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Comparing strategic cultures of selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative

Introduction

Since the Three Seas Initiative (abbreviated as 3SI or TSI) was established in 2016 in Dubrovnik, it has evoked extremely mixed feelings. On the one hand, both the European Union and the Russian Federation initially expressed their concerns that the Initiative would evolve into a political block alternative to the EU, grounded in Polish Prometheism and aiming at Russia's territorial disintegration. Sceptics referred to internal conflicts in individual 3SI member states and disputes concerning national minorities or historical policy. Supporters, on the other hand, stressed the need to shape the political subjectivity of Central and Eastern Europe, the prospects of joint infrastructural projects and the historic integration experience of the region. Later on, Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, and Heiko Mass, German Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended the 2018 Bucharest Summit, expressing their support for the Initiative. Also, voices in favour of the 3SI have been recently heard in the Russian Federation. According to Andrew Korybko, a Russian analyst and expert of the Institute of Strategic Studies and Predictions at the People's Friendship University of Russia, the 3SI-based cooperation actually stands a chance of success because it does not advance the ideas of Prometheism or political disintegration of Russia, its members are not Ukraine and Belarus, and the implemented projects are to be focused on integration in the fields of energy and infrastructure[1]. As the future prospects of the Three Seas Initiative do not seem so obvious, it

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[1] A. Korybko, *Here's Why Poland's Intermarium Plans Might Actually Succeed This Time Around*, sputnik.com, 23.08.2017, https://pl.sputniknews.com/opinie/20170823-6139425-polskie-nowe-miedzymorze-mocarstwo-ue-miedzywojnie-pilsudski-sputnik/, [accessed: 13.09.2019].

appears justified to investigate the political similarities and differences of its member states. These can be explored by comparing their strategic cultures – the perception of shared threats, allies, values, readiness to use force in international relations, or prevailing models of armed forces. Given the extensive character of this subject, the paper has certain limitations. The first limitation is the choice of countries under analysis. The Three Seas Initiative is composed of eleven EU Member States and one non-EU state, i.e. Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Hungary[2], while the article focuses only on the following six: Poland, the Baltic states, Romania, Croatia and Hungary. The second limitation refers to the compared elements of strategic cultures. In view of the previous comparative studies regarding strategic cultures (by Marion Smith), the author has decided to explore three elements, i.e. the direction of transformation of armed forces, the preferred direction of interstate political cooperation, and relations with the Russian Federation. Along with introductory and concluding sections, the article contains three substantive sections. The first one deals with the directions of military development in the selected 3SI member states, in terms of their territorial defence and power projection capacities. The second focuses on foreign policy inclinations (Atlantism vs. Europeanism), and the third on relations with the Russian Federation.

Modern definitions of strategic culture

Numerous definitions of the term *strategic culture* can be found in literature. The definitions provided between mid-1970s and the 1990s mainly focused on nuclear strategies, deterrence and the role of military force used in international relations. In 1977 American political scientist Jack Snyder was one of the first scientists to attempt at defining this notion. He saw strategic culture as a unique and distinct way of thinking about nuclear strategy – one that is relatively permanent and belongs with culture rather than politics[3]. Colin Gray, an American professor of international relations, defined strategic culture as referring to modes of thought and action with respect to force, derived from the perception of the national historical experience, aspiration for responsible behaviour as perceived in a given country[4]. Alastair Johnston referred to strategic culture as "an integrated system of symbols which acts to establish pervasive and long-lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem

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[2] P. Ukielski, *Mapa Trójmorza. Przegląd punktów wspólnych i rozbieżnych w polityce 12 państw regionu*, Report No. 3/2016, Centre for Analysis of the Jagiellonian Club.

[3] J. Lantis, D. Howlett, *Strategic culture* [in:] *Strategy in the contemporary world. An Introduction to Strategic Studies*, J. Baylis et al. (eds.), Jagiellonian University Publishing Press, Kraków 2009, p. 91.

[4] Ibidem, pp. 91–92.

uniquely realistic and efficacious"[5]. In the most recent definitions and concepts of strategic culture, researchers tend to stress the need to extend it beyond the issue of using military force in international relations. They advocate that strategic culture understood merely as "the attitude to using force" is too narrow to fathom modern conflicts which frequently take the form of cyber-attacks, economic pressures or sparking social unrest[6]. While referring to the strategic culture of the Baltic states, Airis Rikveilis defined it as the position of the political and military elites on national security, potential conflicts and strategies. In this context, he further mentioned the influence of history, traditions and ceremonies on the behaviour of institutions dealing with national security[7].

Given the proliferation of definitions of strategic culture, and the lack of the experts' consensus as to the scale of explaining the countries' behaviours in interstate affairs, A. Johnston proposed a division of strategic culture research into three generations. The first generation of scientists, including Snyder and Gray, focused on investigating the impact of culture on various behaviours displayed by countries, and on their military strategies. The second generation, covering the period of the 1980s and represented, *inter alia*, by Kradley Klein, analysed strategic culture as an instrument of hegemony in strategic decision-making, and as social authorisation for the countries to use force in international relations. Finally, the third generation, which dates back to the 1990s, presented strategic culture as an independent variable explaining the countries' behaviours on the international arena[8]. In other words, the first two generations concentrated on military issues and the limited impact of strategic culture on international policy, while the third generation sought to extend this concept. For some time now descriptions of the fourth generation of strategic culture have been increasingly put forward. Recent studies in the field of strategic culture have focused on the emerging subcultures within a given state, their characteristics and impacts on foreign policy. These subcultures may develop around political parties, military institutions influencing national policies or think-tanks[9].

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[5] A.I. Johnston, *Thinking about Strategic Culture*, "International Security" 1995, Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 46.

[6] M. Krasnodębska, *Europeization of Poland's Strategic Culture: Managing the 2013/14 Ukraine Crisis*, ecpr.eu, 10.08.2014, https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/48346673-2a-a6-4313-9eb1-1e05bb00d5ec.pdf, [accessed: 21.08.2019].

[7] A. Rikveilis, *Strategic culture in Latvia: seeking, defining and developing*, "Baltic Security & Defence Review" 2007, Vol. 9, p. 191.

[8] A.I. Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*, Princeton 1998, p. 43.

[9] T. Libel, *Explaining the security paradigm shift: strategic culture, epistemic communities, and Israel's changing national security policy*, "Defence Studies" 2016, Vol. 16, pp. 140–143.

