The CoESPU Magazine - Advanced Studies

The online Journal of Stability Policing

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The CoESPU Magazine Advanced Studies is devoted to the publication of professional concepts and issues, research and doctrinal products developed by the Carabinieri Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units, in collaboration with other international research Centers. The Magazine addresses topics of professional, technical, operational and juridical nature in the field of Stability Policing within Peace Operations. Based on the core values of ethics, integrity, professionalism and respect for diversity, harmonically inflected and informed by the traditions of over two hundred years of Carabinieri history, the Magazine fosters Human Rights and gender mainstreaming, while seeking to enhance current police peacekeeping doctrine and promoting international police peacekeeping interoperability, cognizant of Lessons Learned and best practises. The CoESPU Magazine Advanced Studies is constantly committed to upholding UN standards, norms, procedures and curricula, while endorsing self-sufficiency of the participating Police Contributing Countries. Consequently, its editorial policy promotes the principles of representativeness, responsiveness, and accountability, as well as effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and accessibility, to provide the highest professional standards to build trust and legitimacy of beneficiary Law Enforcement Institutions.

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Dear CoESPU Magazine Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I am introducing the first issue of a special series of our journal, “The CoESPU Magazine – Advanced Studies”, that will be published online twice a year in order to collect and publish scientific articles that deepen in a more and exhaustive way the topics included in our annual research plans.

You will notice several differences from our quarterly magazine, from the cover to the general layout, from the format to the contents. It has been a thoughtful and mindful choice to allow the CoESPU Magazine - Advanced Studies to rise to the rank of an actual scientific journal with the aim of spreading the results of the research conducted by our Chairs and our academics, as well as to host scholars and SME who intend to use this support as a vehicle for the dissemination of their thinking and studies in the field of Stability Policing.

In this first issue you will find many interesting articles. Among them: Roberta Maisano, Phd degree in Technology for Environmental Protection and CoESPU intern, illustrates the need for peacekeeping to foresee new challenges in the cyber domain as a new conflict scenario, to improve the security of peacekeepers and civilian populations. Federico Borgonovo, analyst and researcher at the Italian Team for Security Terroristic issues and Managing Emergencies – ITSTIME, offers a comprehensive exploration on how the pandemic from COVID-19 has allowed several non-state actors to exploit the multiple aspects of the health
emergency for strategic purposes showing how identifiable operations have been conducted within the framework of the Cognitive War. Benedetta Biagi, CoESPU intern, in her article analysed both UN and NATO to highlight how the two organizations embedded the measures to achieve a clean and healthy environment in peace operations. Captain Laris Gaiser, Carabinieri reserve Officer, CoESPU Research Office Staff Officer Associate Professor of Security Studies and Macroeconomy at the University of Ljubljana, illustrates the state of the relations between the EU and NATO in a time of heightened international tension and deep strategic review, their reaction to emerging threats and subsequent potential implications for global security, shedding some light on possible future developments and main challenges for the Transatlantic security.

Before wishing you a fruitful reading, I would like to remind two important events: the first one, represented by the International High Level Conference on Environmental Management in Peace Operations we would proudly host next September 27th and 28th at this Center of Excellence. The conference will be broadcasted on our YouTube channel and through our social pages. The second one, the Police Day that will be held on October 30th at BIPSOT in Bangladesh under the aegis of UNPOL and IAPTC, followed the next day by the 26th IAPTC Annual Conference: in my capacity of IAPTC Executive Committee Police Chair, I will very gladly attend both the events.

Dear readers, I really hope you will appreciate this new initiative and I wish you Happy Holidays.

Giovanni Pietro BARBANO
Brigadier General
CoESPU Director
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Beyond Kiev. From new wars to hybrid confrontations ....................... 7

Upholding Global Security: NATO-EU Relations in Times of Change ........ 19

Predictive OSINT in Cyber Peacekeeping ........................................ 27

Strategies, disinformation techniques and cognitive warfare of jihadist organisations ................................................................. 39

The Protection of the environment in Peacekeeping Operations .......... 53

Constitutive elements of trafficking in human beings.
A multifaced crime ........................................................................... 73

Covid 19 and new opportunities for jihadist extremism(*) .......... 100

Advisory: capacity building at strategic level .................................. 126

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THIS ISSUE OF “The CoESPU Magazine - the online Journal of Stability Policing - Advanced Studies”

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Beyond Kiev
From new wars to hybrid confrontations

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ABSTRACT

The conventional conflict taking place in the heart of Central-Eastern Europe, which sees the Russian Federation opposed to the Ukraine and to the Western world, must not make us forget that in different parts of the planet other conflicts survive and are perpetuated. Such conflicts have posed for years a permanent challenge to international peacebuilders, and in the same time appear unlikely to see a solution in the short term.

The conclusion of the Cold War that took place thirty years ago, in fact, generated a series of resettlement conflicts, which on one hand decomposed states weakened by the disappearance of their sponsor power - the Soviet Union - and on the other baptized a new international order, inspired by the winner of the confrontation, the United States. The initial affirmation of this new order - and its subsequent, progressive relaxation - nevertheless had significant repercussions on the balance of international affairs and, indirectly, also on war phenomena.
The first consequence was the advent of globalization. Globalization, however, by its nature could not help but erode the prerogatives of states, on one hand exposing them to further risks of implosion, and on the other favoring the affirmation on the scene of multiple non-state actors of considerable potential, some benign, others not. In this context, of particular importance was the affirmation of religious-inspired transnational terrorism, a complex phenomenon in which different forms of conflict have converged - all animated by the common desire to oppose the established order - and which has kept the world busy for over thirty years.

The second effect was the emergence, alongside the non-state actors mentioned so far, of nation-states hardly enthusiastic about the new order imposed by the winner, antagonists to varying degrees of the United States and therefore potentially revisionist of the post-Cold War settlement. Nations that are also endowed with considerable potential, even though they are not able to confront the hegemonic power on a level of complete parity, and are therefore forced to adopt an asymmetric posture to face it.

From the point of view of war, the simultaneous affirmation of non-state actors and revisionist powers has led to the emergence or exacerbation of forms of conflict which are inherently asymmetrical, variously described by scholars of the last thirty years as New Wars, Wars of the Fourth Generation or Hybrid Wars, mainly due to their nature, their context and their players. The West, for its part, engaged first in a head-on confrontation with the terrorist threat - a Global War on Terrorism of essentially counter-insurrectional nature. Subsequently, however, advanced nations found themselves in increasingly difficult situations in terms of legitimacy and sustainability of the engagements in political and moral, before than economic, terms. More recently, in face of state and non-state challenges as mentioned so far, the First World has initiated yet another doctrinal reworking, producing in rapid succession the concepts of surrogate wars, remote wars and, finally, multi-domain operations.

In essence, although it may appear that recent events in Eastern Europe have turned back the clock of history towards classical, all-out, kinetic confrontations between sovereign nations, in reality the international sphere is still characterized by a multitude of confrontations, essentially local, not necessarily military in nature, which require a concerted effort to be understood and addressed, and which pose to peacebuilders multiple challenges in order to find a solution. To under-
estimate them or, worse, to forget them under the impression of ongoing events could have dire consequences. The world does not stop in Kiev.

The conventional conflict taking place in the heart of Central-Eastern Europe, which sees the Russian Federation opposed to the Ukraine and to the Western world, must not make us forget that in different parts of the planet other conflicts survive and are perpetuated. Such conflicts have posed for years a permanent challenge to international peacebuilders, and in the same time appear unlikely to see a solution in the short term.

The legitimate concern for a war on our doorstep that can lead to a final, catastrophic confrontation for mankind must therefore not lead us to look away from other situations that still require all our attention, and which need to be well understood in order to be addressed correctly. Situations that are the result of the evolution of long-term trends, which have led to complex, articulated confrontations demanding extremely difficult, if not apparently impossible solutions to be stopped.

The conclusion of the Cold War that took place thirty years ago, in fact, generated a series of resettlement conflicts, which on one hand decomposed states weakened by the disappearance of their sponsor power - the Soviet Union - and on the other baptized a new international order, inspired by the winner of the confrontation, the United States. The initial affirmation of this new order - and its subsequent, progressive relaxation - nevertheless had significant repercussions on the balance of international affairs and, indirectly, also on war phenomena.

The first consequence was the advent of globalization as the main tool for building that political and economic interdependence which, in liberal thinking, represents the preferential vehicle for building peace among nations. Globalization, however, by its nature could not help but erode the prerogatives of states, on one hand exposing them to further risks of implosion, and on the other favoring the affirmation on the scene of multiple non-state actors of considerable potential, some benign, others not. In this context, of particular importance was the affirmation of religious-inspired transnational terrorism, a complex phenomenon in which different forms of conflict have converged - all animated by the common desire to oppose the established order - and which has kept the world busy for over thirty years. A phenomenon that on one hand seemed to expropriate the traditional states of their monopoly of war, and on the other was certainly helped significantly in its worldwide spread by the technologi-
cal, information and financial tools made available by globalization.

The second effect was the emergence, alongside the non-state actors mentioned so far, of nation-states hardly enthusiastic about the new order imposed by the winner, antagonists to varying degrees of the United States and therefore potentially revisionist of the post-Cold War settlement. Nations that are also endowed with considerable potential, even though they are not able to confront the hegemonic power on a level of complete parity, and are therefore forced to adopt an asymmetric posture to face it (Haass, 2020).

From the point of view of war, the simultaneous affirmation of non-state actors and revisionist powers has led to the emergence or exacerbation of forms of conflict which are inherently asymmetrical, variously described by scholars of the last thirty years as *New Wars, Wars of the Fourth Generation* or *Hybrid Wars*, mainly due to their nature, their context and their players. The West, for its part, engaged first in a head-on confrontation with the terrorist threat - a *Global War on Terrorism* of essentially counter-insurrectional nature. Subsequently, however, advanced nations found themselves in increasingly difficult situations in terms of legitimacy and sustainability of the engagements in political and moral, before than economic, terms. More recently, in face of state and non-state challenges as mentioned so far, the First World has initiated yet another doctrinal reworking, producing in rapid succession the concepts of *surrogate wars, remote wars* and, finally, *multi-domain operations* (Freeedman, 2017).

The fragmentation resulting from the end of the bipolar order as well as the progressive erosion of the authority of certain states and their consequent failure - partly caused by globalization and partly by the emergence of non-state actors - are at the origin of a series of irregular conflicts that contemporary authors such as Kaldor, Smith and others define as *New Wars* or *Wars among the people*. Typical examples cited by scholars are the disputes that began in the 1990s in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa as well as Central and West Africa (Kaldor, 2012 and Smith, 2007). Although they have many characters typical of insurgency, in reality these disputes lack the foundations of it. The new wars are in fact fought for identity issues - local, regional, ethnic, religious - and not for ideological or political reasons of a general nature. Hence the associated concept of the *privatization of war*. Nonetheless, the aim is always the same: to bend the will of an opponent in order to acquire or main-
tain power, usually at the local level, at the most regional. The center of gravity, therefore, as in insurrectional activities, is represented by the population. However, New Wars tend to establish a political control of the population not through the construction of consensus, as it is typical of insurgencies, but by the use of fear and the systematic imposition of terror. In addition, they are partly financed with predatory methods, which obviously demands the continued use of violence. On the ground they are fought locally, employing small infantry formations and using guerrilla procedures. Such formations generally use un-sophisticated or obsolete weaponry and equipment, and have very limited mobility and logistics. Basically, they use mostly second-hand, surplus equipment, live in the area and move little. The characters are, as mentioned at the beginning, essentially non-state actors - insurgents of various kinds, terrorists, local militias, war lords, tribes, private companies - who from time to time join forces or fight for control of the territory. The absence of certain interlocutors, the complexity of the situations and the asymmetry of the contenders therefore make solutions difficult, and any intervention expensive as well as very risky.

In the words of a scholar (Schuurman 2010),

‘success in such conflicts no longer depends on the ability to inflict massive destruction, but rather on the ability to remove popular support from the adversary, separating the insurgents or terrorists from what they need most.’

Consequently, New Wars have a devastating impact from the point of view of human security. In fact, the goal is to control the population, and fear is the preferred way to achieve it. To attain their ends, therefore, the contenders use simple and brutal but particularly effective methods of mass violence. From collective rapes in Bosnia, to mass graves in Kosovo, to machetes in Rwanda. The first consequence of systematic violence are mass flights, which reverberate inside and outside the borders, causing massive humanitarian crises. At the same time, these conflicts develop in an overall framework of legal anarchy, which makes the application of humanitarian law very complex, both from the point of view of prevention and of repression of war crimes.

Organized crime, local or transnational, is frequently an additional source of trouble and mischief. This presence, although motivated solely for profit, plays an important role in supporting the contenders or in the appropriation of resources. In addition, in certain circumstances, the concurrence of interests between crimi-
nals, outlaws and rival factions tends to artificially prolong the conflict, further exacerbating situations. In essence, the war turns out to be good business for everyone, and it is convenient to continue it. Finally, where other geopolitical or economic considerations overlap the local identity motif - regional ambitions, power projection, exploitation of raw materials - New Wars often see the intervention of foreign powers or transnational economic interest groups. These external subjects generally act through third parties, such as local militias or private security companies. Third parties with which it is possible to deny any contiguity if necessary.

In parallel to New Wars, another notion very popular since the early Nineties has been the *Fourth Generation Warfare* (4GW) (Lind, 1989). According to this idea, modern warfare has gone through successive phases until it has become in contemporary times ‘an evolved form of insurrection that uses political, economic, social and military tools to convince the adversary that its objectives are unattainable or too expensive.’ (Echevarria, 2005). An evolved form of confrontation that also resorts to terrorism and psychological warfare where it is unable to compete on equal terms. Basically, in order to wear down a stronger opponent, conventional warfare has become progressively irregular and, above all, asymmetrical. Thus excluding *ipso facto* conventional confrontations in the future, and at the same time assuming that armies will have to be reinvented to face this particular threat. However, this hypothesis has been denied by subsequent events, where conventional military instruments - far from disappearing - have continued to play a crucial role in the definition of power relations between states and have been able - when used for good reason - to come to terms with uprisings, in urban environments as well as in the countryside. Adapting is difficult, but not impossible, as demonstrated by the Israeli army in its struggle against Hezbollah and Hamas.

In reality, as we know, asymmetrical wars have always existed and their renewed formulation is simply the result of the use by non-state actors of the increased opportunities offered by globalization (Haass, 2020). The aim is always to bend the opponent’s will, but the conflict necessarily becomes non-linear due to the disproportion between the contenders.

Chechen Wars fought in the 1990s in the Caucasus, Hezbollah operations in Lebanon since 2006, the Hamas intifada and the 2008 Gaza war, the Iraqi and Syrian conflict from 2004 to the present, the terrorist offensive of lone wolves and Quaedist cells in the West are but the most recent response of less-gifted actors to the technolog-
ical supremacy of advanced countries. A response that is also combined with an unshakable will to resist and prevail at all costs over the adversary, materialized by an unconditional willingness to sacrifice for the cause, an aspect that the West, however, struggles to understand.

The techniques used, which present, as mentioned above, an absolute discrepancy between the contenders - think of the comparison between improvised devices and tanks in Iraq, or between Palestinian incendiary balloons and the Israeli Iron Dome - have the immediate aim of creating surprise, of neutralizing the opponent’s material superiority, of wearing him down, of causing unsustainable losses, and of obtaining an advantage, usually local, in the short and medium term. In the long term, however, by hitting in unexpected ways, and by increasing and exploiting collective insecurity, the asymmetrical offense is able to manipulate the political and human environment, compromise the opponent’s will to fight as well as his cohesion and the military advantage that comes from technology. Basically, it tends to throw the antagonist off-balance by playing on the political, economic and human costs of resistance and response. Not coincidentally, all techniques already evoked in the late Nineties military theorists in the aftermath of Western victories in the 1991 Gulf War and in the Balkans (Qiao and Wang, 1999).

For this purpose, the non-state asymmetric fighter makes use of a whole series of competing elements, made available by globalization, which he exploits with great skill. He uses primarily the opportunities offered by low-cost and easily accessible emerging technologies, such as cyber weapons, unmanned aircraft and basic missile systems. Secondly, often striking in an apparently disproportionate way he conveys a message of disruptive effectiveness that affects the internal dynamics of the opposing nation. This message impacts both on his target audience and on international public opinion, amplifying the effectiveness of his actions and enhancing the legitimacy of his cause. In this he exploits the full spectrum of contemporary media, from the Internet to social. Third, he systematically uses transnational political, logistical and financial sanctuaries. Finally, he exploits the gaps of international law to act undisturbed.

If non-state actions are complex to address but none the less manageable, asymmetrical initiatives pursued against the West - in particular the United States - by so-called revisionist powers are of a very different stature. Revisionist powers which, moreover, employ asymmetrical means with different goals. Defensive purposes for Russia, which feels threatened within its borders, suffers the overwhelming power of
the United States, and in some way has to compensate for it. Offensive purposes for China, which aspires to regain a central position in international affairs, but realizes that the gap to overcome to achieve parity with the United States is enormous, and therefore tries to hit the opponent where it appears most vulnerable. A survival purpose for the Iranian regime, which believes it must protect itself and the nation from an adverse regional context, and therefore seeks - by attacking - to carve out a security perimeter that goes from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. And goals of survival and strategic autonomy also for the North Korean regime, which relies on the one hand on nuclear weapons and on the other on Chinese patronage to keep itself afloat in a dangerous balance between Washington and Beijing (Jones, 2021).

We are therefore talking about the so-called hybrid wars, which are not so hybrid, as we shall see, and not even so new. Already postulated by the Chinese Qiao and Wang in the 1990s this form of confrontation was redefined in 2005 in the United States by Hoffman on the basis of the Iraqi experience, as an amalgam of different forms of war, which brings together conventional skills, irregular procedures, terrorism and criminal activities. This definition was then used to describe Hezbollah’s war against Israel in Lebanon in 2006, and it re-surfaced in the West in 2014, to explain Moscow’s modus operandi in the first phase of the Ukrainian crisis. In reality, hybrid methods of warfare such as propaganda, disinformation, subversion, deception, sabotage and other unconventional techniques have always belonged to the Russian political-military tradition - first Tsarist and then Soviet - as well as to traditional Chinese thought. They were also used by the West, as part of the containment of Soviet expansionism, from the 1920s to the end of the Cold War. The novelty of the attacks seen in recent years lies, if anything, in their versatility, speed, scope and intensity, which are in turn facilitated by technological innovation and the increase in global connectivity (Weissmann et al., 2021). Incidentally, the Russian Federation has in turn accused the West of practicing hybrid warfare, notably through the so-called color revolutions, and so has the People’s Republic of China, with regard to the support given to the causes of Hong Kong and the Uighurs.

In their most recent manifestation, hybrid offenses use military and non-military means, both conventional and unconventional, both covert and open, to exert growing political, diplomatic, economic and military pressure, direct and indirect, locally and internationally, aimed
at progressively wearing out and finally breaking the cohesion of a society. Thus compromising its capacity for resistance, and forcing the government or the ruling class to yield. Pressure that is also exercised in an intermediate posture between peace and open war - in a gray area - and is therefore particularly destabilizing and difficult to counter. Here is evident the combination between the founding principles of Chinese military thought - the indirect approach aimed at compromising the opponent’s will to fight - and the psychodynamic techniques developed by Soviet-era scholars to destroy the capitalist enemy. The ultimate goal is in fact to win against a stronger opponent, possibly without a fight, and the way is the manipulation of his mental processes. The immediate aim is therefore to obtain temporary strategic supremacy through local or regional superiority, while in the medium and long term the hybrid fighter aims to provoke a reckless reaction - thereby creating further pretexts for the use of force - or to take the control of territories without a shot being fired, to influence the politics of opposing coalitions, nations and factions, and finally to support transnational agents in the pursuit of their goals of power.

The means, as mentioned above, are the most varied, albeit well-coordinated as part of an overall strategy at the national level, defined and implemented in the inter-ministerial context, and decided by the political elite. Basically, it is unthinkable that the blatant attacks by Russian hackers on the US electoral system took place on the autonomous initiative of the security services of the Ministry of Defense, without the active involvement of the Foreign Ministry for an evaluation of the effects, and without the endorsement of the top political authority. As well as the attacks by Iranian boats in the Persian Gulf, the Houthis’ missile launches against Saudi refineries, or the systematic penetration of the US military-industrial complex by Chinese intelligence agencies.

Hybrid warfare today is conducted through a skillful combination of violent and non-violent operations, directed against the main nodes of government and command of the adversary, industry, communications, critical infrastructures and the population that benefits from them. Anonymous means, occult state organizations, drones and missiles, local and transnational agents, militias and private companies, spies and special forces are used for this purpose. Disturbances of a political and social nature, riots and unrest, economic- and energy instability are generated at a distance. The preferred carriers are represented by sophisticated but cheap technologies. The war of information, which ma-
nipulates the audience - be it political, social or economic - through the use of trolls and proxies, who artfully spread artificially-manufactured information. The cyber war, both state and non-state, which penetrates management networks in order to damage the exercise of government activity and the daily life of society, to generate insecurity, and to acquire information. The clandestine operations, aimed at espionage and hidden destabilization activities. In the most extreme cases, semi-clandestine missile proliferation is used, using carriers of uncertain origin.

Basically a form of war, conventional and innovative at the same time, which mixes consolidated methods - violent and non-violent - and cutting-edge technologies with the absolutely traditional aim of bending the will of the adversary, acting primarily on the opposing political power and on the population that supports it.

