order to be capable of participating in rescue operations and natural and other disasters and catastrophes;
- continuing humanitarian aid to Iraqi citizens and support for local administration within the framework of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), and after transferring responsibility for the province, CIMIC projects or transferring them to the coalition forces for continuation;
- planning and organizing logistic support for subordinate forces executing tasks within the PMC AOR;
- preparing and presenting change proposals to PMC tables of organization and equipment based on various requirements;
- examining equipment in the PMC inventory and dividing it into the following groups:
 - planned for transporting back to country;
 - planned for removing from the inventory in the AOR;
 - redundant, planned for handover to the Iraqis, or to be sent to Afghanistan;
- evacuation of equipment and transferring it or removing from the inventory according to the schedule;
- handing over bases to the Iraqi or coalition forces;
- finishing serving as the framework country for the MND-CS;
- redeployment of PMC Iraq personnel;
- ending PMC presence within Multinational Coalition Forces in Iraq;
- shaping and reinforcing morale and discipline of subordinate soldiers, and in the cases of abuse, reacting with the use of appropriate means.

It should be highlighted that the MND-CS operations were seriously affected by so called national caveats, which included the following:

- lack of a mandate for conducting offensive operations within the Division's AOR;
 - lack of a mandate for operating outside the AOR;
 - lack of heavy equipment and arms, which resulted in dependence on

- the U.S. forces' support;
- different national procedures, with attempts to substitute them with NATO or U.S. procedures;
- limited influence of division commander on changing these items.

The evolution of the Iraqi operation during the respective PMC rotations, composition and number of forces sent from Poland, and scope of the tasks executed, was caused mainly by political reasons. Changes in mission -- from stability to advisory and training, and a reduction in combat forces soldiers were rather conditioned by the expectations from stability forces, than by a real evaluation of the developing situation in Iraq. This was characterized by a gradual increase in the number of attacks on coalition forces, and connected to increasing number of fatalities and casualties in them. This was the case until the last two rotations of the PMC (9th and 10th), when there was a return to an increased activity within the MND-CS AOR, which further resulted in a decrease in rocket attacks on bases and coalition forces in the field.

The most complex and important task was the preparation and transfer of the AOR of the Polish-led division to the Iraqi authorities and the U.S. forces. On account of the scale and nature of the operation, its place and international, coalition, local, and socio-cultural factors, this task was executed by Polish soldiers first time. Despite the related difficulties and constraints, the Polish soldiers acted pragmatically, which permitted them to transfer responsibility for the sector to the interested party and redeployment of the contingent to Poland.

Multi-nationality in Coalition Operations in Iraq

There are still no clear reasons for the military invasion of Iraq by the U.S.-led multinational coalition in 2003. The alleged Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) has still not been proven. It seems that the lack of support from the UN and NATO (especially Germany and France) forced the Washington administration to look for ad hoc allies in Europe and beyond. A creation of multinational and, at the same time, multicultural coalition allowed for a seeming internationalization of conflict, as well as dispersion of responsibility for combat operations in Iraq after toppling Saddam Hussein's dictatorship on larger number of international relations' actors. It must be stressed that the reasons to create this coalition, the role of the United States, and operation environment -- territory of Iraq -- determined most of that operation's connections with broadly understood multiculturalism.²⁴

With regard to coalition operations in Iraq, the multicultural issue (including, connected with it, intercultural communication) may be viewed in various aspects closely related to the following relations:

24 D. S. Kozerański, *Międzynarodowe działania stabilizacyjne w świetle doświadczeń X zmiany PKW Irak w 2008 roku* (Warszawa: 2010), 36-37.

- coalition forces (Command and other three divisions): Multinational Division Central-South (MND-CS);
- coalition forces: Iraq's neighboring countries (Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria);
- countries' national contingents: Polish command of Multinational Division Central-South and 2,500 personnel of Polish Military Contingent;
- Multinational Division Central-South (commanded by Poles): Iraqi authorities, Iraqi Security Forces, local leaders (secular, sheiks; religious, imams), local population;
- Multinational Division Central-South (commanded by Poles): rebel fighters (local and foreign).

One of the most active countries in the coalition operation in Iraq was Poland, which was acknowledged by entrusting Poland with responsibility for one of four zones that the Americans and British had initially occupied. Assuming the responsibility for Central-South zone and commanding MNS-CS which, at the beginning, consisted of soldiers and units from twenty-five different countries, posed a great organizational challenge, and, at the same time, a precedent in the history of the Polish Armed Forces. The series of problems had arisen at the phase of multinational division formation. As a result of the intensive activity of a Polish officers' group led by General Andrzej Tyszkiewicz, it was possible to invite a large group of countries representing not only different nationalities, but also different cultures, for cooperation within this coalition forces division. The MND-CS consisted of soldiers from countries including Bulgaria, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Georgia, Spain, Netherlands, Honduras, Lithuania, Latvia, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Poland, Romania, Salvador, Slovakia, the United States, Thailand, Ukraine, Hungary, Italy, and Great Britain.²⁵ The main mission of MND-CS was to conduct stability operation in order to provide stable and safe conditions for the development of the existing administration, regional stability promotion, and the elimination of terrorist threat.

Political and situational changes in the region caused a major transformation of both tasks and character of the operation, in which the PMC participated. It is worth noting that an implementation of Western-style "democracy" -- under pressure by the coalition forces -- was met with part of Iraqi population's disapproval. This disapproval was manifested in different ways, from armed anti-coalition activities,²⁶

25 A. Tyszkiewicz, *Operacje stabilizacyjne na podstawie doświadczeń polskiej Dywizji Wielonarodowej w Iraku*, (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy "Bellona," 2005), 125-150, and E. Przeniosło, *Formowanie dywizji międzynarodowej*, Special Edition (Warszawa: "Przegląd Wojsk Lądowych" (PWL), 2003), 27-31.

