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The current situation of Sweden in the context of possible threats and challenges: state of the defense and security policy and Arctic as a potential future conflict

Performed by: student of the 2nd year of study

052 Political Science

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I.   Introduction

Sweden is a highly developed country in northern Europe, famous for holding the peace for more than 200 years of its history. Its government has long maintained that there is limited possibility of an attack on Sweden and that there are no obvious threats in the foreseeable future. However, the deteriorating security architecture in Europe, especially in the current context of the war in Ukraine, is forcing the Swedish government to change its views and rhetoric in a near-radical manner. The current state of affairs in the context of an aggressive Russian war in Ukraine highlights the issue of defense and security policy in Sweden, as the country is currently making efforts to rebuild the country's civil defense.

This master's thesis is devoted to the most important, the most relevant and the most unpredictable threat in terms of destructiveness in the geopolitical arena in the context of Russia's relations with other countries, in particular with Sweden.

Speaking about relations between European states and Russia, it is important to understand that the cornerstone and root of many problems is the revisionist policy of the modern Russian government. First and foremost, it consists of negligent diplomacy, interference in the domestic politics of states, as well as hybrid warfare. All these actions are aimed at restoring international power and influence lost at the end of the Cold War.

Not only does Russia in its current state continue to threaten the security architecture by undermining the stability and security of the West, but it is also expanding its frontline of activity by becoming a more and more aggressive player. It is important to provide insight into the historical and political context of Russia's aggressive actions, as well as to identify Russia's information war strategy and its objectives.

It is especially important to understand the peculiarity of disinformation emanating from Russia, which is to contaminate and obfuscate information in the political context, questioning and undermining the concept of true-objective and false news. Certainly, the contamination of the political and news fields has a disruptive effect on Europe's domestic politics, which consists in segmenting and fragmenting European society.

This, in turn, is a convenient ground for promoting Russian interests, destabilizing the situation and political sentiments among the population and even among high-ranking officials. Equally important is the task of establishing and finding a multi-tiered system for countering

disinformation, despite the limitations in the face of organized, financed and effective Russian disinformation operations, as well as a broad campaign of active measures.[1]

Presented master's thesis consists of three main parts. The first part is the most comprehensive one and consists of an in-depth and detailed examination of Russia as a threat. The first part encompasses the historical aspect, methods and techniques of hybrid warfare, and describes the institutions that are engaged in it. The problem of disinformation is also covered with examples of the use of Twitter and media. The second part examines strategies, theories, practices, experiences, and mechanisms for combating Russia's destructive influence on the policies of European states. The last part of the thesis addresses the Swedish presence and influence in the Arctic in the context of climate, economy and possible confrontations of interests with other states in the Arctic region.

i.   Relevance

The relevance of this thesis is the more detailed examination of certain aspects of the potential and actual danger emanating from Russia in the context of modernity and the war it has unleashed. At this stage, Sweden is undergoing both qualitative and quantitative transformations in the areas of government policy, defense and security policy of the country, as well as in the context of civil defense training and planning. It is the study of Russia's tactics and methods going back in history, as well as considering modern technology and practices and the experience of other countries that will significantly help Sweden in a more competent, detailed and thoughtful planning and improvement of policies and measures taken to strengthen the security of the country and society. Consideration of the tools that Russia has used against other countries, as well as the strategies that these countries use to counter Russian information warfare, is of great importance.

Regarding the Arctic question, Sweden's role in the Arctic is innovation and sustainable development. Even though only two counties of Sweden belong to the Arctic, Sweden has been quite successful in implementing its research policy in order to maintain a sustainable future in this remote region. The relevance of this section is to examine the existing problems, claims and challenges in the Arctic in the context of the increasing and unstable relations in the geopolitical arena, and to identify the role Sweden plays in the Arctic region now.

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[1] https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/active-measures-russias-covert-geopolitical-operations-0 [Accessed on 08.06.2022].

ii.   Objective and research questions

The aim of this master thesis is to examine and identify Russia as a source of destabilization, conflictogenicity and potential threat to the security architecture of the Western world by addressing the tools and methods Russia uses to achieve its goals and by reviewing examples of its destabilization policies. This will provide a completer and more detailed picture and possible scenarios that, in turn, can be used as a means of countering, preventing and directly combating Russian hybrid warfare and its consequences.

The research is based on qualitative materials or secondary and primary sources. Due to the drastically changing and unstable situation on geopolitical arena, the following question arise:

1) To what extent is Sweden prepared to confront the potential risks of unfolding Russian hybrid warfare?

iii.   Theoretical framework

Speaking about a theoretical framework of this thesis, there are two cornerstone theories this research is based upon:

Firstly, it is neorealism theory in international relations. In order to shape the understanding of how international relations between states and supranational entities work, a modern and useful approach that will reflect the reality in a succinct, yet scientific way is needed. Following H. Morgenthau's desire to create a science of international politics, a suitable theory that would assist us in expanding our knowledge as well as applying it to the subject of our study that focuses on Sweden's current place in the international arena and any potential and real threats and challenges for its national security coming from the Arctic region is highly requested.

The historical origins that initially called for neorealism as a predominant approach for most international relations scholars in 1960s are essentially the same as today – the world is on a brink of a global war that risks turning into a destructive nuclear clash. Therefore, we use exactly this method in our study – in modern geostrategic challenges for Sweden in the Arctic and Baltic regions coming from almost unpredictable Russia's behavior, we need instruments and a clear vision to calculate all the potential gains and losses, small factors and historical parallels that altogether define Swedish position in the region and its state of national security. Key point for the proponents of neoliberalism is a concept of power balancing and sufficient force meaning that it is not always wise for a country to maintain an aggressive stance steadily increasing its military forces. Instead, sufficient force implies high adaptability and space for

maneuver where national security is protected but national image of the country remains positive and non-militaristic (Keohane 1986: 169).

In the further sections of our research, we take a closer look at Sweden's route to NATO. Neorealism postulates that we quantify the importance of incentives and always conduct cost-benefit analysis to analyze cooperation in the international system. So, we used neorealism theory in order to:

- find out what are key incentives for Sweden's urgent need to join NATO in 2022;
- what Sweden and NATO are expecting from each other in that cooperation (we also take a closer look at different groups of interest within Sweden, such as energy companies and military industrialists, too);
- know how the decision to join would influence Sweden's state of national security and Russian behavior;
- find out how it will reshape the Arctic region's balance of power;
- get to know how some actors (mostly Turkey) would like to gain some benefits and strategic influence by using their leverages in decision-making processes.

Secondly, we also draw heavily from a (nuclear) deterrence theory. Since its inception in 1970s it has been significantly modernized by recent scholarly studies so as to cope with newly created threats that could not have been predicted in the previous century (cyberthreats as a primary example). In the subsequent sections, we portray Sweden's defense mechanisms and strategies against subversive activities that include cyberthreats and psychological operations in the first place. Thus, we needed a comprehensive theoretical approach that would help us to analyze the threats and find out if Sweden response to them is adequate to establish a power balance. According to Ajir & Vailliant (Ajir/ Vailliant 2018: 84-85), key elements of modern (cyber) deterrence between two states are:

- actors (who is in charge of the assault and defense – while in nuclear conflict it is obviously states, in cyberattacks private actors and criminal elements are also part of the formula; such change in states' behavior that they employ other actors to perform devastating attacks influences defensive tactics, methods of countering and persecuting);
- methods (while nuclear attacks happen in physical domain, cyberattacks are disseminated virtually and whole new infrastructure (Internet) is used to deliver malicious strikes on the enemy);

- redline (classic deterrence theory proposes that mutually assured destruction prevents the states from nuclear conflict; in cybersecurity, such principle cannot be enacted because of informational domain and private actors that mask their affiliation to any state – so even physical harm can be done without much retribution);

- target (in nuclear conflict, the target is main military, industrial and infrastructural objects; in cyber conflict, it can also be infrastructure that runs on IT, but also it is personal assets, hardware, funds and information);

- credibility (more specifically, it is reciprocity and attribution - two states have to be confident that in case of prohibited attack they will face the immeasurable consequences; in nuclear war, it is easy to ascertain both who conducted an attack and conduct a swift response; in cyber war, it is much harder to find out who did the attack, attribute it to a concrete country and then perform a similarly devastating attack).

In case of Sweden, we will see that the country does have a strategy to counter cyberthreats and psychological operation in a general strategy to cope with subversive activities. However, as it seems, Sweden is more confident in staying within NATO's collective security that rises the cost of any sort of attack on the country and eases the process of finding and punishing the aggressor.

iv.   Methodological approach

a. Research state and literature approach

The purpose of this review is to identify the tools and methods Russia resorts to for the purpose of disinformation, inciting information warfare, and destabilizing the political situation. In order to determine this, a narrative literature review option appears to be the most appropriate.

This approach to literature analysis is to acquaint oneself with the topic through a critical analysis of the relevant literature (Clark et al. 2021: 84).

Moreover, deductive approach, that means a process when researcher draws on what is known about a particular domain and on relevant theoretical ideas, will be helpful for the literature review.

It is important to first examine the context of the problem and gather materials concerning the history of the development of the problem and investigate relevant theories. In the case of this

master's thesis such theories and concepts as, for instance, Russian revisionism[2], subversion and insurgency[3], active measures[4] have been researched and examined.

Qualitative methods which include content analysis of primary sources (EU official documents, interviews, government reports, speeches) and secondary sources (papers, journal/newspaper articles, documentaries) will be used for writing this master's thesis.

b. Case study method

This method is traditionally considered within the qualitative research paradigm. This type of research is intended to comprehensively examine all the interactions that distinguish a particular situation or case. This is accomplished through a methodology of complete, comprehensive description that includes an in-depth examination of the object of study, the conditions under which the object functions, and the characteristics of the subjects associated with the object. This method is very adaptable and flexible by its nature. A variety of research problems can be addressed with this method, and a variety of data collection methods can be applied.

In this master's thesis, the case study is Sweden, which examines the impact, threats, challenges and methods of combating, preventing and countering Russian disinformation and undermining the country's politics, democratic standards and security architecture.

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[2] https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10308-017-0482-5 [Accessed on 08.06.2022].
[3] http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/op172osd.5 [Accessed on 08.06.2022].
[4] https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/security-insights/active-measures-russias-covert-geopolitical-operations-0 [Accessed on 08.06.2022].

II. Hybrid warfare – mapping possible threats of Russian interference

Until the 24th of February, when Russia started the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine after 8 years of frozen conflict, it was believed that full-scale warfare is not possible in 21 century anymore. Well, while Russia has rules of the game dramatically in terms of global security and stability waging the old-school war while this academic work was already in progress, our main goal is to examine the preconditions to an escalation of a conventional military conflict which is hybrid warfare.

Hybrid warfare has established its prominent position in the world security agenda. Blooming of the research on this matter dates back to the end of the Cold War. First, the term 'hybrid warfare' was defined by Robert G. Walker in 1998. He states hybrid warfare is 'lying in the interstices between special and conventional warfare' (Oğuz 2017). In the early development of a theoretical framework of hybrid warfare, it was primarily elaborated on approaching the combination of conventional warfare, terroristic activity, and guerilla tactics (Hoffman 2007). According to Arsalan Bilal, hybrid warfare 'entails an interplay or fusion of conventional as well as unconventional instruments of power and tools of subversion[5]. These instruments or tools are blended in a synchronized manner to exploit the vulnerabilities of an antagonist and achieve synergistic effects' (Arif 2021). In other words, hybrid warfare enables unleashing war without its official proclamation. Moreover, actual hostilities between nation-states may start not with the armed invasion of one's territory but by waging informational and psychological military operations, so-called 'informational war'.

Ukrainian scholar Geogrii Pocheptsov emphasizes the importance of the informational field of hybrid warfare. He describes it as in this approach to warfare actual physical operations are dimmed while the importance of informational operations rises dramatically while they are supposed to hide physical hostilities (Pocheptsov 2018). Hybrid warfare enables one to take advantage of one's enemy without spending enormous economic, political, and reputational costs on shedding blood on the battlefield. In hybrid warfare, one may establish reflective control over one's adversary which enables one to influence his security and military plans and a general understanding of the situation and his actions. In other words, one side may impose its interests on its adversary and push him to make tactically and strategically wrong decisions. This can be achieved with different methods of reflexive control, such as 'camouflage', disinformation, and other influence operations and campaigns (Smolyan 2013). NATO

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[5] https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2021/11/30/hybrid-warfare-new-threats-complexity-and-trust-as-the-antidote/index.html [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

describes hybrid threats as "military and non-military as well as covert and overt means, including disinformation, cyber-attacks, economic pressure, deployment of irregular armed groups and use of regular forces"[6]. In other words, hybrid warfare is aimed to blur the line between war and peace and contain a constant sense of insecurity and danger.

i.   Modern history of Russian hybrid warfare

The Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and military aggression in Eastern Ukraine by establishing separatist formations, the so-called Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics were admitted being preceded by hybrid (or informational) military operations and were declared one of the major threats to European and NATO security (Oğuz 2016). In this paragraph, we suggest having a closer eye on the modern history of Russian hybrid warfare, its precondition, historical development, and trademark features.

Due to consistent empirical need, so to speak, the term hybrid warfare is well-developed in the Russian military academic field. Western scholars often misinterpret Russian military strategy, holding on to the conditional dichotomy of non-conventional operations as a precondition to waging conventional hostilities. Although, it is a rather harmful and risky perception while Russians do not treat hybrid warfare as simply a set of means of warfare in given circumstances. Instead, hybrid war is a self-sufficient type of hostilities, so constraining it only to a preface to full-scale hostilities will be much of an oversimplification. Russian military officials perceive hybrid war as "a war in which all efforts, including military operations, are subordinate to an information campaign" (Thomas 2020). Moreover, Russians soberly assess their military capabilities and accept the fact of their lack of physical, conventional strength to withstand the entire Alliance on the actual battlefield (Schnaufer II 2017). The Russian view of a global struggle for power, as well as political and economic domination, is not constrained to any means – no matter whether it is physical force or controlling dominant global political narratives. In helicopter view, Russia fights not solemnly for territories or regional dominance, but for determining policy and governance decisions and the geopolitical orientation of target states. As the American Institute for the Study of War puts it, from the Russian point of view, victory does not constrain to physical uptaking, but to "imposing their worldview, values, interests, and understanding of the fair distribution of resources in target state" (Clark 2020).

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[6] https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

Modern hybrid warfare of the Russian Federation is the direct successor of the Cold War between the USSR and the USA. After the USSR's dissolution, Russia kept sticking to the Cold war narratives that US-Russian relations are a constant civilizational battleground for world domination, where Russian culture, religion, and traditions are constantly threatened by the West. Predominantly, after the rise of the Russian Federation as a nation-state, Russian understanding of its security policy and geopolitical position was shaped and elaborated through the lens of the Soviet Union's defeat in the Cold War (Fridman 2018: 205). This way constant struggle with external enemies lies at the core of Russian national idea and political unity as the ancestor of imperial formations. Thus, extensive and multilayer domination at least in the post-Soviet region and globally at best is the existential issue for Russia as a political formation. This worldview and perception of Russian foreign policy and political doctrine echoes in the Russian high military echelon. For example, in 2019 Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces claimed that 'the US and its allies are developing offensive capabilities, including global strike, multi-domination battle, color revolutions and soft power to eliminate unwanted governments, undermine the concept of sovereignty, and change lawfully elected governments' (Clark 2020).

Some scholars argue that Russia evolved hybrid warfare, once known as a popular means of warfare among terroristic groups such as ISIS and Hezbollah, to a significantly new level. Hybrid warfare was commonly associated with conventional, irregular, terrorist, and criminal methods, while Russia added to this arsenal informational, cyber, diplomatic, political, and social layers (Schnaufer II 2017). According to Ofer Fridman, Russian political and, thus, military doctrine is established on two main goals:

1) to demoralize the enemy nation, gradually eroding its culture, values, and self-esteem,
2) to prefer economic, political, and informational means of pressure rather than physical force (Fridman 2018: 208).

This way informational warfare became the core of Russian military strategy. One of the keys to understanding Russian modern hybrid warfare is an insight into its instrumentalization of history. One of the most important intellectuals on this matter for Vladimir Putin himself is Aleksander Dugin, which is frequently called 'Putin's brain'. Dugin promotes the idea of interpreting Russian history, governance, and foreign policy through the perspective of resistance to the West. According to Dugin, all the wars Russia unleashed – in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Syria – are 'the Great war of continents. He proclaims that Western and Russian (or Slavic, as he puts it as one of the ideologists of panslavism) civilizations are

incompatible in terms of their interests, values, understanding of religion, the good, and the evil, humankind, the world, the life, etc. So, it makes this conflict unresolvable and doomed to consistent struggle (Pocheptsov 2017: 95). This way, the most intuitive and expected level of Russian hybrid warfare is the struggle for dominance in the post-Soviet region, threatened by European Union and NATO.