So far we have described, in great detail, the asymmetrical offenses of the last period, the purpose of which was initially - and still is, and probably will be in the future - to oppose the technological, military and organizational supremacy of the West. A West which, faced with this reaction, appeared in difficulty. The reasons for this difficulty are many, and in part they have already been highlighted. In addition to the tiredness of a twenty-year counter-insurgency effort - the global war against terrorism and its substitutes - there are indeed many political, economic, cultural and moral concerns about the opportunity to continue to act in areas of crisis. This in face of the often controversial results in terms of effectiveness, duration and legitimacy. Consequently, if from a conventional point of view the prevailing trend has remained that of maintaining a substantial technological advantage over the main contenders, as regards asymmetrical opponents it is now preferred to avoid frontal engagements. In other words, an indirect approach is being adopted, in which third parties fight wars while advanced countries limit themselves to directing, supporting and contributing in a limited way, taking care not to intervene in full strength. This is the most recent concept of fighting through intermediaries - proxy wars - or surrogates - surrogate wars - or remote - remote wars. Whether remote, surrogate or through an intermediary, these wars start from one principle: operations on the ground are conducted by others, from time to time local militias, third-country forces or transnational private companies (Mumford 2013, Krieg and Rickli 2019). The supporting power typically steps in to provide an intelligence framework, air, land and naval fire support, specialist communications components, and medical support. It
acts directly with its own special forces only to mentor the local ally militarily, and to conduct ad-hoc operations, usually clandestine, aimed at achieving its specific objectives. In the case of a multinational commitment, an overt assistance mission, such as in the Sahel, or humanitarian support activities can be associated with indirect kinetic operations. In this context, however, technology plays a fundamental role in making the intervention remote and reducing the risk, as well as the cost. Just as intelligence support can be provided remotely with the use of unmanned aerial vehicles for reconnaissance, fire support can also be provided remotely, for example by using cruise missiles launched from ships hundreds of kilometers away or by using selectively air power. Basically, today nations are able to conduct a remote military campaign, obtaining the same results as in a direct intervention and paying a very low price. This is the case of the U.S. intervention in Syria, managed through the Kurdish militias. All this without necessarily affecting the consensus, but rather increasing it. At the same time, however, the political, legal and moral implications of such a way of acting are evident, as well as the risk of slipping into forms of conflict beyond control. Russian and Iranian behavior, also in Syria, is an example of this. Handling remotely a conflict, or substituting for participation, can be fine, as long as a context of international legitimacy and respect for human rights is maintained.

On the other hand, the situation is different as regards the fight against hybrid wars. It is in fact evident that the response to an offense brought to a state organization - and to the society that it frames - as the centers of gravity of a nation certainly falls outside the sphere of responsibility of military instruments, even if such an attack is absolutely military in its inspiration. When the challenge involves politics, institutions, the economy, society, communication and public order at the same time, the answer can only be synergic and integrated at the government level. All the more so when the offense invests a system of alliances, in which several member states find themselves having to face such threats, the response must become intergovernmental, and in this case as well, invest more levels and dimensions.

In conclusion, although it may appear that recent events in Eastern Europe may have turned back the clock of history towards classical, all-out, kinetic confrontations between sovereign nations, in reality the international sphere is still characterized by a multitude of confrontations, essentially local, not necessarily military in nature, which require a concerted effort to be understood and addressed, and which pose to
peacebuilders multiple challenges in order to find a solution. To underestimate them or, worse, to forget them under the impression of ongoing events could have dire consequences. The world does not stop in Kiev.

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ABSTRACT

The 21st of March 2022, the EU Council adopted the Strategic Compass. In June, at the Madrid NATO Summit, the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization sanctioned the new NATO Strategic Concept. The aim of this article is to briefly analyze the state of the relations between the two organizations in a time of heightened international tension and deep strategic review, their reaction to emerging threats and subsequent potential implications for global security. The paper will then try to shed some light on possible future developments and main challenges for the Transatlantic security, concluding with some thoughts on the need for more coordination, consistency, and unity to gain a more effective and credible international stance to face the menaces of tomorrow.

Key Words: Nato, EU, strategy, collective defense

Introduction

In times of great uncertainty and power clashes, the global order suffers from the most acute destabilization in many a year. From the pandemic to the conflict in Ukraine, disarray and disorder seem to have become almost systemic, permanent features rather than contingent crises. A change that imposes brand-new ways of tackling international security problems, making clear that hybrid threats will require an
ever more hybrid response\textsuperscript{2}. In fact, both the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are already particularly well positioned to advance such “multidimensional” approach, having experimented in the recent past a relatively extended set of instruments to manage crises and uphold their values, interests and security\textsuperscript{3}. Especially the EU, which can rely on an extraordinarily wide and influent collection of economic, normative, and political measures – not least by deploying fully-fledged military missions, on the basis of the provisions of art. 42 of the Treaty on European Union - TEU, since 2003\textsuperscript{4}. However, also NATO is fast moving towards a more political and global posture, having become aware of the shifting geopolitical balances and the increased need for strong security alliances\textsuperscript{5}. Such eventful developments highlight how important it is, nowadays, for the two organizations to rethink their strategic priorities and adapt to an utterly changed international environment. An environment characterized by a dangerous resurgence of ruthless geopolitical confrontation, transactional international relations, power politics, spheres of influence, militarism, the emergence of new hybrid threats, and authoritarian leaderships throughout the world. In such a worrying landscape, not only the security of their Member States, but the very preservation of global order and peace are at stake. As clearly stated in the new NATO Strategic Concept, “the euro-Atlantic area is not at peace”\textsuperscript{6}. A challenge so momentous that will require the best efforts of both of the shores of the Atlantic and the full military and political cooperation between NATO and EU countries, making common cause and sharing the burden of the responsibility for the defence and security of their citizens, the protection of their interests, and the upholding of their core, shared values.

The Cooperative Framework

In this venue, the EU has developed and approved its most advanced

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{2} Cinciripini, L. The hybrid response of the EU and NATO to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Sicurezza, Terrorismo, Società, 1 - 15/2022, 69 e ss. In particular paragraph n. 4, “Future developments”, where the Author well describes the response of the EU and NATO as “the exercise of a sort of hybrid power”, 74-75.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Petrangeli, F. (June 2020) Le missioni militari dell’Unione europea, Servizio studi del Senato - Servizio delle Commissioni permanenti e speciali, dossier europei, n. 84, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{5} Independent Expert Group, NATO 2030 Report, November 2020 & Secretary General J. Stoltenberg, NATO 2030 speech in June 2020 (https://www.nato.int/cps/kz/natohq/opinions_176197.htm?selectedLocale=en)
\item \textsuperscript{6} NATO (2022) Strategic Concept, p. 3 (https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf)
\end{itemize}
and far-reaching strategic document: the Strategic Compass\textsuperscript{7}. An eventful moment, since it marks the first concrete step towards the ambition of posing the ground for really effective and efficient common foreign, security, and defence policies, without rejecting the fundamental importance of the transatlantic relationship. With the outbreak of a major conflict at the borders of Europe, the role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has gained back both the legitimacy and the urgency it had at its very beginning, having found once again its founding purpose: the defence of the North Atlantic Alliance from an actual military menace. The Strategic Compass leaves no space for doubts: the so-called strategic autonomy – which the EU aims to reach in the near future to emancipate itself from excessive dependence in strategic domains from abroad (e.g., energy supply, rare materials, IT industry, etc.) and gain more leverage on the international stage – should and indeed aims to be fully consistent and complementary with NATO, which remains an untradeable pillar for the collective security of all its members and partners. The Alliance is also moving in this direction, having more than once confirmed its support for a stronger and more capable EU in foreign policy and military affairs, which would act as the European pillar of the wider collective defence organization\textsuperscript{8}. Notwithstanding the risks synthetized in the old and well-known three Ds acronym – namely: no Duplication; no Decoupling; no Discrimination – the project of a European Defence, not to mention the ambition of realizing what may become in the future a true European Army, could well pose (once again) a unique opportunity to strengthen both NATO and the EU, while making the latter more autonomous and politically integrated – and therefore responsible – for the defence and security of its citizens, values, and interests\textsuperscript{9}. Within such scenario, art. 24 of TUE stating that "the Union shall conduct, define and implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States, the identification of questions of general interest and the achievement of an ever-increasing degree of convergence of Member States’ actions > >, could represents the formal link between the EU and NATO common efforts\textsuperscript{10}.

\textsuperscript{8} Gaiser, L. (2010) Geopolitika, Didakta, Radovljica
\textsuperscript{10} European Union (1992) Treaty on European Union (Consolidated Version), art. 24, (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&for-
The new NATO Strategic Concept has been approved in June, at the Madrid Summit. NATO ostensibly confirms and advances the above-described view, strengthening the strategic partnership between the two shores of the Atlantic and therefore between the two organizations. Accordingly, the entire paragraph 43 of the document is devoted to clarifying the fact that << the European Union is a unique and essential partner for NATO >>.

NATO-EU in the Strategic Compass

Approved in March 2022, the Strategic Compass looks towards << a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security >>. In fact, such goals are already sanctioned by the very EU Treaties. Article 2, TUE, in particular: << The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities >>. To that end, the same Treaty (art. 24, par. 1), defines the EU’s competence over the common security and defence policy, within which it opens also to the possibility to progressively create a common defence. However, it is plain that in this effort the transatlantic relationship, and in particular the NATO membership of many EU countries, has played – still plays, and hopefully will continue to play in the near future – a pivotal role. The Strategic Compass fully acknowledges this reality and necessity, by directly addressing the issue of how to manage the complex balance between strategic autonomy and the contextual belonging to a military and political alliance such as the North Atlantic Alliance.

15 Treaty on European Union (TEU), Consolidated version, art. 24, par. 1: “The Union’s competence in the field of the common foreign and security policy covers all areas of foreign policy and all matters relating to the security of the Union, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy which may lead to a common defence”
The word NATO is indeed mentioned in the document at least 28 times, frequently together with the word EU. In the very first page of the Annex to the EU Council document that contains the text of the Strategic Compass, before even mentioning any other international organization or partnership, it is stated that << A stronger and more capable EU in the field of security and defence will contribute positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO, which remains the foundation of collective defence for its members >>. Moreover, it is significantly cleared from the very beginning that << the transatlantic relationship and EU-NATO cooperation, in full respect of the principles set out in the Treaties and those agreed by the European Council, including the principles of inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy of the EU, are key to our overall security >>. The frame is clear, and so are the main principles sustaining it, as inclusiveness, reciprocity and decision-making autonomy.

The problem of the relation between NATO and EU is, in fact, not a new one. Without going through the (brief) history of the first attempt to build a common European defence, that ended in the failure of the European Defence Community project in 1954, it is worth going rapidly back to the Nineties. Indeed, as it has been extensively written about, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the West had to utterly rethink its military posture towards the East and its broader security and political priorities. Moreover, the almost contextual outbreak of conflicts and the resurgence of violence in Africa and in the Balkans made evident that history was far from ending, and therefore NATO and the EU had to go through a complex process of internal reform to adapt to the new international situation, also spurred by the tragic failures to protect the people of Rwanda and Srebrenica. In particular, the war in Kosovo saw NATO intervene where other organizations could not, even if the lack of a Security Council authorization gave rise to a complex debate, somewhat still ongoing, making also the EU aware of the need to develop the necessary capabilities to ensure the security of its borders and intervene to bring peace and stability when needed. The discussions involved also the one about how to discipline the relationship between the two organizations, which ultimately led to the aforementioned 3Ds formula.

NATO-EU in the Strategic Concept

The new NATO Strategic Concept is returning to the past organization’s
mission clarifying that its core tasks are deterrence and defence, cooperative security and crisis prevention and management.\textsuperscript{16} The complementarity between the European and the North-Atlantic vision is a pillar of the new Concept. It is no coincidence that both the Strategic Compass and the Strategic Concept are the result of a parallel reflection that saw governments approve them just a few weeks apart. If NATO is named 28 times in the Compass, an entire paragraph is dedicated to EU in the Concept and the inevitable collaboration between the two organizations is based on the premise of sharing the same principles and values. \textless \textless NATO and the EU play complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security \textgreater \textgreater, consequently based on a longstanding cooperation NATO-EU strategic partnership will be enhanced, strengthened the political cooperation and increased the cooperation on issues of common interest. However, the Strategic Concept goes further stressing that NATO recognizes the value of a \textless \textless stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security \textgreater \textgreater supporting, as essential, non-EU Allies’ fullest involvement in EU defence efforts. All this, however, is noted once again in an official document, shall be accomplished avoiding unnecessary duplications in order to give the possibility to NATO effectively defend, always, \textless \textless every inch of Allied territory, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Allies and prevail against any aggressor \textgreater \textgreater\textsuperscript{17}.

Conclusions

The European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization need now, maybe more than ever, to proceed – and to be perceived to proceed – hand in hand in the struggle for security, in order to efficiently protect their citizens, credibly stand on the international stage, and uphold their values in front of rising, complex and unpredictable threats and challenges. The invasion of Ukraine \textless \textless led to the emergence of a unified transatlantic front, with Washington taking the lead in the response and Brussels assuming an equally active posture, despite different sensibilities at the national level. Sustaining this momentum will be one of the challenges for the Concept. If the invasion of Ukraine contributed to strengthening the transatl-

\textsuperscript{16} For an historical overview, see: De Leonardis, M. (2011). L’evoluzione storica dei Concetti Strategici della NATO. QUADERNI DEL DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE POLITICHE, 2011, 47-64.

\textsuperscript{17} NATO (2022) Strategic Concept, p. 6 (https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf)
lantic relationship and restoring NATO’s sense of purpose >>. The drafting and approval of the analyzed strategic documents is only one step more towards the building of a true political and military partnership between the two organizations, members of which are in many cases juxtapositionable. NATO, also due to the menace posed by the growingly aggressive Russian posture towards the West and its neighborhood, has found new life and purpose while, at the same time, the EU has finally recognized the need to shoulder its share of responsibility in the maintenance of global security. Collective defence, international security, global rules-based order are just some of the key pillars that will guide the EU-NATO partnership in the upcoming years, with the higher aim to protect their members – but also the international community as a whole – from a wide range of conventional, hybrid, and still unforeseeable threats to their security and stability. The EU is now finally building the capability to act as a true security provider, keeping the pace with a world ever more competitive and challenging, where malicious actors and hostile states are trying to substitute power politics, spheres of influence, and military might to diplomacy, multilateralism, and international cooperation. The goal is set, whether it will be fully reached or not is now up to the capacity to keep the common commitment alive and actively sustain the necessary political willingness of NATO and EU Member States to collaborate in security and defence issues – and Italy is particularly well positioned to do both.

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ABSTRACT

Peacekeeping faces a period of renewal due to the need to analyze large amounts of different types of data regarding conflict scenarios, mitigating the informational risk involved, ensuring accountability and preserving public trust in an age of asymmetric security threats. The confluence of artificial intelligence and other dual-use technologies requires peacekeeping to foresee new challenges in the cyber domain as a new conflict scenario, to improve the security of peacekeepers and civilian populations. In this context, cyber peacekeeping can be defined, not only as peacekeeping in cyberspace but, as the application of cyber potential in any domain to preserve peace. This study addresses cyber peacekeeping from a cyber intelligence perspective, with the use of artificial intelligence in order to analyze and investigate through OSINT and Sentiment Analysis on social media, some potential instabilities and dangerous situations in critical areas. The final goal is to support organizations in investigating the society’s thinking through social media and develop strategies to prevent potential anomalies, with the aim of ensuring better security in a peacekeeping mission.

keywords: cyber peacekeeping, intelligence, osint, machine learning, sentiment analysis

Introduction

Cyber intelligence is a central issue today as demonstrated, for example in Italy, by the urgent establishment of a National Cybersecurity Agency to implement measures for a safer country in the cyber domain in close connection with the Intelligence. By 2030, as declared by the United Na-
tions, the whole world will be connected to the Internet and consequent-
ly ‘monitored’. Therefore, the cyber domain will become even more the
central area of the human dimension, in all fields from economics to
politics, from information to education, with an unavoidable change in
the resulting geopolitical dimensions. It is no longer only those who con-
trol the sea, the land or the air who will have a geopolitical view of the
world, but rather those who, through cyberspace, control people’s minds
that will constitute the new battlefield equipped with strategic weapons
such as the misuse of social media in various dimensions such as informa-
tion manipulation, deception by activists, disinformation or threats
on the net. At the same time, in an increasingly ‘militarized’ Internet, cy-
ber warfare is becoming more and more prominent in future conflicts,
requiring new solutions to support governments in securing their assets,
and cyberspace has become the domain of choice for destabilization
campaigns and hostile activities not feasible in a conventional domain.
For the UN, cyber peacekeeping is an emerging multidisciplinary re-
search field that touches on technical, political, governmental and so-
cial domains of thought. In this respect, cyber peacekeeping can be
defined, not only as decisive support to peacekeeping in cyberspace,
but as the application of cyber capabilities in any domain (Robinson
et al., 2018), including the physical one, in order to preserve peace.
Despite the countless challenges for the implementation of a cyber
peacekeeping force, this concept can be integrated into the existing UN
peacekeeping organizational structure as a solution to address the cy-
ber component of future conflicts in crisis areas. In addition, the new
UN Peacekeeping Digital Transformation Strategy published in August
2021 (Guterres, 2021) shows the need for a data-driven approach
and the use of technology, especially given the increasing data vol-
umes, mainly due to the growing of Internet access and the use of
smartphones (Dorn, 2016) in peacekeeping mission target countries,
which has resulted in a technologically driven transformation of the
operational setting. Important implementations in the areas of arti-
ficial intelligence and machine learning are to be added, with some
promising initiatives for UN operations. For example, the MINUSMA
mission in Mali uses machine learning to detect hate-speech in radio
data in order to alert for potential unrest and the MONUSCO mis-
sion in Congo uses social media monitoring and artificial intelligence
in order to detect the perception of the mission on the population.
The potential of artificial intelligence tools also lies in suppor-
ting peacekeeping in conflict prediction, as demonstrated by several studies (Blair et al., 2017) in order to understand conflict dynamics and be able to design missions that are more suitable to prevent the re-emergence of new conflicts. Analysis through machine learning can also improve prevention capabilities (Duursma and Karlsrud, 2019) thus avoiding the situation of establishing a mission for the first time, or at the tactical level, allowing a more intelligent allocation of resources for daily tasks (Horowitz et al., 2018). Advances in Natural Language Processing (NLP) are in addition as tools for translation and interpretation and improve interoperability in multinational missions and in facilitating communication with the local population. Moreover, the language processing capability offers methodologies to analyze open-source information especially from social media platforms. By accessing to different types of information and in large quantities, it is possible to equip peacekeeping missions with a better comprehension of the operational environment, as well as to provide decision-making-based contingency response as part of the intelligence cycle (Dorn, 2016). The UN, aware of the possible benefits, is making efforts to make the best use of these new technologies, e.g. the Joint Mission Analysis Centers (JMACS) aim at a more integrated and predictive data-driven approach to peacekeeping with detailed reports. Nevertheless, the shift from “awareness” to “regulation” and “resource commitment” at the systemic level has yet to be realized. This study was conducted in the context of an internship period between CoESPU and the II level Master in Intelligence and ICT at University of Udine. The study proposes an approach to cyber peacekeeping through a cyber intelligence system that uses OSINT, NLP and Deep Learning, carrying out a Sentiment Analysis on social media in order to identify anomalies in the trend of sentiment that detect potential situations of instability especially in critical areas, theatre of peace missions. The proposed solution is a scalable and modular system that goes from the collection of data to the classification of sentiment, up to the detection of anomalies as an index of potential situations to investigate in order to improve the security of a peace mission. The main feature of the system is its applicability to different study crisis areas, including specific reference topics. The proposed methodology has been tested on social media Twitter in the African Sub-Saharan region of Sahel, although it is applicable to different areas or intelligence missions.
Cyber Peacekeeping and OSINT

Cyber is the new domain of warfare and the topic of cyber warfare is of great interest in the media, geopolitical issues and especially in research area. Many organizations are contemplating how to conduct cyber warfare, but few are discussing ways to mitigate or prevent cyber conflicts. Furthermore, in the field of research the area of how to restore and maintain peace following cyber warfare remains lacking (Robinson et al., 2018). According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), we can define cyber peace as “a universal order of cyberspace” built on a “healthy state of tranquillity, the absence of disorder or disturbance, and violence”. Given the deep geopolitical and cultural divisions among the cyber superpowers, such an outcome is quite unlikely. Moreover, although the term “cybersecurity” is commonly used in much of the West, in other countries such as Russia and China, they prefer to use the term “information security” since they are concerned not only with cyber attacks but with the content being carried. In a multipolar world, this concept of “information security” requires multinational cooperation to hinder the dissemination of information that encourages terrorism, extremism or threatens the political, economic and social stability of other countries, as well as their spiritual and cultural environment.