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Directions of transformation of armed forces

One of the conventional divisions of modern armed forces is based on the directions of military transformation. Some countries concentrate on developing their power projection capacities or the capacity for conducting military operations outside their borders, or in their immediate surroundings. Other countries, however, which are mindful of their financial or technological limitations, or the presence of more powerful neighbours, pay increased attention to the defensive aspect of their armed forces. The American *FM 100-7 Field Manual* defines power projection as the ability of the country to apply any combination of economic, diplomatic, informational, or military instruments of national power to exert influence. Operation Just Cause, conducted by the U.S. Army in 1989 in Panama, is considered an excellent example of power projection. Within 24 hours the U.S. Army took control of the key military infrastructure elements of its enemy, including military bases, and command and control centres, thus cutting its own losses to the minimum[10]. Along with the capacity for conducting fast military operations in all domains (land, air, sea, space and cyberspace), interventions to defend civilians, attempts to release hostages, trade routes protection and humanitarian operations provide examples of power projection capacities in international relations. In the 1990s, given their significant military advantage over other countries, the United States were the only country capable of conducting military operations in any place in the world. They had the most powerful navy, securing free trade and controlling shipping trade routes. At present, comparable power projection capacities are also displayed by other countries, including Russia, China, Iran or Israel. It is estimated that Russia would be capable of reaching the capital cities of Latvia and Estonia in less than 60 hours and deploying 60,000 soldiers by air within 72 hours[11]. When it comes to smaller countries, their power projection capacities are built by sending their soldiers on foreign missions, organising rescue operations or expanding naval forces. As regards Poland, Romania, Croatia, Hungary and the Baltic states, their military transformations clearly progress towards a model of armed forces focused on defending their territories and strengthening alliances with more powerful partners, in order to secure military aid in case their national security is put under threat. Nonetheless, within the last two decades there have been certain new armament purchases, doctrines and operational concepts implemented by those countries, reflecting their growing power projection capacities.

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[10] *FM 100-7, Decisive Force: The Army in Theater Operations*, Headquarters Department of the Army, Washington 1995, pp. 1–6.

[11] G. Vőrős, *US Global Power Projection: Is the World's Policeman still Credible?*, kki.hu, 26.10.2016, https://kki.hu/assets/upload/08_KKI-Studies_USA_Voros_20161026.pdf, [accessed: 5.09.2019].

When it comes to the military safety of Poland, the spacious aspect proved crucial in the previous wars the country had been engaged in. Due to Poland's geopolitical location and vast territory, its strategic culture evolved into one based on a ceaseless war to defend the motherland. At the end of the 15th century, which saw Poland's most rapid territorial development, the country spanned across 900,000 square metres, and at the end of the 18th century, on the verge of collapse, it covered 750,000 square metres[12]. In consequence, Poland's military development exhibited two components: operational (the prince's and royal squads or the royal army) and territorial (defending local castles, passages and narrows). By the 18th century, due to frequently invading the neighbouring countries, the country's territorial defence (referred to as *pospolite ruszenie*, lit. mass mobilization) had become the principal form of military organisation. By employing irregular methods of warfare, Polish local self-defence troops fought victorious battles against Swedish invaders in the 17th century, staged national uprisings, and withstood the German and Soviet occupation[13]. In the period of the Third Republic of Poland, given the serious threat posed by the powerful eastern neighbour and the turbulent history of defensive wars, the political and military leaders were well aware of the need to construct a defensive army and to acquire an ally with power projection capacities in Central and Eastern Europe. Even the decisions made by the Polish Government to take part in the foreign military operations (Iraq 2003, Afghanistan 2002 and Syria 2017) undertaken after 11 September 2001 should be viewed as attempts to build the country's image of a trustworthy ally of the United States whose support would be expected in the event of threat from the Russian Federation[14]. The period of 2001–2011 was when the international involvement of the Polish Army was the most intense, with 2,000–3,500 soldiers per year being deployed outside the county. This number peaked during the stabilisation operation in Iraq, with the Polish Military Contingent consisting of over 2,500 soldiers (2003–2005), and during the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. Overall, between the 1950s and 2012, the Polish Army assisted with 71 international operations, deploying over 84,000 of its soldiers[15]. Following this intense period of attending military operations abroad, Poland began to reduce its international military involvement. In 2011 it did not take part in NATO's Operation Unified Protector in Libya, and in 2013 the "Komorowski Doctrine" was announced stipulating changes of military priorities, including defence of the country's own territory and withdrawal from the "overzealous activity" and the

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[12] J. Bartosiak, *Rzeczpospolita. Między lądem a morzem*, Zona Zero, Warszawa 2018, p. 518.

[13] W. Sokół, *Wojska obrony terytorialnej w historii Polski (wybrane problemy)*, "Bezpieczeństwo. Teoria i Praktyka" 2017, No. 3, pp. 319–320.

[14] F. Doeser, *Historical experiences, strategic culture, and strategic behaviour: Poland in the anti-ISIS coalition*, "Defence Studies" 2018, Vol. 18, No. 4, p. 458.

[15] R. Tarnogórski, *Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Poland*, www.providingforpeacekeeping.org, 3.04.2014, http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-poland/, [accessed: 5.09.2019].

ill-considered expeditionary policy launched in 2007[16]. The modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces towards a defensive army took shape after 2015, along with plans of establishing the Territorial Defence Force (TDF). *The Strategic Defence Review* published in 2017 stipulated that the underlying objective to be fulfilled by the Polish Armed Forces by 2023 would be to create conditions conductive to mobilisation and effective defence operations, rather than gaining advantage or power projection capacities[17]. In September 2018 the fourth division of the Polish Army was established – the 18th Mechanised Division, its aim being to strengthen the country's eastern border against potential attacks from the east[18]. In May 2019 the number of TDF soldiers in Poland exceeded 20,000. The TDF, as the formation in charge of defending the national territory by means of subversive, guerrilla and anti-submarine warfare methods, is planned to ultimately consist of 17 brigades, with 53,000 soldiers in total, deployed all over the country[19]. The TDF reconstruction coincides with the ongoing process of technical modernisation of the Polish Armed Forces. In 2019, with the Ministry of Defence budget reaching PLN 44,674,000,000. Poland has been rated third among the 3SI countries, preceded only by Estonia and Latvia, in terms of the sum allocated for defence in relation to GDP (1.98%), and first in terms of the actual spending.