Immediately after the dissolution of the USSR and the rising of independent nation-states in the post-soviet region, Russian Federation dedicated its efforts to establishing unquestionable dominance of the Kremlin in the region, as it used to be under the USSR. The opportunity for self-determination of new independent formations posed multiple threats, imagined by Russian authorities. Some scholars suggested, that after the USSR's dissolution as the collapse of its enemy, the USA will lose interest in keeping North Atlantic Treaty Organization together. US military presence in Europe was determined to balance the power in the region to balance power with such an influential player as the USSR. Naturally, the elimination of this player would mean no necessity of investing so many resources in the Alliance (Frydrych 2008). Nevertheless, Russia could not afford to give up on the imperialistic myth of Russian celestial destiny to lead the Eurasian continent in its way, already mentioned above with Dugin's quote. As Crag Nation and Trenin suggested, 'severe economic depression, a breakdown of civic order and public morale, a widespread international perception of defeat and humiliation' were the main factors why Russian political elites decided to follow the course of confrontation and unite the broken nation against hostile Other, which was the West (Nation/ Trenin 2007).

Shortly after the USSR's dissolution, in 1993 Russian Federation established a regional international alliance – the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Russia was quick to announce the so-called post-Soviet region not just their territory of interest, but their 'special responsibility. Over time CIS was accompanied by more than 15 agencies for political and economic cooperation and 10 inter-state specialized functional organizations. Russia even tried to establish common foreign security and military strategies among member-states, establishing a quasi-military block based on economic and political cooperation. Fortunately for member-states, Russia has never succeeded in establishing a replica of the USSR under the umbrella of the Commonwealth. First, three newly independent states – Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia – rushed to alienate themselves from the remnant of the fallen USSR and concentrated their efforts on integrating with Europe, which resulted in their membership in both the European Union and NATO. Ukraine as well made a bit more subtle move of distancing itself from CIS, establishing its status not as a full-fledged member, but just as a 'participating state'. Thus, CIS

never succeeded in acting as a unifying ground while there were almost no decisions made in the organization with the participation of all the members (Nikitin 2008). A noteworthy aspect of the Russian attempt to foster security cooperation based on CIS is the attempt of the Russian Federation to approach the borders of NATO with their military forces while still keeping the Alliance far enough from the actual borders of the Russian Federation.

Nevertheless, it will not be an exaggeration to estimate the CIS project has failed. Alexander Nikitin defines some evidence for this statement:

1) a failure to establish the functioning of the Council of CIS Defense Ministers and abolishment of the Staff for Coordination of Military CIS cooperation;

2) disfunction of most CIS organs despite their de-jure operating;

3) inner fragmentation between member-states and participants of the Commonwealth, resulting in arising of parallel institutions, such as GUAM and CSTO;

4) domination of pro-European attitudes in Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine and change of the geopolitical course towards the EU;

5) orientation of Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan towards joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization;

6) a failure to establish a common currency zone across the CIS, as well as the same customs and tariff regulations

7) inability to establish the common doctrine of the joint border of CIS (Nikitin 2008).

Maintaining close relations with newly independent states became the priority of Russian foreign policy, keeping them in their sphere of interests withstanding the European Union, which is perceived by Russian political elites as a 'puppet' in the hands of the United States (Nation/ Trenin 2007). Quite predictably, Russia had neither interest, nor worry about the vision, strategy, and desires neither of the governments of post-Soviet countries, nor their people. Thus, in case of 'disobedience' or rejection of Russian, so to speak, patronage or orientation to the West of those states, that used to be occupied by the Soviet Union, Russian Federation forcefully kept these states in their influence zone. So, one of the characteristic features of Russian hybrid warfare is waging hostilities and establishing frozen conflicts.

Soviet social policy regarding ethnic minorities within Soviet republics provided solid ground and instruments for the legitimization of Russian future military aggression towards post-Soviet countries. Soviet authorities proactively encouraged internal migration, supporting the uniform settlement of different ethnicities across the USSR, keeping the Russian ethnic minority on the highest social position in all the Republics. This created twofold predicament

for newly independent states. First, this way they inherited pro-Russian political elites, closely tight to Russian Federation due to previous barriers for nationalist representatives to move up by social elevator. This factor allowed Russia to keep a tight grip on political and economic life in post-Soviet region. Secondly, presence of Russian minorities of newly independent countries, bolstered by Russian propagandistic blurring the difference between Russian ethnic minority and Russian-speaking Russian majorities, which resulted from Russian centuries-long history of systemic russification in the region. This factor was used to legitimize Russian invasions into their neighbors' territories: Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Chechnya. Having, on one hand, profound influence on internal social, political and economic stability, providing favorable circumstances for successful intervention, and, on the other hand, having solid justification of these hostilities, masking as noble protective operations for saving ethnic minorities. It is noteworthy that none of these conflicts lead to any solution (Kozłowski 2016).

Another international organization established in the region is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is frequently described as the 'Russian equivalent of NATO'. CSTO is a military block, which was established by signing the Collective Security Treaty in 1992. CSTO consists of six member-states – Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. There are also three former participants – Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Georgia, but eventually, they withdrew their membership. Formally CSTO is designed as a partnership between equals – Organization's chairmanship rotates on an annual basis and has interparliamentary assembly. Surprisingly to few, despite the formal equality Russian dominance in organization is hard to diminish while Russia holds the most military capabilities and manufacturing infrastructure. Moreover, after the Russian re-invasion in the territory of Ukraine in February 2022 Russia insisted on accelerated adoption of new amendments, allowing one single 'coordinating state' to decide on military actions on behalf of other member-states. CSTO is the only successful Russian attempt to establish at least some kind of response to NATO in terms of conventional warfare (Rácz 2022).

Regarding the conventional methods of warfare, as we already mentioned above, Russia exploits internal cleavages, escalating them to physical hostilities in its self-attributes 'sphere of interest' and cementing internal distortion and instability in form of frozen conflicts in target state. The first victim of such an intrusion, in this case, orchestrated by the Russian Federation, was the newly independent Moldova right after the restoration of its independence from the Soviet Union. The second victim appeared to be Georgia with Russian involvement in Abkhazia and South Ossetia conflict, which further resulted in the Russian-Georgian war. The third

conflict, fostered by Russians, is Nagornii Karabakh – region, disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan. Fourth and the most dramatic in terms of damage and violence in Ukraine: Russian invasion in Eastern Ukraine with establishing two separatist formations – Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, and waging of the first full-scale war in the XXI century.

In every one of these conflicts and wars Russia deliberately exploited or even orchestrated ethnic conflicts in the named countries. Not being yet brave enough to start and take responsibility for waging the war, Russia sponsored these conflicts, denying their direct participation and funding hostilities with men and weapons (as in the case of separatist formations in Eastern Ukraine) or sending their forces as allegedly peacemakers (for example, Georgian case). Keeping target-states permanently destabilized politically, economically exhausted, and distorted by the persistent threat of escalation, on the one hand, and spreading uncertainty about their role in these conflicts and geopolitical situation in general, on the other hand, helped Russians to keep these countries in their orbit of influence as long as possible (Kozłowski 2016).

But regarding our chosen theoretical paradigm, a struggle for influence is an essence of foreign policy for every nation-state as a political phenomenon. Thus, one may rise fair enough question about the peculiarity of the Russian case on this matter. Part of this matter we have already explored above in this section – is historical legacy if the Russian Federation as political formation, established around the notion of its imperialistic role and distinguishes for not just the region, but entire world. Another significant subject for consideration on this matter is the peculiarities of Russian political regime. Winning coalition of Russian political elites consists of quite a narrow clique of predatory elites, who share the rent of abound natural resources (for example, oil and gas). On the other hand, highly personalized nature of Russian political regime, making the position of those lucky individuals, who made their way to Russian highest echelons of political elites, rather instable. In some way Russia experiences some form of the 'Dunish disease' (Ross 2003), so any attempts to withdrawal from Russian economic zone of interest by newly independent nation states threatens political and economic capital of this established and narrow circle of Russian political elites. Sense of personal threat, on one hand, and lack of constraints by democratic instruments, encourages political elites to more radical means for preservation of power (Jensen/ Doran 2018).

Concerning this peculiarity of Russian political regime architecture, another distinctive chapter in history of Russian hybrid warfare is their hawkish, in game theory terminology,

reaction on the Color Revolutions – in Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. The very essence of these revolutions is to declare and solidify reorientation of abovementioned countries, and first and foremost, their citizens towards the West and removal of old, pro-Russian elites. These events are unambiguous disruption of Russian brotherhood myth, fostered to solidify stability in Russian society and determined withdrawal from economical dependency from Russia. While this ecosystem of Russian ecosystem of Russian rent-seekers was established not on the fair market principles, but on the forceful domination, this windows of opportunities for economical self-determination endangered Russian political winning coalition. Thus, Russian elites developed another repertoire of hybrid warfare – orchestrating contra-revolutions, supporting them financially, informationally and resourcefully (Kozłowski 2016).

Despite the sense of continuation and coherence of Russian hybrid warfare with Western world, at least one episode of temporal comparative pacification can be named. After USA invaded Afghanistan, Afghan war became unprecedented in terms of the history of Russian military warfare cause for cooperation. Taliban turned to be the threating enough even for Russia to tolerate the cooperation between states in Central Asian region and NATO. In order to respond to extremist threat in Afghanistan NATO established its military bases in the region, the closest one to Russian borders (Manas, Kyrgyzstan) was situated in just 30 kilometers from the border (Nikitin 2008).

In 2013 Russian Chief of the General Staff, who is still holding his office during full-fledged Russian-Ukrainian war, added more conceptualization to Russian perception and operationalization of hybrid warfare, which is now famous as 'Gerasimov doctrine' (Gerasimov 2013). According to Gerasimov, non-military warfare is inevitably essential supplement for military hostilities. Moreover, to Gerasimov's opinion, in the design of warfare strategy non-military warfare should exceed military hostilities in four times. Moreover, in the modern world after two tragedies of modern European history – two World wars – straightforward military warfare cannot be framed as noble and justifiable. This way, usage of force is possible only 'peacemaking' and 'crisis management' operations, as now can be fully implemented in Russian portraying of Russian-Ukrainian war as 'special military operation'. Nevertheless, according to Gerasimov, non-military warfare cannot substitute conventional usage of force. Some scholars describe Gerasimov's doctrine as a strategy for accumulation of all the means, available to the state for the sake of warfare.

In 2012 Russian President Vladimir Putin himself addressed the issue of hybrid warfare in regarding the USA. In his pre-election campaign article, Putin followed the established Russian

geopolitical paradigm, accusing the United States of interfering in the intra-regional ties of Russia's traditional zone of economic and political influence in order to destabilize Russia. Moreover, the approach described by Gerasimov, which is in tune with Putin's previous statements mentioned above, can also be observed in the Russian military reform that has been unfolding since 2008. Thus, this reform implemented a tool, later described by Gerasimov as reducing the temporal, spatial and informational distance between the Russian Armed Forces and the government[7]. Thus, the Russian military reform laid the groundwork for encouraging civil-military cooperation in the framework of information warfare and blurring the lines between civilian and military information warfare operations (Gorodnichenko et al. 2021). In fact, this reform was based on the already mentioned "reflexive enemy control" approach for masking Russian foreign military operations and synchronous, operational and tactical levels of military campaigns in the form of proxy wars, special operations, etc. (Gerasimov 2013).

The most obvious transition to Gerasimov's doctrines for the foreign observer was the annexation of part of Ukrainian territory - the Crimean Peninsula. Analysts at the time of the annexation accurately enough interpreted this atypical for Russian hybrid warfare direct military operation as a test of the West's reaction as to how much military aggression Russia can afford with its consequences.

They note such hybrid warfare tools that have shown their effectiveness in these events:

- Seizing parts of a neighboring country's territory without direct troop deployment or other conventional military operations - the so-called "green men" who carried out the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Green Men are Russian servicemen dressed in military uniforms, with no distinctive insignia or chevrons. Putin publicly acknowledged the Russian army's involvement in the annexation of Crimea only sometime after the forceful annexation of Crimea to Russia

- Conducting a so-called "proxy war," using law enforcement and special forces as the main force, setting the stage for future conventional hostilities

- using hybrid non-militaristic means to influence the policies of other countries of the world, in particular Western countries, instrumentalizing internal opposition and escalating internal conflicts, appropriating them as their warfare front[8].

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[7] https://voxukraine.org/longreads/twitter-database/index.html?fbclid=IwAR0GKYCOwCeI-MX73h21_tV-V-V5JqaM5EQoE-zgBb1dSYGg9rxLMpKF_kY [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[8] https://www.moscowtimes.ru/2022/04/12/milliardi-na-propagandu-rashodi-byudzheta-na-gossmi-podskochili-vtroe-na-fone-voini-a19511 [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

Conclusion

To sum up this subsection, Russia has never changed its geopolitical trajectory after the Soviet Union's dissolution. Rather, Russian political elites could not effort to start reshaping established national myth, which provided the core of political unity in Russian civic consciousness amid devastating economic crisis, shared frustration, and sense of humiliation and lack of infrastructural power of the Federation's government. Thus, under the circumstances of limited space for maneuver in context of preservation of power Russian political elites sticked to a strategy of preservation of bipolar world and consistent animosity towards the West. Moreover, the nature of Russian political regime, describe as highly personalized authoritarian regime with predatory elites, small winning coalition, lack of checks and balances, unformed civil society, and loosened constraints from the citizens, stimulated Russian political elites to keep post-Soviet countries under their sphere of influence and economic dependence, even forcefully, if necessary, in order to keep extracting rent from the state and multiply one's wealth. These peculiarities provide incentives for Russian political elites keep ongoing confrontation for the influence in the region, interpreting interstate interaction dynamic only as zero-sum game.

Some Western analyst and scholars misleadingly conceptualized Russian hybrid warfare as a precondition and the mean of escalation for conventional hostilities. In contrast, Russian military forces perceive hybridity not as type of means for warfare, but as strategical approach to warfare. This way all the fields of Russian hybrid warfare designed to be applied in complementary and synergetic manner, which is thoroughly conceptualized in Gerasimov doctrine. Thereby, all the instruments of Russian hybrid warfare are interrelated and cannot be operationalized in atomized way. In the second section of this chapter, we will examine the instruments of Russian hybrid warfare.

ii. Chaos and terror: Instruments of Russian hybrid warfare
a) From 'blue helmets' to 'little green men': Conventional and nonconventional hostilities

Today it is quite hard to distinguish conventional and nonconventional application of physical force by Russia as traditional hostilities are permanently accompanied by terrorist acts, involvement of private paramilitary organizations or complete denial of Russian involvement in foreign armed conflicts. Russia strategically uses a combination of conventional and

nonconventional attacks not only to physically exterminate, but also to intimidate and deplete the enemy.

Another trait of the hybridity of the conflicts is Russia's usage of paramilitary organizations during conventional hostilities. For instance, involvement of PMC Wagner in Ukraine in the East of the country when the war was localized in the Eastern regions, as well as after the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Using the strategy of instrumentalization of internal conflicts, which was described in the previous subsection, Russia consistently denied the presence of Russian army in the East of Ukraine before the announcement of the so-called "Special Operation" in February 2022, insisting that the war in Ukraine is civil. However, external observers and Ukrainian civil activists have presented countless evidence of the presence of Russian army and military equipment, as well as proofs of financial support of separatists in the East of Ukraine.

As regards Russian intervention to the civil war in Abkhazia in 1992-1993, which later evolved to a Russo-Georgian war in 2008, Russia disguised usage of conventional warfare as peacekeeping missions. Using the mandate of CIS peacekeeping mission Russian military forces, or the so-called blue helmets, crossed the Georgian border. Researchers of the period affirm that Russia was supporting Abkhazians since the first day of the war via provision of military equipment, weapons and ammunition, trainings of the combatants (including trainings on Russian internal military bases), organizing the flow of "volunteers" from Russia (Cossacks and North-Caucasus ethnicities, mostly Chechen), maintaining artillery shelling of Georgian military positions and Georgian-controlled cities, establishing air supply route for Abkhazian enclave near miner town Tkvarcheli in the mountains. Later in 2008, Russia started a conventional war in Georgia, legitimizing it by the "protection" of its citizens and peacekeepers located in Southern Ossetia. Similarly, Russian troops were deployed to Moldova (1992) and Tajikistan (1993) under the flag of the peacekeeping mission. Thirty years later Russia again turned to this practice and under the mandate of CSTO Russian forces entered Kazakhstan. On January 5, the Moscow-based Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) agreed to deploy about 2,500 troops there, most of which were Russian. Despite referring to them as "peacekeeping forces," the soldiers were not supporting a peace process in Kazakhstan, but instead were used to quell domestic protests. The Russian troops withdrew before the end of the month[9].

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[9] https://theglobalobservatory.org/2022/02/putins-peacekeepers/ [Accessed on 25.06.2022].

The evidence indicates that Russia fostered separatist sentiments and supported separatist and pro-Russian groups in the Donbass region mediated through its secret services and third-party instigators prior to the outbreak of hostilities (Jensen/ Doran 2018: 19). Moscow's support has continued and strengthened during the initial hostilities, although Soviet involvement has been ad hoc and circumstantial, with limited or no use of formal armed forces. Instead, Russia used an informal network of mercenaries and volunteers who had served in other conflicts in the former Soviet Union and who adhered to pro-Russian or Russian-nationalist views. A significant part of this indirect support, specifically weapons and financing, also came through outside Russian or pro-Russian elites rather than through the Kremlin itself, most likely to preserve plausible deniability of Russian government involvement.