Although one of the main purposes of peacekeeping is to maintain international peace and security, the current UN approach to peacekeeping cannot be directly mapped to cyberspace (Akatyev and James, 2017). Cyberspace can also be a bridge or a threat, where some basic concepts do not exactly match. Introduced around 2003 by Cahill et al., and recognized as a future research topic, the concept of Cyber peacekeeping is investigated further in 2015 by Akatyev and James, when it is defined as a framework with the intention of maintaining peace in cyber and physical spaces affected by possible threats in cyberspace, with specific roles and functions in different phases: pre-conflict, during conflict, post-conflict. Although the use of the cyber domain is a relatively new aspect of warfare, the need for cyber peacekeeping is justified primarily by the fact that individuals are spending more and more time on digital devices than anywhere else and cyberspace is becoming a new realm of human activity with many opportunities, but just as many challenges. The need also arises with regard to human rights violations. For example, a national blackout or altered water supply has the potential to threaten the right to life. Equally important is the right of
every person to seek, receive and disseminate information through any means of communication. In addition, more subtle forms of cyber warfare, such as hacking or electoral manipulation, contribute to the need to maintain a cyber peace. The exact definition of cyber peacekeeping is subject to continuous debate (Bellamy and Williams, 2010). A more appropriate definition is the one according to the UN (Robinson et al., 2018): “The application of cyber capability to preserve peace, however fragile, where fighting has been stopped and to assist in the implementation of agreements reached by peacekeepers”. When talking about cyber peacekeeping, we also have to take into account the recent UN Digital Transformation Strategy for Peacekeeping (Guterres, 2021) that establishes the data-driven approach and the use of new technologies. While scenario, trend and early warning analyses are based on data collected in peacekeeping missions, information analysts in missions have not yet been involved in systematic analysis of data from such operations, through statistical modeling, nor have they attempted to predict events using machine learning techniques. On the one hand, analysts can provide a theory, according to the Intelligence Process, of how an event is affecting a certain outcome, on the other hand, data scientists may uncover patterns that analysts are currently unaware of. Even in data collection, JMAC does not structurally collect and analyze many sources of information which, as specified by Abilova and Novosseloff (2016), could include both military, police, humanitarian, and political intelligence, as well as information from social media monitoring. In particular, the polarizing role of social media with hate-speech influences the dynamics of conflict through: incitement to violence, dissemination of disinformation, propaganda, recruitment into armed groups. In this context, OSINT and cyber intelligence on social media is crucial to combat the so-called Global War On Terror (GWOT), to analyse ‘life models’ on civilian populations living in fragile countries, politically unstable or prone to outbreaks of violence (Guo et al., 2018). OSINT is an intelligence discipline that deals with the search, collection, and analysis of information that can be found freely without violating copyright or privacy rights. In the 1980s, military and intelligence services began gathering information from secret activities, such as trying to read an enemy’s mail or wiretapping phones to uncover hidden information. The attempt was then actually made by searching for freely available or officially released information. In those years, without social media, the only sources of information
were newspapers or public databases, and it was necessary to link them to make them useful. The terminology OSINT originally appeared for such “spying”. Today, OSINT can be categorized into several ways, depending on where the public data are located. Social Media Intelligence (SOCMINT) captures large amounts of data found in social media. SOC-MINT makes it possible to understand situations occurring in the virtual dimension of social media by collecting and analyzing users’ opinions. This could also make it possible to understand the origin or causes of various phenomena by reconstructing them.

Security agencies must face new technical, conceptual, and operational challenges in dealing with the rise of this new intelligence component. In fact, the enormous amount of data, provided by social media in real time, can be a problem for analysts, making it difficult to extract useful information. One of the biggest challenges is definitely the potential for prediction of unstable situations through the analysis of unstructured data. For this reason, the intelligence community requires new approaches to deal with social media challenges. In this direction, Sentiment Analysis, through NLP tools, allows the extraction of information from many textual sources and in particular from social media as a daily monitoring or regarding a specific event. A useful tool for preventing certain critical situations can be Sentiment Analysis and Anomaly Detection. These methodologies, by detecting opinions that differ from the “norm” through sentiment patterns and their temporal characteristics, can enable government organizations to intervene early or adopt the most appropriate strategies if necessary.

Model and case study

This paper proposes a modular system to investigate on Sentiment of a social media platform streaming in order to prevent some instability situation in crisis areas. The work won’t refer to a general approach to cyber peacekeeping but, mainly in physical-real context when the primary purpose is a preemptive analysis to investigate on what’s happening and be able to assess how dangerous an area is. Such an analysis could make it possible to predict potential problems that are not as visible in some areas affected by long-lasting social and geopolitical conflicts that bring about situations of instability and lack of security. The goal was to create a cyber intelligence system, as reliable as possible,
that would preemptively call attention to issues, social and otherwise, that can be captured by social media, including those from the local population. At this regard, the system, whose logical architecture is shown in Fig. 1, consists of a four Layer workflow.

**Collection Layer** - The first layer concerns the collection of data by geographical location and possibly by topic during a specifically chosen period of time. At the same time an existing sentiment labeled social media dataset is considered to be processed in the second layer.

**Classification Layer** - Both dataset are preprocessed with the same Natural Language Processing steps. A Sentiment Analysis model is trained on the existing social media dataset. The model is then used through transfer learning to classify new collected data in positive and negative instances.

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**Fig. 1: Logical architecture of the proposed system**

*Image: Logical architecture of the proposed system showing the four layers: Collection, Classification, Transfer Learning, and Anomaly Detection.*
Grouping Layer - In this layer time series sentiment data are constructed grouping the classification in hourly sum of positives and negatives samples. Anomaly Detection Layer - This layer is responsible of detecting anomalies in negative time series through a deep learning model specially created. The system was tested focusing on twitter social media, creating a Sentiment Analysis model trained on an existing Twitter dataset, and classifying the collected tweets in positives and negatives. Machine learning methods were used for anomaly detection in the negative sentiment time series extracted from the tweets. The purpose is to detect anomalous events inferred from the pattern of negative tweets in the time period under observation. Although experiments were conducted on twitter platform data, the system could be applied to other text data source, or media. The entire workflow, in fact, was conceived as a modular and scalable architecture. Twitter, like other social media, is a free platform where any individual can share opinions or moods about certain contexts. Through the process of opinion mining, it is possible to identify users’ opinions by analyzing the sentiment contained in shared messages. Sentiment Analysis on Twitter has already been used in the literature to try to understand situations in the real world also to predict and monitor events, such as market trends, political opinions or unpredictable events (Liao et al., 2017), (Barnaghi et al., 2016). In a recent study (Vernier et al., 2019), an innovative visualization system for Twitter data mining is presented, expressly designed to report a given event in real time through image sharing on the platform. Identifying the hidden sentiment is not an easy task and requires NLP and Machine Learning techniques. By collecting and analyzing this kind of information we can investigate the problems of a certain population especially in crisis areas, detecting certain trends in sentiment that could lead to instability and hinder peacekeeping. The experiment was conducted with reference to the Sahel region of Africa and specifically the “three borders area” between Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. This region, called Liptako-Gourma (Fig. 2), is a Jihadi domain where groups related to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State rule and mingle with local criminality.
People in the central Sahel face both attacks from armed Islamic groups and from security forces. There are also numerous conflicts between ethnic militias and local defense groups. Although traditional forms of media, such as radio and TV, remain very important across Africa, online forms of media, including social media, are gaining ground faster. In the last two decades there has been an impressive increase in the use of smart phones, so much so that in Mali there are more than 97.1 mobile phone registrations per 100 residents, with a mobile phone coverage rate of 91% (ITU Country Data, 2017), in addition there are 2.1 million social media users (Digital, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the context of cyber peacekeeping, a Cyber Intelligence system has been proposed consisting of an OSINT analysis on social media and Machine Learning techniques using Sentiment Anomaly Detection, in order to investigate negative sentiment in a crisis area to prevent potential instability situations.
The case study concerns the analysis of twitter social media in the Sahel region comprising Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and Northern Nigeria. Some critical aspects of this approach include: twitter accounts that are not always geo-localized, various languages used including local dialects in the text of tweets, lack of digitalization in some territories. Nevertheless, the obtained results showed that the method could be a useful tool to investigate people’s feelings during the evolution of certain critical situations, also allowing to discover some users potentially to be kept under observation. Future developments concern the use of topics as keywords in OSINT research, to contextualize the results more specifically. Further improvements can be made with the aim of automating certain steps of the process, such as data collection and translation.

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Strategies, disinformation techniques and cognitive warfare of jihadist organisations

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic allowed several non-state actors to exploit the multiple facets of the health emergency for strategic purposes, in particular operations identifiable within the Cognitive Warfare framework were conducted. This study focused on the propaganda operations conducted by the two main jihadist organisations, Islamic State and al-Qaeda. Both showed the use of cognitive tactics implemented by each other’s media infrastructure. Both actors carefully observed and interpreted the reactions of Western audiences and studied them in order to influence their threat perception and simultaneously continue recruiting. In fact, the use of propaganda was put in place taking into account the exponential revival by the Western media. In addition, online and offline supporters were urged not to pity or forget the alleged crimes committed by Westerners. The relevant literature has not yet provided an in-depth study of the use of techniques attributable to Cognitive Warfare by the two organisations and the ecosystem of online supporters during the pandemic. This analysis proposes an examination of techniques, narratives and propaganda through a combination of content analysis conducted within the social media populated by jihadist supporters and open-source data collection. The information gathered on jihadist organisations was subsequently encapsulated within the strategic framework of Cognitive Warfare. In particular, the analysis revealed that these terrorist organisations exploited communication in the pandemic era as a tool to influence and incite violence.
By conveying the underlying message of their ideology, they sought to capitalise on the pandemic situation in order to maintain the collective image of global jihad and expand both online and offline where the opportunity arose. The analysis shows how the two groups exploited the opportunities of the pandemic in different ways and with different outcomes. Although both initially adopted the Divine Punishment narrative, IS exploited its great capacity for online contamination to expand its reach by deploying different techniques targeting different audiences. While al-Qaeda has remained on official and institutional canons by targeting non-Islamic Western audiences and repurposing tactics and narratives already used. The study and analysis of the cognitive warfare techniques adopted by jihadist organisations can become a formidable tool for understanding the terrorist phenomenon and its evolution. The knowledge derived from such a study, besides enriching the methodological concept of Cognitive Warfare, can be used to identify new techniques adopted by other actors and ultimately to recognise the communicative processes of hostile non-state actors.

Jihadist Cognitive Warfare

“In cognitive warfare, the human mind becomes the battlefield. The aim is to change not only what people think, but how they think and act. Waged successfully, it shapes and influences individual and group beliefs and behaviours to favour an aggressor’s tactical or strategic objectives. In its extreme form, it has the potential to fracture and fragment an entire society, so that it no longer has the collective will to resist an adversary’s intentions. An opponent could conceivably subdue a society without resorting to outright force or coercion.”

Taking it for granted that the battlefield of cognitive warfare takes place within people’s cognitions and minds, we deduce the following logical steps: jihadist organisations operate on the internet in order to communicate, radicalise, recruit and attack. These operations can be included within the concept of cognitive warfare, since the very act of terrorism aims to destabilise the cognition of the society of those being targeted. As far as the communicative aspect is concerned, the internet is the medium of the cognitive operations of the organisations, and in particular the social platforms suitable for spreading propaganda Un-
derstanding the use of the Internet within networks linked to Islamic extremism emerges as a fundamental step to be able to understand the how jihadist organizations can operate within the cognitive warfare. In particular our analysis will focus the attention on the means of communication of (Islamist) Internet users and subsequently on propaganda. The existing literature is very extensive and is mainly dedicated to al-Qaeda and IS organisations, which does not exclude the fact that other fringes of extremism currently make use of the Internet for terrorist purposes (Conway 2017) and increasingly also policymakers and publics, that easy availability of violent extremist content online may have violent radicalizing effects. This article identifies a number of core questions regarding the interaction of violent extremism and terrorism and the Internet, particularly social media, that have yet to be adequately addressed and supplies a series of six follow-up suggestions, flowing from these questions, for progressing research in this area. These suggestions relate to (1, but it is equally evident that it was the jihadist organisations that experimented with new uses and gave rise to modi operandi that are still relevant today (Rudner 2017). This literature focuses on the study concerning the use of internet by jihadist organisations as a tool for propaganda, information sharing, fundraising, data mining, tactical/military communications in the field, strategic communications and finally for recruitment (Awan 2017). Al-Qaeda was the first terrorist organisation to capitalise on the exploitation of the Internet. The same document produced and issued by al-Qaeda; Twenty-Year Strategic Plan (2001-2020) places the internet as a key tool in the jihadist struggle. The entire second section of the document is dedicated to the internet and how its consequent use can mobilise the jihadist spirit worldwide (Rudner 2017); furthermore, in the fifth section of the same document, the concept of ‘Electronic Jihad’ is enucleated. The concept was subsequently operationalised into a mighty system of specialised websites (Meleagrou-Hitchens 2011) capable of covering the different dimensions of Qaidist Jihad through multiple activities including:

- Publicising the speeches of spokesmen.
- Incitement to violent jihad.
- Recruitment of internet operatives, the so-called ‘Internet Mujahedin’.
- Distribution of propaganda and translating it into several lan-
- Computer support.
- Paramilitary training.
- Information for the community on battles fought on the Jihad fronts.
- Engagement of specific targets with psychological warfare operations (Rudner 2017).

The aim of the system was to influence the ‘hearts and minds’ of supporters through the various activities outlined above; from this we can deduce that the Electronic Jihad is nothing but the ultimate expression of a globally extended virtual call to arms (Rudner 2017). Al-Qaeda has thus ‘occupied’ and militarised cyberspace, giving rise to a militant community, a digitised Ummah that has contributed and continues to contribute to the homogenisation of a political/religious thought that is also shaped by a narrative flow composed of multiple products: videos, magazines and news, immersed in cyberspace (Rudner 2017). The narrative flow also passes through groups and forums that provide opportunities for ideological contamination and thus radicalisation among the users themselves. The global capacity of the ‘internet’ tool was not only used against Western countries; but also, within the Arab-speaking states themselves; in fact, young Muslims, close to technological issues were also targets of radicalisation operations (Rudner 2017). As a side result of this global call-to-action, terrorist activities spread to other countries and became contaminated within war and/or social contexts. This diversifies the struggle and allows for the emergence of characteristic elements that in turn contribute to the formation of other terrorist realities.

A case in point is IS, born from the rib of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, which has also embraced a massive use of cybernetic resources (Nur Aziemah Binte Azman 2014). Regarding the use of social media/social networking platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, IS has proven to be able to exploit the features effectively, especially for recruitment purposes (Klausen 2015), amplifying the media reach of its military/terrorist endeavours and thanks to a linguistic diversification of its videos, it has been able to project itself transnationally (Awan 2017). Twitter and Facebook proved to be functional recruitment bases for terrorist purposes, as they ensured an extremely fast interchange of information.
and comments; moreover, through shares and retweets, the publicity and the revival of each media product was maximised. In addition to its undoubted expansive capacities, IS proved adept at exploiting the aggregating force of social media; this force allows the audience to act not only as a passive entity but as a pro-active group both in the production of cultural (in this case jihadist) material and in the internal interaction between users, fostering the development of real digital communities (Lietsala, Sirkkunen, and University of Tampere 2008). Starting with communities, IS has designed and implemented communicative and digital strategies to serve its purposes as a terrorist organization, including communicating its territorial expansion and media emphasis on attacks carried out around the world. Three explanatory examples of the strategies that IS has been able to implement through the communities established within social media are the Signaling Function, the Twitterstorm (Ammar and Xu 2018), and the Social Media War.

- **Signaling Function**: in 2018 in response to counterterrorism campaigns conducted by Twitter, Facebook, and Youtube, jihadist groups counterattacked by opening multiple accounts with the purpose of alerting the various communities of the arrival of important news (Ammar and Xu 2018); the account that would post the material would also be indicated at a later time.

- **the Twitterstorm** is a media bombardment strategy implemented by means of Twitter. Through massive relaunching of tweets and retweets in a short period of time, the hashtag referring to the designated media product also becomes visible to non-follower users of the page that created the hashtag; thus, visibility is further enhanced (Ammar and Xu 2018). Such operations require high efforts, long preparation timelines, and high levels of coordination; characteristics belonging to organized and militarized communities.

- **Social Media War**: In October 2018, Al-Hayat Media Centre published the eighth instalment of its “Inside the Khilafa” series, specifically featuring a section of the video dedicated to media operatives (munasirin). That section emphasized the use of media invasion strategies; these strategies were operationalized through the simultaneous opening of multiple channels and accounts so that the number of reopened channels and accounts outnumbered the closed ones. The goal of the Social Media War
was to increase offensive capabilities and ubiquity of communication. “If they close one account open another three, and if they close three, open another thirty [...]”

Contextually with the creation of IS communities, it produced retrospective ideas, symbols, and utopias on the basis of which to implement multiple patterns of radicalization (Awan 2017). Twitter proved to be a very useful recruitment platform through the publication of photo reportages of executions combined with the use of strategic hashtags such as #WorldCup (Awan 2017); in this way Twitter acted as an echo chamber by radiating the platform with Islamist narratives and violent images of the conflicts in Syria. The echo chamber effect in the virtual environment (also called the “virtual bubble effect”) facilitates the creation of a sense of commonality and belonging (community) by sharing and amplifying only specific ideological narratives. Unique jihadist thinking is redistributed, disseminated, reinforced (Awan 2017), and through constant repetition or “echo” within the social network (and messaging platforms), normalization of violence and other components of propaganda occurs (Baaken and Schlegel 2017). In other words, while the dissemination of propaganda is ensured by IS’s organizational structures and media, content and issues on the other hand are discussed, negotiated, and disseminated within the communities where the echo chamber operates (Baaken and Schlegel 2017). Although the echo chamber is not an artificial construct created by IS, it remains a strategically exploited phenomenon that is critical to the group’s success as a digital entity (Baaken and Schlegel 2017). As the preferred arena of evangelization for extremists, the echo chamber effect generates an imaginary space within which it is possible to identify oneself within a kind of “family” and assimilate new ideologies; in other words, a consuming and intoxicating source of meaning, a place where one finds friends, airs grievances, and receives emotional support (Winter 2016). Moreover, the echo chamber effect helped generate an idealized and much more “powerful” image of the self-styled “Islamic State” than it was (Klausen 2015). This cyber-tactic was implemented on a large scale during 2015 in the context of the conflict in Syria for recruitment and reputational purposes. A large part of the radicalizing material consists of high-quality videos and powerful galvanizing and instigating messages (call-to-action); media means that are very effective on young people by influencing their cognitive models and al-
tering their value patterns (Awan 2017). Indeed, the extensive and excessive use of social media by young people is well known, which can trigger feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, and loss of real-life poignancy on the one hand and forms of emotional attachment to virtual communities on the other (Bloom 2018). An interesting explanation of the internal cohesion of jihadist communities comes to us from the analysis of so-called visual motifs. Visual motifs, or in other words visual propaganda, facilitate the transmission of ideas and symbols through images, colours, and textual structures (Bearne 2003). Regarding jihadist organizations, the type of communication, conveyed through their visual motifs, has been defined as guerrilla communication (Matusitz and Olufowote 2016). This archetype of political communication is characterized by three key elements:

- Identification with the core values of Islam and emphasis on specific tenets (violent jihad).
- Methodical use of images that reference historical-emotional memories by triggering an emotional response from users.
- Production of persuasive and polarizing propaganda material (“us versus them”) (Matusitz and Olufowote 2016)

By analysing visual motifs through the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor, it is possible to explain, at least in part, the cultural cohesion of jihadist communities. Metaphors simultaneously possess deep emotional meanings and discursive content; through these inherent characteristics, producers of propaganda materials can trigger strong emotional responses from community members (Matusitz and Olufowote 2016). The metaphors present in jihadist videos, images, and speeches possess highly evocative traits and provide the elements of learning and development of ideology (Gow 2001), in this case the jihadist-Salafist ideology. Ultimately, the result achieved by IS in its use of Facebook and Twitter was embodied in the creation of a social (and digital) sphere of terror (Shehabat, Mitew, and Alzoubi 2017) built on hate-filled narratives, within which users were targeted and then radicalized. Such a modus operandi is unquestionably part of the legacy that Al-Qaeda has built by way of Electronic Jihad tactics.
COVID-era Propaganda

Even after their defeats in 2019, Islamic State and Al-Qaeda continued to assert their ideological-religious identity by focusing first and foremost on propaganda and proselytising, using new digital platforms such as Rocket Chat, Hoop and Element, which exploit high security parameters and new narratives, including COVID-19. Analysing the communication strategies of both organisations, two different modi operandi were recognised. As far as IS is concerned, including both its official strategic communication and the unofficial component composed of digital media actors (munasirin), it emerges how the virus has been associated with a true ally in the fight against Westerners. Pro-Daesh digital propaganda, linking up with institutional propaganda, referred to COVID-19 as the ‘soldier of Allah’, a propaganda constructs similar to the Russian concept of a ‘winter general’ (Allen and Chew 1981). In other words, a force at the caliphate’s disposal deployed against vulnerable Western military forces who, hypothetically already burdened by the health emergency, would prove to be easy targets. As far as the semi-official Voice of Hind magazine was concerned, bioterrorist attacks were even encouraged to be carried out by infected Muslims against Western positions. Interestingly, during the early stages of the virus spread, Daesh’s official weekly al-Naba cited COVID-19 as a ‘divine punishment’ against the Chinese for their persecution of the Uyghuri, a Muslim population in the Xinjiang region. This highlights how IS has adopted flexible communication strategies in order to opportunistically exploit COVID-19 by gradually following its rise both as a pandemic and as a main global media topic. As proof of this communication strategy, we note how in issue 225 of Al-Naba, despite the fact that the propaganda line remained that of the virus-allied ‘soldier of Allah’, an infographic appeared with indications on how not to be infected. Another interesting aspect lies in the use of the pandemic to regain a state or parastatal image of the Islamic State. in fact, although this is not the main narrative strand during the pandemic, materials were found that provided information about its symptoms and how not to contract the virus. On social media, Green Birds, pro-IS nonofficial mediatic unit, used a specific strategy exploiting the pandemic narrative but at the same stime remain careful not to get into the verbal hysteria of the years 2014-2019. The group spread propaganda about the pain of infected people to be an opportunity to atone (kafara) for their sins.
Al-Qaeda remained an “old” organization that provides violence. The leadership of al-Qaeda express its perception of a crisis which, before being a global pandemic, is perceived as a theological event. In other words, the God’s wrath. Although these groups are accustomed to conspiracy to “reveal” the hidden meaning of events, they do not venture much in the conspiracy theories. As for Al-Qaeda, its media apparatus was not as resilient in terms of communication; it therefore set up a single media vision related to the health emergency and maintained it. This was a similar construct to that of Daesh but specifically aimed at the allied Muslim audience. In official al-Qaeda communications, the virus was portrayed as an ‘invisible soldier’ who revealed the fallacy of the Western world. In this sense, the invisible soldier comes close to ‘divine punishment’ but does not become a weapon aimed at the West: rather, it remains a warning to the Muslims, a call for the awakening of the entire Ummah. At the same time, it becomes a clear expression of the inherent weakness of Western materialism. Al-Qaeda’s six-page official statement on COVID-19 is a PR-exercise, primarily targeting Western audiences (Avis, 2020, p. 12). AQ invited non-Muslims to study Islam during the lockdown and ponder how the pandemic has brought the most powerful nations of the world to their knees. The AQ statement contained a detailed analysis of the economic costs of Covid-19 in the US, and the senior leadership in Afghanistan mocked the US failure to provide ventilators for patients. The particular effectiveness of IS’s use of online propaganda during the pandemic is partly explained by the fact that unlike AQ, IS’s media machine was able to translate the actual territorial control and management of Syria and Iraq into a coherent and structured online media output (Prucha 2016). In other words, the ‘Islamic State’ only theorised in AQ publications, came to life and provided substance to the retrospective utopia contained in the propaganda disseminated on the web and even after its fall, propaganda was able to bring that historical period back into its own legacy by constructing a collective memory of a glorious and replicable near past. IS expended energy and resources to maintain this kind of media output, with Telegram the other online platforms becoming the central hub for establishing an ideal environment for propaganda dissemination and recruitment (Prucha 2018). The digital ecosystem or Digital Caliphate amplified and realised the image of kinetic operations conducted in the field and beyond; With the succession of military operations, including bombings, coordinated with media operations
(ghazwa) designed to disseminate the exploits of the ‘Soldiers of the Caliphate’, IS subsequently created Telegram channels for the translation of propaganda material into French, German, Italian, Russian, English and Indonesian, (Prucha 2018) so that the combined operations could be conducted on an international scale. Beginning with translation, the channels expanded to the production of original material, shaping a highly productive and locally diverse global community. This expansive process produced two parallel but mutually influenced lines of production: an official and a spontaneous one (Prucha 2018). Moreover, the same process has established such a powerful ideological and theological narrative on the web that it has been able to feed itself despite the territorial regression that IS has undergone; it is thus the theology of violence inherent in jihadist communications that is a key element within the narratives generated by IS’s propaganda machine (Lohlker 2016).