26 See J. Ogrodnik, "Działania partyzanckie sił koalicyjnych w Republice Iraku w latach 2003-2006," in *Działania wojenne, pokojowe i stabilizacyjne prowadzone w warunkach szczególnych w XX i XXI wieku. Konflikty – doświadczenia - bezpieczeństwo*, ed. D. S. Kozerański, 250-268 (Torun: Wyd. "Adam Marszałek," 2007).

through supporting (logistically and spiritually) rebel movements, and to passive resistance against foreign forces seizing (in the opinion of local opposition movements, occupying) the territory of Iraq. During the first years of the operation, the level of multicultural communication between coalition soldiers and authorities and local communities' representatives, despite initial confidence of the latter, was far from satisfying. This was caused mainly by considered an insufficient level of cultural awareness and knowledge of civil and military personnel of international forces' contingents.

An important factor that impacted effectiveness of international forces' task execution was so-called national procedures, which applied to soldiers of particular contingents of MND-CS, and which, in many instances, hindered completion of stability tasks within Central-South coalition forces' AOR. An example was the Spanish Rules of Engagement (ROE), which, unlike similar policies of other MND-CS contingents, did not specify procedures regarding the use of force against military (paramilitary)²⁷ forces. As a result, this could limit or even prevent joint task execution.²⁸

It should be acknowledged that, in the opinion of a group of Polish commanders, the multinational character of units commanded by Poles in MND-CS created the following serious obstacles while executing its missions:²⁹

- national limitations (i.e., national restrictions on participation in offensive operations);
- dual chains of command (MND-CS command and national decision-making center of a particular national contingent);
- differences of mandate and mission;
- language barriers;
- differences in organizational structures, equipment, and weaponry;
- changes in MND-CS composition;
- various traditions and customs.

A serious problem, in both operational and socio-cultural (affecting soldiers' morale) aspects, was the constant process of the withdrawal of national contingents

27 Tyszkiewicz, *Operacje stabilizacyjne na podstawie doświadczeń polskiej Dywizji Wielonarodowej w Iraku*, Appendix 4.

28 Spanish contingent's soldiers were permitted to use "a minimal lethal force against hostile attacks"; however, because of the high threat level during task execution within the MND-CS AOR, the "minimal force" could not be sufficient to provide the security for own forces (Force Protection), or to support coalition forces. That problem was important because Spain deployed nearly 1,120 soldiers to MND-CS, and its officers took responsibility for commanding one of the brigade combat teams (BCT).

29 D. S. Kozerański, "Problem edukacji wielokulturowej w aspekcie realizacji zadań podczas międzynarodowej operacji koalicyjnej w Iraku (2003-2008)," in *Andragogika a grupy dyspozycyjne społeczeństwa*, ed. W. Horyn and J. Maciejewski, 39-40 (Wrocław: Wyd. Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2010).

from the Iraqi operation, which also applied to units commanded by Poles in MND-CS. From the initial twenty-five countries that dispatched military forces initially 2003 to MND-CS, only nine remained in 2008. It is also important to note that within MND-CS, armed forces from nations outside Europe, including Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Philippines, and South Korea, operated.

An essential element that positively affected Polish soldiers' (mainly officers) communication with representatives of other nations were English and Russian language skills (bilingualism), which allowed them to communicate with both NATO officers and those originating from the "Russian language zone" (e.g. Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Ukraine). This bilingualism of the majority of Polish officers was a rarity among coalition forces (the remaining zones were commanded by Americans and British) and facilitated communications in the multicultural environment of the division commanded by Poles (both during working hours and unofficial meetings).

The opinions of the 10th rotation of PMC soldiers regarding the assessment of their cooperation with representatives of other coalition countries are very interesting. The survey was conducted in two groups, among the command and staff of MND CS and among soldiers from subordinate task forces (TF), during the nine-month operation.³⁰ The results of the survey are presented on the graph below:

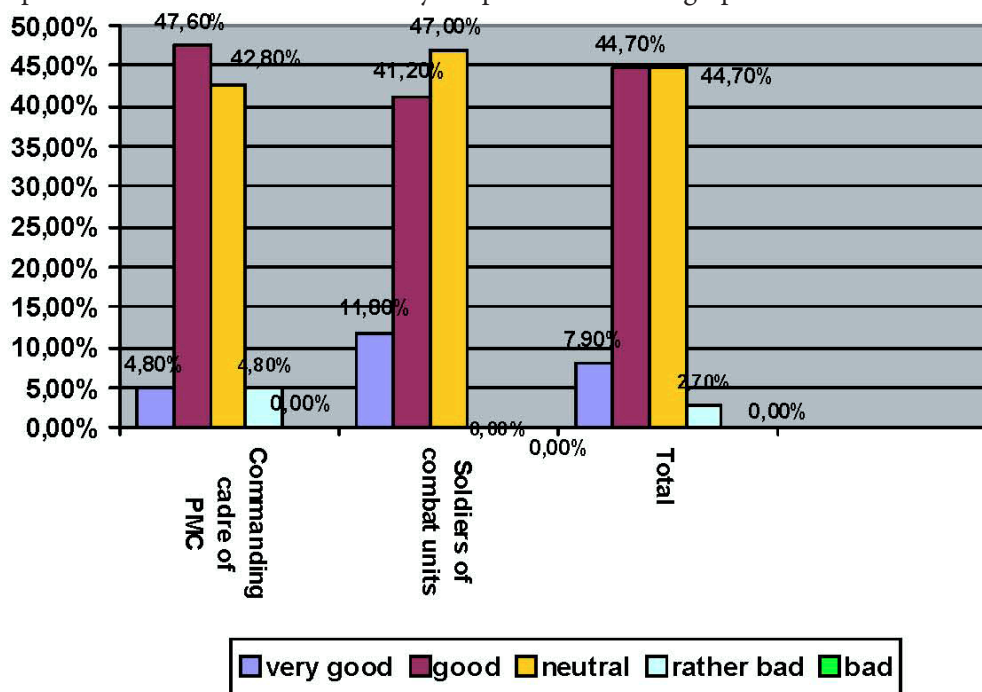


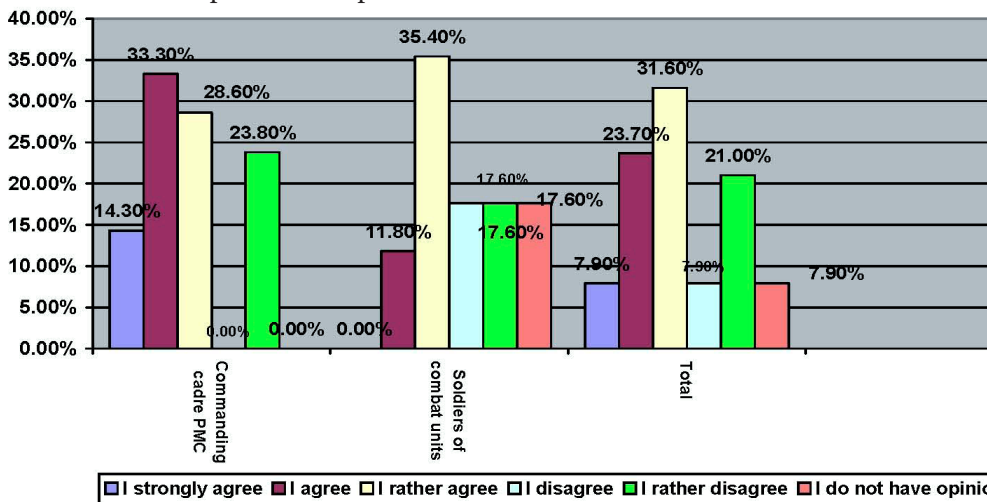
Fig. 1. Opinions of soldiers of 10th PMC in Iraq rotation, regarding an assessment of cooperation with other coalition nations' representatives.

³⁰ It is important to mention that all previous rotations (I-IX) had lasted six months.

Source: based on author's own research.³¹

Base on the data presented on the chart above, it is possible to state that positive assessment values are similar in both commanding cadre and soldiers' groups (approx. 53 percent). Negative and neutral high percentages of the opinions regarding above-mentioned cooperation (approx. 47 percent) are interesting. Explaining their opinions, the respondents mentioned such reasons as lack of language skills (mainly English language) and type of the position they manned (lack of contact with foreigners). One of the serious limitations was a relative low knowledge about history, tradition, and customs of nations that were part of coalition forces and the multinational division commanded by Polish officers. It seems that including and broadening cultural awareness matters to process of PMC preparation for future international operations may positively influence the level of cooperation between allies and coalition members.

Another important issue was the multicultural communication between PMC soldiers and the local population and authorities. The chart below presents, in graphical manner, the opinions of Polish soldiers regarding time dedicated to history, religion, customs, and other cultural issues of Iraq during the preparation of the PMC for the operation. It is important to emphasize that the survey was conducted in the ninth month of the deployment in the MND-CS area of operation,³² and which, because of the respondents' experience, further increases the value of the results.



Source: based on author's own research.³³

31 The survey was conducted in August and September 2008, in the MND-CS area of responsibility in Al Qadisiyah province (coalition forces bases: Ad Diwanijah and Al Kut).

32 It should be highlighted that PMC soldiers' participation in coalition operations in Iraq, because of its characteristic, and dangers for health and life, was formally recognized as operations in the war zone.

33 The survey was conducted in August and September 2008, in the MND-CS AOR

Fig. 2. Opinions of 10th rotation of PMC soldiers regarding the sufficiency of the amount of time dedicated to multiculturalism matters during preparatory training for mission in Iraq.

Based on analysis of this chart, it is evident that approximately 32 percent of respondents positively assessed their multicultural education preparation for the mission. The positive opinions ("I rather agree"), but with some reservations, answered approximately 31 percent of respondents. Almost one-third part of trainees (approx. 29 percent) decided that the training was not sufficient, and approximately 8 percent did not have opinion on that matter. It should be emphasized that a number of respondents had deployed previously to Iraq; therefore, the number of undecided or having negative attitudes toward multicultural education during preparation for the mission may be curious (total -- approx. 37 percent). Despite the fact that the results are not representing the whole situation throughout entire operation, they are indicating the necessity for improving multicultural education (both in terms of quality and quantity) during the process of pre-deployment training, as well as during international stability and peace operations.

Conclusion

In such training, it is worth to remember that better multicultural education might allow better cooperation among international coalitions and with representatives of the local population (administration, tribal leadership, and religious leaders); improvement of PMC and coalition (allied) personnel security; and more effective task and projects completion in support of local communities.

The above-mentioned potential benefits might be the result of broader multicultural education of PMC personnel before deployment and in the area of operation. It should be recognized that better cultural awareness may not necessary change the perception of coalition forces by the local population, especially if the forces do not have broad legitimization from international organizations – as seems to be the case of coalition operations in Iraq.

Multicultural relations of Iraqis (Shiites constituted the majority in Polish AOR -- mostly content because of toppling Saddam Husain regime) with MND-CS personnel were regarded by the former in terms of potential personal profits or culture threats.

The words of Ryszard Kapuscinski are worth considering in the context of Polish soldiers' participation in coalition operations similar to the stability mission in Iraq: "... Let's give the thought, whether, living among various cultures, civilizations, and religions, we want to search for the worst things in other cultures to strengthen our stereotypes, or we rather want to look for common grounds. Our world is on the crossroads. Certain tendency seems to be unavoidable -- we will all live in the multicultural world."³⁴

in Al Quadisiyah province (coalition forces bases: Ad Diwanijah and Al Kut).

34 Cited after: W. Kalaga, *Dylematy wielokulturowości* (Krakow: 2004), 161.

It should be highlighted that we already live in a multicultural world, and the key condition for cooperation with other cultures seems to be a respect for their diversity with widely understood tolerance. Thus, one of the most important factors in achieving these goals is, beyond any doubt, multicultural education at every level of education and training of international military contingents' soldiers.