Separatist militias also inherently experienced fundamental institutional deficiencies that hampered their effectiveness as conventional forces. Nevertheless, the separatist units did include some highly experienced and combat-hardened fighters, primarily defectors or some volunteers from Russia or the former Soviet Union. A prominent example is the Vostok Battalion, a unit predominantly comprised of veterans of pro-Russian fighters from Chechnya, the pseudo-independent states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and other regions of the Caucasus (Borshchevskaya 2020). However, Ukrainian separatist forces in the Donbass were less efficient and less well-disciplined, presumably involved in looting and other illegal activities, which undermined their support among the local population. The absence of local support was another contributing factor, as despite the population's poor opinion of the post-revolutionary government in Kyiv, most locals rejected to participate in the conflict, which contributed to the lack of separatist troops (New Ukrainian School 2020). Altogether, cooperation and coordination among separatists was either tenuous or non-existent (Ministry of Healthcare of Ukraine 2022). This applied not only to high-level executives at the theater and strategic levels, in addition to unit commanders at the tactical level.

The escalation of the conflict by the Russian side has included not only the introduction of its own troops into the war, but also new endeavors to enhance the combat capabilities of the proxy separatist forces that remain within the region. Having saved the separatists from destruction in August 2014, Russia has reportedly begun paying salaries, allowances, and pensions to separatist political and military leaders in the Donbass during 2015 (Koppes/ Black 1990). Direct Russian involvement has also resulted in an ever more conventional structure and organization of separatist forces (Joseph 2014). The Russian military ensures provision of

supplies, training and personnel - both active-duty soldiers and volunteer - as well as intelligence, special operations and other military capabilities (Savage 2018).

Another method of intimidation and wreaking havoc is terrorist attacks accompanying conventional hostilities. During russia's involvement in war in Syria Russia conducted a series of attacks on healthcare institutions, the hospital bombing campaign (Borshchevskaya 2020). Although Syrian troops also utilized this tactic. According to the data of Physicians for Human Rights, an advocacy group that tracks attacks on medical workers in Syria, since Russian involvement in the hostilities there were 266 attacks on hospitals. And although Russia denies its involvement in these attacks, blaming the Syrian army, journalists and international observers established the facts of deliberate bombing of hospitals by the Russian military[10]. Same is true for the full-scale Russo-Ukrainian war: as of June 2022, Russians destroyed 111 schools and damaged 830[11], and 105 hospitals[12]. The most publicized case was the shelling of the Mariupol maternity hospital on May 9, 2022[13], because it was one of the first deliberately targeted attacks.

It is worth noting the downing of the Malaysian Boeing MH-17 by the Russians, which can be considered an act of international terrorism from the territories occupied by Russia (Bellingcat 2017). On June 17, 2014, a civilian commercial plane of the Malaysian Airline company, following the Amsterdam-Kuala Lumpur flight, was shot down over the Donetsk region by a Buk missile. Despite numerous testimonies about Russia's responsibility in this tragedy, Russia tried to use this attack to discredit the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including accusing them of conducting a false flag operation[14]. In addition, such attacks help Russia to destabilize the international community, thus waging a war not only with Ukraine, but also with the countries of the West, signaling that this conflict is not limited to Ukraine only. Thus, on this level we also observe inseparability and complementarity of hybrid warfare dimensions described in Gerasimov`s doctrine - in this case a combination of unconventional hostilities and information warfare.

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[10] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/reader-center/russia-syria-hospitals-investigation.html [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[11] https://nus.org.ua/news/skilky-poshkodzheno-i-zrujnovano-shkil-v-ukrayini-dani-mon/ [Accessed on 10.06.2022].

[12] https://www.facebook.com/moz.ukr/posts/389938296493726 [Accessed on 25.06.2022].

[13] https://voxukraine.org/en/lie-bombing-of-maternity-hospital-in-mariupol-staged/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[14] https://euvsdisinfo.eu/mh17-seven-years-of-lying-and-denying/ [Accessed on 25.06.2022].

Similar strategy was underlying the assassination of Putin's prominent political opponent Alexander Litvinenko in the United Kingdom. The most important detail of this case is that Litvinenko was already British citizen at a time and was killed by Russian agents on the territory of his state. The case of Litvinenko was largely portrayed in international media due to brutality of means, used by Kremlin, while Litvinenko was dying slowly and painfully. This criminal action was interpreted as a strategic move of intimidation that there are no borders for pursuing their enemies, despite their residency and citizenship (Schnaufer II 2017).

There are two examples of usage of unconventional hostilities within the course of the conventional warfare that deserve a separate emphasis - Bucha massacre[15] and Mariupol theatre bombing[16]. Both acts became one of the most resonant events in Russo-Ukrainian war because of deliberate application of violence towards non-combatant civilians. These decisions of the Russian military command show Russia's readiness to resort to atypically radical and direct actions in order to wear down the enemy and incline Ukrainian citizens to pressure the Ukrainian authorities for concessions to Russia for the sake of peace and the end of terror. Such unconventional military tactics are designed not only to exhaust the enemy, but also to force it into a dead end from a diplomatic point of view and push the rival government to conduct peace negotiations on Russian terms.

iii.   From Russia with love: Hybrid threats on the institutional level

At the institutional level, Russia continues to exert active hybrid pressure in the diplomatic process as well. For example, Russia has been able to position itself as a non-party to the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict and thus play the role of peacekeeper and mediator in the negotiations between the warring parties and act as a guarantor of peace agreements. It is not hard to guess that those guarantees ended sadly and tragically. The first such example followed just half a month after the outbreak of war. On September 2-3rd, 1992 a meeting of the heads of Russia, Georgia and Abkhazia (Boris Yeltsin, Eduard Shevardnadze and Vladislav Ardzinba) was held in Moscow. With Russian mediation, a treaty was signed which provided for a ceasefire, the exchange of prisoners and the return of refugees. Indeed, after those agreements, the intensity of the fighting and shelling subsided. Georgia, in compliance with the agreements, withdrew most of its troops and military equipment from Gagra and the surrounding areas. According to Russian sources, the withdrawal of troops subordinate to Tbilisi from the Gagra

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[15] https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/04/04/russias-bucha-facts-versus-the-evidence/ [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

[16] https://voxukraine.org/en/lie-bombing-of-maternity-hospital-in-mariupol-staged/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

region was completed on September 30th. On October 1st, 1992, armed formations of the Abkhazian side - with the help of the Russians - began to storm Gagra.

Another example of Russia's hybrid aggression at the institutional level is the Gorchakov Foundation for the Support of Public Diplomacy, one of several Russian non-governmental but government-controlled organizations whose mission is to develop and disseminate pro-Kremlin foreign policy narratives, both domestically and among foreign expert circles. The Foundation distributes grant money for projects by young people who aspire to develop in the fields of international relations, political science, economics, history or journalism, to implement projects focused on public diplomacy, which, however, must fit into specific areas of Russian foreign policy. Another component of the Foundation's activity is its own projects as summer schools or conferences devoted to discussions of international affairs in certain regions. Through scholarly and educational programs, the Foundation forms a network of young experts and specialists who gradually study the Kremlin's foreign policy narrative and are likely to become the next generation of Russian and foreign political elites. Through larger formats at the highest political level, as in the case of the regular Potsdam meetings with Russian and German parliamentarians, the Foundation supports initiatives to establish an understanding between Russians and Europeans as part of the Kremlin's policy of revising the global "security architecture".

Despite its legal status as a nongovernmental organization, the Gorchakov Foundation is subordinate to the government structures of the Russian regime. The Foundation is almost half-subsidized from the federal budget, and its governing bodies include many representatives of the Russian power vertical. In addition, a significant portion of the Foundation's funds comes from unknown individuals, probably Russian oligarchs and the heads of Russia's largest state enterprises.

The Foundation deals with projects of different levels of ambition: the lowest level involves the distribution of relatively small grants for projects of very young researchers in the field of public diplomacy. At the intermediate level, summer schools or conferences are organized on countries or regions of priority for Russian foreign policy. There are also several large-scale projects at the highest political level, such as the Potsdam meetings (suspended in March 2022) with Russian and German parliamentarians, which pursued the logic of revising the global "security architecture" with the involvement of the European side (Tereshchenko/ Koval 2022).

Other similar examples are the use of the network of Rossotrudnichestvo and Russian Dom, including world capitals.

iv. **Informational warfare**

a) **Disinformation and cyber attacks**

The active implementation of the information space during war to strengthen one's own position and weaken the enemy's morale is not a unique invention of the Russian Federation. Propaganda has been an integral part of military operations since World Wars I and II. (Messinger 1992/ Lasswell 1971/ Koppes/ Black 1990). However, with the development of the mass communication media, the information front began to play a definitive role in military conflicts to some extent (Josepf 2014). Information is used both to mobilize one' own audience and to demoralize the opponent (Benford/ Snow 2000). Information can legitimize a war in the eyes of the international community or, on the contrary, indicate to outside observers the injustice of the aggressor's actions (Rotaru 2019).

The Russian Federation started using information as a tool in warfare practically from the very beginning of its existence as a separate state in 1991. From 1991 to 2009, Russia conducted four military campaigns: two Chechen wars (1994-1996, 1999-2009), a war with Moldova over Transnistria (1992-1993) and the Abkhazian war with Georgia (1992-1999). All these wars were characterized by a significant information advantage of the aggressor state, because Russia inherited significant information capabilities from the Soviet Union. Neither Chechnya, nor Moldova and Georgia were able to form a powerful information resource to reach a wide foreign audience at that time, and therefore they had virtually no opportunity to promote their own perspective on events. Russia itself actively used its information advantage, covering these military campaigns mainly as internal conflicts in the countries next to it and muting the appeals of Georgia, Moldova and Chechnya to Western countries. This view is supported by the fact that the international academic community has not actually paid any attention to the information confrontation between these countries and Russian propaganda: to date, there are simply no scientific articles on this topic.

The second war in Georgia in 2008 was the first war of the Russian Federation in which Moscow entered with a well-constructed propaganda message that was promoted among its own citizens as well as abroad. Researchers note that Russia had several important narratives that it actively promoted during the second Georgian war:

- Russia is a powerful and strong country, clearly aware of its own interests and focused on achieving them. This narrative was built based on the opposition to the United States and the EU inherited from the Soviet Union.

- Complete discrediting of the Georgian government, both inside and outside the country. The Georgian government was portrayed by Russian propaganda as a puppet entity that served U.S. interests and ignored its own people (who, of course, were favorably disposed toward Moscow). Russia also divided the Georgian people and the Georgian government: by refusing to negotiate with the government, they claimed to respect the Georgian people.

- The division of Georgia was presented as "inevitable" and as a logical historical process (Rogoża 2008).

The turning point for the Russian Federation's use of information as a weapon was its aggression against Ukraine in 2014. At that time, Moscow began to actively use techniques previously tested in the Georgian war.

After the signing of the so-called Package Measures for Implementation of Minsk Agreements in 2015, military actions in Ukraine entered a frozen phase. However, this was not characteristic of the information front: Not only did the information confrontation between the Russian Federation and Ukraine not stop, but it gradually increased its activity, expanding and deepening its influence through various media. In addition, the political agenda was also changing. For example, in 2015 the head of the Russian Defense Ministry, Sergey Shoigu, stated that the day has come when we all recognized that word, camera, photography, the Internet and information in general have become another kind of weapon, another kind of armed force. This weapon is applicable both in a good sense and in a bad sense.

Consequently, the Russian leadership has announced that it will use information as one of the important areas of its confrontation with its opponents. To summarize, in 2015, alongside the gradual cooling of hostilities in the south and east of Ukraine, the Russian Federation began a full-fledged information war against this country.

This paper defines information warfare as "an operation conducted in order to gain an information advantage over the opponent"[17]. This information advantage, in turn, implies that, first, a certain country can protect its information space from hostile cyber-attacks or

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[17] https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/5/pdf/2005-deepportal4-information-warfare.pdf [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

disinformation, and second, it is also able to obtain and use to its own advantage information that is important to the enemy.

NATO also identifies two subspecies of information warfare that will be useful for this study:

- Cyberwarfare. Cyberwarfare is concerned mainly with technical ways of defending and attacking hostile information infrastructure. It deals more with cyber-attacks, the destruction of the opponent's information systems and various ways to ensure one's own information security. NATO also focuses on so-called "social cyberattacks": "by creating in people's minds a specific image of the world, consistent with the goals of the information warfare conducted by a given country"[18].
- Information war over the Internet. NATO emphasizes social media and notes that it plays an important role in information wars because of its simplicity, speed, cheapness and breadth of coverage. In addition, "social networking sites are also a valuable source of information on the target groups to which (dis)information activities are to be addressed"[19]. Among the methods that can be used in information warfare, NATO notes troll factories, fake news and bots.

In order to better understand what information threats may emanate from Moscow, it is worth considering what methods it has used to gain an advantage over the Ukrainian information space. It is worth noting that Russia has been actively using both cyberwarfare and social cyberattacks and has recently been actively investing in the development of information warfare on the Internet.

First, it is worth mentioning the elements of cyber warfare. Even before the war with Ukraine began in 2014, Russia was actively trying to use cyber-attacks and cyber espionage to pressure the Ukrainian authorities and society. At least some of the most large-scale attacks on Ukrainian services should be mentioned:

- **May 21-25, 2014:** DDoS attacks and subsequent hacking of the Ukrainian Central Election Commission website. As a result of this attack, false results of the May 25 presidential election in Ukraine were published on the website. It was these results that

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[18] https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/5/pdf/2005-deepportal4-information-warfare.pdf [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[19] https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/5/pdf/2005-deepportal4-information-warfare.pdf [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

were subsequently released by Russia's Channel One as the true results of the will of the Ukrainians.

- **On December 23, 2015,** the Russian program BlackEnergy3 shut down 30 substations of "Prykarpatyeoblenergo" energy company, which left more than 200,000 residents of Ivano-Frankivsk Region of Ukraine without electricity for several hours. On the same day, similar attacks were carried out against "Kyivoblenergo" and "Chernivtsioblenergo".
- **December 6, 2016**: a hacker attack on the internal networks of the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the State Treasury and the Pension Fund. The attack knocked out several computers and destroyed important databases. As a result of the attack, budget payments were delayed.
- **December 15, 2016:** DDOS-attack on "Ukrzaliznytsia" website, due to which the service did not work for about a day.
- **December 17, 2016:** cyberattack on " Severnaya" substation, which left some residents of Kiev and the Kiev region without electricity.
- **June 27, 2017**: the largest-scale hacker attack through the "Petya.A" virus program, which temporarily blocked the work of several Ukrainian state companies and private enterprises (Boryspil airport, Ukrtelecom, ChAES, Ukrzaliznytsia, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and several media outlets)[20][21].

The elements of disinformation include:

- Russia actively invests in state media (funding data) and shuts down independent media inside the country (radicalization of society inside) + spreads propaganda outside (RT, Sputnik)
- Russia uses social networks to create favorable messages for itself or to generate useful ideas for itself in society (troll factories, coordinated networks of pages, etc.)

One of the tools of the Russian information warfare is the Internet Research Agency, a company associated with the Russian oligarch and owner of the Wagner RPC, Yevgeny Prigozhin. The company was engaged in spreading disinformation through the creation of troll-factories. Interference by Internet Reserch Agency or 'bots from Olgino' has been documented in Spain, Britain, Ukraine, Great Britain and the United States.

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[20] https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/najbilshi-kiberataki-proti-ukrajini-z-2014-roku-infografika-1438924.html [Accessed on 18.06.2022].
[21] https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/29656549.html [Accessed on 25.06.2022].

Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs Alfonso Dastis confirmed information about interference in the Catalan referendum from the territory of Russia. According to him, before, during and after the referendum, the Spanish authorities recorded Internet content of a political nature that came from servers located in Russia, and the investigation will determine whether it has any connection to the Russian government. The accounts were also engaged in spreading inaccurate information, false opinion polls, and misrepresentation of facts. Also, during the period of preparation for the referendum on Britain's exit from the EU before the referendum, 20% of all tweets concerning Brexit were made by this botfarm (Gorodnichenko et al. 2021).

The CIA, FBI, and NSA joint briefing confirmed Moscow's involvement in the election campaign, as well as the methods and means of Russian propaganda in the United States. The Kremlin propaganda was disseminated by RT and Sputnik news agencies. The "trolls" controlled by RT and the "Internet Research" agency spread discrediting information about Clinton and publications in favor of Trump. The main goal of the intrusion into the election, and the actions of the "trolls" in particular, was to destabilize the internal situation in the United States and to undermine the liberal-democratic order in general, because Putin considers it a threat to his own regime[22].

After exposing this Russian bot farm, Ukrainian researchers from VOXUkraine analyzed their activity on events in Ukraine. Russian bots were almost inactive during the annexation of Crimea. A surge of messages about Ukraine was observed only on the day of the elections to the Verkhovna Rada on October 28, 2012. The milestone of 100 tweets per day was crossed the day after the "referendum" in Crimea, on March 17, 2014. Trolls started tweeting more massively at the end of May 2014. For the next six months, the number of tweets did not drop below 115 per day. The real "Twitter storm" took place on July 18, 2014, the day after the crash of MH-17 in the Donetsk region. On that day, accounts "tweeted" more than 44,000 tweets, and the next day, more than 25,000. The study shows that more than 200 accounts were managed centrally. In July 2014, there was activity of several client-services for working with Twitter: "twisofter" and "token_app". With the help of the former the most publications were made on July 18 and 19 - 19.3 and 11.2 thousand tweets (more than 40% of the total). It also turned out

[22] https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=4380489-Justice-Department-s-Internet-Research-Agency [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

that 55% of the nearly 775 thousand tweets were unique, that is, not distributed (retweeted) messages from other accounts[23].