If we want to look at the cognitive operations carried out by jihadist organisations, other convergences can be traced. In particular where the ideological-narrative input was connected to the religious sphere, the terrorist groups achieved the same results. The narrative of divine punishment or God’s wrath is the common factor that shows a sort of similarity regarding the outcomes in terms of recruitment. In Somalia, (Al-Shabab which we can consider as a powerful parastatal actor of al-Qaeda) took for different days before adopting a common position on the epidemic, a long time for an unsurprisingly declaratory, crusader punishment, but this delay is a clear indicator of the complexity of the pandemic case for its shura. and at the same time IS’s counterpart, Wilayah Somal, followed the narrative of the central media direction aligning itself with the Divine Punishment. in this specific case Al-Shabab being an actor that manages and administers territory could not afford the use of different narratives to recruit or send messages to the West. Al-Shabab’s first objective is to maintain its semi-institutional position. on the other hand, IS and its Somali province possesses characteristics more akin to that of an insurgency, and consequently its propaganda could have undergone the narrative hybridisation typical of pro-IS online environments. Jihadists organizations used this situation to seduce and win the support of the local people, to encourage new vocations. Their topics are both mystical and fiercely anti-Western.
Conclusion: mapping jihadist cognitive warfare techniques

The information gathered from social media and content analysis was used in order to provide a methodological tool capable of developing effective communication strategies effective in the medium to long term. The proposed methodology is divided into three phases: mapping, comparison and recognition. Mapping takes the form of reviewing the main propaganda products (narratives, concepts, visual motifs) of the actors and then associating them with the corresponding ideological matrices. In this way, the policy maker will have a wide-ranging view of all relevant elements, including actors, ideologies and media products. Figure 1 shows an example of mapping applied to the actors examined by the paper. The comparison of propaganda strategies narratives and tools highlight their intrinsic diversity and similarities. The communication medium has become a flexible tactical/strategic option capable of hitting political/religious targets consistent with their respective ideologies through the development of newly developed narratives and visual motifs (Matusitz and Olufowote 2016). This allows jihadist movements all over the world to pursue similar objectives, mainly related to the expansion of their recruitment pool and the destabilisation of national contexts, increasing social tension and undermining the relationship of trust between rulers and citizens. On the other hand, as far as diversity is concerned, the ideological matrix of individual actors clearly distinguishes their methods of deployment and media targets. Jihadist actors have embedded the health crisis within the religious vision, associating it directly to a divine manifestation.

In summary, IS and al-Qaeda start from a very similar ideological core, i.e. jihadism. The main narratives can be summarised as Islamism, religious fundamentalism, antisemitism and anti-western views. Starting from this common core, the two organisations apply their cognitive warfare techniques. On the one hand, there is IS, which based on the collected material operates on different levels and extends its influence online as far as possible.
The combination of mapping and comparison leads to the recognition of the threat. At this stage, all previously processed information is integrated, providing a final detailed and specific picture of each threat analysed. From the emerged, it will then be possible to elaborate ad hoc counter strategies that, depending on the threat to be countered, will be implemented. The threat to be countered, will be implemented through the balanced action of constant monitoring of online platforms (places where extremist narratives are constructed) and digital counter operations (closing channels and moderating content) to limit its spread and propagation. In addition to the two factors mentioned above, it is necessary to have concrete resources to mitigate also the economic-social fac-
tors cause of the widespread malaise that makes the recipients of such propaganda more receptive. As already highlighted in this analysis, the methodological tool framed within the Cognitive Warfare concept is of vital importance for future operations, as it would ensure a high degree of identification of the threat and consequently a better allocation of resources aimed at executing the most correct countermeasures.

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The Protection of the environment in
Peacekeeping Operations

Environment; Armed Conflicts; Peacekeeping; United Nations; NATO;

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ABSTRACT

The right to have a clean and healthy environment belongs to the category of third-generation human rights, enshrined for the first time in the concluding Declaration adopted by the UN Conference on the Human Environment, held in June 1972 in Stockholm, and proclaimed by the International Court of Justice. The following paper aims to explain how this right has become embedded in international law, particularly within the peace operations organized by the United Nations and NATO. Indeed, the devastating effects of wars on the environment in which they take place have led to an increased focus on environmental protection by international organizations, even during the peculiar stage of peacekeeping missions. In fact, peacekeepers find themselves carrying out the missions in particularly environmentally sensitive places in the world, most often already the site of armed conflicts for several years and whose environment and ecosystem is extremely harmed. For this reason, there has been awareness about the importance of giving the peacekeepers very precise instructions not only in order to make their operation as environmentally less harmful as possible during the construction of camps and the conduct of missions but also in order to remedy the environmental damage suffered by the conflict-affected territory. In this regard, it is intended to highlight how both the international organizations, although with different instruments, actually use a common twofold approach in arranging instruments for environmental protection whenever a peace-

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keeping mission is organized and prepared. A first approach is carried out through the implementation of direct mandates to peacekeepers to ensure respect for the environment during military activities and the development of guidelines from which best practices can be learned; the second approach, on the other hand, takes the form more indirectly of a preventive perspective, through the provision of funds, the organization of specific training courses for military personnel and the writing of reports in which environmental damage is noted. To highlight this dual approach, the two organizations have been analyzed separately, starting with the United Nations and following with NATO. For each organization, a brief introduction was provided regarding their general position on environmental protection and its place in their founding charter. After that, the two aforementioned approaches are described individually, starting with the more direct one that examines the nature of mandates with specific environmental protection provisions or guidelines adopted and then analyzing the more indirect one, constituted by the trust funds and programs developed by the two organizations. In conclusion, the example of ENVSEC is revealed as a result of the United Nations and NATO working together for the first time on environmental protection. Such collaboration certainly bodes well for the future as the exchange of information regarding the techniques and tools adopted can only be a benefit to all. At the end of this study, it is possible to realize how the techniques used by each organization are actually the same: the tools, the documents produced, and the purposes are common to both and what differs is simply their names and sometimes the way in which they are implemented. This aspect amplifies the need for collaboration at the international level to cope with the various problems of implementation of the tools used, given, for example, the lack of monitoring mechanisms, uncertainty about the duration of missions, even more so after the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has in fact destabilized the organization of many peacekeeping missions and projects aimed at environmental protection.
INTRODUCTION

Respect for human rights is a principle that is independent of acts of law but inherent in the fact that we are individuals, human, and, as such, entitled to their respect. The most established way of classifying these rights is into ‘first, second and third generation’ rights, respectively Civil and political rights, Social, economic and cultural rights and in the end Solidarity rights and among this last category we find the right to a clean and healthy environment. As stated by the International Court of Justice (1996) <<[T]he environment is not an abstraction but represents the living space, the quality of life and the very health of human beings, including generations unborn.>> It has been fully acknowledged beyond doubt that our environment is in dire need of being protected as it is ruled and standardized both at national and international levels. Nevertheless, the concern has increased regarding the deteriorating effects of the armed conflicts on the environment, which is described in the academic debate by Bartolini and Pertile (2016) as <<the silent victim of warfare>>. It even happened during armed conflicts that ecosystems have been deliberately targeted to achieve political and military goals; however, the majority of the environmental damage is collateral or related to the preparation and execution phases of wars and to the managing strategies of local populations. Since environmental protection is a recently developed right, it has not been easy to frame it in the international debate and in relation to armed conflicts: environmental deterioration can be caused in most cases by an armed conflict but also by peacekeeping missions that involuntarily have to operate in countries already damaged by years of tensions. The need to protect the ecosystem is not only a moral duty towards the planet, but it is of vital importance to avoid the creation of further conflicts in relation to natural resources that may be lacking as a result of the conflict and to avoid environmental exploitation, which therefore may hinder the peace of the country and its return to normal life. In fact, after the deployment of military and civilian personnel and major logistics operations, peace operations have historically left an undesired environmental legacy in fragile and resource-scarce areas (Waleij, 2020).

4 UNEP, From Conflict to Peacebuilding. The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment, 2009, p. 15.
In their study, Bruch et al. (2016) sustain how peacekeeping operations happen in countries where degradation and contamination of natural resources exacerbate poverty and food insecurity, where natural resources are the target of armed violence, and it happened in the past that the impact of the troops’ activities would worsen the environmental situation, also unintendedly. In Darfur, for example, the UN humanitarian and peacekeeping community decided to purchase bricks made locally to stimulate the local economy, but because trees were used as fuel to fire the bricks, it caused an increase of deforestation in that area. To limit the impact of armed conflicts on the environment, there have been attempts to elaborate specific international agreements regarding the conduct of hostilities, which led to the enactment of the Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques (‘ENMOD Convention’) adopted in 1976 by the UN General Assembly. More general rules concerning this matter are also enshrined in Geneva Conventions Additional Protocol I 1977, articles 35 (3) and 55 (1). Even the International Law Commission at its sixty-fifth session in 2013, decided to include the topic Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts in its program of work, dedicating, in particular, a section related to the protection of the environment after the conflict, from Principle 23 to Principle 28. Being aware of the environmental damage caused by military activities, both the United Nations and the NATO Alliance started developing environmental policies and guidelines in order to provide environmental protection during post-conflict scenarios. In particular, their commitment in this regard is shown in two different ways: through the implementation of direct mandates to the peacekeepers to ensure their respect for the environment during the military activities and the development of guidelines from which they can learn the best practice; but also more indirectly in a preventive perspective, by arranging funds for the protection of the environment, settling specific pieces of training for the staff and the military personnel and through the drafting of reports in which environmental damage is noted, since they have proven to be extremely effective in order to prevent the commission of the same mistakes.

THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Even if in the United Nations Charter (1945) a specific referment to the environment does not appear, by reading the first article in whi-
ch it is stated that its purposes are to "take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace" and "achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character," we can easily include the importance of the protection of the environment in these lines. In fact, environmental protection is a very recent issue addressed to the member states and all over the world, considering that the UN was founded in 1945, so a goal-oriented or a historical approach is needed to interpret the UN Charter. If we want to make a comparison, it is by following the same goal-oriented approach that the UN started creating peacekeeping operations based on impartiality, self-defense, and consent of the State in which they are deployed, using the Chapter VII of the Charter as the more adequate legal basis. Therefore, despite their absence in the Charter, nowadays not only do these operations have a specific mandate by the UN to do what is necessary to prevent environmental damages during their activities, but also through the collaboration of the different UN Departments, every year new guidelines, strategies and measures are adopted to prevent the environmental degradation caused by military activities.

Starting from the direct approach, as explained by Shoshan (2016), UN peace operators often have to build military bases, headquarters, airfields, and camps in very fragile urban and rural environments with little infrastructure, which are constantly threatened by desertification, over-exploitation of natural resources, and climate variability. UN peacekeeping started concerning about the environmental impact of their missions only at the beginning of the 2000s with the deployment of several new-scale operations. This is the reason why it has developed an overarching policy to manage environmental issues with the UN Department of Operational Support (DOS). The aim pursued by the DOS is indeed to provide operational support to all UN Secretariat entities, including advisory, operational, and transactional support services in the environmental field, having recognized the potential damage that field operations can have on the environment, as well as on the local economy and on relations with host communities. In collaboration with the Departments for Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support (DPKO/DFS), they adopted an Environmental Policy for UN Field Mis-

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sions in 2009 and they created an Environment Section in 2016, which has designed an Environment Strategy. Maertens and Shoshan (2018) enlighten in their report that in September 2015 a dedicated Waste Management Policy for UN Field Missions was approved, which included doctrine, policies, procedures, and practices aimed to reduce the waste produced by the missions and then the proper dispose of such waste. The most ambitious program has been set by the Department of Field Support (DFS) in collaboration with the DOS, with the establishment of the Environment Strategy, which came into effect in 2017. Through this program the Departments planned, by June of 2023, to realize the deployment of <<responsible missions that achieve maximum efficiency in their use of natural resources and operate at minimum risk to people, societies, and ecosystems; contributing to a positive impact on these wherever possible.>> The Strategy is a living document which is constantly updated as progress evolve and in particular it points out a phase one in which the goals that they scheduled to achieve by June of 2020 are described across five pillars: energy, water and wastewater, solid waste, wider impact and the introduction of an environmental management system. This document underlines specific recommendations for the management of the peace operation. According to the study of Maertens and Shoshan (2018), first of all, it is required an increase in financial and human resources dedicated to the implementation of the Environment Strategy and to planning, like the commission of urban planners to analyze the local context and the Environmental Officers, who disseminate the important information and guidelines about the Environmental Policy and Strategy among the population, they conduct inspections, promote mainstreaming environmental policies into operations conducted by missions, advise other sections, and organize training and awareness-raising campaigns for field personnel. It is no less important the recommendation to use local capacities and materials where feasible, which, depending on the environmental and economic assessments of the possible long-term impact, can exponentially reduce the cost and environmental footprint of UN missions. Thanks to this initiative, since 2017 all the UN peacekeeping missions have used a standard template to develop their environmental action plan through data collection and budget planning. In June 2016, DFS establi-

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7 Ibidem.
THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

shed also a three-year technical assistance partnership with UNEP, the Rapid Environment and Climate Technical Assistance Facility (REACT), which recruited eight professionals in environmental engineering, so that they could provide technical assistance to headquarters and missions.  

The establishment of the Environment Strategy surely improved the work of a well-known UN peacekeeping operation. Indeed, back in 2013, the UN Security Council for the first time gave a peacekeeping operation in Mali a direct mandate to address the environmental consequences of its activities: the United Nations (UN) Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) was launched on July 1st, 2013 following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2100 on April 25th. The reason why there has been a particular consideration for the environment in this regard is that most of MINUSMA’s activities take place in northern Mali, a zone characterized by low population density, chronic droughts, and lack of water.  

In this matter, there has been substantial preparatory work to include environmental considerations in every aspect of the mission. The report (Maertens and Shoshan, 2018) explains the modalities for housing construction, the management and waste disposal, and the most considerable use possible of a resource as important as water. This was necessary because to support the deployment of the mission, many camps, operational headquarters, logistics hubs, and airports were built in numerous cities in Mali. A very relevant part of MINUSMA’s environmental action plan has been the training for military, police, and civilian personnel. Indeed, until January 2015 the Environment and Culture Unit trained almost 550 personnel on environmental management in Bamako, Douentza, Gao, Kidal, Mopti, and Timbuktu and more than 40 environmental visits were conducted to different sites to observe the management of solid and dangerous waste, energy, water, wastewater, flora, and fauna.  

The training of UN peacekeeping staff and troops has been suggested by the UNEP in its 2012 report, and they can be extremely useful for improving their practice during the missions.

<<Protecting the environment before, during, and after armed

8 Ibidem.
conflict must rise to the same level of political importance as protecting human rights, because a healthy environment is a foundation upon which peace and many human rights are realized.>> This statement by David Jensen, UNEP’s environmental peacebuilding officer, can be taken as a starting point to highlight how the United Nations started to do anything in their power not only to put a remedy to the environmental damages but also to prevent them. Indeed, the first and most important achievement has been the institution of UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It is the leading global environmental authority that has been working since 1972 against climate change, in favor of environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources. Having an autonomous mandate to provide guidance to its member states on environmental issues and policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programs within the UN system, the UNEP worked during these years through many levels and many initiatives. One of the most famous is for sure the Greening the Blue Initiative, which started on the 5th of June 2007, when the former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon publicly called on all UN agencies, funds, and programs to become climate neutral and go green. 11 By doing so, it was established that UN entities should: measure their environmental performance, reduce their environmental impacts, and offset unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, to extend UNEP’s range of action and analytical capacity, an Expert Advisory Group on Environment, Conflict, and Peacebuilding was established in February 2008 and ended up in a report, From Conflict to Peacebuilding, The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment (UN environment program, 2009). In general, it speaks about the connections that exist between the environment, conflicts, and UN operations. It is emphasized how crucial is the adoption of an appropriate action plan for the management of natural resources. In fact, a failure to take steps to establish the use of resources and plan their division among the populations or countries in the conflict, can cause the conflict to rekindle. Another significant tool adopted by UNEP is the UN Environment’s vision for Environmental Education & Training for Sustainable Development (EETSD). Experience has made us understand how the ways to protect the environment and to prevent the negative effects on it

can vary greatly, depending on the population and the area in which you are located; therefore it is essential to adopt an education strategy to achieve an holistic approach in order to protect the environment, to make people understand that all humans are responsible for its preservation and that everyone can do something, even minimal initiatives, to achieve an improvement in the quality of their life.\textsuperscript{12} Along the same line, from the UNEP’s report Greening the Blue Helmets, it emerges that the biggest and most organized UN peacekeeping missions provide proper training to the staff and the military personnel with the aim to raise awareness and identify the key environmental challenges faced by the mission in terms of waste management, water, and energy.\textsuperscript{13} For example, they have been trained to identify some challenges such as wastewater treatment, solid waste, hazardous waste segregation and disposal, ground pollution from oil spills, renewable energy technologies, and emergency preparedness plans. However, at this moment there seems not to be a systematic and comprehensive pre-deployment training on natural resources and the environment for UN peacekeeping personnel, plus the fact that these pieces of training often lack appropriate environmental expertise, or enough dedicated time to perform these additional duties.\textsuperscript{14} To avoid the degradation of the environment, direct activities in assisting the areas in need can be helpful, but Mason et al. (2008) describe in their study some recent avant-garde tools, the environmental Conflict Prevention Measures (CPMs), defined as measures that can help prevent conflict by specifically focusing on environmental factors. It is a logical consequence that, to avoid environmental damages, we need to avoid conflicts, or at least it is necessary to do what is possible to prevent them. Therefore, these measures, using the environment as a transversal topic, focus on the socio-economic and political use and management of the environment, rather than on purely technical or economic approaches. A perfect Conflict Prevention Measure needs to be concrete and applicable case by case, aiming at conflict prevention, as the name suggests, rather than post-conflict management and it addresses the underlying environmental trends potentially escalating a conflict, with the complex aspects of conflict dynamics.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{14} Idem, p. 22.
An example of an effective measure is the prospective impact assessment, used to make an evaluation of the risks and impacts prior to an important decision regarding a specific project, in order to minimize unwanted outcomes and thereby encourage the design of proper follow-ups, long-term sustainability, and structural reform. Examples of these assessments can include the EU Sustainability Impact Assessment and the Handbook for Sustainability Impact Assessment. Being these assessments at a national or regional level, often they cannot be used in different countries, so this is why the UN involvement has been fundamental with the establishment at the UNCED of the Agenda 21, which promotes a global action plan for sustainable development and requires that impact assessments be integrated into decision making processes.