While there is no doubt that the Polish Armed Forces have been consistently transformed towards territorial defence since 2011, experts and researchers' opinions regarding Hungary seem to markedly differ. On the one hand, Hungary intends to present itself as a pacifist country, oriented towards both international cooperation and amicable settlement of interstate disputes. In its *National Military Strategy* of 2012, it was expressly stated that no country was perceived as a Hungarian enemy, and that any disputes would be settled in compliance with international law. Moreover, in 2007, in view of the country's limited military potential (over 30,000 soldiers according to the 2019 data), the Hungarian authorities decided that their involvement in foreign operations would at no time exceed 1,000 soldiers, including advisers and observers.[20] On the other hand, along with attempts to expand its own armed forces, Hungary has been paying much attention to the guarantees from NATO and the EU as its allies. Readiness to take part in international military

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[16] M. Lasoń, *Zaangażowanie Polski w misje wojskowe Unii Europejskiej w Afryce w II dekadzie XXI wieku*, "Yearbook of European Integration" 2015, No. 9, p. 176.

[17] *The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland*, the Polish Ministry of Defence, May 2017, p. 48.

[18] https://www.gov.pl/web/obrona-narodowa/minister-blaszczak-podjal-decyzje-o-utworzeniu-nowej-dywizji-, [accessed: 28.08.2019].

[19] M. Zieliński, *Już ponad 20 000 żołnierzy w szeregach WOT*, www.polska-zbrojna.pl, 15.05.2019, http://www.polska-zbrojna.pl/home/articleshow/28305?t=Juz-ponad-20-000-zolnierzy-w-szeregach-WOT#, [accessed: 28.08.2019].

[20] P. Tálas, T. Csiki, *Strategic Culture in Europe – Hungary* [in:] *Strategic Culture in Europe. Security and Defence Policies Across the Continent*, H. Biehl, B. Giegerich, A. Jonas (eds.), Springer, Potsdam 2013, p. 170.

operations has been declared in numerous governmental documents (including *The National Military Strategy*), as a way to build Hungary's credibility as an ally and to highlight its ambitions of an active member to international organisations. In 2001, as the first "new" member of the North Atlantic Treaty, Hungary decided to purchase western pursuit aircraft, i.e. fourteen Gripens made in Sweden, for a price of EUR 823,000,000. This purchase met with widespread approval from NATO*'s* military circles, being seen as an element of strengthening the overall Treaty capacities for conducting military operations. In 2003 Hungary joined the NATO ISAF operation in Afghanistan, sending on that mission over 500 of its soldiers[21]. It is also envisaged that the Hungarian Armed Forces will eventually be ready to conduct high-intensity military operations outside the country[22].

Romania, as one of the few countries in Central and Eastern Europe, did not yield to the western rhetoric of asymmetrical perception of national security in the decade of fights against global terrorism (2001–2011). The country's readiness to take part in international antiterrorist operations was expressed in *The National Security Strategy* of 2001. However, from the point of view of the Romanian strategic culture, this declaration should be considered part of Bucharest's NATO accession efforts. Moreover, global terrorism was recognised as a threat to supra-national, rather than national, security[23]. This view was later upheld in *The Military Strategy of Romania* of 2016, with the more imminent threats including destabilisation efforts made by the Russian Federation, hybrid war, cyber-attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, uncontrolled migrations and ethnic conflicts, as well as international crimes. Moreover, intelligence operations aimed to cause political destabilisation to the country were considered by the authors of the document as particularly dangerous. From Bucharest's perspective, while conventional warfare in Europe appears rather unlikely, it could be caused, *inter alia*, by an increased presence of military forces in the Black Sea or by the expanding Anti Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities. Therefore, it has remained the objective of the Romanian Armed Forces to strength the national defence capacities, to protect borders and people, and to deter any forms of aggression[24]. In addition, the Crimea annexation, the war in Eastern Ukraine and the militarisation of the Black Sea have prompted the Romanian authorities to debate on such issues as the justifiability of abandoning the compulsory military service, the demographic situation, the mobilisation capacities or the need to establish territorial defence troops. The provisions of the Act on the Volunteer Reserve and the National Reserve Forces, adopted in 2015,

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[21] M. Smith, *Between the EU and NATO: Hungary's Strategic Culture*, Central European University, Budapest 2009, p. 46.

[22] https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/b/ae/e0000/national_military_strategy.pdf, [accessed: 29.08.2019].

[23] I. Joja, *Reflections on Romania's Role Conception in National Strategy Documents 1990–2014: An Evolving Security Understanding*, "Europolity" 2015, Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 99.

[24] *The Military Strategy of Romania – Modern Armed Forces for a Powerful Romania within Europe and Around the World*, Bucharest 2016, pp. 7–11.

became effective in 2017. Those in favour of establishing territorial defence troops in Romania have invariably stressed the need for 8 brigades to be established in the upcoming years in those regions of the country that have the necessary military infrastructure. Each of the brigades would be composed of 3–5 battalions whose deployment and equipment would be geographically-conditioned[25].

The transformation of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, conducted between 1991 and 2019, has featured elements of both a defensive army and an army displaying certain power projection capacities. Following the war of independence which was fought in 1991–1995, a number of military reforms were implemented, aimed at reducing the armed forces, limiting the military impacts on national defence, introducing civilian control of the military and cutting defence spending. First changes were effected in 1994, with Minister Gojko Šušak launching the modernisation process in line with the western trends. The reform process was influenced by American advisers from Military Professional Resources Incorporated, who had obtained the consent from the U.S. Department of State to contribute to the future shape of the Croatian army[26]. After Minister Šušak's death, it was President Stjepan Mesić that became the human face of the professionalization-driven change in the Croatian army. Despite the opposing voices of some commanders – veterans of the recent Civil War (1991–1995), the defence budget was cut from 11% to 2% of GDP, civilian control of the military was introduced, and the number of soldiers was reduced from over 100,000 to only 16,000[27]. The military forces have, nevertheless, remained among the major instruments of the Croatian foreign and internal security policies. The country's readiness to protect the vital national interests with all available means was declared in *The National Security Strategy* of 2002[28]. Moreover, in 2000–2004 the Croatian Ministry of Defence implemented a working plan aimed at transforming the military forces from a big army into smaller mobile troops, capable of cooperating with other NATO units in military missions. At the same time, the principal objective of the Croatian military forces has been to expand their capacities for conducting defence operations within the national territory, both in cooperation with allied forces and on their own[29]. Although the country does not have separate territorial defence troops, and its army is no longer based on compulsory military service, it makes efforts to increase its mobilisation capacities. According to recent plans, the reserve troops will be increased to 20,000 soldiers

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[25] D. Plâviţu, *Territorial Defence as a Part of the Romanian National Defence System*, "Ante Portas – Security Studies" 2016, No. 2 (7), p. 222.

[26] D. Lozančić, M. Burđelez, *A Brief Review of Civil-Military Relations in the Republic of Croatia*, "Politička misao" 1998, Vol. XXXV, No. 5, pp. 43–44.