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Col. Dariusz Kozerański, Assoc. Prof., Ph.D. hab. (habilitatus) – vice Rector of National Defence University for Military Affairs and International Cooperation (Warsaw); Head of the Chair of Strategy and Geostrategy (2008-2013) and Professor of National Defense University, Warsaw, Poland. He is a graduate of the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Mechanized Infantry Military Academy (1989), the University of Wrocław (1995). He earned doctoral degree at University of Wrocław (2000), and post-doctoral degree (professorship) in humanities at University of Wrocław (2006). His area of expertise is contemporary history, history of international security affairs, international safety and conflict studies. He is the author or co-author of over 145 publications in Poland and abroad.

Appendix A. Conference Program

27 May (Monday)

12.00 – 19.00 Arrival

19.00 – 21.00 Welcome Cocktail hosted by General Paulus, SHD

28 May (Tuesday)

8.00 – 9.00 Participants registration (Rakovski Hall)

9.00 – 9.45 Opening Session

Address by H.E. Mr. **Todor Tagarev**, Bulgarian Minister of Defense

Address by General **Olivier Paulus**, Director, French MoD History Office (SHD)

Address by Mr. **Frederic Labarre**, PfPC representative, co-chair of the Regional Security in the South Caucasus Working Group (RSS-CWG)

Welcome by Commodore **Dimitar Angelov**, Commandant, G.S. Rakovski National Defense Academy

Introductory speech by Dr. **Robert S. Rush** (USA), Co-Executive Secretary, Conflict Studies Working Group

9.45 – 10.00 Group Photo

10.00 – 10.30 Coffee Break

10.30 - 12.00: First Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **André Rakoto** (France)

Per Iko (Sweden): *Not neutral, rather close to war: Sweden in the 19th Century*

Marina Lavitskaya (Russia): *Liberation or occupation: problems of modern Russian - Bulgarian relations through the prism of history*

Niels Bo Poulsen (Denmark): *Going to War for Domestic Reasons*

Panel Discussion

12.00 – 13.30 – Lunch at the Conference Venue

13.30 – 14.00 Presentation of documentary exhibitions (King Hall, 1st and 2nd floor):

- *Bulgarian Supreme Command during the World War I* – organized by the Regional Museum of Kyustendil

- *The Fate of the Bulgarian Jews in the World War II* – organized by Bulgarian State Archival Agency at Council of Ministers

14.00 - 15.30: Second Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **Dimitar Minchev** (Bulgaria)

Dalibor Denda (Serbia): *Professional Army as a Factor of war success. Case Study: Serbia (1876-1918)*

Trendafil Mitev (Bulgaria): *The Necessity of New Research: Why the Bulgarians Had Gone to Wars?*

Efpraxia Pashalidou (Greece): *Building up alliances before venturing into Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: the impact of coalitions*

Panel Discussion

15.30 – 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 - 17.30: Third Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: Miloslav **Čaplovič** (Slovakia)

Fredrik Ericsson (Sweden): *Assessing the Capacity for Total War – Swedish Military Attachés and National Characteristics in the Interwar Baltic Sea Area, 1918–1939*

Dimitar Mitev (Bulgaria): *The National Idea: The Spearhead of the Bulgarian military policy during the first half of the 20th Century*

Janusz Zuziak (Poland): *General Marian Kukiel on the Mobilization of the Polish Armed Forces in the West in Case of the Outbreak of World War III*

Panel Discussion

18.30 – 21.00 Reception hosted by the Bulgarian Minister of Defense at Lozenets State Residence

29 May (Wednesday)

Staff Ride: Historical & Archaeological Sites

30 May (Thursday)

9.00 - 10.00: Fourth Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **Janusz Zuziak** (Poland)

Peter Chorvát (Slovakia): *Military Participation of the Slovak Republic in the Nazi Aggression against Poland and Soviet Union (Reasons, Process, Consequences)*

Miljan Milkic (Serbia): *Everyday life during the crisis. Yugoslav military government in Julian region 1945 – 1954*

Panel Discussion

10.00–10.30 Coffee Break

10.30 - 12.00: Fifth Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **Harold E. Raugh** (USA)

Ivan Cadeau (France): *Lessons learned from the Indochina War: the “Ely report”*

Carmen Rijnoveanu, Daniela Siscanu (Romania): *The Six Day War of 1967: Behind Bucharest’s Decisions*

Jordan Baev (Bulgaria): *The Cold War Dilemma: Who were the aggressive and the defensive powers in the Balkans according to their military war plans and exercises?*

Panel Discussion

12.00 – 13.30 – Lunch at the Conference Venue

13.30 - 15.00: Sixth Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **Jordan Baev** (Bulgaria)

Vladimir Prebilič, **Damijan Guštin** (Slovenia): *Defending Slovenia – Why was it difficult to decide?*

Dariusz Kozerawski (Poland): *A Case Study of Polish Military Contingent Experience from Iraq (2003-2008)*

Dominique Guillemin (France): *From national deployments to coalition operations : the adaptation of the French navy to missions abroad (1987-1999)*

Panel Discussion

15.00 – 15.30 Coffee Break

15.30 - 17.00: Round Table on Military Archives & Military Museums (Rakovski Hall)

Moderator: **Christian Ortner** (Austria)

Rumiana Atanasova (Bulgaria): *Presentation of the digital documentary project of Bulgarian State Archival Agency – State Military History Archive on Bulgarian Military Casualties in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)*

André Rakoto (France) : *“The way forward”, presentation of the SHD collections transition from paper to digital archives.*

Mariana Krasteva (Bulgaria): *Bulgarian Navy Museum in Varna: Activity and Perspectives*

17.00 - 17.30 WG Administrative Session (Rakovski Hall)

Moderators: **Robert S. Rush** (USA), **André Rakoto** (France)

CSWG executive secretaries

Closing Address: Capt. (N) Prof. Dr. Sc. **Yantsislav Ynakiev**, Director, Defense Advanced Research Institute, *G.S.Rakovski National Defense Academy*

19.00 – 21.00 Dinner on behalf of Commodore **Dimitar Angelov**, Commandant of

G.S.Rakovski National Defense Academy

31 May (Friday)

8.00 – 18.00 Departure

Appendix B.