NATO FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

NATO defines the environment as "the surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelations," but the concept of environmental protection does not appear in the North Atlantic Treaty, or in the NATO Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). However, the prevention principle was stated during the Rio Declaration in 1992 and then confirmed by the International Court of Justice in the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros case in 1997, according to which "in the field of environmental protection, vigilance and prevention are required on account of the often irreversible character of damage to the environment and of the limitations inherent in the very mechanism of reparation of this type of damage," led to the acceptance of this principle as a norm of customary international law, influencing the approach of NATO’s environmental protection policies, doctrine, and standardization agreements (NATO Legal Gazette, 2019, p. 4). Even if the environmental protection was not addressed by NATO military forces since the beginning, it has now become an essential goal for the conduct of successful modern, comprehensive operations. The main activities and commitments of NATO regarding the environment fall under two categories. The first one, called Environmental Protection, aims to protect the environment from the harmful impact of the military activities, providing specific teams and guidelines which the

personnel needs to follow during the missions. The second one, named Environmental Security, addresses security challenges emanating from the environment, with a specific focus on the prevention of the degradation of the environment, thanks to funds and collaborative initiatives.\(^\text{16}\) With the aim to reduce the environmental footprint of the operations and to respect the Environmental Protection (EP) standards, now all NATO missions include environmental considerations, having the NATO Military Principles and Policies for Environmental Protection as legal basis (2011). Also, since 1970s NATO is developing its environmental protection policy by proposing several guidelines and standards.\(^\text{17}\) Most importantly, two main groups are working on specific aspects of the environmental protection and they strive to respect environmental principles and policies under all conditions.\(^\text{18}\) the Environmental Protection Working Group (EPWG), under the Military Committee Joint Standardization Board that reports to the Military Committee; and the Specialist Team on Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection (STEEEP), under the Maritime Capability Group Ship Design and Maritime Mobility that reports through the NATO Naval Armaments Group to the Conference of National Armament Directors. The EPWG is composed of environmental policymakers, environmental experts, military engineers, and logisticians from NATO and interested Partner countries, whose goal is to reduce the deteriorating effects of the military operations on the environment by the developing guidelines, NATO policies, and best practices in the planning and implementation of operations and exercises.\(^\text{19}\) The EPWG has the task to develop standardization proposals or prepare Standardization Agreements (STANAGs). Indeed, the EPWG began to work on the STANAG 7141, Joint NATO Doctrine For Environmental Protection During NATO-led Military Activities, with the aim to help standardize doctrine for EP by Allied forces (NATO Legal Gazette, 2019 p. 56). Then, according to the Legal Gazette one of the most significant EP policies was launched, the MC 469 – NATO Military Principles and Policies for Environmental Protection, approved in June 2003 by the Military Committee and updated in 2011. The objective of this document is to facilitate the integration of EP into all NATO-led military activi-

\(^{18}\) Ibidem.
\(^{19}\) Ibidem.
ties, consistent with operational imperatives. In doing so, this document highlights the responsibility that military commanders have for the protection of the environment while they plan the military activities and furthermore it instructs them on how to apply the preservation measures that are more practical and feasible to conserve the environment and to reduce the damages of the NATO missions; the MC provides principles and policies in support of all NATO-led military activities and it stresses out the importance of early consideration of environmental aspects in the planning process.20 Given the fact that its content is very generic the Legal Gazette (2019, p. 40) affirms that SHAPE, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, started the revision of this document in order to describe in detail the specific roles and responsibilities at all levels and to coordinate EP efforts across NATO organizations, NATO Members, and partners. More detailed documents have been developed by NATO, firstly the STANAG 7141 Joint NATO Doctrine for Environmental Protection during NATO-led Military Activities 21 (which the EPWG is responsible to write and update) a promulgation letter in which the participating Nations agreed to implement the Allied Joint Environmental Protection Publication 4 (AJEPP-4). The STANAG 7141 refers to the environmental evaluations that the troops need to plan during an operation, for example how to prevent health hazards to the personnel and the surrounding local population, or how to prevent damage to that environment.22 An extremely helpful agreement has been the STANAG 2510 (Study Draft 4 15 Aug 2005), Joint NATO Waste Management Requirements During NATO Led Military Activities. This document was an important achievement in harmonizing waste management rules during military activities. In fact, the Legal Gazette (2019, p. 60) affirms that when the Operation Deny Flight over the Balkans was launched, it was recognized that the air forces of the nations all had different regulations regarding waste management, therefore discovering that a lot of waste ended up in unauthorized landfills, severely polluting the territory. The STEEEP is the custodian of all these publications. It aims to integrate environmental protection and energy efficiency regulations into technical requirements and specifications for

21 NATO Standardization Document Database, accessed on 10 June 2021.
armaments, equipment, and materials on ships, and for the ship-to-shore interface in the Allied and partner nations’ naval forces. A very innovative means used by NATO that has shown its particular attention to environmental protection has been the high-visibility exercise Trident Juncture 2018 (TRJE18) in Norway, the country’s largest NATO exercise since the 1980s described by Paxton (2018). Consisting of a total number of 50000 participants, the exercise required adequate preparation to minimize the impact of the troops on the environment, but above all to try to prevent it. According to the AJEPP-7 Best environmental protection practices for sustainability of military training areas, <<every person in the military […] should know and obey applicable environmental laws and regulations, exercise caution, prepare for reasonably foreseeable risks and respond to risks and incidents as soon as practicable>>, a violation of these rules would not only taint NATO’s reputation but could cause irreparable environmental damage (Legal Gazette, 2019, p. 152). During the TRJE18 specific Environmental Protection measures have been adopted and the EP Officers have been trained so that they could support the Commander and the unit in their planning process to avoid environmental damages with a view of prevention rather than cure. The greatest concerns of the Norwegian government were the risks of car accidents and the damages to cultivated grounds, which they tried to avoid by using outlying fields, in the inner nature. Unfortunately, this choice has not prevented the occurrence of damage to forests, and this is just one example that shows how difficult can be to make a correct assessment of the damages and how complicated it is to choose the lesser of the two evils when it comes to environmental damage in any case. Concerning is also the contamination of the waters that could poison fishes causing diseases, and the general well-being of the several nature reserves that inevitably suffer the footprint of the units. According to the NATO Legal Gazette (2019, p. 149) about 1069 cases of compensation have been asked to NATO due to the environmental damages, and although the harms cannot be undone, the acknowledgment and concern that all NATO states are giving to the environmental cause respects the organization’s aims and gives hope for a more effective and decisive collaboration towards the environment.

Switching to the indirect approach, the NATO Alliance is addressing security challenges emanating from the environment, such as depletion of natural resources, pollution, and so on. To do so, the Alliance committed itself not only by addressing the environmental damages provoked by the military activities but also by evaluating the environmental risks to security in general. A proactive role is fundamental to help the territories victims of conflicts to clean up mines, stockpiles of weapons, and unexploded remnants of war, which can keep causing serious damage to the population in a long term period.  

That is why NATO is leading environmental initiatives through the Science for Peace and Security Programme, which promotes security-related practical cooperation and dialogue with scientists, experts, and officials from Allied and partner countries, based on scientific research, innovation, and knowledge. Indeed, the shortage of natural resources, the contamination of waters caused by pollution, etc. results in serious environmental degradation which has the potential to significantly turn into violence and territorial tensions. For this reason and also because nowadays the environmental security and human development are strongly linked to the issue of nutrition and health, the funds provided by the Programme and its initiatives regarding an optimal water resources management and the development of sustainable consumption, are fundamental to prevent conflicts and to keep a safe lifestyle.

The program works through the proposals that are developed by the interested candidates and that must in any case fall within one of the four granting mechanisms conceived: Multi-Year Research Projects, Advanced Research Workshops, Advanced Training Courses, and Advanced Study Institutes. In this way, all the proposals will enter a selection process that will evaluate the application for funding submitted, the presence in the proposal of one of the key priorities of SPS (Science for Peace and Security Programme), and its impact on safety, as well as the scientific merit.

An example of the Science for Peace and Security project’s commitment has been the effective management of uranium industry wastes in the Central Asian Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajik-

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27 Ibidem.
istan, and Uzbekistan, with the aim to prevent health risks and environmental damage. The extracted uranium resulted in high levels of technologically enhanced natural radioactivity (TENORM) and therefore, given the absence of waste management in most of these areas, there is a serious spread of contamination beyond existing contaminated sites\textsuperscript{29}. The project lays the groundwork to establish nation-wide radon survey programs in the four concerned countries, with the aim to contribute to the establishment and upgrading of environmental radioactivity laboratories and to the training of personnel in the use of contemporary equipment, survey methods, and protocols\textsuperscript{30}. Following almost the same approach as the United Nations, NATO developed the Science and Technology Organization (STO), which promotes the production of scientific researches, also in the environmental field, for the development of innovative methodologies and techniques in the training of the military\textsuperscript{31}. These searches involve up to 6000 specifics and then result in real scientific reports that can be used by all the Allied. The STO is governed by the NATO Science and Technology Board (STB) and it has three executive bodies: the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE) in La Spezia, Italy; the Collaboration Support Office in Paris, France; and the Office of the Chief Scientist at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The main STO activities concern noise reduction, and the use of greener ammunition, and in particular there has been a wide study conducted by the CMRE about the impact that sonar systems can have on marine mammals’ health. An ongoing activity that the STO is carrying out since the beginning of 2021 when NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg addressed the Leaders Summit on Climate and stated that NATO has recognized climate change as a security challenge and that the Alliance will work through climate change research. Additionally, COP26, the climate conference organized annually by the United Nations under the Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was held in Glasgow on the 12th of November 2021. On that occasion, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that <<climate change is a threat to global security and peace, and NATO is in the field to reduce the impact of our militaries and make sure that our mis-

\textsuperscript{29} NATO - Science for Peace project - SIP 981742, accessed 27 June 2022.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibidem.
sions and capabilities are increasingly green. The Secretary outlined the three lines of action he intends to pursue: awareness and understanding of the climate security nexus, military emissions reductions, and adapting their forces and operations to changing circumstances so that they can operate in all conditions. Working hand-in-hand, the three STO executive bodies provide analyses of climate scenarios to the Chief Scientist so that he can inform the Secretary-General, as well as the Nations, on how to best prepare for future security challenges. Additionally, individual NATO member States and partners set up Trust Funds, to provide resources to partner countries so that they can implement practical projects to reduce their aging weapon stockpiles, clean up deteriorating rocket fuel, clear land contaminated by unexploded remnants of war and safely store ammunition. It was first launched in September 2000 with the specific purpose to provide a practical mechanism in order to assist partners with the safe destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel landmines. Indeed it is common knowledge that the presence of landmines causes soil degradation, deforestation and the heavy metals of which they are made pollute water resources causing an alteration of entire species’ populations by degrading habitats and altering food chains. Thanks to the Trust Funds project, countries have been able to meet their obligations under the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction. The NATO Legal Gazette (2019, p. 27) makes clear that the goal of EP efforts is to do whatever is possible to plan in advance and in an effective way, also by providing smart and prompt advice to the staff, with the aim to minimize the damages that could affect the environment or human health negatively. Naturally, once the damage occurs without the possibility to prevent it, it is fundamental to address it and to carry on with the mission with the awareness not to repeat the same mistake in the future.

34 NATO Trust Funds: supporting demilitarization and defense transformation projects, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natoq/topics_50082.htm#:~:text=Project%20development,with%20NATO%20may%20request%20assistance.&text=Projects%20may%20be%20initiated%20by%20either%20NATO%20member%20states%20or%20partner%20countries, accessed 27 June 2022.
ENVSEC

For a more effective outcome of their activities, the United Nations, in particular within the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and NATO started a collaboration by joining the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) together with other international partners, with the aim to contribute in reducing environment and security risks, strengthening cooperation between and within countries, providing a multistakeholder based analysis of environment and security risks and supporting a process whereby the identified risks are systematically addressed through strengthening policies, institutions, and capacities.36

Under ENVSEC the mechanism usually starts with a national request that identifies an environmental issue. After that, meetings and consultations are organized between various International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in order to ensure optimal coordination, identify the most critical environmental issues that require urgent resolution, and at the same time promote the initiative among the community of donors in order to obtain the necessary funds;37 it is also relevant to identify environmental problems that can trigger conflicts, and when an agreement is reached, they launch the program.38

An example of this effective collaboration has been the assessment of environmental and security issues in Eastern Europe by supporting several activities in the Pripyat river basin shared by Belarus and Ukraine since 2008.39 In particular, the main job consisted in the application in Belarus of UNECE Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change and Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention, with the aim of a flood risk assessment and monitoring of the situation that will be shared between the other ENVSEC projects. The results of this partnership have been encouraging: a comprehensive on-site assessment of flood risks in the Yaselda River Basin (a tributary of the Pripyat) was carried out, and an innovative flood warning system was developed, capable of integrating real-life monitoring data from automated assessment stations installed by the United Nations Development Programme.

(UNDP); also the rating curves for converting the measured water level to water flow were obtained for all locations and provide to Belarusian Hydrometeorological Service which operates the automated posts.40

CONCLUSION

We can surely affirm that the international community at this moment has a far better understanding of the degradation of the environment caused by the armed conflicts, and sometimes unintentionally from the impact provoked by the peacekeeping missions. It can be stated that both the UN and NATO have come up with a various multitude of solutions in recent years, not only for the direct protection of the environment but also by raising awareness on this delicate issue, which in fact concerns the entire world population. From direct mandates to peacekeepers during their missions, to funds set up specifically, environmental lessons given to populations who are victims of conflicts, and pieces of training organized for all soldiers and staff so that in situations of conflict they learn and prepare to pay attention to environmental issues. The measures are constantly evolving and are increasingly aimed at prevention rather than resolution of a problem caused, as it had been until a few years ago. To date, as it has been observed, a number of current peacekeeping missions have independently adopted environmental policies and undertaken impressive and far-reaching measures to introduce resource-efficient technologies to diminish the environmental impacts of their operations. Also, all major peace agreements signed between 2005 and 2011 have included detailed provisions on natural resources, as compared with only 50 percent of the agreements concluded between 1989 and 2004.41 The doctrine developed by the UN and NATO forms a solid basis for legal advisers, EP specialists, and other stakeholders to advise on the EP mission requirements. Many of the measures adopted by NATO are equivalent to those of the UN and vice versa, however, especially in the field of peace operations and therefore prevention, the rules are different, and they are based mainly on SOFA, UN resolutions, agreements, and documents drawn up by the various organizations. So there is still no inter-

40 Idem, p. 44.
national binding law that can operate for all types of peace operations, but each organization uses its own funds, programs, and procedures. Despite the progress that has been made, sometimes the tools in place are insufficient for monitoring compliance or to concretize effectively what is written on paper. In fact, a successful implementation continues to be hampered by a combination of factors: lack of monitoring mechanism, uncertainty in the duration of the mission which prevents a correct evaluation of costs and resources, and the political will of the host country to tackle illegal exploitation and the inability of the host-government to manage high-value natural resources in a transparent manner. To better face these issues and implement policies and guidelines designed by organizations, it is fundamental to strengthen the capacity to deliver early warning and early action in countries that are vulnerable to conflicts over natural resources and environmental issues, but also to integrate natural resource and environmental issues into post-conflict planning, and building better cooperation between all the organizations dealing with the environmental issue in this particular stage of the armed conflict. Furthermore, De Coning (2021) explains that during the Covid-19 pandemic the peacekeeping missions have gone through a phase of uncertainty and confusion as the virus significantly disrupted UN peacekeeping operations, forcing the international organizations to limit the operations to the most essential ones and necessarily excluding those mandates specifically aimed at environmental protection. After these unprecedented times, future peacekeeping operations are likely to be guided by a principled adaptive approach, which will allow them to adapt to the realities of the moment while remaining true to their fundamental form and identity. This approach is indeed driven by a set of principles that help the system maintain its core identity and function, some of which could be embodied in the very principles that are the offspring of the work of the International Law Commission.

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42 Ibid.
Constitutive elements of trafficking in human beings.
A multifaced crime.

Giulia Petrilli

ABSTRACT

In 2000, the United Nations approved the first International Treaty against Transnational Organized Crimes, the treaty was followed by two additional protocols. The first one is the “Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children”, and the second one is the “Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea, and air”. Taking into consideration these paramount international regulations, this work aims to examining the purposes of trafficking in human beings by analyzing the modern and long-standing implications in the international dimension. Therefore, the analysis will be dedicated to the investigation of the duties and responsibility of States to adapt their national laws on counter-trafficking, the obligation of realizing the protection of civilians by peacekeeping personnel; the step forward of international tribunals in designing the accountability for trafficking before the Courts. The focus will be also on the concept of sexual exploitation, going through the link between sexual violence, and conflict conditions that trigger people’s vulnerabilities. Sexual violence and sexual slavery are, historically speaking, means of warfare or ethnic cleansing, able to destroy the population’s identity. After investigating the link between conflict situations and the risk of trafficking, an overview of the role of anti-trafficking actions within the UN Security Council resolution mandate will be given. Trafficking in human beings is largely part of the Protection of Civilians.
Mandate, labeled by the United Nations as a primary mandate within peacekeeping missions. Furthermore, going through the decisions of the International Criminal Court, the steps forward made by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in the evolution of sex crimes as means of warfare will be investigated. This criminal perspective study will help to outline if the conviction of trafficking in human beings can be recognized by the International Criminal Court as a crime against humanity. To conclude, considering that the efforts of the international community and tribunals in shaping the crime are quite advanced, it will be evaluated, as a concrete praxis, to deal with human trafficking considering an intersectional approach to vulnerabilities and social processes.

Keywords: trafficking in persons, sexual slavery, protection of civilians, criminal perspective, intersectionality.

Introduction:

It might seem anachronistic that still today, elaborating strategies against trafficking in human beings is of great necessity. Just like interstate conflicts are back from the past, trafficking in persons is a highly widespread criminal phenomenon in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Therefore, international actors and lawmakers must strengthen their capacity to detect crime and prosecute traffickers. The way through which international actors implement counter-trafficking actions in the last decades mainly depends on the context where they are responsible to act. For this reason, the analysis will investigate the obligation of signatory States to include in their national laws specific provisions on the contrast of trafficking; then the evaluation of the link between conflicts and sexual crimes will lead to the structure of the protection of civilian mandate and how the Security Council has involved the anti-trafficking mandate. Lastly, the accountability before the International Criminal Court for human trafficking seems an essential step towards decreasing
the distance between human rights declarations and the refund of victims. The analysis of these three scenarios will allow us to have a better understanding of the reached goals and the efforts still needed to set an effective capacity to contrast trafficking.

Main body:

The main feature of trafficking in human beings, is its multifaceted nature. It can take several forms, starting from labour exploitation leading towards sexual exploitation, such violations might occur due to the exploitation of the weaknesses of the national system (the absence of workers’ rights) or due to the linkage with wartime.

Trafficking in human beings (hereafter THB) is a complex crime. It consists of three main aspects, as shown in article 3 of the Protocol to prevent, suppress, and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children (hereafter Palermo Protocol) entered into force on 25th December after the high-level Conference held in Palermo in 2003. Based on the cited article, the three elements are referred to as the conduct element, the means element, and the purpose element. Under conduct, the provision mentions the following actions: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt. For what concerns the means, it refers to threats, use of force, abuse of power, a condition of vulnerability or other forms of coercion that traffickers use in order to control and manipulate victims. The use of such generic terms, such as coercion, makes the commentators able to encompass both physical and psychological pressure, as well as any other form that is not strictly foreseen by the wording of the article. The last aspect of trafficking in persons is the purpose of exploitation. It is crucial to identify exploitation and recognized it as trafficking element. In other words, if the illicit conduct foreseen under article 3 of the Protocol occurs, it cannot be prosecuted as trafficking in persons in the absence of the purpose of exploitation. The exploitative purpose is realized at least through sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, removal of organs, or other forms of servitude. The role of consent is one of the most complex and intriguing topics related to the codification of THB. The Protocol doesn’t

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state that the presence of any forms of coercion invalidates the consent of the victim. However, the crime is not theoretically elaborated in the absence of consent. Whereas the interpretation of the role of consent in trafficking in human beings with adult victims is quite challenging, the irrelevance of consent in the case involving children is clear-cut. The reason for such strict interpretation is due to the assumption that children may not be conscious in their choices and therefore, when it comes to child victims of trafficking, judges do not consider if the children in question, have or have not given their consent.

On the 15th November of 2000, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, and the Protocol against smuggling of migrants by land, sea, and air. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Palermo Protocol on trafficking in human beings, the UN Special Rapporteur for trafficking in persons, especially women and children, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro (2020), stated that the foremost added value of the approval of the Palermo Protocol was the agreement reached among states parties on a shared definition of the crime of trafficking in human beings. In addition, the Palermo Protocol introduced the notion of abuse of power or a position of vulnerability. First of all, by enlisting all the conducts which constitute the crime of trafficking in human beings, the international community allowed the international and national courts to prosecute misconducts that before 2000, weren’t recognized and prosecuted as trafficking in human beings but, at least, as independent criminal acts. Nevertheless, it is worth to remember that the terminology of trafficking, even without any clarification on its content, was already included in the article 6 of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979, CEDAW) and in the article 35 of the Convention on the rights of the child (1989, CRC).