[27] J. Hopp, *Croatia's Reform of its National Defence Strategy*, www.centreforpublicimpact.org, 15.06.2018, https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/reform-national--defence-strategy-croatia-2003/, [accessed: 3.09.2019].

[28] G. Zela, *Strategic Culture of the Western Balkans States*, "Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences" 2013, Vol. 4, No. 10, p. 637.

[29] *The Republic of Croatia National Security Strategy 2017*, p. 15.

in a short-term perspective[30]. The defensive character of the Croatian army is also reflected in the country's purchase programmes, developed in response to the military development of its neighbour, Serbia, which has recently acquired six Russian MIG-39 multirole fighters, thirty T-72 tanks and thirty BRDM-2 vehicles. At the beginning of 2019 Serbia ordered seven Mi-35 and three Mi-17 helicopters. Currently Belgrade is also negotiating the purchase of Buk-M1/M2 missile systems, S-300 systems and military unmanned aerial vehicles from China[31]. This has prompted Croatia to respond with declarations regarding the purchase of F-16C multirole fighters or the Swedish JAS-39C/D Gripen. In addition, Croatia is planning to have its M-84 tanks modernised by 2024, along with modernising or replacing the BWP M-80A infantry fighting vehicles, purchasing new anti-tank weapons to be used in infantry combat, man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS) and OPL short-range systems, or acquiring new rocket artillery[32].

As regards the Baltic states, the transformation directions leave no space for ambiguity, with the military forces being clearly prepared to defend the national territory. When it comes to national defence, Lithuania has a total defence system. *The Military Strategy* of 2012 stipulates that, in the event of an armed conflict, the national territory will be defended by the Lithuanian military forces, allied troops deployed by NATO, and each and every citizen, using all national resources[33]. General and total national defence is also envisaged in Estonia. *The National Security Concept* of 2010 stipulates that, once invaded, the country will use all its resources, both civilian and military, to repel the enemy[34]. This provision was later upheld in other governmental documents, including *The National Security Strategy* of 2011 which assumes the country's defence in any circumstances and against any opponent regardless of its potential. A situation of the country being partly occupied by external forces has also been envisaged in that document which stipulates that, in such circumstances, fights will be continued in the seized territory by employing irregular methods of warfare[35]. Lithuania and Estonia are among the very few members states of the North Atlantic Treaty that have not abandoned the compulsory military service. In Estonia the conscript service was launched in 1991 and still

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[30] *The Croatian Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan 2015–2024*, The Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence 2014, p. 17.

[31] D. Kimla, *Croatian Defence Modernisation Agenda: Meeting NATO Commitments within Financial Limits*, http://europe.avascent.com, 1.04.2019, http://54.175.128.208/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/White_Paper_Croatian_Defence_Modernisation_FINAL.pdf, [accessed: 4.09.2019].

[32] M. Szopa, *Chorwacja się zbroi. „Ambicje mimo niewielkiego budżetu"*, www.defence24.pl, 4.04.2019, https://www.defence24.pl/chorwacja-modernizuje-armie-ambicje-mimo-niewielkiego-budzetu, [accessed: 4.09.2019].

[33] *The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania*, Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania 2012, p. 6.

[34] *The National Security Concept of Estonia*, 12 May 2010, p. 13.

[35] *The National Defence Strategy of Estonia*, Estonian Ministry of Defence 2011, p. 8.

remains in force. In average terms, the conscript training involves at least 3,400 recruits per year, and by 2022 this number is expected to grow to 4,000[36]. In Lithuania, similar to Poland, the conscript service was suspended at the turn of 2010. However, following the Crimea annexation by Russia and the outbreak of the war in Eastern Ukraine, Lithuania restored the compulsory military service in 2015[37]. This gave rise to establishing a mixed-type army, comprising professional soldiers and recruits completing their compulsory military service. Based on the Lithuanian Government's data, 68% of the society support the compulsory military service, and 75% have nothing against their relatives being enrolled as conscript soldiers[38]. The Baltic states have no air forces which are the crucial building block of power projection capacities. Their military structures are dominated by land forces, with approx. 8,800 soldiers in Lithuania, over 5,500 soldiers in Latvia, and approx. 6,400 soldiers in Estonia. Each of these countries has also established TDF troops. The Lithuanian territorial defence force comprises over 4,700 soldiers, with 500 professional commanders, and forms an integral part of land forces. The TDF troops are supported by the Riflemen's Union, a volunteer paramilitary public organization with over 11,000 members. The TDF troops in Latvia, with over 9,000 members, are also integrated with land forces, while the Estonian Defence League, given its universal character, is the most numerous, with approx. 24,000 members. The duties entrusted to TDF troops in all the Baltic states are similar and include maintaining the combat capabilities of the volunteers and preparing them for defending the national territory, supporting NATO forces within the Host Nation Support Programme, and supporting the state and local government administration in the event of natural disasters[39].

The preferred area of interstate cooperation (Europeanism vs. Atlantism)

Europeanism and Atlantism (also referred to as Atlanticism or Transatlanticism) are two opposing terms denoting foreign policy directions. Europeanism seeks to advance Europe to a position of a self-reliant player in international relations through the process of European integration. Atlantism opts for the American world order and makes Europe's security conditional on the U.S. military presence and the role of the North Atlantic Treaty[40]. Classifying foreign policies of Central and Eastern European countries as either clearly European or Atlantic is an extremely challenging task, as some states tend to deliberately balance between both trends. In addition, foreign policy directions are subject to changes which are brought about

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[36] www.kaitseministeerium.ee/en/news/juri-luik-how-do-we-protect-estonia, [accessed: 11.09.2019].

[37] M. Bieri, *Military Conscription in Europe: New Relevance*, "CSS Analyses in Security Policy" 2015, No. 180, p. 2.

[38] https://www.defence24.pl/litwa-przywraca-pobor-na-stale, [accessed: 11.09.2019].

[39] T. Małysa, *Wojska obrony terytorialnej w państwach bałtyckich*, "Bezpieczeństwo Teoria i Praktyka" 2017, No. 3, pp. 227–230.

[40] S. Lee, *Europeanism and Atlantism in the Italian Foreign Policy: Focused on Continuity and Change*, "International Area Review" 2007, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 176.

by international events, government transitions or shifts in the global balance of power. As noted by James Kennedy, Professor of History at the University College Utrecht, Donald Trump's foreign policy and landmark events such as Brexit have contributed to a shift in the Dutch foreign policy from Atlantic towards European[41]. As similar changes can be seen in Central and Eastern Europe, brought about by the aggressive policy of Russia towards Ukraine, investigations into the foreign policy directions in the member states of the Three Seas Initiative, involving the Atlantism-Europeanism dilemma, appear valid and well-grounded.