Conference Participants

Nº	Country	Name	Email address
1	Austria	Dr. Christian Ortner	m-christian.ortner@hgm.or.at
2	Danmark	Niels Bo Poulsen	cfm-01@fak.dk
3	France	Gen. Olivier Paulus	
4	France	Prof. Dominique Guillemain	dguillemain75@gmail.com
5	France	Andre Rakoto	andre.rakoto@defense.gouv.fr
6	France	Captain Ivan Cadeau	ivan.cadeau@intradef.gouv.fr
7	Greece	Dr. Efpraxia Pashalidou	efpraxia2001@yahoo.com
8	Poland	Col. Prof. Dariusz Kozerawski	d_kozerawski@op.pl
9	Poland	Prof. Janusz Zuziak	januszzuziak@op.pl
10	Romania	Carmen Rijnoveanu	carmen_sorina@yahoo.com
11	Romania	Daniela Siscanu	daniela_siscanu@yahoo.com
12	Russia	Prof. Dr. Marina Lavitskaya	marinalv2010@yandex.ru
13	Slovakia	LTC Dr. Miloslav Čaplovič	caplovic.m@gmail.com
14	Slovakia	Dr. Peter Chorvát	peter.chorvat@vhu.sk
15	Slovenia	Dr. Damian Gustin	damijan.gustin@inz.si,
16	Slovenia	Dr. Vladimir Prebilic	Vladimir.Prebilic@fdv.uni-lj.si
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18	Serbia	LTC Dr. Miljan Milkic	miljanmilkic@gmail.com
19	Sweden	Maj. Per Iko	per.iko@fhs.se
20	Sweden	Dr. Fredrik Ericsson	fredrik.eriksson@fhs.se
21	USA	Dr. Robert Rush	robert.rush@us.army.mil
22	USA	Dr. Harold Raugh	INFFAOHER7@aol.com, Harold.Raugh@DLA.mil
23	PfP Consortium	Frederic Labarre (Canada)	labarref@gmail.com
24	Bulgaria	Dr. Stancho Stanchev	st_stanchev@mail.bg
25	Bulgaria	Dr. Dimitar Minchev	bcmhll@yahoo.com
26	Bulgaria	Dr. Jordan Baev	Jordan.Baev@gmail.com
27	Bulgaria	Dr. Trendafil Mitev	trendafil_1950@abv.bg
28	Bulgaria	Dr. Dimitar Mitev	agromit@abv.bg
29	Bulgaria	Mariana Krasteva	marianakrasteva@yahoo.com
30	Bulgaria	Rumiana Atanasova	daa@archives.government.bg

Appendix C.