Secondly, the UN Special Rapporteur for Trafficking in Persons, stated

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that the introduction of the concept of abuse of power or a position of vulnerability has the intent to enlarge the discretionary judgment of the courts to what extent the interpretation of means of coercion. In the same intervention, Giammarinaro underlined the positive effect on the international community coming from the adoption of the two additional protocols to the Convention against Transnational Organized crime. As a matter of fact, after the entry into force of the Palermo Protocol, many instruments to combat trafficking in human beings were issued. Regarding an international level, in 2002 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published the Recommend Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking; in 2010 The UN General Assembly issued the United Nations Action Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The main feature of the document adopted by the General Assembly is that it informs the subject to a human-rights-based and gender-sensitive based approach.

At a regional level, many instruments for the protection of victims of trafficking were adopted after the signature of the Palermo Protocol. The Council of Europe approved in 2005 the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking and a group of experts on action against trafficking in Human Beings, responsible for the implementation of the Convention was established (GRETA); article 4 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa foreseen the obligation of the States to take effective measures to prevent and to protect women, to prosecute traffickers and to condemn this heinous crime; lastly, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution 4.

Even if the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, represents an important step forward in the fight against trafficking, scholars identified several flaws. According to article 5 paragraph 2 of the Protocol, after signing the international treaty, state parties are required to introduce in their national system, legislative measures in compliance with the purpose of the Protocol and aimed at criminalizing the conducts outlined in the article 3.

A recent study (Silver S., 2021), discussing the reforms of domestic law

in compliance with the international standards, argued that the Proto-
col doesn’t oblige States parties to approve holistic legislation in order
to combat all forms of trafficking. Therefore, article 5 leaves discretion
to national authorities in the adaptation of domestic law. Twenty years
after the adoption of the Palermo Protocol, Silver (2021) elaborated an
analysis of the anti-trafficking domestic laws which showed two main
trends. The first one is the trend of those states, such as Israel, which
omit to include in the trafficking definition the means element. On
one hand, this legislative choice facilitates the prosecution of the crime
before the court, on the other hand, due to this broadened definition,
national authorities can enlarge the definition without aligning with the
international standards. Conversely, these States, usually don’t foresee
the exemption of the means element when the crime involves a child
victim.

The second trend is represented by those States, such as the United
Kingdom and Australia, that require the movement element in the base
offense of trafficking. The movement element is not encompassed in the
definition provided by the Palermo Protocol, albeit some conduct the-
rein has the inherent action of movement. Applying a comprehensive
interpretation of the Palermo Protocol and of the Convention on Trans-
national Organized Crime, Article 34 of the Convention states that state
parties shall adopt their domestic anti-trafficking laws without taking
into consideration the transnationality of the crime. Consequently, some
countries wouldn’t assist victims of trafficking who haven’t crossed the
borders, even if, under international law, they will have the right to
be protected. The author (Silver S., 2021) concluded her research by
driving attention to the eventual consequence in terms of multinatio-
 nal cooperation in combating trafficking. In other words, not aligning
national anti-trafficking laws with the international standards in terms
of the definition of trafficking in human beings and its constitutive ele-
ments, would hinder the cooperation and the joint actions between law
enforcement teams in prosecuting this multifaceted crime.

According to the opinion of the former UN Special Rapporteur for traf-
ficking in persons, Maria Grazia Giammarinaro (2020), the general
Palermo Protocol’s shortcoming is in the drafters’ attitude to privilege
the repressive approach against criminal networks and migration ma-
nagement rather than the human rights dimension. The former UN
Special Rapporteur stated that the protocol inspiration is mainly focused
on the criminal justice response, and it is evident in the provisions of the international legislation dedicated to the protection of victims of trafficking and their status. Under article 7 of the Palermo Protocol, the State shall deal with the issuing of the permit to stay considering humanitarian factors. This approach is criticized because it is up to the State to outline conditions to stay or to be repatriated, without any clarification on the right of appeal. Lastly, the former UN Special Rapporteur concluded that, in the whole Protocol, there is no mention of the concept of the non-punishment of the victims for acts committed as a result of their being victims of trafficking. Therefore, many State parties of the Protocol didn’t include in their domestic anti-trafficking legislation provisions with this content.

In 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur for trafficking in persons, Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, presented to the Human Rights Council, the Recommended Principles and Guidelines to Human Rights and Human Trafficking. According to the second principle, states have the legal responsibility to prevent trafficking, investigate and prosecute traffickers and to assist and protect trafficked persons. In other words, state must respect a particular standard of care, able to ensure the respect of the right to effective remedies. The UN Special Rapporteur defined such obligations as substantial and procedural identified in the restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, and satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition 5. The UN Special Rapporteur with the report on Promotion and protection of human rights issued in 2014, expressed the necessity to ensure the fulfillment of a smooth identification procedure and the removal of the legal obstacles present in the national system, able to deny assistance and protection to the trafficked persons.

To the extent of the State’s responsibility to protect and assist a victim of trafficking, the turning point is the judgment by the European Court of Human Rights Rantsev v. Cyprus & Russia. Farrior (2010) concluded that the decision of the case law was crucial because the Court recognized that, trafficking in persons, even if not foreseen in the Convention as an autonomous crime, falls within article 4 of the European Convention of Human Rights (Slavery and Forced labor). The argument beyond this orientation is the Convention’s special features of being “(..) a living

instrument which must be interpreted in the light of present-day conditions.”\textsuperscript{6} Moreover, the Court, stated that States have positive obligations to combat trafficking and to implement measures to make the fight effective. The reasoning of the Court comes back to the content of the recommended principle number 2, which recalled the State to put in place measures to protect trafficked persons as well as prosecute traffickers.

In 2020 The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes issued a Global Report on trafficking in persons and the outcome of that report is that 50% of victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation, 38% for labor exploitation and 6 percent for forced criminal activities. Looking at the phenomenon of trafficking for labor exploitation, one of the main features is the fact that it can affect several economic sectors: domestic servitude, agriculture, fishing industry, mining and construction industry. Although labor exploitation may occur in very different economic sectors, trafficking for labor exploitation maintains the same characteristics: lower salaries and protection, informal employment, increasing number of working hours.\textsuperscript{7}

Besides the Palermo Protocol, the legal framework related to the forced labor includes the International Labor Convention n. 29 (1930), the Additional Protocol on Forced Labor n. 203 (2014), the international abolition of forced labor Convention n. 105 (1957). These legal instruments determine the international labor standards on forced labor and become the tools of the international community to fight labor exploitation.

Analyzing the exploitation of workers within the construction industry, it seems that the majority of victims are male and that the demand requires a higher level of low-skilled workers, often hired with a subcontracting procedure. Particularly interesting are the criticisms raised for the selection of Qatar as hosting country of the World Cup 2022. Due to Qatar’s reputation for the respect of workers’ rights, commentators argued that it was an opportunity to launder it through sports. In other words, by hosting such a world event, Qatar would have improved its imagine worldwide and hidden the poor work conditions endured by people (Nilsson E., 2022).

\textsuperscript{6} European Court of Human Rights, Rantsev v. Cyprus & Russia, 2010, §277
In 2017, Qatar introduced a reform of its labor law aiming an increasing the minimum waging and eliminating the Kafala system. The Kafala system is a sponsorship system which restrict the freedom of workers to quit their work and leave their employer. As a matter of fact, the investigation of such delicate subject must take into consideration all the structural and cultural differences among country. (Griffin A., 2021).

In this scenario, many workers are migrant workers who have fled their home country due to the lower job offers. As a result, they represent a huge labor supply and the hypothetical violations they can suffer might occur at different stages of the migration life cycle. In the recruitment phase, migrants tend to trust brokers providing information on how to obtain a work visa. In addition, work visas are often obtained as a result of corruption; In the deployment phase, workers are obliged to take other loans to travel to their work destination; in the employment phase they usually work over 60 hours per week in inhumane work conditions (Ganji K., 2016). Following the commitment of the International Labor Organization at an international level in 2011, The United Nations issue a non-binding document the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. First of all, the principles aim at ensuring the state obligation to protect individuals against human rights abuses committed by third parties by preventing, investigating, punishing and redressing abuses. Moreover, the Guiding Principles affirm that corporates have the responsibility to respect human rights by adopting due diligence able to mitigate and contrast negative impact of human rights violations (Bonnitcha J. et all., 2017). It is noteworthy that UN Guiding Principles refer to those human rights internationally recognized and enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Lastly, the third pillar of the Principles is the right of the victims to access to effective remedy through judicial and non-judicial means. The legal instruments implemented appear all very virtuous, however their enforcement is usually quite challenging. In order to find the causes of this trend, it is crucial to consider that national legal frameworks are ill-prepared for the prosecution of trafficking in economic sectors and very often officers are not always able to identify indicators of trafficking. Many domestic laws require the physical restriction of victims to convict who is in charge of exploitation. Hence, many cases fall into impunity. Difficulties in detecting trafficking in supply chains come from the plurality of actors that make the identification of
traffickers problematic. Furthermore, what enhance vulnerabilities of trafficked persons for forced labor is the power detained by employers and the bound of the workers who keep working in inhuman conditions rather than deciding hazardously to leave.

When it comes to such complex contests and harsh working conditions, the respect of law appears too remote to reach. Therefore, it seems a good practice to start from the study of the intersectional elements of vulnerabilities to restrict gaps that might occur between legal instruments and reality.

For what concerns the endemic relation between trafficking in human beings and conflict and post-conflict situations, it seems appropriate to define conflict as a multiplayer of population vulnerabilities (Giammarinaro M.G. 2022). Among scholars and international actors, this is the most popular interpretation of the way in which conflict fosters the risk of trafficking. Looking at the report of the UN Special Rapporteur issued in 2016 (A/71/303), two are the main comments in regard to trafficking and conflicts. On one hand, is underlined that those conflicts intensify pre-existing weaknesses and forms of discrimination, due to the absence of a well-structured center of power. Moreover, as a result of the destruction of the national government, it increases a climate of impunity that traffickers can benefit from.

According to this interpretation, women and children are the categories more at risk. The former are vulnerable because they are often denied access to social and economic resources and so, they remain dependent their male relatives. The latter are vulnerable by nature, due to their condition of being still in the process of growing.

Said that, in a conflict or post-conflict situations vulnerabilities are rather intersectional (e.g. sex, ethnicity, gender, nationality), it is worth to remember that trafficked persons are fragile also because, due to the outbreak of the war, they are obliged to flee their countries. Usually, while escaping from conflict zones, people must agree to pay a fictitious debt in order to leave their country. Through the creation of the fictitious debt, traffickers manipulate those who want to leave, and, in exchange of a safe passage or survival, escapers become victims of

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labor or sexual exploitation.

Despite the fact that trafficking is an endemic misconduct related to the conflicts, the international system provides different legal tools declaring the unlawfulness of the exploitation during conflicts and post-conflict situations. As we know, during an armed conflict the international humanitarian law is applicable. At the basis of this branch of law there are the principle of proportionality, the principle of distinction, the principle of military necessity and the principle of humanity. These four principles represent cornerstones in the development of all other international humanitarian regulations.

It is worth to focus on the principle of proportionality because it is one of the core principles of international humanitarian law and a general principle under international law. Under international humanitarian law, the principle of distinction establishes that attacks must never be directed against civilians, however, when the attacks are incidental, international humanitarian customary law states that attacks are prohibited if the loss of civilians would be excessive respect to the military advantage anticipated. Beyond the principle of proportionality applicable under Jus in bello, is easy to find the purpose of the entire international humanitarian law, devoted to limit the effects of war and reduce human suffering.

Proportionality is also treated under international human right law, as one of the basic principles in the use of force along with legality, accountability and necessity. The use of force must be unavoidable and proportional to lawful objectives. At the same time the principle of proportionality, as general principle of international law, might drive the balance between human rights. In this scenario, and according to article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, States can derogate their human rights obligations in time of declared emergency and up to the necessity, without any discrimination on the ground of race, sex, color, religion, language and social origins. On one hand, the Covenant allows the derogation of rights such as freedom of expression when it has a discriminatory content, or freedom

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of movement when it comes to pandemic. On the other hand, under international human rights law there are some absolute rights such as freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, the right to equal recognition before the law or the prohibition of slavery that wouldn’t be derogated under any circumstances 11.

Going back to the international humanitarian law and gender-based violence, international humanitarian customary law 12 states that: “Rape and other forms of sexual violence are prohibited”; in addition, the common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions prohibits “outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment”. Article 27 of the fourth Geneva Convention declares that “Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault”. Moreover, the two additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention affirms that “Women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault”. Considering the noteworthy development of international humanitarian regulations and the common use of rape as a mean of war (O’Brien M., 2011), the relation between conflict situations and a misconduct based on the exercise of control and power on the victim, becomes a pre-existing argument when it comes to the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

Despite the remarkable attention to the prohibition of sexual violence under international humanitarian law, other branches of law provide specific protection to the human dignity damaged by sexual violence or sexual exploitation. To reflect such protection, it is worth mentioning the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), which constitute part of the International Bill of Rights and where the provisions on the right to life, liberty and security, the freedom of torture and freedom of slavery are enshrined. To conclude, when a cease-fire is reached, sexual violence, and sexual exploitation are prosecuted as well under human rights law (O’Brien M., 2015).

In 2015, the President of the Security Council effectively addressed the trafficking issue by recalling member states to the implementation of

11 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, art. 4 §2.
12 International Committee for the Red Cross, Customary International Law study, Vol. 1, Rule 93, available at https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1
the several United Nations Security Council Resolutions concerning the protection of civilians and the anti-trafficking actions. The President recalled member states upon their duty to implement regulations on identification mechanisms and access to protection, especially in relation to the conflicts. Two are the most powerful arguments expressed by the President. Firstly, was recognized the nature of sexual and gender-based violence as part of the ideology of terrorist groups. For what concerns UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, she reaffirmed the prohibition to penalize trafficked persons due to their involvement in unlawful actions. In other words, the President supported the implementation of the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking for misconducts committed as a result of the involvement in illicit networks.

Even if the President statement shows a large commitment in raising awareness of the international community on such delicate topics, the need to shed the light on the protection of civilians during conflicts and in post-conflict situations already emerged in 1999. It was the UN Security Council Resolution n. 1265/1999 that, for the first time, dealt with the negative impacts of conflict on the civilians and the protection, through UN peace operations, was involving in the resolution mandate. Since 1999, the mission mandate has become more and more detailed to the point that in the Security Council resolution deploying the UN mission in Mali, instructs UN personnel to support investigative and judicial activities to detect mass atrocities and transnational organized crime. The protection of civilians mandate stated, in a clearer way, the need to contrast the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. Moreover, scholars (Bove V. and Ruggeri A., 2015) concluded that the presence of peacekeeping missions has a huge impact on the restraint of violence against civilians. They suggested that UN personnel has a deterrence function, meaning that their presence avoids the widespread of violence against civilians in non-conflict areas. Moreover, after the cease-fire, local authorities are more committed to follow legal routes to set up governmental structures. Lastly, peacekeepers represent an enormous source of information thank to their constant proximity to the population. As a matter of fact, by sharing information, the UN personnel has a crucial role in the peacemaking process.

The development of the resolution mandate is coherent with the tremendous transformation of peace operations during decades. With the expression “peace operations” we refer to all forms of peacekeeping authorized from the UN security Council (Diehl P. and Druckman F., 2018). However, in the practice, United Nations have developed different forms of peacekeeping depending on the phase of the conflict in which they are deployed and their purposes. Over decades the deployed actors have changed, and the mandates started to overlap to become integrated (e.g. a clear-cut example of an integrated mandate is the relationship between the protection of civilians mandate and the child protection mandate). The current situation of the UN deployments is the outcome of a long-term transformation which started with the cease-fire monitoring missions, through peace operations specialized on electoral observation, on rule of law, on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the protection of population from human rights abuses and violations (Diehl P. and Druckman D., 2018).

Each word of the protection of civilians mandate represents a landmark in pursuing the security of civilians. As we know, at the basis of peacekeeping mission there are three milestone principles: the consent of the parties, otherwise the mission would become part of the conflict and the intervention would be an enforcement operation; the impartiality of the mission in order to ensure United Nations credibility and cooperation among actors in the field, the prohibition of the use of force (Peter M., 2015). It is good to remember that under international law the prohibition of the use of force against the integrity or the sovereignty of a national state is a general principle of customary law, enshrined in the article 2 paragraph 4 of the UN Charter.

Within the mission, peacekeepers may use the force when authorized by the Security Council, acting in self-defense or in defense of the mandate (Peter M., 2015). Therefore, looking at the wording of the mandate, resolution become crucial in the investigation of the aims of the mission and the means allowed. Peacekeepers must protect civilian according to their available resources to fight the threats in the area in which the mission is deployed by using “all necessary measures”. The presence of this last sentence is quintessential to have a better understanding of the limit of the peacekeeper’s intervention. As a matter of fact, by using the terms “all necessary measures”, the Security Council allows UN forces to carry out all necessary action up to and including deadly force.
Another important issue regarding the protection of civilian is the role of the hosting state which has agreed to the deployment of the mission. The primary responsibility of the protection of civilian bears on the host state and, only if the State is unable or unwilling to fulfill its duty, UN forces must take over as a subsidiary actor. As a resulting course of actions, if the national state is responsible for human rights violations against civilians, peacekeepers are, under their mandate, obliged to intervene even against the will of national government.

The obligation to act against the hosting state responsible for human rights violations - bearing on the personnel deployed - seems coherent with the primary responsibility of the government and all its institutional actors to protect, respect, and fulfill their human rights obligations.

The commitment of the United Nations to contrast trafficking in peace operations is well-defined in the UN Security Council Resolution 2331/2016. Among the most important statements, there was the priority to set up procedures ensuring the identification and assistance of victims of trafficking and the recognition of the strict link between trafficking, gender-based violence, and conflict-related sexual violence.

Looking at the experience in the field, many are the best practices that have been collected in the last “2021 Annual Summaries of Activities and Good Practices in Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence by United Nations Peacekeeping Missions”.

Four are the peacekeeping mission that has been tasked by the Security Council with the specific mandate to prevent and respond to CRSV, and those are MINUSCA in the Central African Republic (CAR), MINUSMA in Mali, MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and UNMISS in South Sudan. In Mali, sexual violence is the most perceived risk among girls and the second for women living in conflict areas. Unfortunately, what we have analyzed before, is confirmed by data since, in CAR and South Sudan, sexual violence is a toll of control of rival ethnic communities and a means of retaliation against civilians in conflict areas.

One of the first shortcomings underlined concerning the Palermo Proto-

16 United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Res. 2331 (11 November 2016)
col was the absence of a victim-centered approach instead of a criminal response. However, the information provided by the Annual summaries is in contrast with this argument. MINUSCA field offices have involved survivors of sexual violence in politics, especially in the renewal of peace agreement. The program is aimed at rebuilding the relationship between survivors and the society they rejoint. In addition, to empower victims of sexual violence, all the cited United Nations missions have published videos and public statements on the stigma endured by the victims to sensitize locals on avoiding marginalization and guilty feelings in survivors. Among the best practices collected, it is worthy to remind the constant implementation of training modules. The CRSV modules were developed by MINUSMA and the Malian Police to increase the capacity of the national police in addressing those sexual crimes.

As we know the operational concept of protection of civilians in peacekeeping is made up of three tiers that can be implemented simultaneously or not. The three tiers are protection through dialogue and engagement, the provision of physical protection, and the establishment of a protective environment. These operational concepts are useful to read the activities implemented by the MINUSCA personnel in CAR. During the annual transhumance, sexual violence is quite common therefore, the mission has increased patrols and involved community leaders in the identification process of sexual violence cases. The involvement of the local community in the detection of sexual violence and aggression might be identified as one of the foremost episodes of protection through dialogue and engagement.

For what concerns the accountability for sexual violence cases, all the cited peacekeeping missions have developed best practices to avoid impunity for perpetrators by affecting the rule of law and the judiciary of the hosting states.

MONUSCO allowed victims and witnesses to participate safely in the trial against a former armed group, found guilty of rape, murder, use of children, and convicted of crimes against humanity to life imprisonment. Moreover, in Mali, a team of experts in the Rule of Law elaborated an evaluation report on conflict-related sexual violence cases, pending before the Court, to identify the most overriding ones. Regarding the reparation for victims, all the cited peacekeeping missions create a partnership with the Global Survivor’s Fund to increase and facilitate
access to redress. Lastly, strong support came from the synergy between the mission and civil society organizations that have been crucial in Mali in the re-establishment of the criminal justice chain. Their efforts were dedicated to the collection of evidence of the violations, setting up the criminal proceedings before the Court, and assisting victims during the trial. The examples of best practices provided by the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations tried to reduce the impact of sexual violence on the community and they seem mandatory action to effectively address and prevent trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation. As a matter of fact, rape might be the first step, especially in conflict zones, to create an illicit network of sexual slavery. Therefore, exploring the field under which circumstances sexual violence occurs means addressing possible future trafficking cases by analyzing the intersection between gender, class, race, and social process.

In 2009, the Security Council Resolution declared the priority of the protection of civilians mandate, “reaffirming that parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians” 18. Beyond these words, there is the intention to shed the light on the critical issue of targeting of civilians during conflicts.

Albeit the principle of distinction and the prohibition of attacks directed to civilians seems to be fixed in the stone as the first rule of customary law under international humanitarian law, civilians are constantly targeted by the parties of the conflicts (Bove V. e Ruggeri A., 2015).