All of the countries under analysis follow the Atlantic trend, which is best visible in the foreign policies of Poland, Romania and the Baltic states. The Romanian foreign policy became pro-American in 1999 with President Emil Constantinescu coming to power. This was when the country's *National Security Strategy* was published, which for the first time in the post-communist period recognised the Euro-Atlantic direction as a priority in the foreign and national security policy. The pro-Atlantic course was followed by subsequent presidents, i.e. Ion Iliescu (2000–2004) and Traian Bâsescu (2004–2014). The importance of the U.S. alliance was reflected, *inter alia*, in Romania supporting NATO's military intervention in former Yugoslavia in 1999 despite its previously good relations with Slobodan Milošević's administration, endorsing the U.S attack on Iraq in 2003, and consenting to the U.S. soldiers' presence in the Romanian territory during military operations in the Middle East[42]. Romania's *National Defence Strategy* of 2010 once again stressed the key role of the United States, seen as a guarantor of security and a military ally to provide support in the event of threat posed by the Russian Federation, with precedence over NATO, as a defence alliance, and the European Union.

In Hungary the pro-American inclination in foreign policy was first seen at the beginning of the 1990s. In the strategic documents drawn up in 1993, it was written that no European institution was capable of guaranteeing security on the continent, and the United States, by marking their presence in Europe through the North Atlantic Treaty, were seen as the only such guarantor. It was further noted that Hungary would make its own army compliant with NATO standards in terms of the size, structure or purchase plans. The pro-Atlantic course was upheld in *The National Security Strategy* of 2002[43]. Following Hungary's accession to NATO and the European Union, the country's foreign policy acquired a more multi-polar character. By "opening itself to the East", i.e. by establishing cooperation with Russia in the field of energy and by attracting Chinese investments, Hungary weakened its relations with the United States. During the presidency of Barack Obama and the Fidesz-led government in Hungary, no meetings were held between heads of these two states. Washington

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[41] J. Kennedy, *From Atlantis to Europa: Erosion of Dutch Atlanticism*, spectator.clingendael.org, 20.03.2019, https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/atlantis-europa-erosion-dutch-atlanticism, [accessed: 9.09.2019].

[42] I. Joja, *Reflections on Romania's*…, op. cit., p. 94.

[43] M. Smith, *Between the EU and NATO…*, op. cit., pp. 45–46.

criticised Budapest for its internal policy, attitude to migration and activities of NGOs, while Viktor Orban, despite numerous disputes with the European Commission, presented himself as a proponent of the EU military integration. He also claimed to be in favour of establishing joint military forces and becoming independent of the United States in the area of defence. A breakthrough came on 11 February 2011 with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's first visit to Hungary, which could be seen as an attempt to warm the U.S.-Hungarian relations by Donald Trump's administration[44].

Like Romania, Poland is one of the closest U.S. political and military allies in Europe, but the Euro-Atlantic course in its foreign policy was set much earlier. In *Assumptions to the Polish Security Policy and the Security Policy and Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, drawn up in 1992, membership of the North Atlantic Treaty and the European Community was seen as a key objective of the Polish foreign policy. Poland was also in favour of U.S. military presence in Europe, viewing it as a stabilising factor in the face of transitions taking place upon the collapse of the communist system[45]. Over the years the Polish-American relations intensified, with Washington endorsing Poland's attempts to join the North Atlantic Treaty in 1999, and then the European Union in 2004. In return, Poland voiced its support for the U.S. fights against terrorism, engaged in the Second Persian Gulf War, and then sent its military contingents on stabilisation missions to Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*) national-conservative party came to power in Poland, and Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election, the mutual relations between the two countries have been further consolidated. During his visit to Warsaw on 6 July 2017, President Trump assured that Poland was considered one of the key U.S. allies and strongest partners in Europe. The United States endorsed the Polish-Croatian Three Seas Initiative, treating it as an effort to restrict the German influence in Europe, as well as expressed their disapproval regarding the Nord Stream II project. In line with the commitments made at the NATO summits in Newport (2014) and Warsaw (2016), the United States decided to deploy its detachments in Poland, following which over 800 soldiers joined the NATO Battalion Battle Group and 4,000 soldiers were sent to the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team in Poland. Finally, Poland used its close relationship with the United States to purchase high-tech military equipment. At the beginning of 2018 it signed an acceptance letter worth of USD 4,750,000,000 to purchase the "Patriot" surface-to-air missile (SAM) system, and in September 2019 the U.S. Department of State voiced its support for the potential sales of thirty-two F-35 fighters with a value exceeding USD 6,500,000,000[46].

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[44] Ł. Frynia, *Węgry wobec oferty ocieplenia stosunków amerykańsko-węgierskich*, osw. waw.pl, 13.02.2019, https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2019-02-13/wegry--wobec-oferty-ocieplenia-stosunkow-amerykansko-wegierskich, [accessed: 6.09.2019].

[45] *Assumptions to the Polish Security Policy and the Security Policy and Defence Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw 1992, pp. 4–5.

[46] T. Sharma, *U.S.–Poland Relations in the Age of Trump*, intpolicydigest.org, 5.10.2018, https://intpolicydigest.org/2018/10/05/u-s-poland-relations-in-the-age-of-trump/, [accessed: 12.09.2019].

The Euro-Atlantic course in the foreign policy of Croatia should be viewed as balancing between Atlantism and Europeanism. This depends on a multitude of factors, including the American Government's administration expressing interest in Western Balkans, the Croatian political elites' attitude to an increased EU integration and the EU capabilities to guarantee security in Western Balkans. The 1990s brought some ups and downs in the Croatian-American relations, which eventually led to a solid partnership. At the outset of the Yugoslavian conflict, hoping for preventing further escalation, Washington took the view that the unity of Yugoslavia should be preserved. However, with the conflict becoming more brutal, and under pressure from other European countries (especially Germany), the United States recognised Croatia and Slovenia as independent countries on 7 April 1992. Despite having no strategic interests in Western Balkans, the U.S. engagement increased in the face of the EU weaknesses and limited military power to put an end to the ethnic cleansing. In 1994, by participating in the Croatian army training by hand of a private enterprise, Military Professional Resources Incorporated, the United States became committed to ending the Bosnian-Croatian dispute. At the same time, Washington criticised Croatia for its internal human rights policy, democratisation and failure to comply with the provisions of the Dayton Agreement. Similar ups and downs in the mutual relations occurred in the following years, with Croatia endorsing NATO's military intervention in Kosovo in 1999, but failing to do so in 2003 during U.S. attacks on Iraq. In 2006–2018 efforts were made to restore the strategic partnership. Croatia increased its engagement in the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and the KFOR mission in Kosovo, while the United States endorsed the Croatian attempt to join the North Atlantic Treaty, ignoring the fact that Slovenia had sought to veto the enlargement of NATO. Starting with the American pivot to Pacific in 2011, Washington's interest in Western Balkans began to decline, and it was the European Union that took over the U.S. role of ensuring safety and stability on the peninsula[47]. However, given the EU military weakness and inefficiency during the Balkan wars, one can hardly assume that the United States have withdrawn from the region for good. For several years now an increased activity of the Russian special forces has been observed in the area of Western Balkans, especially in relation to the pro-western governments of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo. Through destabilisation and attempts to revive the frozen conflicts and escalate tensions, Kremlin is looking to reduce the EU and NATO's influence in the region[48].