As it was mentioned in our description of unconventional hostilities, Russia actively uses disinformation to disguise its involvement in acts of violence and discredit its enemy. For example, after the de-occupation of Kyiv region from Russian forces in early April 2022, the Ukrainian military witnessed dozens of bodies of executed Ukrainian civilians in the settlement of Bucha - as it is now called Bucha massacre. At that time, the Russian Defense Ministry launched several disinformation narratives. The first reaction was to accuse Ukraine of faking photo and video evidence of the Bucha massacre. Thus, the Russians initially claimed that the bodies in the video of the Ukrainian journalists were allegedly moving and that the videos were not dead bodies, but live actors. The Kremlin's next version was that there were still people killed in Bucha, but that the civilians were executed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As proof, they cite white bandages tied to the hands of the dead (for recognition, the Ukrainian military ties yellow and blue bandages to the body, while the Russians tie white and red). The Russians claim that the Ukrainian army began the shooting only on the basis of the white armbands, mistaking them for local Russian soldiers or collaborators. Outside observers, however, have refuted both Kremlin versions[24].

Similarly, the Russians spread disinformation about the Mariupol maternity ward bombing on March 9, 2022. In this case, the Russians did not deny their responsibility for bombing, but similarly accused Ukraine of staging a photo-evidence from the maternity ward. One of the victims of the bombing, caught in the photo, was Ukrainian makeup blogger Maryana Pidgurskaya. The Russians used this fact to their advantage, calling Maryana a made-up actress who shot for Ukrainian propaganda. According to the Russian version, there were no civilians in the maternity hospital. At the same time, they had information that the maternity hospital was used as a shelter by fighters of the Ukrainian Azov battalion. Furthermore, the Russian military kidnapped the injured girl and her child, who was born shortly after the shelling from Mariupol, and the Russian media had interviews with the girl, where she confirms the Russian version of events. The latest public information about Maryana Podgurskaya at the time of

[23] https://voxukraine.org/longreads/twitter-database/index.html?fbclid=IwAR0GKYCOwCeI-MX73h21_tV-V-V5JqaM5EQoE-zgBb1dSYGg9rxLMpKF_kY [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[24] https://www.bellingcat.com/news/2022/04/04/russias-bucha-facts-versus-the-evidence/ [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

writing is statements from her family members requesting that Maryana be released into Ukraine. The girl's fate is still unknown[25].

b) State-controlled media

Network of Russian state-controlled international media consists of Rossia Segodnia International Informational Agency (Voice of Russia, 'Ria Novosti'), MIR TV, Informational Telegrapg Agency of Russia (ITAR-TASS) and Russia Today (Ruptly, Fee Video). During Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine from January to March 2022, the Russian government spent 17.4 billion rubles (about $306 million) on media funding, 3.2 times the federal media spending for the entire previous year. The Russian government spent the most on the company that owns the international state-owned media outlet Russia Today[26].

The following characteristics of the strategy of media weaponization can be identified:

– spreading disinformation, targeted to both domestic and international audience,

– withholding the most important information by masking it in boosted information flow or simply omitting it,

– creating informational chaos with contradictory messages,

– overgeneralization, simplification and echoing,

– language transformation: spreading substantially changed concepts, either deprived of sense or infused with new meanings,

– fostering a culture of self-censorship, spreading the narratives of tabooization of certain set of topics and terms

– legitimization through cooperation with influential and recognized public figures,

– preference towards pessimistic or negative information, which is more likely to trigger and get attention from the audience (Kuleshov/ Zhutdiev 2014: 106).

A key tool in Russia's information war abroad are the two foreign-language state media, Russia Today and Sputnik. The Russian government established international state TV channels

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[25] https://war.obozrevatel.com/ukr/okupanti-vzyali-v-zaruchniki-porodillyu-z-mariupolya-rodichi-prosili-vivezti-ii-v-ukrainu.htm [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[26] https://www.moscowtimes.ru/2022/04/12/milliardi-na-propagandu-rashodi-byudzheta-na-gossmi-podskochili-vtroe-na-fone-voini-a19511 [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

to "improve Russia's image abroad" and, as Putin stated in 2013, "an alternative" and "a Russian voice in the Anglo-Saxon information space".

Russia Today is an international Russian state television channel founded in 2005. According to Putin himself, the purpose of Russia Today is to break the Anglo-Saxon media monopoly on information flows.

The channel has bureaus in several world capitals and broadcasts on cable and satellite networks in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. After the start of Russia's full-scale war with Ukraine in March 2022, the European Council banned Russia Today and Sputnik from broadcasting in the EU (Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/351 of 1 March 2022). Russia Today and Sputnik were also fully and partially restricted from broadcasting in the United States, Britain, and Australia[27]. In 2014, when Russia invaded Eastern Ukraine and annexed Crimea Russia Today in USA tv-channel Russia Today was 13 times more popular than German international news broadcaster Deutsche Welle[28]. In the same year audience in Great Britaine reached 2 million regular users. Also, RT used to outnumber Al-Jazeera English and CNN You-Tube channels with 1,3 million subscribers (now their You-Tube channel is deleted by Google's decision) (Campbell et al. 2014).

At the beginning of its establishment, Russia Today functioned as common mainstream media, acting as a tool of conventional diplomatic soft power. Turning point of Russia Today editorial policy can be traced back to the year 2009. Then in the broadcast of Russia Today anti-Western rhetoric began to intensify, with the media taking a clear opposition to then U.S. President Barack Obama. Thus, a significant portion of the channel's broadcasting time was taken up by topics of social inequality, mass unemployment, the 2008 crisis and the dissemination of conspiracy theories (Ajir/ Vaillant 2018).

One of the most striking examples of destabilization of the target-state with the help of state media was the case of the 2016 story about the rape of a 13-year-old girl who had emigrated to Germany from Russia by a group of migrants of Arab origin. Russian domestic and international media actively promoted the story in the first days after the incident, accusing the German police of inaction and attempts to "hush up" the case. The story was first broadcasted by the Russian-language English-language media Channel One and was actively rebroadcast by other English-language, German and Russian media. However, during the

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[27] https://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2022/05/13/7345992/ [Accessed on 04.07.2022].
[28] https://euvsdisinfo.eu/mh17-seven-years-of-lying-and-denying/ [Accessed on 25.06.2022].

interrogation by the police, the girl admitted that the story was fabricated and that the rape did not happen. Nevertheless, the Russian expat community and the pro-Russian population reacted to the story almost immediately by protesting Germany's openness to accepting refugees from Middle Eastern countries. This case also instrumentalized far-right political forces and movements in Germany, enhancing theory of anti-immigrant narratives. Consequently, Russia took advantage of one of the most active cleavages in German society and created an excuse to unite the pro-Russian right-wing opposition in Germany. Also, the dissemination of this disinformation functioned as a destabilizing factor, exaggerating the then acute social conflict in the very public field (Spahn 2021).

c) Culture as a tool of informational warfare

Notwithstanding the fact that news reports and other spheres of information influence are much more often seen as methods of hybrid warfare, one should not exclude the fact that entertainment media are also quite effective ways of influencing the aggressor's citizens of other countries. Cinematography and other such media can often be successful in shaping a certain perception of reality among its viewers that is useful for one side or the other of the conflict. They are particularly useful in that they specialize in covering personal stories, and, as Ghanem in the book "Communication and Democracy: Exploring the intellectual frontiers in agenda-setting theory" asserts that bringing a story to this personal level can help the reader [or other consumer of information] to identify with the events in the story and thus make the reader [or] other consumer of information] feel more about what is happening (McCombs et al. 1997).

Indeed, the use of cinematography, the creation of soap operas and music, is a powerful way for one country to influence the societies of its own country and other countries. The realization of this came a few decades after the invention of cinematography as such: in 1915, the three-hour film "The Birth of a Nation" appeared in the United States, in the development of which the U.S. Department of Defense took part. P. Redmond notes that this collaboration was most likely intended "to create and consolidate a certain version of history and to promote a political and social ideology" (Redmond 2017).

Subsequently, this use of cinema only deepened: as a means of influence, it was used even during World War I, and during World War II Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union deployed almost a separate cinematic front (Koppes/ Black 1990). A 1943 memorandum from the Office of Strategic Services (predecessor of the CIA in the United States) entitled "The motion picture as a weapon of psychological warfare" noted that the motion picture is one of the most powerful propagandas instruments the United States has. It can perform many different functions such as

informing the public of facts of which they may not be aware, explaining complex issues, dispelling doubt, uncertainties, and easing anxiety, shaping morals and thoughts. (Redmond 2017).

John Noakes offers a theoretical framework where he explains why cinema is so effective and so widely used by authorities in different countries to influence the population. According to him, cinema is usually very well attuned to the system of values that are key to potential supporters and to "the social and political context" (Noakes 2000). Cinematography and television series are the most appropriate means for simultaneously expressing a set of specific, socially understood values and demonstrating the sociopolitical context. Unlike the media, which usually cover only a short period of time and do not always act in accordance with generally accepted values, cinema demonstrates much greater possibilities through the length of the story and the means by which the audience's empathy with the characters is achieved.

Media propaganda in the field of music operates in a similar way. As E. Larkey notes that the dominant political forces in the GDR tried to implement total media control over pop music through political deterrence and surveillance. Moreover, music should have been integrated into the discursive structures of the media in order to incline young people toward music alternative to that of the West (Larkey 2016).

For example, in 2021, Russia Today Documentary, a subsidiary of the Russian state media, produced the propaganda film Ukraine: The Everlasting Present, which is positioned as a documentary about the history of Ukraine and the development of Ukrainian statehood. The film is aimed at a Western audience and broadcasts the Kremlin's pro-Russian narrative. The film stars Ukrainian pro-Russian politicians (some of whom were shown evidence of treason during the full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine)[29]: Andriy Derkach, who was accused in espionage, Renat Kuzmin, who used to be an MP of pro-Russian party Opposition platform – For life, which is now banned in Ukraine, and Ukrainian blogger and politician Anatoliy Shariy, also currently under investigation for high treason in Ukraine, former president of Ukraine Victor Yanukovych, famous for his pro-Russian policy, who during Ukrainian Revolution of Dignity (2014) escaped to the Russian Federation and also accused in high treason in Ukraine, as well as Rudi Giuliani – lawyer and political colleagues of former president of the United States Donald Trump. In this film Russian filmmakers are trying to

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[29] https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/sbu-ne-dala-rosiiskym-spetssluzhbam-zlamaty-ukrainski-telekanaly-yaki-berut-uchast-u-natsionalnomu-telemarafoni [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

portray Ukraine as failed state, operating under direct control from the American government. Moreover, Russia describes two Ukrainian revolutions, both determined to establish pro-European geopolitical course of Ukraine instead of further integration with Russia – Orange Revolution of 2004 and the Revolution of Dignity, or Euromaidan of 2014 – as anti-constitutional and illegitimate coup d'états, sponsored by Western countries.

Another example of cultural hybrid warfare of Kremlin is the film of American pro-Russian filmmaker Oliver Stone – Ukraine on Fire[30]. In Ukraine on Fire Stone also presents the Ukrainian history of statehood as a battlefield between two global powers – Russia and the West. Film echoes Russian propagandistic narratives that Western presence in the region has no other reasons but attempts to intimidate Russia and destabilize the region, manipulating Ukraine to entice it into integration with the West. According to the script of this film, during the entire Ukrainian history Ukraine had neither agency nor influence on its own development, being doomed to being just a puppet between Russia and the West. Here we can see an attempt to get Western audience acquainted with the picture of Ukrainian patriotism and nationalism as Nazism. This propagandistic myth will become the core and essence of Russian-Ukrainian war escalation while Russian frame and public proclaim Russian full-scale invasion in the territory of Ukraine as 'special operation on denazification of Ukraine'[31]. In the Ukraine on Fire Stone creates an image of Ukrainians as collaborators during the World War II, except for Eastern Ukrainians, who keep closer ties with Russia and are deeply assimilated in Russian culture. Also, there was an attempt to legitimize Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, describing this territory as 'Khrushchev's gift to Ukraine', which was taken back by the independent Russian Federation.

Attempts of cinema production were made on the pro-Russian separatist formation, the so-called Lugansk People's Republic. In 2019 Lugansk filmmaking studio 'Lugafilm' released feauture movie 'Opolchenochka', which was showed in cinemas of Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republicks and available in Russian online streaming services and social media[32]. 'Opolchenochka' tells the story of three heroic Ukrainian civilian females from Donbass, who in 2014 joined local separatist military formations. This film is determined to solidify Russian disinformation that Russian military forces do not participate in hostilities and is portraying the conflict as 'civil war' in Ukraine. Furthermore, film delegitimizes Ukrainian government,

[30] https://khpg.org/en/1480891067 [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[31] https://www.vesti.ru/article/2685335 [Accessed on 05.07.2022].
[32] https://www.svoboda.org/a/29803030.html [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

framing the hostilities in Eastern Ukraine as the 'heroic fight' of the people of Donbass of undemocratic government in Kyiv.

Cinematography is not the only tool within the cultural hybrid woofers of Russia. For example, in June 2022, in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian city of Mariupol, Russians filmed a re-make of the Ukrainian song 'Plyve kacha,' which became one of the symbols of the Revolution of Dignity. The clip for the Russian version of the song was shot by Russia Today journalist Akim Apachev. The song was written in Ukraine. Apachev's stateside question is that the Ukrainian is a Russian trophy when they are so. In the lyrics of the re vritte song Russian defenders' 'demons' and express support for the occupation. Also, Russians did they remakes of Ukrainian singers and groups like Go-A, Ocean El'zy, Skriabin and others[33].

To sum up, the main levels of Russian hybrid warfare are conventional and nonconventional hostilities, warfare on institutional level and informational warfare, which consists of disinformation and cyber warfare, state-controlled media and cultural warfare. In these sections we illustrated interconnectedness and coherence between all the levels of hybrid warfare in order to generate as much chaos as possible and establish reflexive control on one's rivals and to blur the boundaries between war and peace.

In Russian hybrid warfare conventional and nonconventional hostilities are complementary to each other. Moreover, frequently nonconventional hostilities are portrayed as conventional by Russian propaganda. Nonconventional methods include terrorist attacks, military crimes as act of violence against non-combatants, attacks on densely populated civil areas, usage of nonconventional weapons, kidnapping, assassinations, involvement of paramilitary organizations to the conventional warfare etc. Nonconventional warfare accompanies conventional violence in order to exhaust the enemy and put in unfavorable position in terms of negotiations, to raise costs of defense instead of surrender and stage the false flag operations.

On the institutional level, Russia established branches of organizations diplomatic, cultural and economic institutions around the world to establish grassroot basis for spreading propaganda, elite and activists coaptations. Also, there are cases of Russian abuse of diplomacy.

On cultural level we can see influence operations via cinematography, music, art and other cultural means. This level is twofold: for the Western audience it serves rather as part of informational warfare as another form of spreading propaganda and disinformation; for the

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[33] https://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2022/05/13/7345992/ [Accessed on 04.07.2022].

countries of Russian sphere of influence it is full-fledged realm of hostilities – Russia exercise culture appropriation, distortion and humiliation of valuable cultural elements and symbols and forcefully assimilate in Russian cultural space.

On the informational level of warfare, we outlined usage of disinformation and cyber warfare, cultural warfare and the state-controlled media. Informational warfare is aimed to preserve constant sense of insecurity, danger and instability in target-states, create informational chaos in order to distract the attention from the facts, sow the distrust to any side of the conflict, exploit and escalate existing social and political conflicts to one's advantage, discredit its opponents and protect its reputation.

III. Defensive Strategies and Mechanisms against Subversive Foreign Activity

i. Existing knowledgebase and theories

C. von Clausewitz famously said: "Nothing is more important in life than finding the right standpoint for seeing and judging events, and then adhering to it. ... Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the instrument" (Colby 2021: ii). To start with, it is essential to define what a national strategy is (and what a defensive one is in particular). Any strategy is commonly described as "a collection of ideas, preferences and methods which explain activity and give it purpose, by connecting it to a desired effect or a stated goal" (Cornish et al. 2011: 1). A defensive strategy can be defined as "a way of employing, posturing, and developing military assets, forces, and relationships to attain a set of goals that are derived from and designed to serve broader political aims" (Colby 2021: 1).

According to various national security strategies currently adopted by key liberal democracies on the West, a defensive strategy basically connotes a formula with three variables:

- Ends (what goals do we want to achieve)
- Ways (how we would achieve the designated goals)
- Means (what resources are currently available and what portion are we ready to deploy to achieve the goals).