Sexual assault as a gender-based violence is historically part of war strategies. In roman literature, we read one of the most ancient episodes of women assault during a war: the abduction of the Sabine Women. Historians debated if the purpose of the abduction of Sabine women was the intent to have more women, to give birth to more children and strengthen the new state or if it was merely a sexual assault. Whatever the aim of the abduction was, the scheme seems to be the same in the early history of Rome as well as in nowadays. As a result, the landmark resolution of the Security Council number 1325 on wo-


18 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Res 1894 (11 November 2009)
men, peace and security was issued in 2000 and therein member states were called upon the respect of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law provisions applicable to the right and protection of female civilians from gender-based violence, especially rape or other sexual abuse in situations of conflicts.

During conflicts, sexual assaults against women may be used as an indirect attack against men, to weaken them and prove that they can’t protect women (O’Brien M., 2015). Rape in wartime might have different reasons: it might be perpetrated as a tactic to humiliate, intimidate and torture the enemies with obvious consequence on women’s identity. In many societies, women victims of rape lose their purity and therefore are condemned along with their children to the society stigmatization. If we look at genocides, rape aims to destroy a particular ethnic group or a genus of people, creating an ethnic cleansing.

This is what has happened in Rwanda where Tutsi women were highly targeted due to an effective propaganda against them (Weitsman P., 2008). The purpose of rape as a weapon of war is clearly expressed in two landmark judgments. The first one is the case law Prosecutor v. Akayesu before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In that judgment rapes were encompassed under the rubric genocide because the occurrence of genocide has been already met. This assumption is noteworthy due to the fact that the Court recognized that the mens rea of genocide - the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” was given. In the second case law Prosecutor v. Kunarac the rape recognized within the legal framework of the crime against humanity. As a result, the burden of proof of the mens rea was lower, having to demonstrate the knowledge of the consequence of misconducts that is the widespread and systematic attack against civilians (Fountain C.J., 2013)

The consequence of rape campaigns during armed conflict affects the identity of the population. In the war’s aftermath stigmatization affects not only raped women, who have lost their social value, but also children who are labeled as “children of hate”. As an example, the intention to impregnate Bosnia Muslim women was the foremost objective in the mass sexual assaults committed in Bosnia in 1992 (Weitsman P., 2008). As we know, when rape is used as a war strategy the aim is to destroy the population’s identity. With a similar purpose, cultural herita-
ge is also very often under attack as a way to undermine a population affecting its memory and critical history and complicating the reconciliation process after the war. All the parties involved in the conflict might find a way to heal by going through a process of reconciliation with their history and culture, therefore a restart could stem from their cultural heritage (Avrami E. et al., 2019).

This analysis has shown the linkage between conflicts and sexual assaults, however in many cases maybe something more occurred (Weitsman P., 2008).

According to the Nigerian terrorist practice, young women are abducted and sold as sexual slaves on the market in order to reward combatants (Giammarinaro M.G. 2022); in Rwanda, Hutu combatants abducted Tutsi women and held them for years as sexual slaves. This narrative clearly expresses the interconnection between terrorism, trafficking in human beings and conflict related sexual violence. The conflict related sexual violence can conduct to trafficking in human beings and likewise trafficking and conflict related sexual violence can facilitate the terrorist groups (De Brouwer A. et al., 2020).

Despite the fact that under the Rome Statue trafficking in human beings is not codified and the Palermo Protocol doesn’t provide commentators with a definition of exploitation, it is noteworthy to investigate the development of sex crimes and its possible connection with the crime of trafficking. Firstly, enshrined in the International Criminal Court Statute, there are many misconducts like rape, enslavement, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, torture or inhuman and degrading treatment that might be at the basis of the exploitation according to article 3 of the Protocol.

It is not predictable if article 7 of the Rome Statute will become the legal basis for future convictions. Nevertheless, it could happen considering the great contribution of the international tribunals on the jurisprudence development around sexual crimes. Without the interpretation and definition provided by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia on rape, enslavement, and the differences between the latter and sexual slavery, it wouldn’t be possible to introduce nowadays trafficking in persons as crimes within the jurisdiction ratione materie of the ICC.
The first milestone case law was the Akayesu case. In 1998 the Trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda expressed the first definition of rape under international law. The Court stated that rape is “a physical invasion of a sexual nature, committed on a person under circumstances which are coercive.”

For what concerns the consensus element, Akayesu affirmed that under conditions of genocide, the sexual act would never have been consensual. As a result, consent wasn’t an element of consideration in the crime of rape.

The first definition of rape was posed, and it was recognized as crime against humanity and as a crime of genocide, however it was revised from the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). In the Furundzija case, the ICTY detailed and expanded the concept of rape providing definitions of acts and body parts affected by the crime and recalling the circumstances of coercion. With the conviction of Kunarac, the ICTY added the crucial element of consent by saying in §129 of the Appeal judgment that the absence of consent is a condition sine qua non of rape and that “Force or threat of force provides clear evidence of non-consent, but force is not an element per se of rape” (MacKinnon A., 2006).

As we know, the Statute of the International Criminal Court doesn’t codify trafficking in human beings as actus reus. However, the interpretation of article 7 of the Statute might be used as the legal basis of the conviction for trafficking. Article 7 foresees under the first paragraph all acts with a sexual nature. On the contrary, the second paragraph of article 7 codifies the conduct of enslavement, interpreted as the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over a person. This classification seems really clear-cut; however, the drafting of article 7 was quite controversial.

During the negotiation of the Rome Statute, there were two different orientations on the structure of article 7 concerning enslavement and slavery. Some State delegates proposed to elaborate one single category of crime where enslavement would encompass sexual and labor trafficking, and slavery would have been a subcategory of the principal crime. This approach was criticized because it would have enlarged the number of actus rei, weakening the gravity of all mentioned conducts. Others State delegates, trying to avoid this outcome, recommended to

CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS.
A MULTIFACED CRIME.

separate sexual slavery and enslavement. By doing so, enslavement would have encompassed all crimes involving the exercise of power of ownership on a person, whereas sexual slavery only the conducts implying sex nature. The drafters supported the separation of the two crimes to highlight the relevance of sexual crimes (Alhadi N., 2020).

Although the Rome Statute separates sexual slavery and enslavement, legislations are living instruments, therefore a clear interpretation is crucial to enforce the law. The interpretation of article 7 of the Rome Statute has been controversial just like its formulation. Scholars argued that the interpretation of article 7 must consider the crime of enslavement as part of customary law and jus cogens, so mandatory. In addition, the notion of slavery and enslavement has evolved in customary law. Given this assumption, scholars suggested a broad interpretation of enslavement able to include new forms of acts committed with the intention to produce physical suffering and psychological trauma (Pocar F., 2007).

Based on this interpretation the Appeal Chamber of the International Criminal Court for Former Yugoslavia in the case law Prosecutor v. Kunarac, declared that the absence of a complete ownership in not an obstacle to identify and recognize enslavement. With this decision, the Tribunal applied a broader definition of enslavement which didn’t correspond to the formal power of ownership (chattel slavery). Moving to the identification of trafficking as a crime against humanity and, as a result of this interpretation, to identify enslavement as crime against humanity, the burden of proof would have been satisfied if prosecutor demonstrate that traffickers participate in the creation of something similar to ownership (Alhadi N., 2020).

Among the factors that have to be taken into consideration when it comes to convictions for trafficking in human beings before an international tribunal, there is the chronological order in which regulations were issued. The Palermo Protocol was adopted in 2000 and the Statute of the International Criminal Courts was signed in 1998, therefore the definition of trafficking in human beings is not included in the Rome Statute. As a result, in the Court decisions, there is no room for an express conviction for trafficking. The only useful tool available for international judges might be the interpretation of the Statute, starting from the conduct of enslavement and sexual slavery already present among the provisions. Considering this discrepancy, scholars argued that trafficking in
human beings for sexual or labor exploitation can smoothly result from the conducts enlisted in article 7 of the Rome Statute (Pocar F., 2007).

Conclusions:

From the analysis of the human trafficking legislation, the anti-trafficking mandate in the peacekeeping missions, and the International Criminal Court decisions, emerged that the prosecution of this heinous crime is more developed in its formal and juridical aspects rather than in the practice. In conflict or post-conflict situations the lack of awareness of trafficking indicators is not the only obstacle that actors in the field must face. Setting up referral systems, mechanisms of assistance for victims, and supporting their social reintegration requires the presence of well-structured institutions and civil society organizations that often cannot be present in destabilized contexts.

Considering all factors that might concur in the elaboration of an effective anti-trafficking strategy, it seems worthwhile to consider an intersectional approach.

The theory of intersectionality works as an analytic mechanism able to detect the intersection between factors such as gender, class, race, sexuality, and social processes. It has been applied to the phenomenon of smuggling and conceptualized as a useful tool to create “frameworks that capture dynamic social relations and question the power of accepted criminological categories”. As a result, the identification of trafficking cases must avoid fixity and taxonomies such as victimization, suffering, and humanitarian (Sanchez, G. 2017). Using the intersectional-informed approach in addressing sex trafficking means considering each social identity and situation where the threats occur and not approaching victims as a homogeneous group (Vollinger L. 2020). In other words, intersectionality appears as a critical praxis proceeding through empirical assumptions that analyze social dynamics as the foremost source of vulnerability.

At the end of the day, trafficking in human beings might appear even more complex than at the beginning, albeit the work investigated a few small components of it. “Humanity” is a volatile word and starting by
CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS.
A MULTIFACED CRIME.

calling things by their proper name represents a step backward from impunity.

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Covid 19 and new opportunities for jihadist extremism(*)

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Ten. CC me Ippolito Sgroi²

ABSTRACT
The COVID-19¹ pandemic is causing important upheavals in the daily life of each of us and its continuation will probably produce a weakening of the global social economic architecture², starting first and foremost with the so-called fragile States³. In the European Community, the pandemic will eventually accelerate the disintegration processes already present, exacerbating the fractures that the States had accumulated internally; considering the pandemic as a competition for efficiency, there will be a redistribution of power and prestige which will be immediately evident in the post-COVID-19; unlike every post-war one, historically clear, simple, chemically pure from the point of view of the hierarchy of power, the post-COVID-19 one will be complex and a confused strategic political landscape could arise. These considerations are not pure and simple predictions coming from the more or less creative imagination of accredited scholars, but arise from the analysis of the periods following the main pandemics by which mankind has been overwhelmed. Starting from the picture outlined above, this paper will briefly describe the

¹ Corona Virus Disease 2019.
² COVID-19 crisis and the impacts on the global economy - KPMG Italy (home.kpmg).
³ A state of fragility can be a consequence of situations of conflict, climate issues, governance, absolute poverty or the high rate of violence, in countries where private investment is inevitably limited due to the present risk.

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main pandemics in history and their geopolitical and strategic consequenc- es. Subsequently, the reasons why the COVID-19 pandemic is considered to be an opportunity for jihadist groups will be examined together with the actions recently implemented by the main international organizations (UN, NATO and EU) for the prevention and fight against terrorism. Finally, the COVID-19 propaganda by these main groups will be examined with par- ticular reference to Al Qaeda (AQ) and the Islamic State (IS) and the success- es achieved by these terrorist organizations in the current pandemic period.

2. PANDEMICS IN THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY AND THE GEO- POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONSEQUENCES

Pandemics, in the course of history, have caused massacres, sometim- es ensuing devastating effects on the political balance within indi- vidual countries, often modifying their international relations. The af- fected nations, in most cases, found themselves in the position of not being able to restore their economic, political and social level prior to the pandemic for reasons mainly linked to both the decrease and the weakening of their own population, the consequence of which was on the one hand, the inability to produce sufficient goods in the prima- ry and secondary sectors, and on the other, the inability to conduct conflicts with the same pre-pandemic intensity. However, not all coun- tries are to be entered in the register of losers as a consequence of a pandemic: in fact, those who have quickly restructured their econo- my, at the end of the pandemic crisis, have achieved notable develop- ments influencing international relations. It is known that, in the past, the reorientation of international trade flows was one of the effects of a pandemic in order to avoid certain ports in favor of others due to possible contagion. Of course, the geographical position of a nation is a determining factor in the spread of a pandemic: the more a coun- try is isolated, the less it risks of being affected by the epidemic, while a State fully involved in international trade is particularly exposed to it; this is in fact the case of the Italian peninsula particularly exposed to everything that happens in the Mediterranean, Africa and Asia and therefore always a victim of these tragedies, either in the past, but also in the present as is being observed with the COVID-19 pandemic.
Historically, for example, devastating consequences both in economic terms and in social cohesion were suffered by both Sparta and Athens following the plague pandemic of 430 BC; the Antonine plague, which spread in 166 AD, caused a profound economic crisis, recession, discontent among the authorities who, as a scapegoat, convinced the public opinion that the spread of the disease was due to Christians, thus causing persecution by the polytheists. Smallpox in Japan in 735 AD it is, on the other hand, one of the few epidemics to have been followed by an improvement in the quality of life of the population, thanks to fiscal policies adopted by Emperor Shomu and aimed at reviving the most affected areas; the plague of Boccaccio in the 14th century brought about important changes in Italy, giving way to the birth of the Italy of the Communes and the economic development today remembered as the Renaissance. Finally, the Spanish plague (starting from 1918) which caused 100 million deaths in the world, accelerated research in the pharmaceutical sector and led to the discovery of penicillin in 1928 (further information can be found in ANNEX B). It can therefore be noted that pandemics generally constitute an unforeseen event that alters, usually for the worse, the economic, demographic and social situation of the world, leading to the ignition of tensions and claims both within each country and in international relations. Very few cases in history are an exception in which countries have managed not only to minimize the consequences but to understand the new opportunities generated by the consequent change of life of their citizens, avoiding falling into the abyss of insolvency. International trade, both by land and sea, together with wars, has been one of the main vectors of pandemic spreading, which, mainly due to the bereavement they gave rise to, were considered a divine punishment\(^3\). A similar approach, is worth noting, is still present in various religions and has been dusted off today during the pandemic linked to COVID-19.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY: THE RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

Among the negative consequences of this pandemic, which is putting a strain on world economies and altering our lifestyle, is the growing threat of numerous extremist groups (a threat that takes a back seat

\(^3\) Just to mention some passages from the Bible, the Book of Numbers or Deuteronomy which explicitly speak of mortal diseases and divine punishments for sins committed against the Lord.
to the health emergency even if the Summits of the United Nations and the European Union have already highlighted the danger for some months⁴). In fact, the isolation dictated by anti-coronavirus measures⁵ to prevent the spread of the contagion, has increased the exposure to the calls of terrorist and violent extremism groups as stressed by several researchers and CT experts; while the increase in time spent online during confinement has decreased the number of crimes, it has dramatically increased cybercrime and scams, making us more vulnerable to propaganda and fake news⁶. Some jihadist groups, from the very first weeks after the spread of the virus, have begun to use it as the protagonist of their own propaganda, as a disease that affects infidels and, therefore, inviting their accomplices to intensify attacks on Western countries and then subsequently opting, given the global spread of the virus, for a different strategy aimed at the needs of their followers, giving advice and providing assistance, including health care in areas considered under their control, in particular in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. Furthermore, the consequences of the spread of the virus and the lockdown, are also exploited by left and right extremist groups to attack homeland Institutions, bringing inefficiencies to the attention of citizens and fueling social tensions through propaganda on the media, addressing the management of the pandemic: disinformation, in fact, has been and still is particularly important, so much so that the European Union, and, in general, the main Western international organizations, facing this infodemic, have taken actions to reach a common contrast strategy⁷.

The international community: terrorism and extremism

a. Before delving into the responses of jihadist extremism to COVID-19, it is considered appropriate to classify terrorism and violent extremism and briefly mention how the international community has responded to this threat over time. Although there is currently no universally

⁴ Gilles de Kerchove, the anti-terrorism coordinator of the European Union, raised the alarm in April 2020 (see The Straits Times editorial board of 30 April 2020, Militants, fringe groups exploiting coronavirus outbreak, warns EU anti-terrorism chief”). For the United Nations, Secretary General Guterres in a statement entitled “We must act now to strengthen the immunity of our societies against the virus of hate”, underlined the important propaganda activity that terrorist groups are putting in place since beginning of the pandemic.  
⁵ Ibidem.  
⁶ COVID-19 Coronavirus, there is a boom in scams on the web: + 400% compared to the pre-Covid period - Il Sole 24 Ore COVID-19 and the increased risk of fraud (pwc.com.au).  
recognized and approved definition of terrorism, under EU law terrorist offenses are acts committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, unduly coercing public authorities or an international organization to carry out or refrain from carrying out any act and, seriously destabilize or destroy the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organization. If there are elements of extraneousness with respect to the State entity alone, we speak of international terrorism and it is easy to understand that, by definition, it is a phenomenon that goes beyond state borders.

b. The UN

Within the UN, a series of resolutions have been approved which, starting with no. 1368 of 12 September 2001, redesigned the instruments for a global fight against international terrorism and, unlike the previous resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, they are not aimed at a specific State nor have a limited purpose, but rather contain provisions addressed to all States to combat the activities of each terrorist group. It is also important to mention the establishment of a series of permanent bodies for the fight against terrorism such as the Anti-terrorism Committee of the Security Council and the approval of fundamental strategic documents such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 8 September 2006 and the Plan of action to prevent violent extremism of 24 December 2015\(^8\) in which a significant terminological change is introduced, compared to the past, classifying as violent extremism groups that elsewhere are classified as terrorists. In fact, a legal connection was also created between terrorist groups, insurgents and violent extremists who are defined as groups and not movements in the absence of a stable and hierarchical structure, a clearly identifiable leadership and a structured financing system: violent extremism, so identified because it lacks a program decided by the leadership and whose attacks are often anticipated by posters posted online, is considered by the United Nations as a threat to international peace and security as it can materialize and materialize in acts of terrorism. Activism in the UN, testifying to the sensitivity of the topic, materialized in 2020 in advocating numerous initiatives around the world, among which particular attention was paid to the 2020 Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week held in New York in

\(^8\) Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism - Office of Counter-Terrorism.
July and, in detail, the seminar on *Strategic and Practical Challenges of Countering Terrorism in a Global Pandemic Environment* which saw the participation of delegations from various Member States, representatives of International and Regional organizations: the event highlighted how the serious global economic/employment crisis and the limitations of certain rights and freedoms imposed by various governments to counter the health emergency have created fertile ground for the proliferation of feelings of hatred and intolerance as well as facilitating the processes of radicalization, both religious and political/ideological; in this context, according to what was stated at the seminar, the Islamic State and Al Qaeda have wisely exploited this situation to feed online propaganda, gain new consensus and incite a resumption/intensification of attacks in some crisis theaters, taking advantage of the vulnerabilities of States committed to addressing the health emergency.

c. NATO

Even NATO, over time, has given increasing importance to the terrorist threat. According to the report of the NATO Project 2030, commissioned by S.G. Stoltenberg to a group of counter-terrorism experts, it is the main culprit in the deaths of citizens belonging to countries of the Alliance and therefore must be examined as a priority. The document highlights how the only time Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty was activated was in response to a terrorist attack, namely that of 11 September 2001. In 2010, the Strategic Concept of NATO defined terrorism as an integral part of the security environment by reiterating the need to improve analytical skills, intelligence and the training of local forces. Since then, NATO has made much progress, including the adoption and subsequent update of the 2017 Counter-Terrorism Action Plan; moreover, counter-terrorism has been defined as one of the five priorities of the *NATO Science for Peace and Security Program* in order to hone its resilience in the field. The report also highlights the need to more explicitly integrate the fight against terrorism into its fundamental tasks, namely collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security by creating ad hoc structures that require consequent commensurate resources, also in light of the important actions of propaganda implemented by terrorist associations with the outbreak of the pandemic in progress.

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9  Collective Defense Principle
10  CT: the EU Directive 2017/541 on the fight against terrorism was adopted on 15 March 2017.
d. Europe

The fight against terrorism has been identified as a top priority for the European Union: in November 2020, following the terrorist attacks in France, Germany and Austria, EU home affairs ministers agreed to further intensify joint efforts to fight terrorism, without compromising the common values of the Union, such as democracy, justice and freedom of expression, by implementing actions such as improving the exchange of information and preventing online radicalization, particularly accentuated since March 2020, since first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. By publishing illegal content and/or fake news. Following the provisional agreement reached on 10 December 2020, on 16 March 2021 the European Council adopted a Regulation, which entered into force from the current year, relating to the fight against the dissemination of terrorist content online (further details are given in the ANNEX D.). The goal of the legislation is the rapid removal of online terrorist contents and the establishment of an instrument for this purpose common to all Member States. The rules apply to hosting service providers operating in the EU, regardless of whether their main establishment is in the Member States or not. The competent authorities of the Countries belonging to the European Union have the right to issue removal orders to service providers, requiring them to remove terrorist content or disabling the access to it; moreover, they will have to act in accordance with the provisions issued by the Member States, removing the content or disabling access to it within one hour. This regulation was the subject of discussion in a hearing on the fight against global terrorism of the Italian Foreign Commission held on 29th of March 2021, which highlighted the pillars of the EU strategy on counter-terrorism and in particular the importance of prevention, given the increase in the online propaganda of the main terrorist groups that emerged in conjunction with the COVID-19 pandemic (in ANNEX H. a summary of the speech by Prof. Alessandro Marrone, head of the defense program of the Istituto Affari Internazionali).