Foreign policies of the Baltic states became unequivocally pro-Atlantic after 1991. It has been emphasised in the governmental documents outlining the strategic interests of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia that the North Atlantic Treaty provides

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[47] R. Barić, D. Smiljanić, *Relations between the United States and Croatia: Development and future perspectives* [in:] *Central European Countries Relations with the United States*, A. Pĕczeli (ed.), National University of Public Service, Budapest 2019, pp. 38–39.

[48] G. Kuczyński, *Wojna hybrydowa Rosji na Bałkanach Zachodnich*, warsawinstitute.org, 26.03.2019, https://warsawinstitute.org/pl/wojna-hybrydowa-rosji-na-balkanach-zachod-nich/, [accessed: 26.09.2019].

the basis for the Euro-Atlantic cooperation in the field of security. The U.S. constant presence in Europe is seen as a guarantee of peace, safety and stability on the continent. The three countries, together with the United States, pursue close military cooperation with the Nordic countries (Sweden and Finland), and with Poland. The American idealism reflected in the slogans of "freedom, justice and human dignity" is consistent with the values cherished by the emerging young political elites of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. These values are grounded in the attachment to liberal democracy and opposition to authoritarian and totalitarian rule. The support pledged to the United States in 2003 by the Baltic states, as part of the so-called coalition of volunteers, should be treated as an element of their strategic cultures, attesting to their opposition to Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and gratitude for the U.S. endorsement of their attempts to join NATO. At the same time, those countries object to the dilemma of choosing between the military integration within the EU or NATO. They treat the EU Common Security and Defence Policy as complementary to NATO's potential. They are all members of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and other EU-based military initiatives[49].

Relations with Russia

As regards the states under analysis, Hungary is the only country which does not precisely refer, in its official doctrines and governmental documents, to the threat posed by the Russian Federation. Nor does it consider Russia its enemy. Since 1989 Hungary has published a number of official documents outlining its security policy and describing, *inter alia*, the scale and types of threats. In 1993 the following documents were released: *The Basic Principles of the Security Policy of the Republic of Hungary* and *The Basic Principles of National Defence of the Republic of Hungary*. *The Basic Principles of National Defence of the Republic of Hungary* were then amended in 1998, and in 2002 another document was published, entitled *Security on the threshold of the new millennium: The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Hungary* (amended in 2004). Finally, in 2012 Hungary's *National Military Strategy* was released. The documents of 1993 and 1998 did not focus on the role of the Russian Federation in Central and Eastern Europe, and it was not until 2002 that Russia and Ukraine were mentioned as the countries located in the post-Soviet area which had a major impact on the Hungarian security. The Strategy of 2004 stressed that Russia was seen by Hungary as both a source of potential threat and an "instrument stabilising Hungary's cooperation with the west"[50]. *The National Military Strategy* of 2012 featured a very general passage making reference to the ongoing global geopolitical changes, including the growing role of the so-called raising powers. That process, according to the authors of the document, might ultimately give rise to military conflicts, should the competition and arms race be continued[51]. There have

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[49] A. Rikveilis, *Strategic culture in Latvia...*, op. cit., pp. 191–195.

[50] M. Smith, *Between the EU and NATO...*, op. cit., pp. 36–39.

[51] https://2010-2014.kormany.hu/download/b/ae/e0000/national_military_strategy.pdf, [accessed: 29.08.2019].

been several reasons behind Hungary's "pragmatic" position on Russia, which is different from that taken by the remaining 3SI member states under analysis. The first reason can be sought in the Hungarian-Ukrainian relationship which, starting with 2017, has been in the deepest crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In that year the Ukrainian Parliament passed an education act restricting the use of minority languages, including Hungarian, in schools. Budapest reacted with strong criticism, demanding that the act be reversed and that a government plenipotentiary for the development of the Transcarpathian region be appointed. This met with Ukrainian opposition, with Kiev calling these demands an interference with the internal affairs of the country. An over 150-thousand Hungarian minority residing in the south-western region of Ukraine further complicate the mutual relations. Supported financially by Budapest, its members show no intent to integrate with the Ukrainian society or to learn the Ukrainian language[52]. Secondly, Russia continues to be the major supplier of energy to Hungary, currently accounting for 70–80% of natural gas supplies. The Hungarian energy safety policy is based on balancing between the ideas and projects launched by the EU Member States, and those financed by the Russian Federation. On the one hand, when the plans of constructing the "Nabucco" gas pipeline first appeared, aimed at limiting Europe's dependence on Russian gas supplies, by securing raw material transport from Iran and Azerbaijan via Turkey, Hungary supported the idea. However, with time it began to withhold any further declarations regarding its participation in the undertaking. On the other hand, it expressed interest in engaging in the Russian "Blue Stream 2" project, extending the "Blue Stream" initiative towards Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Hungary, and in the "Turkish Stream" intended to secure gas supplies from Russia to Turkey[53]. In addition, in 2014 Hungary entered into an agreement with Russian, which then led to a contract being signed with Rosatom for constructing two nuclear power plant units in Paks, with the capacity of 2400 MW[54].

Among the countries under analysis, Poland has taken the most unequivocal position on the Russian foreign policy towards Central and Eastern Europe. The "Russian" disposition, along with the so-called German, Rapallo and Yalta dispositions, is a key feature of the strategic culture of the Republic of Poland. It reflects the historic caution and fear or dislike for its eastern neighbour which has frequently raided the Polish territory, and has a record of depriving Poland of its statehood (in 1795 and then in 1939). The anti-Russian sentiment (or Russophobia) encoded in the Polish society has constituted an imperative for seeking protection from

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[52] T. Iwański, A. Sadecki, *Ukraina – Węgry: narastający spór o prawa mniejszości węgierskiej*, osw.waw.pl, 14.08.2018, https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2018-08-14/ukraina-wegry-narastajacy-spor-o-prawa-mniejszosci-wegierskiej, [accessed: 30.08.2019].