Euro-Atlantic Conflict Studies Working Group, by Robert S. Rush

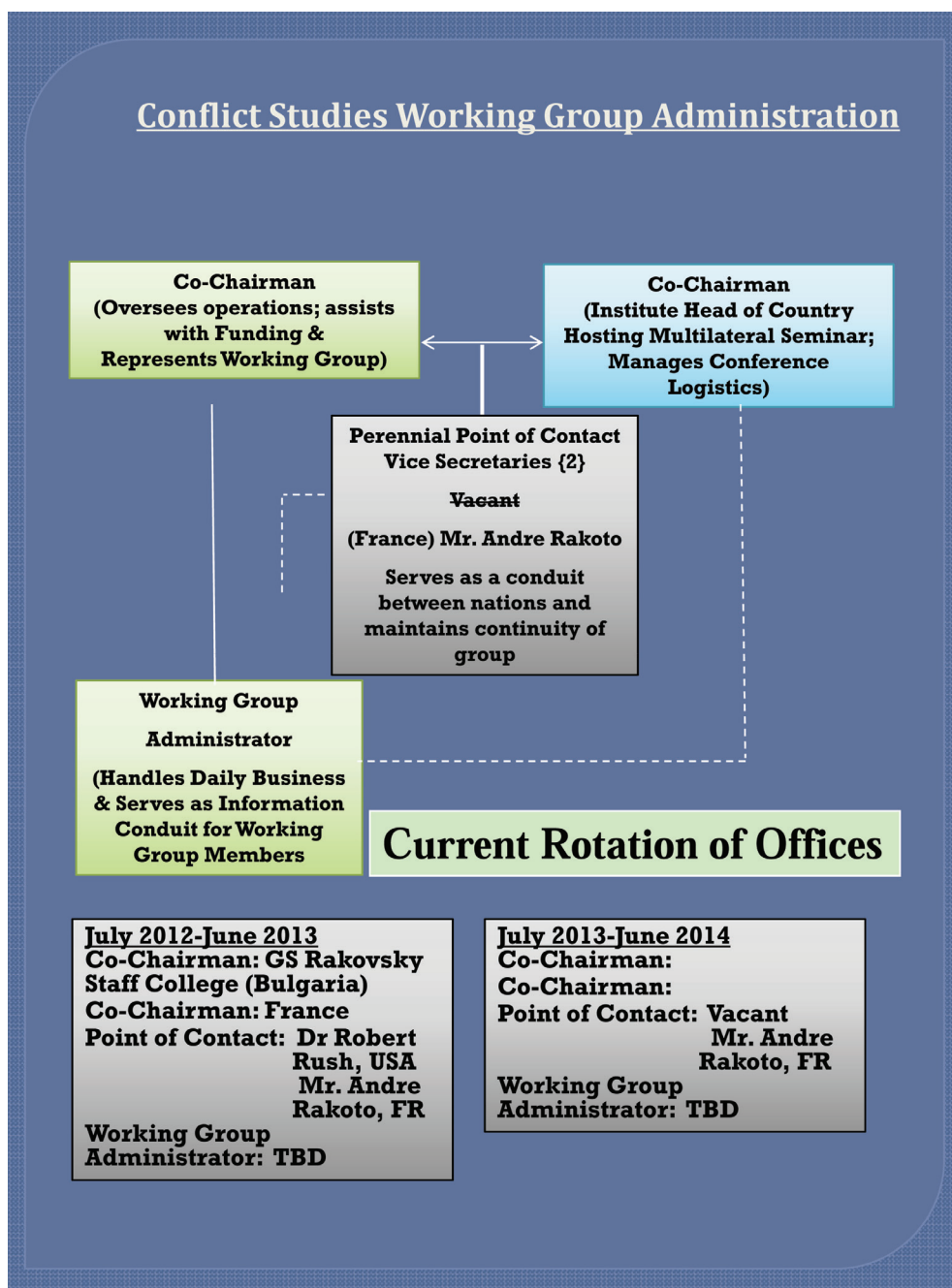
Mission

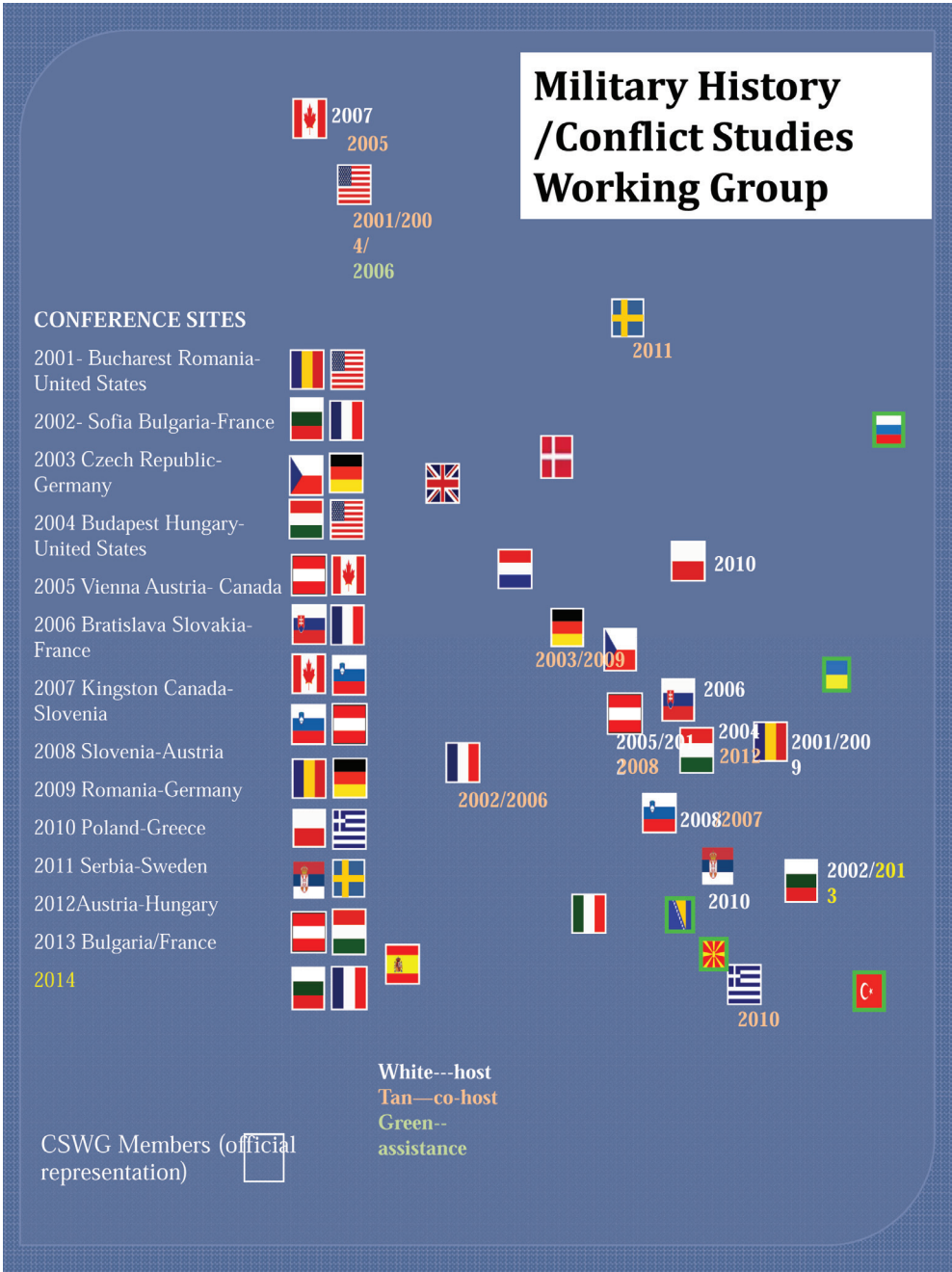
To establish, maintain and enhance a regular, multilateral, and open exchange of information, viewpoints and ideas between official military history institutions through annual thematic conferences that examine historical determinants of national military strategy, policy and objectives, as well as the historical context of current international and regional affairs.

Secondly, to strengthen defense and military education and research by enhancing cooperation between institutions and nations.

Vision

Military historians from the different nations come together to share ideas concerning important events -- and to gain an appreciation of differences in national perspectives with respect to them. This open sharing of opinion and historical research assists the different nations in moving away from confrontation and toward a lasting peace and stability.





Metrics of Success

- Does this group strengthen defense and military and research by enhancing cooperation between institutions and nations?

✓ Yes. All countries have established official military history offices, many embedded within defense academies. This group brings them together in common endeavors to examine historical determinants of national military strategy, policy and objectives.
- Does this group create a community and network of experts in the fields of defense and security studies in order to share best practices and practical solutions to common issues and problems?

✓ Yes. Provides historical background to common issues and practices.
- Are the groups activities unique?

✓ Yes. This is the only association of official military history offices, able to mobilize military history resources within each country.
- Does this group support defense military education and research within and without Consortium nations?

✓ Yes. Calls for papers go outside official military history offices. Topics covered are distributed to the different military history offices for further distribution.
- Does this group apply across the spectrum of Consortium countries.

✓ Yes. Twenty-two countries are officially represented by the MHWG; (10/12) with the topics covered having a direct relationship to today in the Balkans, the expansion of NATO, and education and training of the Military.