Additionally, there is another approach to country's defining its defensive strategy as described by P. H. Nitze, an American's statesman and primary author of the famous NSC 68 (United States Objectives and Programs for National Security):

- What should our role in world affairs be?
- What objectives should our international efforts serve?
- What sort of means should we employ in seeking these objectives? (Drew 1990: 132)

The most obvious goal of any defensive strategy of any country is to maintain its territorial integrity (protecting key assets, interests, technologies, resources of various sorts), to secure it from foreign aggression in various forms (including subversive foreign activity within its borders), and to establish a stable political order and flourishing economy. A spectrum of goals can also include gaining advantage of any sort, be it political, military or economic one. Specifically, Sweden's most recent national defense strategy of 2017 describes this country approach to security as to

"safeguard the life and health of the population, as well as the functionality of society, along with the ability to maintain fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Government Offices of Sweden 2017: 6).

Threats identification is also a very important part of any defensive strategy. There must be a properly made research verified by key organizations within the country. For instance, in Sweden's most recent national defense strategy of 2017 Russia is specified as a primary threat to any values and principles cherished by the Swedish people and its government. Characteristically to our study, Russia is accused of conducting influence operations against Western countries, including Sweden, to sow discord, create uncertainty and influence political decision-making processes and choices. It can easily be assumed all these actions to fit neatly into characterization of subversive foreign activity.

On a ways & means axis, there is an approach in the current academic literature that divides it on traditional levers of power and so-called 'soft-power'. While conventional levers include diplomatic efforts, economic pressure and military might that the country in question is able to employ under its available national security strategy, newer methods operate in postindustrial, informational era to reach advantage in terms of cultural influence (Cornish et al. 2011: 1). J. Nye, a classic of soft power theory, defines it as "the ability to get others to want what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" and also as "getting others to want the outcomes that you want – co-opting people rather than coercing them" (Nye 2004: 2). Soft power can be utilized to influence target populaces around the world and instill desired change in their values, attitudes or even behaviors. It is essential, however, not to forget that both approaches are especially handful when they are employed simultaneously and within a master plan with an overarching strategic purpose.

Recent events in Ukraine have eloquently shown that Russian bare man- and firepower combined with thousands of tanks meant nothing in modern warfare when there has been zero acceptance of its actions elsewhere in the world due to implausibility of Russian worldviews. It is even more showing providing that prior to the invasion Russian intelligence has been adamant about Ukrainians greeting occupant's armed forces with flowers. It turned out that Russian army was greeted with an obvious and fierce resistance from the key targeted populace, Ukrainian citizens. These false presumptions based on vain faith in soft power (common history, language, culture and attractive economic situation compared to the one in Ukraine) have directly influenced Russia's evaluation of national security plan, which led to inadequate

and voluntaristic planning of military invasion (number of forces deployed, commandment operational tactics, lack of attention to the logistic issues etc.).

Alternatively, having a lot of 'soft power' without sturdy basis of military and economic strength does not positively add to a country's defense situation. A country's (or group of countries') massive culture, effective public diplomacy, modern worldviews, and inclusive values may well be extremely popular and attractive to the world and closest neighbors, but to support that cultural power it is essential to maintain adequate military, economic, and administrative potential. For instance, European Union has long sought to rely almost exclusively on the means of soft power in its relations with closest neighbors by implementing numerous neighborhood development and cooperation initiatives abundantly financed from the common budget. The initiatives, in turn, provided massive funding for development, democracy-oriented project that highlighted progressive European values in EU's neighbors. It also included heavy reliance on diplomatic efforts, especially when dealing with erratic Russian leadership. However, that was achieved mostly at the expense of military potential of the common Europe, which was deemed as ineffective and obsolete means. Russian invasion in Ukraine has underlined EU failure in exploiting diplomacy and its neglecting in sustaining an adequate coercive power outside NATO and U.S. potential. It is even more characteristically that Germany, which until 24th February 2022 has been a primary example of soft power reliant country, is currently dramatically increasing its military spending on EUR100 bn and claiming to regain the status of the most powerful army in Europe, as claimed by Chancellor Scholz[34].

D. Loh introduces his theory of defensive soft power that he derives from careful study of Chinese defense strategy during 2014 Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong. Contrary to our previous account of soft power based on J. Nye descriptions of mostly positive and persuasive-oriented vision of soft power that countries use to make audiences view them favorably, defensive concept of soft power concentrates on another realm. In Loh's terms, it means using soft power to instigate a "coerciveness of attraction" or, more extensively, "the reactionary activities that respond to perceived attacks and criticism on one's national image" (Loh 2017). In his analysis of China employing a defensive soft power when coping with Hong Kong's protestors, Loh postulates that Chinese central government and state media under its control employed several curious tactics such as playing a victim card, showing an image of confident and at the same time patient reaction to protests amid Western "interference" and media

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[34] https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/russland-ukraine-news-am-sonntag-elon-musk-starlink-hilft-ukraine-mit-internet-aus-a-08e79937-e5b3-43aa-8865-699d14274ed5 [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

criticisms. Such actions have proven useful and instrumental as they found some support among current and former politicians such as Singapore's Foreign Minister, then British private secretary to PM M. Thatcher and some American politicians, too. Regular Western populace has been successfully targeted as well. Such studies and approaches help us to be informed of potential tactics that can be employed and that should be taken into consideration while working on a defensive strategy.

As such, subversive foreign activity implies aggression against the State, sabotage or terrorism aimed at the people of the State, an activity aimed at changing the constitutional order of the State or a foreign or hostile intelligence operation (Western Cape Department of Agriculture 2012: 5). Another look on the matter is given by the Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential where subversive activities are "closely associated with ideological conflicts in which persons acting secretly in concert on behalf of an organized party of persons within the State, or outside the State, or acting in behalf of foreign nations, attempt to overthrow or weaken the domestic government and its political institutions" (Abaya 1984). Methods that are utilized to engage in subversive activities often include:

- ideological indoctrination;

- blackmail;

- corruption of loyalties of nationals;

- acts and disinformation calculated to destroy confidence in national leadership and exploit differences of opinion and other opportunities for furthering confusion, dissatisfaction and dissension (Abaya 1984).

ii.   Theoretical frameworks and models

Another approach to usage of modern technology in proliferating subversive foreign activity is presented by Deverell et. al. According to the researchers, using information as an offensive endeavor has been characterized as part of a general movement in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states. Another researcher, C. Walker[35] suggests the notion 'sharp power' meaning aggressive communication and propaganda to undermine citizens' trust in government institutions, culture, media, academia etc. The key means that authoritarian regimes utilize in projecting that 'sharp power' over neighboring states is strategic narratives. In defining them we follow famous explaining of Miskimmon et. al:

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[35] https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/what-is-sharp-power/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

"a means by which political actors attempt to construct a shared meaning of the past, present, and future of international politics to shape the behavior of domestic and international actors" (Miskimmon et. al 2017: 6).

Naturally, strategic narratives are created by political actors to influence key audiences in organizations or states.

Swedish researchers M. Kragh and S. Åsberg develop their theory of intentional usage of public diplomacy as a means of engaging in 'active measures', a Soviet-era term of political warfare and one of key instruments of subversive activity within unfriendly states. They postulate that since 2014 Russia has taken different approach to different European states. In April 2015 Russia established a Swedish language Sputnik news website that, having pretended to be a public diplomacy tool, pushed Russian narratives into Swedish informational space. Swedish researchers have quantitatively analyzed around 4,000 articles throughout 2015 finding blatant traces of "dissemination of forgeries, military threats, mobilization of local actors or agents, support of pro-Kremlin movements and important target groups for entering Russian influence in Sweden (including, e.g., political parties, NGOs and media) (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017: 775-776). Among the most widely used narratives that Russia pushed through it Swedish-speaking news channel were:

- Western policy failures (incompetence);
- Unreliability and hatefulness of the West;
- Negative image of countries under West's sphere of influence;
- Positive image of Russia and Russia's wins;
- Focus on West's and NATO's divisions within;
- Western or NATO's aggressiveness, militarism and propaganda;
- Crisis (economic, political, social and cultural) in the West (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017: 778).

As can be seen, Swedish language Sputnik did not actually cover Swedish-Russian relations or even try to portray life in Sweden or Russia to audiences. Rather, authors presume that Swedish department was used mainly to deliver key messages to Swedish population and main stakeholders within the country "to sow doubt about Swedish political system" and push the country further away from NATO by spreading disinformation and propaganda narratives in Swedish media climate. Authors conclude that "a consistent flow of disinformation polluting a target population's information climate, and the unpredictable long run consequences of such phenomena, suggest that active measures can be politically efficient" (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017:

807) as they aim at destroying a balance within Western society by targeting minor although strategically important groups. Ukrainian expert Y. Marchuk further supports this claim insisting that one "will not find any propaganda of the Russian way of life [on the Russian state media]: the major TV medium working in the West does not propagandize Russia, but spreads stories telling how bad the West is."

Another group of researchers studying Russian subversive activity in the Nordic region develop the idea of using media and strategic narratives to undermine unity both within the country and internationally. They introduce a couple of important terms that explain the gist of Russian informational warfare:

- *Suppression* – aims at "belittling an actor's moral standards, way of life, or religion aiming to alter the status of the state on the international arena" (Deverell et al. 2021: 17). As Neumann and Carvalho put it, Nordic countries (Sweden included) may be particularly vulnerable to the tactic due to their striving towards maintaining an image of reliable partners to more powerful Western nations; (2015: 1-2)
- *Destruction* – aims to "diminish deterrence capacity, military reputation, governability or ability to attract alliance partners" (Deverell et. al 2021: 18) by concentrating on belittling military, finding rifts among domestic population or key government social economic policies.
- *Direction* – aims at inculcating 'right' beliefs instead of suppressed and destructed ones in previous stages of subversive activities. It aligns with Jakobsen's theory of coercive diplomacy that utilizes some basic reflexes to change object's behavior in international relations (2016: 476).

By applying this theoretical framework on Russian propaganda acting in Sweden in 2014-2019, Deverell et. al have found that Sweden has been marked as "an ultraliberal state in decay" where some old and distant socialist utopian Sweden is shown as being potent and respectable while nowadays it is full of immigrants dictating their will to the general public (Deverell et.al 2021: 20). As can be seen, Sweden must defend its media space against such stigmas as highly conflicted space where every big enough social group is in constant state of fighting another (e.g., feminists against men, Social-Democrats against other political parties, Islam immigrants against Swedish Christians etc.).

One of the reasons democratic countries are most vulnerable to authoritarian regimes' malicious activity was masterfully explained by W. Jilge. The author insists that "democracies

are weak at first sight when it comes to the confrontation with asymmetric and hybrid wars. Because democracies have one very important basis of functioning – trust and truth. There are no democracies and trust without truth. Democracies are obligated to make decisions based on the facts in order to be convinced that we really should go on confrontation with former partner."[36]

It is very tempting, then, for authoritarian regimes to utilize this weakness of democracies (such as Sweden) and try to feed up opposition forces within the country or instigate protests against the legitimate government. One of the most well-known strategies for such kind of activity is the so-called "New Generation Warfare" (also commonly addressed by the wider Western media as "Gerasimov doctrine" (Gerasimov 2016)). According to Howard et al., "…its main aim is to achieve political objectives; therefore, the use of military power may not even be necessary" (Howard et al. 2019: 158). As such, New Generation Warfare that can be possibly waged against Sweden is a combination of notions presented in Table 3.1. We also included potential defensive measures available for a country like Sweden in the current literature:

Name	Asymmetric Warfare	Network-Centric Warfare	Sixth-Generation Warfare
Explanation	"Unconventional strategies and tactics adopted by a force when the military capabilities of belligerent powers are not simply unequal but are so significantly different that they cannot make the same sorts of attacks on each other"[37]	"Deriving combat power from distributed interacting entities with significantly improved access to information. It reflects and incorporates the characteristics necessary for success in the Information Age - the characteristics of agility and the ability to capitalize on opportunities revealed by developing an understanding of the battlespace that is superior to that developed by an adversary" (Alberts et al. 2000: 92)	State's military full reliance on high precision strikes on the enemy territory, information weapons, means of electronic warfare in order to destroy enemy's military potential while saving its economy and civil infrastructure[38]

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[36] http://neweurope.org.ua/en/yak-protydiyaty-pidryvnij-diyalnosti-rosiyi-v-krayinah-yevrosoyuzu/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

[37] https://www.britannica.com/topic/asymmetrical-warfare [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[38] https://jamestown.org/program/russias-entry-to-sixth-generation-warfare-the-non-contact-experiment-in-syria/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

Possible counter-measures	To counter such policy from an adversary, Sweden's leadership should conduct regular and continual self-assessments to understand their country's current vulnerabilities. Moreover, Sweden must enhance their threat apprehension to understand what current enemy asymmetric tactic is and what parts of the state it may target (Hickman et al. 2017)	Sweden is one of the most technically advanced countries with potent scientific and industrial base. Thus, it is Sweden that has an advantage in this sphere. Combined with potential joining NATO, its capabilities in the sphere will be almost unrivaled in Europe.	In a new technological environment and with consideration of Sweden's military potential, keeping distance and having defensive strategy/tactics will be better-off in the absence of mass production and human resources (Finlan 2021: 487)

iii. Current actions undertaken by Sweden

Firstly, it is important for us to assess Swedish strategic environment as of 2022. There are a couple of levels that have to be properly addressed:

- On a geostrategic level, the main security threat factor for Sweden is Russia's aggressive behavior in the Baltic & Arctic regions;

- Also on a geostrategic level, Sweden official decision to join NATO as a full-fledged member entails numerous risks of being a target of Russian and other hostile states subversive activity in the short- and midterm. Their need for secret information, to influence behavior of Swedish populace and statesmen will affect Sweden's cybersecurity for years to come;

- On a digital level that also directly entails internal affairs it is violent extremism that is spreading fundamentalist (beliefs belonging either to Islamic Republic of Iran or remaining actors of ISIS) or other terrorist groups' metanarratives in Swedish internal media and Internet spheres as well as public places such as schools. For instance, in 2021 Roger Haddad, the deputy chair of the education committee in Sweden's Parliament, publicly urged the government to shut down one of the Muslim schools in Gothenburg because of its "connection to extremism". In this regard, it should be noted that Gothenburg is particularly

vulnerable to radicalization and violent extremism as more than a third of Swedish ISIS fighters have come from this city[39]. Swedish Security Service SÄPO has been particularly busy with catching terrorists and potential terrorists who come to Sweden as refugees and often are members of terrorist "sleeper cells" that remain inactive and pretend to be ordinary citizens for a couple of years and then conduct a violent terrorist attack. One of the most recent examples of SÄPO's effective work happened in 2021 when the police arrested 2 Iranian nationals who came to Sweden as Afghani refugees in 2015 and planned to carry out attack in 2021. They were linked to Iranian security agencies particularly effective in Sweden. Such activity of terrorist groups and Sweden's constant adherence to liberal democracy allows for safe haven of extremist organizations or political adversaries that were made to leave their respective countries. As we will see further in the work, such a reputation in the world weakens Sweden's national image and further deteriorates its international reputation that affected its relations with Turkey and, consequently, created unnecessary problems in aligning with NATO.

- Other levels of danger for Sweden include industrial and military espionage operations conducted by predominantly Chinese citizens in Sweden. As such, SÄPO has publicly disclosed that China utilizes openness of Swedish educational system to blend in its agents undercover as students in order to engage in espionage in the fields of research and development, industry and cyber spheres. Russia has also been accused of trying to utilize Swedish citizens of Russian background in conducting covert activities in the country. The main reason behind such subversive activities by foreign nations in Sweden is believed to be Sweden's cutting-edge technological development that inevitably leads to a lot of unnecessary attention and power struggle. SÄPO is confident that "it is becoming increasingly common for Sweden to be used as an arena for foreign powers in order to be able to attack other countries and other countries' interests. This applies both to the use of technical platforms and the use by foreign powers of individuals who are in Sweden"[40].

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[39] https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2021/07/30/call-to-shut-down-swedish-islamic-school-over-link-to-extremism/?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2669980_ [Accessed on 02.07.2022].
[40] https://universitetslararen.se/2022/05/19/swedish-security-service-finds-increased-number-of-threats-to-swedens-higher-education-institutions/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022]

Even the most recent Swedish security studies stated that "non-participation in military alliances has historically served Sweden well" (MFA of Sweden: 19). And, as we know, Sweden has even more rarely provided other countries with military assistance fearing potential worsening relations with other involved parties. Historically, only two cases exist – the first one being Riksdag providing military assistance to Finland during Soviet Union intervention in 1939 and the second one being providing materiel and armaments to Ukraine in 2022 (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017). Except for the situation when during Second World War Sweden, which did not affiliate itself with Nazi Germany, supplied it with critical resources, mostly oil (Colby 2021: 60).