[53] S. Smith, *Between the EU and NATO...*, op. cit., p. 50.

[54] A. Sadecki, *Rosja bliżej budowy elektrowni jądrowej na Węgrzech*, https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2016-11-23/rosja-blizej-budowy-elektrowni-jadrowej-na-wegrzech, [accessed: 31.08.2019].

western states (the United Kingdom, France or the United States)[55]. Poland continues to perceive Russia as a revisionist state, ready to use its military power in international relations with a view to manifesting its *raison d'état*. In the Polish *Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021*, the war in Eastern Ukraine has been considered an act of violation of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and the first case of the Russian Federation departing from the rules of peaceful coexistence. The EU and NATO's failure to adequately react to the aggressive Russian policy towards Georgia and Ukraine is seen as one of the two principal reasons behind the erosion of the western world, the other one being the 2008 economic crisis[56]. The strategic German-Russian partnership is considered particularly disturbing. One of the outcomes of the Berlin-Moscow cooperation is the construction of Nord Stream II, a pipeline to run along the floor of the Baltic Sea, in order to avoid Poland and Belarus as transit countries in gas supplies from Russia to Germany. Apart from its underlying energy supply function, Nord Stream II would serve as yet another means to put Poland under pressure, and to force it to accept higher prices for, or even to resign from, Russian gas supplies. This sense of mutual mistrust and threat perception is also shared by Russia. Much attention to the Polish-Russian relationship in the context of strategic culture was paid, *inter alia*, by Russian researcher A. Korybko. In his work, *Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Change*, he mentioned Polish Prometheism as a major geopolitical concept, at par with theories by Alfred Thayer Mahan and Halford Mackinder. Prometheism (or Prometheanism), understood as making attempts to weaken Russia by supporting independence movements among the nations forming part of the Russian State and living in the peripheral areas of its territory, has continued to be seen as a major threat to the country from the west. In the interwar period, Prometheism was reflected in Józef Piłsudski's federation plans in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the activities of the Polish military intelligence service in the Soviet Union. In the 1970s this movement was represented by Zbigniew Brzeziński and his "Balkanisation of Eurasia" concept, aimed at strengthening the independence awareness of Central Asian countries in order to weaken the Soviet Union[57]. Since the Third Republic of Poland, supporting independence movements of Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia), and their integration with the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty, has been a permanent element of Poland's foreign policy, regardless of the political inclination of those in power. It has also formed part of the Polish grand strategy, together with maintaining independence, sovereignty, integration with the EU and NATO, and alliance with the United States[58].

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[55] J. Czaja, *Kulturowe czynniki bezpieczeństwa*, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Krakow University, Kraków 2008, p. 250.

[56] *The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, p. 6.

[57] A. Korybko, *Hybrid Wars: The Indirect Adaptive Approach to Regime Change*, Moscow People's Friendship University of Russia 2015, pp. 15–17.

[58] M. Krasnodębska, *Europeization of Poland's...*, op. cit., p. 8.

Romania and the Baltic states also perceive Russia as a threat. In fact, for Romania the threat posed by Russia was an incentive to amend its foreign policy in 1999 and to set the Atlantic course. However, given its limited potential and caution in mutual relations, Bucharest had not precisely indicated Russia as the imminent threat in the official governmental documents drawn up by 2010. This changed at the outset of the second decade of the 21st century, along with searching for a new paradigm and implementing an assertive foreign policy. *The National Defence Strategy* of 2010 presented Russia not only as a threat but also as a power destabilising Southern and Eastern Europe, with the following events quoted as examples: the Russian aggression against Georgia in 2008, the cyber-attack on Estonia in 2010, the suspended gas supplies to Ukraine in 2009, and the Russian army being deployed in Transdniestria[59].

Taking into consideration the geopolitical location, the military potential and the significance of national minorities, the Russian threat is the most visible in the Baltic states. Since 2008 Russia has exerted an increasing political pressure on those countries, including threats in response to the discrimination of Russian national minorities, cyber-attacks targeted at critical infrastructure and even cases of intelligence service officers being kidnapped[60]. Cases of airspace violations by Russian planes and helicopters have also been reported in recent years, together with increased activities of Russian submarines on the Baltic coast[61]. These measures taken by the Russian Federation should be viewed as consistent with the "limitrofic war" concept, as presented in the Vadim Tsymbursky's "Grand Limitrof" theory. It involves a political and economic destabilisation of Central and Eastern Europe, without resorting to military forces, as well as extending the Russian influence to the country's buffer area[62]. Despite the obvious attempts to destabilise the Baltic states, both politically and economically, much caution has been exercised in the Lithuanian governmental documents as regards the direct recognition of Russia as a threat. *The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania* of 2012, amending the strategy drawn up in 2002, failed to expressly present Russia as a country posing threat to the national security of Lithuania. Instead, the authors of the document stressed that it was the growing authoritarianism of Lithuania's eastern neighbours, coupled with their expanding military potential, demonstration of power and the use of force against other states, that should be considered disturbing from the national security perspective. Prospects of a conventional conflict, information warfare, cyber-attacks,

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[59] I. Joja, *Reflections on Romania's*…, op. cit., p. 105.

[60] S. Roblin, *The Suwalki Gap: The 40-Mile Line NATO is Ready to Go to War with Russia Over*, https://nationalinterest.org, 13.04.2019, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/suwalki-gap-40-mile-line-nato-ready-go-war-russia-over-52172, [accessed: 9.09.2019].

[61] A. Kuczyńska-Zonik, *Dylematy bezpieczeństwa państw bałtyckich po aneksji Krymu*, ssp.amu.edu.pl, 7.02.2017, http://ssp.amu.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/ssp-2017-2-07.pdf, [accessed: 9.09.2019].