TODAY

1999-2005

Military History
Working Group
Partnership for Peace
Consortium

2006-2008

Military History Working
Group Unaffiliated
Name change to
Euro-Atlantic Conflict
Studies Working Group

2011

Euro-Atlantic
Conflict Studies
Working Group

**Affiliates with
PfPC to provide
rationale for
countries to
remain
engaged**

**Remains
Independent
in Concept**

**Affiliates under
NATO Defense
School umbrella
or other entity
that can accept
different nation's
money**

Past Themes

Seminar topics have focused on the diplomatic-military affairs of Central Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, including comparative studies from other regions or countries.

Contemporary topics of significant interest to the Political/Military Leadership of the different countries, such as the:

- ❖ 2002: Military Policy in Europe, 1870-1914: Case Studies on the First Balkan War
- ❖ 2004: Military Professionalization
- ❖ 2005: Multinational Operations, Alliances and International Military Cooperation
- ❖ 2006: Exiting War: Post Conflict Military Operations"
- ❖ 2007: Strategic Planning for War
- ❖ 2009: End of Empires: Challenges to Security and Statehood in Flux
- ❖ 2010: Military Conflicts of the 20th Century: Political and Military Aspects
- ❖ 2011: Regular and Irregular Warfare: Experiences of History and Contemporary Armed Conflicts
- ❖ 2012: Past through Present: Thoughts on Military History at the Strategic, Operational and Tactical Levels of War
- ❖ 2013: Nations at War: Why do Nations Participate in Wars, and Why Not?

In Closing—The Real Importance of the Conflict Studies Working Group

22 May 2003 email from Central Europe
Subject: PfPC

“The MHWG plays a pioneering role of driving the Central Europeans back to a multilateral forum, facing their own controversial military and political history. I think, that if the MHWG does not do it, nobody will do it.”

Dr. ROBERT S. RUSH, Senior Historian, International Military History Program, Field and International Programs, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Ft McNair, Washington DC, USA

Co-Chair of PfP Consortium Military History/Conflict Studies Working Group, (2003-2013)

Appendix D.

A Centenary of Bulgarian Military History Services¹

by

Jordan Baev

A decade after the establishment of the Third Bulgarian Kingdom in 1878 as a result of the Russian-Turkish War, and just a few years after the Serbian-Bulgarian War in 1885, the state and military leadership in Sofia acknowledged the necessity of creation a special military history unit inside the General Staff. The first attempt to establish such a division in January 1890 failed without any visible results. Twenty years later, in 1910, a group of ten skilled General Staff officers was formed with similar tasks; however, the outbreak of the Balkan War (1912-1913) terminated its activity. Following a proposal by the War Minister, Gen. Climent Boyadzhiev, on 1 August 1914, King Ferdinand I of Bulgaria signed Royal Decree No. 39 to establish a Military History Commission at the General Staff. The members of the newly-established Commission started to recover and collect the first military archival records with documents about the organizational build-up of the Bulgarian Army and its participation in the Serbian-Bulgarian and the two Balkan Wars. They founded as well the Military History Library, and received first components of soldiers' everyday life at the front line, which were designed for a future military museum's exhibition. The initial practice of the first military history institution in Bulgaria showed that the best way to start comprehensive research was to develop in parallel a library, archives, and museum under a common organizational structure.

In September 1915, due to the imminent entrance of Bulgaria into the First World War, the Military History Commission terminated its existence. However, on 16 June 1917, such a unit was re-established again, this time under the name Military History Division at the Staff of the Acting Army. Its personnel increased in less than a year to 27 persons, including 13 officers. A month later the chief of the Division, Col. Dimitar Grancharov, visited the allied military history services in Berlin and Vienna

¹ The main historical data of the proposed review was taken from a volume with proceedings of an international conference on “90th Anniversary of Organized Military History Research in Bulgaria,” held at *Rakovski* National Defense Academy in Sofia in November 2004. Among the most valuable papers were those of Stancho Stanchev, Todor Petrov, Dimitar Minchev, Snezhana Radoeva, Ivan Koev, Marko Zlatev, Dimitar Zafirov, and Nikolai Prodanov.

for a study of the richest experience of his German and Austrian colleagues. The newly- established Military History Museum was subordinated in that time to the Military History Division. Once again, on 1 November 1918, following the process of demobilization of the Bulgarian Army after the Armistice was signed, the Military History Division was reduced to three officers and seven civilian experts.

The first official statute of the Bulgarian military history institution was issued in 1921, and it united in its structure under a unified command a military history commission (a research body), archives, and museum. The Military History Museum was separated in 1931 as another independent structure at the War Ministry; its first permanent exhibition was opened in May 1937. In 1926, the Military History Commission addressed a special appeal to Bulgarian military attaches in Western Europe and in the Balkans to discover and deliver systematically valuable military history publications and documentary volumes, which contributed significantly to the enrichment of the Military History Library collections. For only a few years (1921-1925), the members of the Military History Commission succeeded to prepare and publish the first two collective monographs about the history of Serbian-Bulgarian War of 1885 and a short history of Bulgarian Armed Forces. In 1927 the first professional scientific and scholarly historical journal, *Military History Journal*, was established. For a relatively short period (1927-1943) more than 300 military history publications were published in the journal. A year later, the Military History Commission started its first ambitious scientific project: publication of multi-volume histories of Bulgarian participation in the Balkan and First World Wars. The personnel of the Commission included well-respected generals and senior officers who had served as commanders in these wars. In just a decade the military historians published seven volumes of history of Bulgarian participation in the First Balkan War and three volumes for the Second Balkan War. By 1945, the Bulgarian Military Commission had also published all thirteen volumes of *Bulgaria in the First World War (1915-1918)*.

A year after the end of the Second World War, a reorganization within the General Staff unified again the three units (research, archival, and museum divisions) into a joint Military History Department. This new name of the military history research institution remained unchanged for the next twenty-seven years. In 1949, the museum also was reorganized into the Central Museum of Bulgarian National Army, which opened its new permanent exhibition in 1952. In 1968, it was renamed the National Military History Museum. An August 1951 ministerial order established the Central Military Archive located in the medieval Bulgarian capital Veliko Tarnovo, 220 kilometers from Sofia in northern Bulgaria.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the gradual development of the military history research institutions in Bulgaria led to reorganization in its structures. In 1963, Bulgarian Military History Scientific Society was established with a ministerial order as a non-profit organization, aimed to incorporate and unite retired generals, senior officers,

and academic scholars for a more intensive and thorough study of Bulgaria's military history legacy. The Society started to publish its own research volume twice a year. From the time of its existence until the end of the 20th century, more than sixty volumes were published.