However, an enormous shift in Sweden's foreign and defensive policies have occurred right after Russian invasion in Ukraine has begun. Country that since the beginning of 18th century remained neutral and ever since stayed out of most European wars finally decided to join NATO. Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson spoke on 16 May 2022: "The government has decided to inform NATO that Sweden wants to become a member of the alliance. We are leaving one era and beginning another"[41]. Strikingly enough, most of the Swedish parties have agreed to the idea of becoming a part of NATO despite current turbulent times in political circles of the country. The only ones directly opposing the joining and insisting on continuing of non-alignment policy are The Green Party, The Left Party. Social Democrats have long remained undecided but in the end appeared positive to the cause[42]. Curiously enough,

Most Western military experts have expressed modest optimism regarding the admission: "Although Sweden and Finland would provide rather modest added capability, given the alliance's massive power advantage over Russia, they would bring an advantageous geographic position and capable, forward-deployed forces; moreover, adding them would involve bringing forward and solidifying an existing defensive line rather than creating an entirely new defensive position" (Colby 2021: 201). Still, that is an enormous geostrategic shift not only for Sweden but also for the whole European region. And as we focus largely on subversive foreign activity aimed at Sweden and its defensive capabilities, this decision to join NATO would have some major implications.

Sweden has a long history of engaging in building up its soft power capabilities. In 1945 Swedish Institute was established as a result of merging two previously functioning

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[41] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/sweden-ends-neutrality-joins-finland-in-seeking-nato-berth/articleshow/91600532.cms?from=mdr [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[42] https://behorizon.org/will-sweden-break-with-its-military-non-aligned-policy/ [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

organizations (Enlightenment Council and Cultural Council). Its focus was disseminating knowledge about Swedish way of life, values and convictions around the world (mostly in the U.S. and other European nations) by influencing press, attracting scientists and students, propagating Swedish approach to economy and policing (Belinska & Vovchuk 2017: 24-30).

Sweden's way to NATO cannot be marked as easy mostly due to the Turkey's position on the matter. Turkish President R. T. Erdogan has made numerous statements regarding Turkey's unwillingness to accept Sweden and Finland to NATO "citing their support for Kurdish organizations that Turkey considers security threats"[43]. After a couple of long discussions and negotiations all three countries have achieved a compromise signing a memorandum on 28 June 2022 just the day before the Madrid Summit where both countries would be officially accepted to NATO.

Moreover, there are additional implications that will seriously affect Sweden's defense situation after its adoption to NATO. First and foremost are obvious degrading relations with Russia that will bring more threats to the region. While all the Russian leadership's attention is currently diverted to the war in Ukraine, their response to NATO accepting new members after just half a year passed since Russia's ultimatum to NATO urging it to get back to the borders of 1997 might be considered a serious threat for Sweden. Some experts think that *"the most probable Russian course of action involves various types of influence activities ... directed at the Swedish general public and specifically against Swedish decision-makers"* (MFA of Sweden 2022: 36). Judging from previous Russian attempts to utilize subversive activities we can presume that the form of those actions would be:

- Cyberattacks on Swedish government websites, election processes, critical infrastructure;
- Influence operations carried out in Swedish media and Internet spheres;
- Sabotage operations;
- Violations of Swedish air or naval spaces, acting aggressively in Swedish neighborhood or Swedish zones of national interest.

Some experts insist that Russian military is severely weakened due to the war in Ukraine, and they already demonstrate significant levels of attrition. For instance, Colby is confident that "this contingency is manageable, though, for one reason in particular: the NATO

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[43] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/28/turkey-lifts-objections-to-finland-and-swedens-nato-bid [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

allies, as well as other states concerned by the potential for a Russian attack, such as Finland and Sweden, have the wherewithal to address it. In simplest terms, these countries are together overwhelmingly richer, larger, and stronger than Russia, and if adequately prepared, they could readily defeat a Russian assault into NATO" (Colby 2021: 412). Others focus their attention on covert operations that Russia is still able to put into life. As they put it: "Russia's capacity to carry out a conventional military attack against other countries is limited. However, Russia has the capacity to also carry out limited acts of violence against Sweden, such as sabotage by Russian special forces units or operations using long-range weapons" (MFA of Sweden 2022: 36). Consequently, to ensure its stability, Sweden must get some protection assurances from its closest allies such as the U.K and the U.S. during a transitional period when Article 5 of the NATO 1949 Treaty would not be active.

Since Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and especially Russia's more robust military and informational activity in Arctic and Baltic regions, Sweden has decided to redesign its national security strategy. Numerous accidents involving Russian military ships and planes violating Swedish waters and airspace have additionally motivated its leadership to rethink approaches to defense. The latest one puts additional accent on the necessity of identifying and neutralizing propaganda campaigns, and the Prime Minister's office has warned against Russian intervention in Swedish elections. Key Swedish actors that are confronting subversive foreign activity within the country are:

- *MSB*, Sweden's civil defense agency under the Ministry of Defense;
- *National Board of Psychological Defense*;
- *Swedish Psychological Defense Agency* under the Ministry of Justice;
- *SÄPO*, the Swedish Security Service.

Out of them, the organization that piques our scientific interest the most is the Swedish Psychological Defense Agency (SPDA). In 2018 the-then Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven announced a creation of a new government agency tasked with creating a "psychological defense". It was created in January 2022 with a staff around 45 professionals (this number is expected to grow any time soon) stating its mission as to "lead the coordination and development of Sweden's psychological defense in collaboration with public authorities and other stakeholders in society" (SPDA 2022). According to the documents available at SPDA's website, they define psychological defense as

"safeguarding our open and democratic society, the free formation of opinion, Sweden's fundamental freedoms and ultimately our independence by identifying, analyzing, preventing, and countering foreign malign

information influence activities and other disinformation directed at Sweden or at Swedish interests" (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017).

SPDA cooperate with all Swedish national and private organizations to strengthen the population's ability to detect and resist malign influence campaigns and disinformation. They also work both preventively and operationally. One of the key goals that SPDA aims to achieve is psychological resilience of the Swedish population meaning their ability to identify interference by foreign states in freedom of opinion, their values, convictions and positions.

Other organizations also provide for necessary assistance in dealing with new threats. MSB has been educating Swedish government officials to be prepared for election meddling or influence operations. SÄPO has a long history of working hard in countering influence operations targeting the Swedish elections, providing also all the necessary assistance in dealing with cyber threats meddling in democratic election process. However, this organization's activity does not entail political affairs exclusively. It is useful in repelling hacker attacks on Swedish infrastructure as well[44].

In military terms, Sweden has also been bolstering its defenses in strategic regions, namely Arctic and Baltic regions. For instance, prior to Russian invasion in Ukraine in February, Sweden was seriously warned that exactly they would be Russian military machine's target. Magnus Hjort, deputy director of aforementioned SPDA, has told that "they cannot rule out that Sweden would not be attacked"[45]. It is exactly because of such apprehension of the situation that Sweden seriously strengthened its military presence on the strategically important island of Gotland on the Baltic Sea. However, it is much more worrying for the Swedish leadership that election and the way people decide their future would be the main target of the aggressor who would like to "make sure that Sweden takes the 'right measures' in the way a foreign power sees it"[46].

Moreover, since 2014 Sweden has also taken an initiative in terms of building up alliances in strategic regions. For instance, Sweden is an active member of Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO), created in 2009 and which consists of:

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[44] https://euromaidanpress.com/2018/09/04/what-the-uk-sweden-baltics-did-to-be-full-scale-defenders-against-kremlin-subversion/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

[45] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/06/sweden-returns-to-cold-war-tactics-to-battle-fake-news [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[46] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/06/sweden-returns-to-cold-war-tactics-to-battle-fake-news [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

- Denmark;

- Finland;

- Iceland;

- Norway;

- Sweden.

Although some of these countries are active members of NATO, creators of NORDEFCO have explicitly stated that this is not a military alliance but rather as a "mutually reinforcing cooperation in capability development" (MFA of Sweden 2022: 23) that can be achieved without creating additional security threats to other players in the region (first and foremost, Russia). As such, member parties achieve it by "extensive training activities, exchange of air surveillance information, easier access to each other's territories, a crisis consultation mechanism and secure communication systems" (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017).

Sweden has also several close bilateral cooperation in defense sector that can be summarized using Table 3.2:

Table 3.2

Sweden Defense Cooperation with Foreign Nations

No.	Country	Cooperation details
1.	The United States of America	Sweden and the U.S. have signed a bilateral Statement of Intent in 2016 Sweden and the U.S. have a close cooperation in cyber domain where both countries share experience in repelling hacker attacks on critical infrastructure Moreover, Sweden and the U.S. regularly conduct joint military exercises, primarily between air forces and naval forces
2.	The United Kingdom	On 11 May 2022 Sweden and the U.K. have signed a political declaration of solidarity that include at least 44 joint activities planned for the period 2022-2023. They include: - policy dialogue and cooperation in areas such as exercise activities; - international operations; - research and development; - bilateral defense industry cooperation; - doctrine development

3.	France	Sweden and France cooperate closely in the Sahel, in the Task Force Takuba in Mali and the Coalition for the Sahel
		Common implementation of the Strategic Compass
		Sweden takes part in European Intervention Initiative that aims at developing a common strategic culture and thereby strengthen Europe's capability to take actions in crisis management operations
4.	Finland	Except for joint participation in NORDEFCO, Sweden and Finland also share close connections on bilateral level.
		Since the invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland conducted joint military exercises on Gotland in the Baltic Sea, in Stockholm's southern archipelago and in the central Baltic Sea, including the Gulf of Finland
5.	The European Union	It is stated that since Russian full-scale invasion in Ukraine, EU's role in coordinating the efforts and cooperation of the partners has been consolidated further. Thus, it is predicted that "The EU will probably become a more prominent geopolitical actor and Sweden has reason to welcome this development" (MFA of Sweden 2022: 25)
6.	NATO	Since the Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, Sweden has activated Modality for Strengthened Interaction with NATO that allowed it to make a route to NATO standards and procedures quicker.
		Cooperation with NATO is key to developing the capabilities of the Swedish Armed Forces, both for national defense and for operations in the strategic regions and beyond.

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. 2022. Ds 2022: 8. 22-26

As can be inferred from the Table 3.2, Sweden has quite a cooperation with its key strategic partners both in the region and globally. Such connections may well enable long term strategic security assistance for Sweden even in case its failure to become a full-fledged NATO member.

According to Sweden's most recent national defense strategy of 2017, there are 6 key national interests stated by the Swedish government:

1. Ensuring the safety, security and health of the Swedish people (physical security);
2. Ensuring supplies and the protection of essential services (includes trade security, economic freedoms as well as stability of banking system and IT sector);
3. Maintaining the fundamental values of democracy, the rule of law, human freedoms and human rights (this is key targets of any foreign nation's subversive activity, and we see Sweden adequately understanding these threats);

4. Defending, under all circumstances, Sweden's freedom, security and right to self-determination;

5. Maintaining and strengthening cooperation, solidarity and integration within the EU;

6. Promoting a rules-based multilateral world order;

7. Information and cyber-security, digital stability.

Digital and cybersecurity matters are also top priority in Sweden. This claim is supported by the fact that Sweden has its own national cybersecurity strategy. The document entails that "structured and risk-based cyber security efforts will enable us to ensure society's continued digital transformation, while also asserting Sweden's security and national interests, such as human rights and freedoms and the functioning of society" (Johannsson 2016: 3). To achieve this, the strategy proposes to follow a priority list:

- to secure a systematic and comprehensive approach in cyber security efforts;
- to enhance network, product and system security;
- to enhance capability to prevent, detect and manage cyberattacks and other IT incidents
- to increase the possibility of preventing and combating cybercrime;
- to proliferate knowledge and promote expertise;
- to enhance international cooperation (Johannsson 2016: 7).

Conclusion to III

To sum it up, in this section we covered three important topics that show the complexity of modern defense against adversaries' subversive operations.

Firstly, we elaborated on current scientific literature on the topic. We defined what is both a defensive strategy and subversive activities, named important attributes of these notions and provided some examples from Sweden's national security strategy and examples of Russian subversive activities disassembled by researchers on key tactics and strategies. We also stress that in modern technological world more and more countries are spending an increasing number of resources on espionage, propaganda, terrorist attacks etc. They reckon such operations as cost-effective and always hardly traced by the object's defense forces while bearing some highly promising results for their policies, be it behavior influence, policy change or industrial espionage.

Secondly, a lot of our research attention has been directed towards trying to model how a modern subversive operation looks like. As a primary example, we took Russian information subversion in Sweden since 2014 that aimed at playing at nation's internal rifts (as any

democracy is susceptible to authoritarian regimes' narratives) in order to draw the country away from the NATO. We also tried to portray Russia's modern approach to subversive activities on the example of the New Generation Warfare and found some ways how a democracy such as Sweden can handle this strategy.

Lastly, we took a closer look at Sweden defense strategy. We began by identifying a strategic environment around Sweden and also named some of the most serious threats to its security, namely Russian aggressive behavior in the Arctic and in the Baltic regions as well as terrorism proliferation in education system and Chinese espionage. Currently, there are at least 4 government institutions that are coping with repelling subversive attacks on Sweden. The most prominent ones that we focused our attention on were SÄPO (Sweden security service) and Swedish Psychological Defense Agency. While the first one has quite a wide sphere of responsibility, the latter focuses on educating citizens on how to deal with propaganda and other examples of psychological warfare. We also concentrated on how Sweden enables protection in the critical sphere of cybersecurity directing a lot of attention to working with private companies and industries to ensure their expertise in dealing with the matter. Sweden is also highly aware of adversaries trying to intervene in its democratic processes, so a lot of resources are utilized to secure free-will expression of its people.

IV. Opportunities and challenges for Sweden in the Arctic region

i. Sweden's role in the Arctic

In terms of access to the Arctic Ocean, Sweden has historically been a landlocked country and diverted most of its attention to the Baltic Sea and Finland. Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region was first published in 2011 (marking its two-year rotating chairmanship in the Arctic Council, originated in 1996) and was renewed in 2020. It clearly defines Sweden's position as an Arctic country:

> *"A Swedish core interest is to try to contribute to a peaceful, stable and sustainable development of the region through well-functioning international cooperation with Arctic and non-Arctic actors in the region. ... At the same time, it is in Sweden's interest to safeguard the special role and position of the Arctic states in promoting peaceful, stable and sustainable development in the Arctic region"* (MFA of Sweden 2020: 5).

As such, Sweden has a total of six priorities (political directions) where the country wishes to direct the most of its further work:

1. international collaboration;

2. security and stability;

3. climate and the environment;

4. polar research and environmental monitoring;

5. sustainable economic development and business interests;

6. securing good living conditions (MFA of Sweden 2020: 6).

However, comparing the two strategies, we can see that they are virtually similar in most matters such as environment, cultural policy, intergovernmental cooperation except for one important factor – security matters. In 2011 Europe and the Arctic were far less conflict-torn than in 2020 (even more so it is true for 2022) thus implying more wariness from Swedish government to the defense strategies. Some experts in the EU have already deemed Sweden's approach to exerting influence in the Arctic region as "a staunch norm entrepreneur" (Björkdahl 2008: 135) that despite not having enough military, economic or diplomatic power utilized its normative credentials "to influence the EU's climate change and Arctic strategies by contributing to the articulation and implementation of detailed measures aimed at reducing global emissions of greenhouse gases"[47].

Although the Swedish government has continuously accepted the fact that "the Arctic region has rich natural resources such as forest, fish, wild animals, energy and minerals that play a key role in the economic development of the Arctic countries" (MFA of Sweden 2011:

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[47] https://eeradicalization.com/swedish-counter-radicalization-strategies-an-overview/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

31), its political stance on the developmental projects and initiatives often lacks motivation and leadership. For instance, Sweden has received criticism from environmentalists and indigenous people advocators for prioritizing its mining efforts over grazing lands in the far north of the country. This territory of the Sweden is almost inhabitable and is used primarily by the Sami (also known as the Sápmi), an indigenous population (the only one left in Sweden) that is estimated to be around 20,000 people living in Sweden. The landscape and environment there are applicable either for highly subsidized by the government mining industry or reindeer husbandry economic potential of which is currently significantly underdeveloped. The problem of development of these hardly reachable and bewildered areas has been long raised in Sweden. Although it is a common knowledge among experts that "the Arctic's harsh conditions and its sheer vastness require major investments in infrastructure, production sites, and workforce in order to be able to develop business opportunities" (Gosnell et al. 2020), the matter has had for some time a strange absence of urgency in Sweden.

Swedish scientists and policy experts are currently raising alarms pointing out that mining industry has had an extreme impact on Sami reindeer herding, including its economy, culture and environment. In a wonderful and novel study on two mines polluting the life of communities of reindeer herders, Larsen et al. list some of environmental, economic and social-cultural impacts of Sweden's poorly regulated mining industry in north-western regions populated by indigenous Sami people:

Table 4.1

Effects of the mining industry in the Arctic regions of Sweden

Environmental effects	Economic effects	Social and cultural
Direct and indirect land dispossession; Degradation of pastures; Stress to the cattle, change of its behavioral patterns;	Loss of animals; Increased workload on the Sami people to mitigate the consequences of environmental effects; Increased costs for equipment and material;	Psycho-social stress, anxiety, frustration and fatigue, some accounts of depression; Constrained opportunities for Sámi youth to continue traditional herding livelihoods; Undermining and loss of traditional Sámi knowledge of the land.

Source: Larsen, Rasmus Kløcker et al. (2022), The impacts of mining on Sámi lands: A knowledge synthesis from three reindeer herding districts. Working paper - The Extractive Industries and Society, Vol. 9, 101051.