[62] http://geopolityka.net/rosja-wyspa-i-wielki-limitrof-mysl-geopolityczna-wadima-cymburskiego/, [accessed: 9.09.2019].

energy safety challenges, activities of foreign intelligence services, terrorism and climate change were listed as other major threats[63]. In contrast to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have directly recognised the Russian Federation as a threat to their national security. *The National Security Concept of Estonia* of 2010 described Russia's foreign policy as aspiring to restore the status of a global power. The authors of the document pointed out that, while pursuing its own national interests, Russia was ready not only to employ an array of political and economic tools, but also to resort to military power[64]. Much attention to the threats posed by Russia was also paid in the Latvian strategic documents. *The National Defence Concept* of 2016 expressly stated that after Latvia had regained independence, Russia made frequent attempts to destabilise the political and economic situation of that country. These included artificially coordinated and manager communication (propaganda), indoctrination, attacks in cyberspace, exploiting the energy industry to accomplish political goals, sabotaging economic and business circles by erecting barriers and imposing commercial bans, activities of special forces, and conducting military training in the vicinity of the Latvian border[65].

As for Croatia, Russia is not considered a direct menace to security. It was listed neither as a threat nor a partner in *The National Security Strategy* of 2017. The Croatian perception of threats continues to be influenced by the events that took place in the 1990s, i.e. the Civil War of 1991–1995. The approach to national security is based on the concept of individual (private) security, which implies protecting all citizens. The following factors are mentioned among the threats to national security: nationalism in Western Balkans, revisionism and attempts to establish "great powers", activities of organised criminal groups, cyber-attacks, hybrid operations, terrorist attacks or threats related to ecological safety. As stressed by the authors of the document, a conventional war in Western Balkans is currently unlikely but such a prospect cannot be ruled out in the future[66]. As in the case of Poland and Romania, Croatia's lack of direct reference to the destabilisation activities implemented by the Russian Federation results from its geopolitical location. For Zagreb, the south-western direction appears particularly dangerous when it comes to military safety, as it was where the Yugoslavian army mounted its attack in 1991. This is also where the most savage military operations (the Battle of Vukovar, fights in Slavonia or Operation Storm) took place. Until nowadays, the countries bordering Croatia to the south-east have been described as politically unstable and highly corrupted, with at least several hundred citizens leaving for the Middle East to join the Islamic State in the fights in Syria and Iraq[67]. Moreover, along with developing the Three

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[63] *The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania*, Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania 2012, pp. 4–5.

[64] *The National Security Concept of Estonia*, 12 May 2010, p. 7.

[65] *The National Defence Concept*, Riga 2016, p. 4.

[66] *The Republic of Croatia National Security Strategy 2017*, pp. 7–8.

[67] Ibidem, p. 8.

Seas Initiative and supporting Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reviving contacts with Russia is among the foreign policy priorities assumed by President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. A visit of the Croatian President to Russia in October 2017 was one of the measures taken to this end, its aim being to reconcile the Croatian and Russian interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to discuss the prospects of cooperation in the field of energy. It led to a gas supply contract being signed between Prvo Plinarsko Društro, a Croatian company, and Gazprom, providing for supplies of 1 bn m3 of the raw material per year, accounting for one-third of the overall use in Croatia[68].

Table 1. Comparing strategic cultures of selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative

Dimension of strategic culture		Poland	Romania	Croatia	Baltic states	Hungary
Direction of military transformations	Territorial defence	x	x	x	x	x
	Power projection					
preferred area of cooperation	Eurocentricity			x	x	
	Atlantism	x	x	x	x	x
Relations with the Russian Federation	Containment	x	x		x	
	Cooperation			x		x

Source: own elaboration based on M. Smith, *Between the EU and NATO: Hungary's Strategic Culture*, Central European University, Budapest 2009, p. 47.

Concluding remarks

Strategic cultures of the selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative exhibit far more similarities than differences. As regards the development of military forces, transformations oriented towards defending their own territory and cooperating with NATO allies clearly prevail in all the countries under analysis. Their participation in peacekeeping missions and military operations abroad should be viewed as elements of building strategic partnerships between the Central and Eastern European countries and the United States. The engaging, alongside of Washington, in the global war on terror, following the attacks of 11 September 2001, also resulted from the converging American and Central European values, arising from the pursuit of liberty and opposition to any form of dictatorship. The foreign policies of the member states of the Three Seas Initiative are unequivocally Atlantic-oriented. While Romania, Poland and the Baltic states perceive the United States as an ally capable of projecting its power and granting military assistance in crisis situations, some other 3SI member states, such as Croatia, seem to balance between Atlantism and Europeanism, depending on the current situation in Western Balkans and U.S.

68   M. Seroka, *Prezydent Chorwacji w Rosji. Próba ocieplenia relacji*, osw.waw.pl, 25.10.2017, https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2017-10-25/prezydent-chorwacji-w-rosji--proba-ocieplenia-relacji, [accessed: 3.09.2019].

administration's interest in this sub-region of Europe. Significant divergences between those countries are found in their relations with the Russian Federation. The countries bordering Russia, which were once under Russian (Soviet) occupation, perceive it as a serious threat to their national security, whereas those states which do not have such experience, or are located westwards, are in generally good terms with Russia, implementing joint energy projects. This article does not exhaust the discussed topic given its extensive character and the complexity of strategic cultures. However, it can serve as the starting point to further investigations into the relevance and future of the Three Seas Initiative.

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Comparing strategic cultures of selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative

Abstract

The article describes and compares strategic cultures of selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative (Poland, Romania, the Baltic states, Hungary and Croatia) by indicating both their convergences and divergences. The author has focused on the following three elements of strategic culture: the direction of transformation of armed forces, the preferred direction of foreign policy cooperation (Atlantic vs. European), and relations with the Russian Federation. The research methods comprised analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalisation. The author has paid special attention to analysing a range of documents and reports describing the national security strategies of the selected countries, their military strategies and operational concepts, including the following: *The National Security Concept of Estonia, The Polish Foreign Policy Strategy 2017–2021, The Military Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania, The Republic of Croatia National Security Strategy, The Croatian Armed Forces Long-Term Development Plan 2015–2024, The Military Strategy of Romania – Modern Armed Forces for a Powerful Romania within Europe and Around the World, The Defence Concept of the Republic of Poland,* and *The National Defence Strategy of Estonia.* In developing this paper, reference was also made to publications released by other authors researching strategic cultures, including Marion Smith, Andrew Korybko and Jacek Bartosiak.

The presented research results indicate that strategic cultures of the selected member states of the Three Seas Initiative exhibit more similarities than differences. Similarities were identified as regards transformation of armed forces, foreign policy inclinations and threat perception, while differences were found to refer mainly to relations with the Russian Federation. The conclusions formulated in the article can serve as the starting point to further investigations into the relevance of cooperation within the Three Seas Initiative.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura strategiczna, Inicjatywa Trójmorza, Europa Środowo-Wschodnia
Key words: strategic culture, Three Seas Initiative, Central and Eastern Europe

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