The most significant transformation took place in September 1973, when the Military History Department was reorganized into the Institute of Military History at the General Staff of Bulgarian Armed Forces. The structure of the Institute comprised of two departments -- a military history department with four research sections, and a methodology and scientific information department, with two expert sections and a Military History Library. The *Military History Journal* was also a part of the Institute. In 1978, a "Coordinative Scientific Council" was elected, too; thus, the Institute of Military History became the national military history coordinating research center in the country. Meanwhile, since the late 1940s, a special chair "History of the Wars and Military Art" was established at *Rakovski* National Defense Academy, where besides its educational task many original military history works were also published.

The main goal of the Bulgarian military historians after the establishment of the Institute of Military History was to write a detailed history of the participation of Bulgarian Army in the struggle against Nazi Germany on Yugoslav, Hungarian, and Austrian territories during the final stage of the Second World War (September 1944-May 1945). It resulted in several collective and individual monographs and four documentary volumes. A new revisited history of the Balkan Wars was also published. In the 1980s, the military historians focused their attention as well on Bulgaria's national liberation struggles in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the buildup of the Bulgarian Armed Forces in the postwar years. During its thirty-six years of existence, the military historians at the Institute published more than seventy collective and individual monographs, documentary volumes, and selected thematic bibliographies.

After the change of the political system in November 1989, Bulgarian military history research institutions suffered a radical transformation and reduction of its personnel. In 1992, the Institute was reorganized into the National Center of Military History, but in 1995 it was renamed again Institute of Military History and again subordinated to the General Staff. In August 1999, the Institute of Military History ceased to exist. Initially two military history research sections were incorporated at the newly-established Defense Advanced Research Institute; however, they were disestablished a few months later. Meanwhile, in 1992, the chair "History of Military Art" at the National Defense Academy also was incorporated with three other chairs, thus losing its original pattern. The Central Military Archive in Veliko was transferred in 1999 to the General Directorate at the State Archival Agency and renamed in 2006 the State Military History Archive. In accordance with the actual legal regulation, in the last few years almost all of the archival collections up to the early 1990s (about

3,000 record groups) were declassified and made available to the public.

In April 2000, a small Center of Military History with two officers and two civilian historians was re-established at *Rakovski* National Defense Academy. In 2003, the Center was incorporated into the newly-established National Security and Defense Faculty, while in 2009 it was moved as a scientific section at the Defense Advanced Research Institute (DARI). The Military History Library, which contains more than 250,000 volumes, was also included in DARI. The military historians at the Institute have published in the last five years more than ten collective and individual monographs. They contributed as well to several M.A. programs at the National Defense Academy and some other Bulgarian universities, and lead currently a Ph.D. program in Military History.

Soon after the establishment of the Institute of Military History in 1973, Bulgarian military historians established close contacts with the partner institutes of the Warsaw Pact member states, which stimulated the scientific international exchange and additional joint projects. In 1976, new contacts were also made with the Military History institute in Belgrade. At the end of the 1970s, the Bulgarian National Commission of Military History (BCMh) was established at the Institute of Military History, which was approved by the Chief of General Staff (in the 1990s it had been approved by Minister or Deputy Minister of Defense). The official registration of the Commission contributed substantially to the participation, beginning in 1980, of Bulgarian military historians in the annual congresses of the International Commission of Military History (ICMH) and for more active work within the ICMH framework. In the 1980s, the BCMh succeeded in publishing two volumes of *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, dedicated to the Balkan Wars and Second World War. The culmination of the Bulgarian contribution to ICMH activity was the organization of the 38th ICMH congress in Sofia in September 2012² and the organization of the forthcoming 40th ICMH congress in Varna in September 2014.

Despite the closure of the Institute of Military History in August 1999, Bulgarian military historians exerted their efforts to join the Euro-Atlantic academic community through the newly established PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes. During the 2nd Annual Conference of the Consortium in Sofia in December 1999, in collaboration with the partners from U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington, D.C., Bulgarian military historians initiated the establishment of the Military History Working Group (renamed in 2008 the Conflict Studies Working Group)³, and hosted its 2nd and 13th Annual

2 See Dimitar Minchev, Jordan Baev, and Kostadin Grozev, ed., *Technology and Warfare. 38th International Congress of Military History* (Sofia: Sofia University Press, 2012).

3 See Jordan Baev, "The Role of the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies for the Development of Military Education and Research in Bulgaria before NATO Accession (1998-2004)," in *Professional Military Education and Defense Studies: Past, Present and Future*, ed. Yantsislav Yanakiev (Sofia: 2012), 360-369, and William Epley and William

Conferences, respectively in May 2002 and May 2013. The bilateral cooperation of the contemporary Military History Studies research section of the Defense Advanced Research Institute at Rakovski National Defense Academy was also successful and resulted in several agreements with similar institutions in the Balkans and Europe as a whole (unique among them was the trilateral agreement between the military history research centers in Sofia, Athens, and Belgrade, signed in May 2009) and some joint research and documentary volumes.

Prof. Dr. Jordan Baev: Military History Studies research section, Defense Advanced Research Institute, Rakovski National Defense Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria; former Scientific Secretary of Institute of Military History (1996-1998) and Secretary General of Bulgarian Commission of Military History (1995-2005).

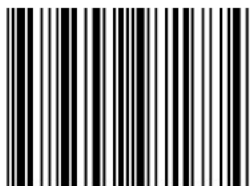
Stivers, "Origins of the Central European Military History Seminar," in *Past through Present. Thoughts on Military History at the Strategic, Operational, and Tactical Levels of War*, ed. Harold E. Raugh, Jr. (Vienna: 2013).

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