As can be seen, mining in the far north despite brining a lot to Swedish economy has far-reaching consequences for local population as well as Arctic unique environment. However,

it seems the Swedish government is not yet fully ready to make important sacrifices for the sake of preserving its indigenous people and nature. Moreover, as one striking case of an ore mining enterprise in the far north, an ill-fated Northland Resources company managed to cause both severe environmental harm as well as did not show any promise in economic profits for Swedish industrial potential. Initially, the company had a lot of prospects from the local populace (they hoped for high wages and increased tax flow that would bolster their vicinity of *Pajala*, close to the Finnish border) as well as from Swedish industrialists who hoped for quality iron ore to be extracted soon. However, after the world's prices on iron ore fell down catastrophically, the company went bankrupt and has already been periodically accused of improper of illegal business practices (by its shareholders) as well as major environmental harm (from environmental activists and local government). In the end, the party that lost the most in this story is local populace that not only lost any prospects for the future, but also had to face and cope with the effects of land dispossession and proliferation of dangerous illnesses. As such, classic industrial-era exploitation of the land proves to be extremely dangerous and economically precarious. In the Arctic, some severe damage to the ecosystem is added to this unpromising formula.

On the other hand, Sweden is a pioneer in building a sustainable development plants and factories in the Arctic. For instance, there is an initiative to build a greenfield steel plant in Boden (far north of Sweden) by 2024. It is a project by a private Swedish company *H2 Green Steel* founded in 2020 by another Swedish large manufacturer of green solutions for automobiles (lithium-ion batteries), *Northvolt*. This plant, according to the H2GS, will be a state-of-the-art technological achievement with:

"a fully integrated production process, using end-to-end digitalization, electricity from fossil-free sources and green hydrogen instead of coal, we are committed to set state-of-the-art technologies to work and bring emissions down."[48]

The company realized the urgent need to decarbonize the production of steel in Europe and found investors with environmental conscience, such as S*cania* truck manufacturer and others, involving *SMS group, BILSTEIN GROUP, EIT InnoEnergy, Altor Fund V, and IMAS Foundation*. As a result, Swedish Boden will prosper from innovative and sustainable industry bringing in vast amounts of tax money to the local budget annually. Proliferation of such development projects in other Arctic nations would at least partially account for the protection of the environment and turning more investments into the region.

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[48] https://fuelcellsworks.com/news/h2-green-steel-to-build-large-scale-fossil-free-steel-plant-in-northern-sweden/ [Accessed on 01,07.2022].

Sweden is a member of the Sami Council that is the Sami's common non-governmental, cultural and political institution and is one of the oldest indigenous peoples' organizations in the world. It unites countries with the Sami ethnic minorities – Norway, Sweden, Russia and Finland. This council participates in international processes on matters concerning indigenous peoples of the world as well as matters of the Arctic, pollution and environment. (MFA of Sweden 2020: 62) Additionally, in 2020 in the Sweden's Supreme Court the Sami community won against the state. In a 92-page-long ruling later called 'a historic Girjas case' the court has put to an end a 10-year dispute between one of the Sami reindeer herding community and the state over the former exclusive rights to manage hunting and fishing in their historical lands in northwestern Sweden. The state obviously claimed that according to all the national laws (and specifically the Reindeer Husbandry Act) it is the owner of all the land in Sweden and thus solely holds the right to fish and hunt. The Court, however, ruled in Sami's favor. It anchored its judgment in Sami customary law and immemorial use. According to Ravna,

"the Court's verdict is also based on obligations under international law set forth, most importantly, in the ILO Convention No. 169 on indigenous peoples and tribal peoples in independent countries (ILO 169)" (Ravna 2020: 19-21).

Still, Sweden has a long way to go until the rights and freedoms of its only indigenous population meets the highest world standards. As Khorrami astutely puts it:

"To realize its full potential, Stockholm must be prepared to take a more hardline stance on the mining industry as its activities and the accompanying infrastructural projects negatively impact access to grazing lands."[49]

One of the proposed ways of economic development of the north of Sweden is through sustainable development that would incorporate both Sami's unique culture and talent in terms of reindeer husbandry and modern economy's approaches to food production. Recent economic studies by OECD have shown that the consumer demand for sustainably produced food accounts for EUR 1.3 billion combined both in Sweden and Finland that is a significant number and can actually revitalize the economy in the Sami-populated regions (OECD 2019). Sweden must take necessary actions to broaden its strategic scope and start running enlightenment campaigns among its own population to raise public awareness about the region and its potential. After some time, the public will develop emotional bonds with the region starting to see it "as an indispensable part of the country and not just a frozen landmass."[50] It will positively

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[49] https://eeradicalization.com/swedish-counter-radicalization-strategies-an-overview/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[50] https://eeradicalization.com/swedish-counter-radicalization-strategies-an-overview/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

impact a culture of entrepreneurship in the Arctic that is currently not so proliferated although the creation of 'the smart society' is massively supported in Sweden under the development strategy "Make in Sweden 2030".[51]

Until not so long ago, Sweden has had a reputation among other European nations of an 'awkward partner' meaning that Sweden initially was reluctant to join the EU. It rather desired to preserve its strategic and decision-making autonomy, and a sense of, albeit narrowing, uniqueness. (Khorrami 2020: 2) Prior to 2022, its strategy in the region has been termed as 'quid pro quo' or 'delicate balancing' (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017). For instance, while Sweden accepted joining the EU, it stayed out of the Monetary Union. Its fight with COVID did not resemble any strategy adopted by other European nations with strict quarantines. In the Arctic specifically, Sweden joined a lot of international initiatives and organizations, such as the Arctic Council or the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)/Barents Regional Council (BRC), but inevitably rejected the EU-led Northern Dimension initiative (it is also connected to Finland's leadership with which Sweden until recently had an unannounced silent competition – we will elaborate more on this matter later in the next subsection), which facilitate a strong and active role for Brussels in defense and security (Gebhard 2013: 367).

In a way, we have recently seen the consequences of a strategy summarized by Wedin as "non-aligned in peacetime with a view to stay neutral in wartime" (Wedin 2007: 38). In a highly tightly globalized world with ascension of new regional powers such strategy seems a bit old-fashioned. To further strengthen its strategic position in the Arctic, joining the NATO seems the most strategically far-sighted decision to be made by Sweden. However, the route to the NATO has not been easy for both Sweden and Finland promising new conflicts and internal political unrest. In an urge to join NATO as soon as possible in the face of ever-more dangerous Russian behavior and rhetoric in 2022, Sweden had to overcome Turkish opposition to its joining. Turkish authoritarian regime in its desire to take back key opposition leaders from Kurdistan Working Party and their families whom Sweden gave political asylum (some were even granted Sweden's passports) utilized its highly important status for the NATO leadership to strengthen its own position in negotiations. The people Turkey wants to be extradited are those accused of having links to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and its alleged Syrian offshoots - People's Protection Units (YPG) and its political arm, Democratic Union Party (PYD) that are currently active in Rojava (north of Syria), a region particularly sensitive for Turkey, and a region provided with some considerable political and economic support by

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[51] https://produktion2030.se/wp-content/uploads/prod2030_ny_Agenda_210x230_20181.pdf [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

Sweden. They want them to an extent that when the deal between Turkey, from one side, and Sweden and Finland, from another, finally took place the day before strategically important NATO's Madrid Summit on 06.30.2022 Turkish President R. T. Erdogan was eager to announce that more than 70 Kurdish opposition leaders and their families (73, to be precise) were promised to be extradited to Turkey by the Swedish government despite previously agreed number being only 33. Erdogan called it a diplomatic victory for his country claiming that he forced Scandinavian countries to finally surrender 'terrorists'. Subsequently this claim was supported by unsealed text from the signed memorandum where Sweden and Finland agreed to address Ankara's "pending deportation or extradition requests of terror suspects expeditiously."[52]

On the other way, on the same day Erdogan gave his speech Sweden's foreign minister Ann Linde in her discussion with the Swedish media insisted that Sweden will not extradite anyone until a solid proof of their engagement in terrorist activities is presented. It is understandable for Sweden's is one of the most tightly populated by the Kurds country with their minority estimated at around 100,000 people with many possessing dual citizenship (Swedish and Turkish). Unlike Turkey, Sweden does not consider members of YPG and PYD terrorist organizations while at the same time it has considered the PKK a terrorist organization for some decades. However, Kurds and their political wings themselves periodically confess that Sweden has provided them with tens of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid. Characteristically enough, Russian propaganda try to play on the matter interviewing a lot of Kurdish and Syrian leaders within Sweden's borders (via Arabic Russia Today). In the interviews all of them declare that they have "very friendly" relations with Swedish government and its civil society[53]. All in all, the situation that Sweden found itself in is tricky both in international front and on internal domain for there should be found a balance where Turkey lifts its veto from Sweden joining NATO and local Kurdish residents remain satisfied with Sweden's stance on human rights and democratic values.

There are other dimensions in Sweden's pledge to join NATO. For instance, it can also possibly influence its arms trade industry. Despite holding a neutral and pacifist image in the world's cognition, Sweden is one of the largest arms exporters in the world. According to Burja, from 2009 to 2019, Sweden was the world's ninth largest arms exporter in U.S. dollars with a cumulative value of $14.3 billion. In the same time period, it ranked eighth in arms as a

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[52] https://www.rudaw.net/english/world/300620221 [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[53] https://arabic.rt.com/prg/قصارى_القول/1365638-كيف-سيواجه-أكراد-سوريا-هجوما-تركيا-محتملا/ [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

percentage of total exports[54]. Swedish top manufacturers of military weaponry are industry leading factories like *Saab*, *Nammo, BAE Systems AB* etc. With joining the NATO, Sweden's national image in the world would worsen. As well as its policy space would be significantly reduced. That could impede Sweden's pre-accession ability to potentially sell arms to anyone. Moreover, some companies that

On the other hand, Swedish military-industrial and telecom companies are positive about what a new NATO era promises them. In April 2022 key Swedish and Finnish companies' executives met with their countries' leadership (including both military commanders and Finnish president S. Niinistö) hoping to hear the latter's vision of future development as well as some dividends for them after joining the Alliance. After Russian aggression against Ukraine, these Nordic countries have convinced themselves that the nuclear superpower they tried to get in touch with and find some common points of contact (not in the least in economic cooperation in the Arctic region) are null and void. At Milne's astute observation, "both countries have seen the unfortunate fate of non-NATO Ukraine and are drawing their own conclusions."[55] Unpredictable and revanchist behavior of Russia further strengthened the stance of those businesses in Sweden and Finland that advocated for the rightful place of them in the NATO. Moreover, it is ever-more popular thought among Swedish political circles that acquiring NATO status would bring in more investments: "The security of a country, economically, socially and militarily, decides the investment climate. NATO membership would strengthen that" (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017). Telecommunication companies, such as Swedish Ericsson and Finnish Nokia, are also depending on NATO contributing to the improvement of the security situation in Europe because they are feeling some tight pressure from Chinese Huawei. All in all, it seems that Swedish and Finnish companies have successfully convinced their political circles in urgent need to get to the West as close as they could.

ii. Risk for economic conflicts and regional tensions

In 2015 the-then President of Iceland O. R. Grimsson famously stated that the Arctic "is like discovering a new Africa."[56] Indeed, the region is vastly underdeveloped, populated by indigenous peoples that cannot propose and impose their own strategic vision of the region. And even if some nations would love to make Arctic an exception of all the other hot spots on the world map, "you cannot put a do-not-disturb sign upon the Arctic" as famously spoken by

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[54] https://brief.bismarckanalysis.com/p/the-swedish-arms-industry#footnote-2 [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[55] https://www.ft.com/content/7aff6128-af80-4e44-93a7-0080493292d7 [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

[56] https://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic/2015/11/16/blog-arctic-like-discovering-a-new-africa-iceland/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

T. Soini, former minister of foreign affairs of Finland[57]. With the support of new modern technologies, a lot of natural resources can be exploited and extracted – often at the expense of the local population but almost always not to their profit. Even more so, numerous nations are currently in a decisive hurry of conquering the region following their predecessors' African narratives of a 'great game', 'scramble' or 'race for resources' (Kragh/ Åsberg 2017). And although international cooperation in the Arctic has been burgeoning with multibillion investments in energy sector and some long-awaited political decisions made there has always been a lot of unresolved issues. All of them were further exacerbated by Russian aggression in Ukraine. Economic exploitation of the Arctic, the need for environmental protection and radical militarization of the Arctic Ocean – these are the most critical issues to be dealt with if the humanity wishes for the Arctic to have a promising and bright future.

The Arctic Council is an international and intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation in the Arctic.[58] It was originated in 1996 and has 8 member states – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, the U. S., Sweden, Norway and the Russian Federation – as well as numerous indigenous people associations such as aforementioned Sami Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Aleut International Association, Gwich'in Council International and Inuit Circumpolar Council. Since February 2022 its activities have been suspended on unspecified period due to Russian aggression in Ukraine and following decision of 7 out of 8 member states to 'pause' Russian involvement in the organization. This decision has received a lot of criticism both from neutral observers/experts of the Arctic region and from predominantly Washington's political enemies. If the position and premises of the latter is of little interest for our study, arguments behind the fierce criticism of Russia's expulsion from the Arctic Council from the side of scientists and experts need to be addressed as they indicate important point of view on the matter. Their main argument voiced by Dr. E. Buchanan in the article published by the Arctic Circle, the largest non-profit and non-partisan democratic platform and network of international dialogue on the Arctic region created by Iceland's fifth president O. R. Grimsson, points to the fact that it is strategically unwise to break all ties with the country that owns more than a half of the Arctic. The author believes that by doing so the Arctic States have given way to other, non-Arctic states eager to get their share in the region. She means predominantly BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India,

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[57] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-sustainability-in-troubled-times [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[58] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-council-steps-into-unchartered-territory [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

China, South Africa), ASEAN (countries of Southeast Asia) as well as some Arab states that also want to engage in development and energy projects in the region. As she warns:

This decision to pause engagement with Russia via the Arctic Council has the potential to backfire and threaten Arctic-rim state strategic interests for the long-term. ... Being on the right side of history is important, however, it is uncertain the extent to which sacrificing dialogue with Russia in the Arctic is actually in the collective regional strategic interest.[59]

As we will further see in this subsection, the region is already heavily militarizing on the go. Apart from Russia's obvious war efforts in the region, on the other side of the ring there is the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR). It comprises of 11 participating nations (Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States) and was created in 2010 by Norway and the U.S. to "promote regional understanding and enhance multilateral security cooperation with the Arctic region."[60] It has been mostly inactive for the past 10 years but since the Russian aggression in February ASFR has already had a joint meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska as all the members agree on "the strategic importance of the Arctic and the asymmetric advantage gained through strong alliances and partnerships built on the foundation of shared values, experience and vision."[61]

At least some of Arctic's indigenous people associations (all united in the Arctic Council) have reached a new level of diplomatic agency. Prior to the war in Ukraine, one of the associations, Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) directly applied to all world nations not to forget commitments they have made to Indigenous Peoples and not to allow for a possible military conflict to spread to Ukrainian indigenous people's (Crimean Tatars') territory. (Arctic Athabaskan Council 2022) As Zellen constates:

"AAC's effort to directly reach out – not only to the leaders of the Arctic states but the global community of nations – to protect the rights of indigenous peoples from the ravages of war reflects the powerful diplomatic innovation of the Arctic Council, the inclusive diversity inherent in the Council structure, and the novelty of its effort to align the formal sovereign powers of the Council's state actors with the informal influence of its indigenous actors in the formation of Arctic policies".[62]

The Northeast passage (NEP) is currently seen as the most attractive sea route for trade between Northern Europe and Northeast Asia (Japan, Korea and China). While having some obvious constraints such as limits on tons of deadweight (DWT) for tankers that can be

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[59] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-council-steps-into-unchartered-territory [Accessed on 30.06.2022].
[60] https://thewatch-magazine.com/asfr/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022].
[61] https://www.dvidshub.net/image/7179563/norad-and-usnorthcom-commander-speaks-arctic-security-forces-roundtable [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[62] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/the-importance-of-indigenous-participation-and-the-ottawa-declaration [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

operatable in harsh conditions of the Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, East Siberian Sea and Chukchi Sea including also the Russian maintained Northern Sea Route (NSR), climate change consequences are surprisingly bolstering Northern trade routes. For example, in 2017 the maximum ice coverage hit the lowest level ever on record that allows experts to be safe to presume that by 2035 the Arctic Ocean would be largely free of ice during summers. Moreover, last year's terrible man-made catastrophe in Suez Canal when an enormous cargo ship blockaded the route for intolerably long period of time and world trade between Asia and Europe virtually stopped gave further food for thought for policy experts in various countries to reconsider the NEP. And although the NEP is currently used primarily for oil and gas shipments, the route has some promising future. In that case, all nations interested in gaining the most wins out of the situation, namely Russia and the U.S., are competing for the control over resources, trade routes, security matters etc[63].

Sweden is also extremely interested in development of the NEP for various reasons. Historically, it was Sweden that first financed and fully backed the initiative of the Finland-Swedish explorer A. E. Nordenskiöld to conduct a complete passage from west to east. The main reason is for Sweden to maintain healthy and mutually reinforcing economic relations with its key trading partner – China. Nearly all Sweden's most prominent private companies have their biggest share of success in China. Beijing has also shown a keen interest in the region mainly because of economic reasons – the route from Shanghai to Northern and Western Europe will now consume approximately 10 to 15 days of travel (21,000 km for the Suez Canal against 13,000 km for the NEP). Herman also points to the fact that China has numerously tried to buy military objects in the region, mainly old military bases and airfields 'for sale' in Greenland and Finland – all without success[64].

A recent report by the Reclaim Finance, an NGO focused on linking finance and environmental justice, has shown that there are 20 'expansionists' in the oil and gas industry in the Arctic that account for 99,3% of the new oil and gas fields under development. They claim that this sector is extremely attractive for each and every one energy company in the world as, following their estimation, "oil and gas production is set to increase by 20%" (Ileri et al. 2021: 6) Two Russian biggest energy companies, Gazprom and Novatek, have an enormous bid in the Arctic energy sector. For instance, 74% of Gazprom's reserves are based in the Arctic

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[63] https://www.wsj.com/articles/sweden-and-finland-will-help-nato-confront-russia-in-the-arctic-ice-submarine-nuclear-11654786841 [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[64] https://www.wsj.com/articles/sweden-and-finland-will-help-nato-confront-russia-in-the-arctic-ice-submarine-nuclear-11654786841 [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

(Kragh/ Åsberg 2017:8). Until recently Russia has had massive plans on extracting shale gas from the Arctic. However, all the joint projects with Norway's (Equinor), Anglo-Dutch (Shell) and French (TotalEnergies) companies have been aborted due to the Kremlin's war efforts in Ukraine.

Moreover, after the Ukrainian invasion Russia found itself in the tricky situation of complete technological blockade that endanger the very foundation of its economy. Rents from oil and gas industry built and, more importantly, maintained almost exclusively on Western technologies and parts have already started falling down. Undoubtedly the biggest infrastructure and energy megaproject in the Arctic, $21,3bn 'Arctic LNG-2' led by Russian corporation Novatek (owns 60% of the project) and co-financed by French TotalEnergies (10%), Chinese CNPC and CNOOC Ltd. (10% each) as well as Japanese consortium Mitsui & Co., Ltd. and JOGMEC (10%) is currently under danger of cancellation due to the Western sanctions. The project aimed at delivering gas to European and Asian markets via three terminals and existing pipelines with a general output of 20mn ton per year. European and American building and energy companies, such as giant TotalEnergies and Baker Hughes, have aborted all contracts and even prevented China from helping the project (by supplying its own technology) by refusing to delivering any hardware from China to Russia. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's national energy company Saudi Aramco is ready to get in the project not as a new shareholder but rather to replace French Total[65]. As a result, in order to at least try to mitigate the technological gap a new wave of industrial espionage throughout the Arctic nations may be started.

In fact, Russia has already given an official start to its industrial espionage in Europe: On 07.01.2022 during a meeting with Russian Foreign Intelligence Service's (SVR) members President V. Putin declared that one of the key goals of the SVR is "acquiring information that would contribute to industrial development of the country in the environment of the sanctions imposed on Russia"[66]. With China that is already highly active in this regard, two powerful nations operating in the region would potentially bring political escalation and diplomatic scandals, such as the one currently in place in Bulgaria that is sending away 70 Russian diplomats accusing them of espionage.

Additionally, Russian aggressive behavior on the other fronts would automatically provoke similar response from the Arctic states that altogether instigates further militarization

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[65] https://neftegaz.ru/news/Acquisitions/741085-po-sobstvennym-sledam-saudi-aramco-mozhet-stat-uchastnikom-proekta-arktik-spg-2/ [Accessed on 02.07.2022].

[66] https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2022/06/30/18040814.shtml [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

in the Arctic region. In March 2021 Russia conducted a full-scale military drill in the Arctic 'Umka-2021' with at least 3 submarines capable of firing 16 ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads as well as troops and aviation. In fact, Russia has probably the same aggressive attitude towards considering the Arctic 'its own' as with Ukrainian or Baltic states' territory. The most striking example occurred in 2007 when Artur Chilingarov, a Russian Duma member, led a submarine expedition to the North Pole and planted a Russian flag on the seabed declaring: "The Arctic is Russian"[67]. However, after 15 years passed since this Russian official's claim, Russia feels threatened at the Arctic and voices concerns and alerts to NATO countries. In the beginning of 2022, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Arctic Council Nikolai Korchunov told Russian state media TASS that:

> *"The internationalization of the Alliance's military activities in high latitudes, which involves non-Arctic NATO states, cannot but cause concern. In this regard, there are risks of unintentional incidents that, in addition to security risks, can also cause serious damage to the fragile Arctic ecosystem."[68]*

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff J. Milley also agrees with Russia's obvious feeling of insecurity: "So from a Russian perspective that will be very problematic for them, militarily speaking, and it would be very advantageous to NATO," said M. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff[69].

Major political and economic gains from controlling the future Arctic trade routes with billions of dollars in revenue for the winning party is a source of trouble for the current security situation in the region. In 2010 then Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, Admiral J. G. Stavridis warned that global warming and a race for resources could lead to conflict in the Arctic:

> *"For now, the disputes in the north have been dealt with peacefully, but climate change could alter the equilibrium over the coming years in the race of temptation for exploitation of more readily accessible natural resources."[70]*

Indeed, this is a vicious cycle in the zero-sum game where each actor fears that any gains in the Arctic will be achieved at his/her expense and turns to increased militarization of the region. As if to support our claim, in March 2022 NATO countries led and hosted by

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[67] https://www.mk.ru/editions/daily/article/2007/08/07/88555-artur-chilingarov-myi-dokazali-arktika-nasha.html [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

[68] https://eurasiantimes.com/russia-warns-nato-of-clashes-in-arctic-says-accession-of-sweden-finland/ [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

[69] https://www.arctictoday.com/sweden-finland-joining-nato-would-be-tough-for-russia-top-u-s-general-says/?wallit_nosession=1 [Accessed on 03.07.2022].

[70] https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2010/oct/11/nato-conflict-arctic-resources [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

Norway conducted a series of military drills in the Arctic – a biannual "Cold Response" exercise, which took place near the Russian border and where about 30,000 soldiers from 27 countries participated. Overall, such behavior from both sides will lead to destabilization and further conflict between the NATO and Russia on the Arctic.

Some Western experts are confident that Sweden's and Finland's accession to the NATO would assist in containing Russians on the North Pole. Until recently, NATO has not diverted much of its massive bureaucracy's attention towards the Arctic – in 2021 summit's joint statement members mentioned it only once. Only Norway tried to voice up the matter, but no man is an island. After Russia's invasion into Ukraine the matter of Arctic has again reentered the public discourse and found some new strong voices represented by Sweden and Finland. Finland is a leader in icebreaker ship industry, Sweden has quite a fleet of quiet submarines. Adding these countries would inevitably bring more cards for the NATO and the U.S. in the Arctic to counter devastating Russian (and possibly Chinese) behavior. For instance, out of eight members of the Arctic Council, seven will be NATO members (the U.S., Canada, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Finland).

However, some experts voice some serious doubts about Arctic region sustainability at large in the current geopolitical and ecologic environments. For instance, Coninsx is confident that the Arctic region will soon face a major crisis in at least three sectors[71] that we decided to summarize in a Table 4.2:

Table 4.2

Potential risk-zones for the Arctic's sustainability

Economic and Environmental Sustainability	Energy Security and Sustainability	Political and military sustainability
- Implications of climate change are the most obviously devastating in the Arctic that becomes heater three times faster than any other region on the Earth (Ileri et al. 2021: 12); - Proliferation of innovative technologies that can maintain both a sustainable development	- Amassing new and new drilling rigs in the Arctic would bring environmental destruction to the region. However, this sector is about to increase by more than one quarter by 2030 (Ileri et al. 2021: 6); - More problematic is that it is the initiative belongs not only to the private	- Most of actors in the Arctic region are quickly forgetting about the principle of the "Arctic exceptionalism" meaning remaining the Arctic out of political battles as a region of international peace and cooperation; - Although the rights of many indigenous peoples of the High North are

[71] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-sustainability-in-troubled-times [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

of the region and high profits for the companies is slow due to low self-awareness and high economic price for R&D in the Arctic; • New and potentially rewarding industries receive limited attention from the media and big enterprises;	companies that are unrestricted by the national legislation, but also to the national governments that forget about limiting global warming and adhering to sustainable development[72];	protected, they still have to fight for their motto "Do not speak about us, but with us"[73]. They also suffer from ecological impact of exploiting their lands. And more importantly, they are not perceived by any states as people capable of governing themselves as well as profiting from extraction of the natural resources by themselves.

In the public discourse we hear about Sweden and Finland having a public image of unanimous countries of 'Nordic cooperation' interested in the proliferation of joint development projects often. While this term may define various notions, the most succinct definition is of L. Wedin's who sees Nordic Cooperation as a group of states that work together on the basis of deep historical, cultural and political links as well as on the grounds of shared moral values (Wedin 2007: 39). Gebhard proves that Sweden and Finland may be perceived as silent rivals on the international arena and in the Arctic region specifically. The author eloquently shows that until recently Sweden and Finland "have not cooperated but *competed* in this sub-regional matter" (Gebhard 2013: 366) despite everyone's expectations that they will work together when it concerns promotion of a Northern European and/or Arctic matters in Europe. Finland has largely been more proactive when it comes to international cooperation and is eager to finding new allies and partners elsewhere to realize joint projects and visions in the Baltic and Arctic regions. On the other hand, Sweden perceives other states' (as well as groups of states such as the EU to which it curiously belongs) eagerness to help and cooperate in their historical 'fiefdom' as intervention in the zone of its national interest. To summarize Gebhard's findings, he finds traces of differing behavior on the international arena in historical circumstances – Finland wants to reassert itself and fight its colonial complex through obtaining many friends and partners while Sweden cherishes its nation's independence and wants to settle

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[72] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-sustainability-in-troubled-times [Accessed on 01.07.2022].
[73] https://www.arcticcircle.org/journal/arctic-sustainability-in-troubled-times [Accessed on 01.07.2022].

the core matters on its own. Swedish leadership reckons regional cooperation as a "loss of influence than a gain of visibility and leverage, which have been highlighted by Finnish administrations" (Gebhard 2013: 384). Still, nowadays after Sweden's and Finland's common way to NATO through many hardships such claims seem rather outdated as they were written during a principally distinct political environment in Europe and in the world.

Aside from obvious military conflict threat to the region's security, existing policies in the Arctic nations and intergovernmental organizations are harmful for the Arctic's environment. Ileri et al. note some of the weak spots. Exclusion zones are too limited and arbitrary. A lot of financial institutions that are eager to make money in the Arctic limit their geographical scope to allowed zones in the papers while in fact operating at much larger territories officially restricted for them. Most banks and insurers can bypass existing protective policies imposed by states or IGOs by granting funds to corporate clients and not specifically oil & gas expansionists. Some policies restrict oil extraction while simultaneously allowing gas conceding to the belief that it is more eco-friendly (Ileri et al. 2021: 30).

In terms of environmental security, the Arctic is in an endangering situation following the actions of the aforementioned '20 expansionists', the biggest oil & gas companies in the world competing for the sake of bigger profits. Except from obvious CO_2 emission in the atmosphere from an unsustainable extracting of oil and gas, the environmental impact on the Arctic ecosystem goes much further than that. As Ileri et al. insist, oil and gas industry in the Arctic is significantly affecting the cooling system of the Earth that depends on the ice shelfs' natural ability to divert the heat from the Sun back to the atmosphere instead of it being absorbed into the earth. With proliferation of drilling rigs and their byproduct, soot or 'black carbon' that pollute the ice shelfs, the latter melt faster and, hence, less solar radiation is reflected from them, and the Earth is getting heater (Ileri et al. 2021). Curiously enough, thawing permafrost and melting ice that altogether led to sea level rise endanger not only small minorities living in the area, but also production and operation sites of the big energy companies that send highly skilled workers and professionals to operate and build new drilling sites in the ocean (Gosnell et al. 2020).

Gosnell et al. have explored yet another negative effect of excessive exploitation of the Arctic – they focused on demographic issues. They prove that small communities (such as aforementioned Sami herding communities that must prove in Swedish courts their right to live and prosper on their historic lands) are facing negative demographic trends caused by "decreasing fertility rates in combination with brain drain" (Gosnell et al. 2020). It looks like the Arctic states are currently much more interested in giant economic prospects stemming from

the Arctic rich natural resources rather than creating healthcare, infrastructure and educational conditions for at least partially comfort and attractive life in the far north.

Still, sometimes the Arctic is a place for some peaceful negotiations between two countries having a long-standing dispute over territorial matters. On June 15, 2022, Denmark and Canada have finally settled a territorial dispute over a small island of Tartipaluk (or Hans) that lasted for roughly 49 years since 1973. According to Andreikovets, the island has no economic significance and is completely empty. Nevertheless, "Canada and Denmark periodically sent troops to the island, who changed the flag of the state to their own and left a bottle of whiskey or schnapps near it.[74]" The "Whiskey War" was resolved by dividing the island into an area of 1.3 square km between them creating a land border between Canada and Denmark. About 60% of the island went to Denmark and 40% to Canada. The agreement also defines a sea border on the shelf within 200 nautical miles and a continental shelf outside the area[75].

Conclusion to IV

Forth section of our study has focused on Sweden's role in the Arctic as well as the overall situation in the region since the Russian aggression in February 2022. We have found that:

Firstly, Sweden plays an active role in the development of the Arctic region in many domains. On a political level, Sweden's ascension to the NATO brings up an effect of an atomic bomb to the region changing all the existing power predispositions and significantly worsening Russia's plans to occupy and militarize the region. Such situation favors Norway and Finland as well as the U.S. with Sweden's potent military capabilities. However, some fear a new wave of espionage and subversive activities to happen throughout the Arctic nations. On an economic level, Sweden has both examples to be proud of, such as building the first green steel plant in the Arctic by H2GS company, as well as whole sectors that need to be altered significantly in order to maintain Arctic's sustainable development and biological diversity, such as negative effects of Swedish mining industry on Sweden's only indigenous people, the Sami.

Secondly, current geostrategic situation in the Arctic region has significantly worsened since the Russian aggression. Most of intergovernmental organizations had to make hard but inevitable decision to exclude Russia from their activities. That decision has been heavily criticized by some experts and researchers fearing some new political actors from outside may be brought into the region by Russia. In terms of militarization of the Arctic, we have shown

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[74] https://babel.ua/en/news/79978-the-whiskey-war-is-over-canada-and-denmark-have-settled-a-long-standing-dispute-over-an-island-in-the-arctic [Accessed on 30.06.2022].

[75] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61801682 [Accessed on 29.06.2022].

that both sides, NATO and Russia, are currently developing their defensive and offensive capabilities with Finland's and Sweden's ascension to the Alliance would further heat up the situation. In terms of environmental situation, we expect the Arctic to be further divided and exploited by European, Asian and possibly Arabian countries eager for massive resources and lack of coordination and control in the region. Moreover, by 2030 energy sector would grow although Western sanctions against Russia would somewhat slow down the development of the oil and gas fields. In terms of environmental effects of the proliferation of drilling rigs in the Arctic, experts are warning that the consequences will be grim as the Arctic already heats up three times faster than the rest of the Earth and unless some decisive actions and national legislation altered the negative trend will be difficult to counter.

Conclusion

We address the basic research question of our master thesis:

To what extent is Sweden prepared to confront the potential risks of unfolding Russian hybrid warfare?

As a result, it can be confidently stated that Sweden has prepared considerably for threats that Russian hybrid warfare poses:

Firstly, Sweden's (along with Finland's) joining the NATO is a major factor in establishing country's political, economic and social security. It is achieved by creating a steady collective security line of Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland) under NATO's Article 5 that postulates that any attack on one member of the Alliance automatically triggers unified response from all its members. Such omnipotent geostrategic move from Swedish and Finnish governments significantly raises the stakes for Russia's subversive activities in the Baltic and Arctic regions. Swedish military industrial complex's experts already voice high optimism for investment climate in the face of general instability in the European demesne. As such, the mere fact of Sweden being a member of the most powerful military Alliance in the world increases the country's national image and significantly lowers the chances for unprovoked aggression of any kind.

Secondly, since 2014 Sweden (under its cybersecurity strategy) has created a viable, working system of internal measures and mechanisms within state's security organizations and services in order to counter hybrid threats from any international actor, be it another state or private actors. In the cybersecurity domain, Sweden has been working on its IT system security with the most attention being provided to police, army and critical infrastructure networks. Considerable number of resources and time has been channeled to establish a psychological sustainability of Swedish population – an entirely new government service has been created, Swedish Psychological Defense Agency. Its main role lies in working tightly with a large variety of non-government institutions, companies, factories etc. in order to make the people more knowledgeable about potential psychological operations risks and countermeasures. Political stability has also been massively strengthened as election system has been protected from external cyberattacks and influence from within Sweden.

All in all, Sweden has shown that its political leadership has adequately understood the threats since 2014 and developed a highly flexible government mechanisms in order to create a groundbreaking defensive strategy. We see that Russian aggression in February 2022 on

Ukraine has multiplied dangers and risk factors for Sweden, but we also are confident that Sweden is highly capable of defending itself not only in conventional military warfare, but also in much less visible, but ever-more threatening hybrid warfare.

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