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12 Representatives of the caliber of Raffaella Nigro, associate professor of international law at the Magna Grecia University of Catanzaro, Marco Di Liddo, head of the African area of the Ce.S.I., Dario D’Urso, contact person for the he Balkan area of Ce.SI, Alessandro Marrone, head of the “Defense” program of the Iai, Francesco Marone, program director of Ispi, Luca Franchetti Pardo, deputy director general of Meci for political affairs and security.
4. JIHADISTS: A PROPAGANDA OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL EXTREMIST GROUPS IN COVID-19 FUNCTION

Following the first analysis, it is possible to state that the coronavirus has been integrated into the propaganda of the main terrorist groups, polarized around the two main networks of Islamic terrorism or Al Qaeda and the Islamic State\(^\text{13}\) and in opposition to each other in theaters such as the Libyan, Syrian, African, Sahelo-Saharan and the Yemeni. The lines followed to a greater extent by these jihadist groups, in order to exploit the pandemic in their favor, are divided into two complementary and opposing types: attacks on the enemy, using slogans such as *Covid is a soldier of the Caliphate*, and aid to the affiliated areas/populations\(^\text{14}\). Confused responses were initially observed followed by opportunistic rhetoric, faithful to their principles and behaviors\(^\text{15}\), imbued with the idea that the virus was a divine punishment, resulting in the modification or at least the temporary interruption of Western behaviors not in line with Islam. In fact, bars, pubs, discos and, in general, places considered of perdition by radical Islam have been closed in addition to the decrease in the use of alcohol and tobacco even in private homes. In a nutshell, it could be said that COVID-19 has imposed a neo-Salafist doctrine on Westerners by prohibiting hugs, gatherings, extramarital intercourses and veiling women with masks, instead of being slaves to make-up and their beauty, making them available to their family all day long. Probably, since the virus has fully entered the propaganda, using, moreover, communications on official channels by its leaders\(^\text{16}\), it will remain there for a long time with the ultimate goal to change the world global order by the terrorist groups, dismantling relationships among the actual international entities and the founding principles of the International Community.

a. Al Qaeda and its affiliates

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\(^{13}\) The first signs of a possible split came in 2013 when Al Baghdadi, head of the Iraqi branch of AQ, attempted to annex the Syrian faction (Al Nusra) loyal to Al Zawahiri, leader of AQ. The split occurred in 2014 with the self-proclamation of the Caliphate by Al Baghdadi and the situation did not change either with the loss of the Syrian theater by the IS or with the death of Al Baghdadi and the advent of the new leader Al Qurayshi.

\(^{14}\) “Covid is a soldier of Allah”. The jihadist cell that threatened Italy - ilGiornale.it.


\(^{16}\) This is something that rarely happens and is symptomatic of the fact that the pandemic has taken center stage in the overall strategy.
AQ, characterized by a structure of concentric circles with Al Qaeda Core at the center and the affiliated groups around it (AQAP, AQIM, AQI, Al Shabaab and JNIM\(^{17}\)), has shown that it fulfills the role of an old sage among jihadist groups: in fact, despite the fact that 2020 was characterized by the loss of historical leaders of the regional subsidiaries of the organization\(^{18}\), it proved to be a patient terrorist group with a very accentuated doctrinal interpretation and focused on religious purity, a characteristic also required of affiliated groups called to primarily perpetrate the AQ core agenda before the local one. Although the pandemic was considered from its origins a divine punishment for the sins and immorality that spread in the world (Muslim and non-Muslim), the first response of AQ was to advise everyone (especially non-Muslims and with conciliatory tones) to study Islam during the period of confinement, wishing non-Muslims to become their partners in paradise\(^{19}\), reflecting the personality of its leader Al Zawahiri, a calm and far-sighted doctor, according to whom Islam has the characteristic of being a religion that has always preached personal hygiene, necessary to hinder the spread of the virus (the first full document published on official channels is shown in ANNEX G). In a video of May 2020, produced by its official newspaper As-Sahab Media, the US and British approach to the pandemic was then criticized, mainly aimed at defending the interests of the economy without thinking about people’s health, defining Boris Johnson and Trump << Darwinists, bordering on eugenetics >>\(^{20}\). However, even in subsequent videos and/releases, attacks on the West were not encouraged, while AQ strengthened the master message of capitalizing on the pandemic by studying Islam by lending a hand to Americans and Westerners in general in difficulty with messages such as << We want to share heaven with you just as we share this earth >>. Even the affiliated groups, as anticipated, have adopted the same AQ core policy asking mainly their population to close in prayer, with

\(^{17}\) AQAP (Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) was born in 2009 from the union between the AQ branch in Saudi Arabia (QAP) and the faction in Yemen made up of fighters returning from Afghanistan. AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) is a terrorist group allied to AQ since 2006 and formed by Algerian fighters from the 1990 civil war. AQI (Al Qaeda in Iraq) joined AQ in 2004 and was formerly known as Tawhid wal Jihad, born in 2002. Al Shabaab formally joined AQ in 2012, the group was born in 2000 in Somalia. JNIM (Jama’a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al Muslimin) is a Sahelo-Saharan group that gathers the Saharan branch of AQ in the Islamic Maghreb. (Make half of the lines).

\(^{18}\) Droukdel, head of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb-AQIM, was killed in al Raymi, leader of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula-AQAP.

\(^{19}\) It is significant that the first six-page document released at the beginning of the pandemic reported in bold only the following sentence: A general Call for the Masses in the Western World to Embrace Islam.

\(^{20}\) Former President Trump in an interview had ironically suggested “disinfectant injections” while British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had suggested waiting for herd immunity.
exceptions focused on the defense of areas considered by the terrorists to be invaded by Westerners. The unity between global and local objectives was guaranteed by a skillful communication strategy of the Al Qaeda leadership, which intended to enhance the media production and operational activism of the regional branches and, at the same time, to relaunch campaigns of global breadth, such as the note << Jerusalem shall never be Judaized >> 21, in whose name, among other things, bloody actions against international objectives / interests have been claimed. In fact, JNIM continued to organize attacks in Mali declaring the pandemic a divine punishment against France while the Somali group Al Shabaab instead accused the African Union mission (AMISOM), Somalia and the Western Allies, inviting their militants to attack the detaining facilities in order to save their comrades from the risk of contagion.

b. The Islamic State and its affiliates

The Islamic State, characterized by the Caliph at the top and assisted by a Delegation Commission or a Council of Ministers and a Shura Council (Religious Council), is made up of dozens of provinces both in the Syrian theater and outside that territory. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the IS leaders have proved to be very impulsive, confirming their nature which is the main reason for the split with AQ: in fact, IS, via a simple declaration of a new province of the Caliphate, allows, without particular religious and agenda constraints, the affiliation to any terrorist group, promising redemption and acceptance22, or pledges to purify any type of sin committed in the past and consequently guaranteeing paradise. Over the past few months, IS has changed its propaganda by considering it, since the outset, as a divine punishment against infidels23 and promoting do-it-yourself terrorism, asking young natives and non-Westerners to transform themselves into soldiers of the Caliphate and, in particular, to those in the Syrian-Iraqi and Libyan territories, to promote actions, including kamikaze ones, to free their militants, protecting them from the spread of the virus in prison. Subsequently, the

22 An indicative example is the affiliation to the IS of the Nigerian group Boko Haram on 7 March 2015, or two days after the oath of allegiance, while AQ had refused membership as they were deemed to be not very observant of the Sharia law.
23 First of all, the Chinese were blamed for the treatment reserved to the Uighurs, then when the virus hit Iran it blamed the Shiites for their repudiation of religious belief, then the Westerners for their actions and customs.
IS also addressed its own population affected by the virus by disclosing health and hygiene advice. The official spokesman also stated that the virus was a tool to distract the West from the Crusade territories by strengthening the main message of the divine punishment against the Crusaders of the anti-IS coalition; he also incited its militants to fight until victory. In Iraq, the IS continued, and at times intensified, its activity with numerous suicide attacks, murders and kidnappings, also exploiting the return of its members to their Country with a strategy aimed at maintaining a substantial decentralization of the organization in the various Countries of interest, leaving the coordination and control function of the peripheral cells at a central level. In Africa, the successes achieved by regional groups affiliated with IS, especially in the Sahel and in the operational basin of Lake Chad, were celebrated with the help of a wide online media coverage increased thanks to the pandemic crisis. In fact, a rise in attacks was observed due to the decrease in the attention of local security forces, committed to implementing the lockdown, and of foreign forces focused on containing infections among their personnel located in the areas of operation; in addition, the training activities of local troops were interrupted and numerous foreign fighters were released and/or managed to escape due to the impossibility of being able to repatriate them. In addition, it should be noted that the Islamic State is the most active jihadist group online through a vast propaganda action in different languages, in order to reach a large number of people; furthermore, the economic crisis we are observing, by many experts comparable only to the Great Depression of 1929, is affecting not only Western Countries but also the Arab ones with inevitable consequences such as, for example, the increase in social unease, oxygen for the propaganda of terrorist groups and specifically of the IS. The terrorist group has shown a renewed media momentum, with a more conscious and strategic use of its propaganda apparatus, highlighting the clear desire to strengthen its consensus base, especially in the Indian subcontinent: the online magazine Voice of Hind which, to incite jihad, simultaneously leverages the dynamics linked to the conflict in Kashmir and the conditions of Muslims in India (further details in ANNEX E). Finally, the jihadist groups affiliated with the IS are also trying to capitalize on the pandemic as much as possible, as in the

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24 Mainly the official weekly magazine of the online terrorist group Al Naba was used as a propaganda tool, posters and infographics distributed via telegram and videos from its official media organs Al Furqan through the official spokesman Abu Hamza al Qurashi.
25 Jihad is also online: al Qaeda and the Internet - Limes.
c. Outcomes and possible consequences

The first results of the media campaigns carried out by jihadist groups have been visible since the first months after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. These actions, which have increased compared to the previous year, are almost all attributable to pro-Islamic State subjects, proof of the persistent instigating capacity of the formation despite the death of the leader Al Baghdadi and the territorial defeat of the Caliphate. In fact, jihadist propaganda and threats to the West, posted and shared on social platforms, have not known any setbacks and ISIS, using the usual mixture of emotional, theological and ideological references, has continued to encourage jihad, as well as to provide instructions for carrying out attacks, recruit/train followers and sometimes remotely direct their followers. There was also constant recourse to propaganda campaigns against infidel states, in order to perpetuate the clash with the West and incite revenge.

In fact, according to the European Union Terrorism Situation And Trend Report (TE-SAT) of 2020, there were 119 attacks in Europe in 2019, failed, thwarted and successful, and 1004 people were arrested for terrorist offenses in the same period (Europol’s annual report in ANNEX C). Of these, 24 are of a jihadist nature, among which 17 thwarted, 3 successful and 4 unsuccessful. The START InSight database, in accordance with what is reported in the report of the observatory on Radicalism and the Fight against Terrorism (React 2021, in-depth information on the observatory are reported in ANNEX F), has instead identified 19 terrorist acts and acts of violence of jihadist matrix completed in the same year (both successful and unsuccessful, differing from Europol’s total of 7) while in 2020, an overall of 25 were registered. In 2019 all victims of terrorism in Europe are the result of jihadist attacks: according to Eu-

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26 The jihadist group Boko Haram swore allegiance to the IS in 2015, however it subsequently split into two parts: the Islamic State in West Africa loyal to IS and the part loyal to the old leader Shekau (dead) close to AQ.
27 The 2021 TE-SAT Report is not yet available. It is expected to be available by June 2021.
28 Strategic Analysts and Research team.
ropol allegedly 10 dead and 26 injured (1 injured following an attack attributed to far-right groups). START InSight reveals a higher number of injuries, equal to 48, mainly victims of secondary and emulative attacks. In 2020 there was a significant increase in deaths compared to the previous year: 16 people killed and 55 injured, a figure confirmed in the Italian report on intelligence policies for security of 2020 issued by the Prime Minister’s Bureau. This is a consequence of the increase in terrorist attacks that led the international community, at the end of 2020, to taking further measures to mitigate the phenomenon: the Islamist attack against a teacher in France once again demonstrated how important it is to fight illegal content online, terrorist propaganda, hate speech and disinformation; in this perspective, in full respect of fundamental rights (such as freedom of expression and privacy), social media and other hosting service providers have been further empowered to verify that their services are not used for illegal activities that promote terrorism and crime and hatred in general. The long wave of terrorism associated with the Islamic State phenomenon recorded 146 actions from 2014 to 2020: 188 terrorists involved (59 dead in action), 406 dead victims and 2,421 injured (according to the START InSight database). Recidivist terrorists increased in 2020: nearly three out of ten terrorists, as did terrorists already known to intelligence (54% of the total in 2020) and those with a criminal record. The increase in the potential risk of terrorism was also verified with the increase in irregular migrants: in 2020 20% of terrorists were found to be irregular immigrants; specifically, in France, if up to 2017 none of the attacks had been carried out by irregular immigrants, in 2020 40% of terrorists were found to be irregular immigrants (graphs, figures that summarize the above data, are shown in ANNEX A). As in the rest of Europe, in Italy a certain adherence to jihadism continued to be registered through the web, where articles, infographics, propaganda videos in Italian language, shared material aimed at conveying anti-Western claims and threatening images against symbolic monuments of our country and of Christianity. In this context, the risk linked to the instigating effect that such messaging could exert on particularly influential subjects is taken into consideration, whether they are residents (homegrown/recently immigrated) or in transit, directing them towards extemporaneous demonstrative/provocative gestures, even with violent outcomes, if not motivating them to real premeditated and organized acts of individual jihad. Also during 2020, although no original production of jihadist propaganda in Italian was detected,
texts for Italian-speaking users was shared online, mainly using social networks and messaging platforms protected by end to end encryption. Among the dangerous consequences of the pandemic was the slowdown in repatriation and, in some cases, the evasion of foreign fighters and their families from detention and refugee camps. Furthermore, the coronavirus will lead to an exacerbation of the already delicate social tensions in countries at risk: the dramatic health and economic consequences will exacerbate racial hatred and, for example in the Middle East, the increasingly bitter clash between Shiites and Sunnis will materialize, with greater discrimination of minorities. In Africa, a continent where jihadist propaganda is so much alive that many experts define some areas of the black continent as the next Safe Havens of terrorist groups, the consequences, in light of the weak health system, could be even worse than in other areas of the world: although containment measures similar to those implemented in the West have been implemented, the strength of the African institutions is not such as to guarantee their persistence and effectiveness and the consequences of the socio-economic crisis could reduce dozens of millions of people and be exploited by criminal groups and in particular by terrorist ones. In addition, the virus has also spread to the United Nations contingent stationed in Mali, causing deaths; moreover, terrorist groups have intensified their attacks against the institutions of that Country.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Social networks and telematic means in general have always been among the main useful propaganda tools for jihadist groups to collect adherences in areas far from those under direct conflict through the aid of traditional means. However, since the very first moments in which the COVID-19 pandemic began to manifest itself, the online propaganda by terrorist groups has undergone a significant acceleration favored by a general social context torn by the virus, where the differences of religion, ethnicity, culture and social condition have become more divisive and where, therefore, terrorism has found the ideal ground to exploit and deepen these weaknesses and social fractures. Along these rifts, the space for radicalization processes and violent acts has found

29 “How Coronavirus could make the Middle East even more dangerous” of 12 April 2020 by Colin Clark and Naili Hajer.
expansion, to the point that radicalization is in danger of becoming mainstream. A careful look at history, always very useful as an important means of comparison in order to evaluate the effects of similar actions carried out even if in contexts sometimes far from the one in question, teaches us that the pandemic will determine short, medium and long term effect: the short-term consequences are generally negative but the medium-long term ones are not so obvious; indeed, sometimes catastrophic events can turn into opportunities to be seized to improve the common lifestyle by reflecting on the mistakes made in the recent past. In the short term, the serious global economic/employment crisis and the limitations of certain rights and freedoms imposed by various governments to counter the health emergency, have created fertile ground for the proliferation of feelings of hatred and intolerance as well as facilitating the processes of radicalization, both religious and political/ideological. The short-term effects of this strategy can be traced to the recent attacks in Paris, Nice and Vienna, and more generally in the increase of actions carried out by terrorist groups witnessed by the main international scholars/agencies, were performed by isolated cells inspired by the online disinformation of the Islamic State, even if they were not strictly coordinated by this terrorist organization but driven by mainly personal reasons. The outcomes, despite the limited media reverberation, shadowed by the attention of the international community on the pandemic situation, are very effective considering the effects on the perception of common security and disaffection towards the authorities unable to prevent such extreme events. The steps taken by Europe, if on the one hand, through the accountability of hosting service providers, aim to prevent the dangerous publication of terrorist content which has been clearly accentuated since the outbreak of the pandemic, on the other hand they risk limiting lifestyle Western liberal oxygenating the propaganda of the jihadist media. More complex and less obvious, however, is the prediction of the medium-long term effects: if it is true, in fact, that the persistence of the health crisis situation, increasingly combined with the economic depression, continues to feed and channel social anger towards hostile actions and the persistent call to action of the Islamic State, could represent the perfect mix to be forced to look to the near future with concern (especially in the so-called fragile states): the final result is not certain to be so obvious and clearly outlined for all States. In fact, the same pandemic that has so far represented the key element for strengthening online propagan-
da activities, could also constitute a brake on violent radicalization for the States that will seize the opportunities, proving to be a striking example of how targeted management, sensitive to the main common problems of citizens, attentive to relational topics such as the quality of life, can, in the long run, determine important advantages by slowing down the exacerbation of social discomfort in place of common well-being.

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ANNEX A:

Picture no. 1: number of persons arrested for suspected terrorist attacks in Europe in 2019.

Picture no. 2: number of persons arrested for suspected terrorist attacks in Europe from 2015 to 2019.
COVID 19 AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR JIHADIST EXTREMISM

Picture no. 3: jihadist attacks in Europe in 2020 and their victims to 2019.

Picture no. 4: terrorism of religious/jihadist matrix in Europe; source: Europol.
ANNEX B:
The Way Forward
A Word of Advice on the Coronavirus Pandemic – Shaban 1441 – March 2020
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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

All praise belongs to Allah, the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the One, the Mighty Who takes revenge from the evildoers. And May peace and blessings be upon the Leader of the pious, the Imam of the God-fearing ones, upon his family, and Companions. Peace be upon those who, till the Day of Judgment, follow his way and fulfill the duty of Jihad, just as he did. As we all know, the coronavirus pandemic has cast its gloomy, painful shadow over the entire world. Across the globe, there appears to be no light at the end of the dark tunnel that the world finds itself in. People are stuck in their homes, shops and businesses are being forced to shut down. The global economy is paralyzed and the world utterly perplexed by this predicament. Everything that was once taken for granted lies now in grave jeopardy. Economies of major nations lie in ruin as they find their entire state apparatus, including army and security, pinned down by an invisible enemy. Norms of social behaviour, lifestyles, everything is being redefined. Allah alone knows what the coming days hold in store. In the midst of this unprecedented crisis, we consider it our duty to console our Muslim brothers and sisters and discuss the way forward for the Muslim World specifically and humanity in general.

The current crisis has exposed the brittleness of a global economy dominated by the United States. Only a few weeks back, the economy was making historic strides, the outlook better than ever. Trump could not stop bragging about economic growth, historically low unemployment rates and one of the longest ever bull rallies in Wall Street. With the emergence of Covid-19, the American economy has been struck by a powerful tsunami. In a matter of a few weeks, 4 million Americans have been left jobless, and this is just the beginning. Experts predict the numbers to spike sharply, possibly in the tens of millions. The American economy has suddenly, and most unexpectedly, found itself in the ICU, in desperate need of a ventilator to resuscitate it, much like the Corona patients in the hospitals of New York. To avoid a total meltdown, the US administration has announced a stimulus package that is proportionate to 30% of the American GDP. Experts agree that even this major injection might not stop a free fall to the abyss. A long-term recession is no longer a remote possibility.

It is worth mentioning that this injection of funds into the economy amounts to a whopping 6 trillion dollars, out of which the 2 trillion dollars approved by the Congress are for a stimulus aid package, while 4 trillion dollars are expected to be pumped into the economy by the Fed over the course of coming months. Interestingly, this tremendous sum of money equals American losses in the two wars waged against the Muslim Ummah during the last two decades. Exalted indeed is the Almighty, the All-Powerful, ‘And no one knows the soldiers of his Lord except Him, and it is but a reminder for mankind.’ It must be said that the arrival of this pandemic to the Muslim World is only a consequence of our own sins and our distance from the Divine methodology that Allah has chosen for His slaves. The Quran enlightens us in such a grave situation: ‘And whatever tragedy afflicts you is because of what your own hands have earned. And surely God forgives much!’
The Way Forward
A Word of Advice on the Coronavirus Pandemic

Before this great disaster struck, obscenity and moral corruption had already become widespread in Muslim countries. In fact, this phenomenon had extended its dirty tentacles to the vicinities of the purest site on the face of the earth, the Haram in Makkah. And just as indecency was being openly promoted with official supervision, prisons started overflowing with the righteous, the reformers and scholars. The despots ruling over the Muslim World, specifically in the Arab World, have been guilty of committing the most unimaginable forms of torture and rights abuses against Muslim scholars and Mujahideen in secret torture cells that have become a norm across the Muslim World.

To make matters even worse, Islamic causes have been consigned to oblivion across the Muslim World, especially Syria, Iraq, Waziristan, Palestine, East Turkistan, Libya, Islamic Maghreb, and Somalia. The Crusader enemy is focused on killing the believers, destroying their homes, burying oppressed people alive beneath the rubble and displacing millions from their lands, while the rest of the world watches on. There are hundreds of thousands across the globe who have been hurt by this oppression and do not find anyone to complain to except Allah (swt).

This oppression pales in comparison to the Western-led campaigns to spread atheism in Muslim societies. The West, with the aid of its local tools— despotic rulers and a Westernized media— has made unrelenting efforts to distance Muslims from their Religion and values. Billions have been spent on these campaigns, mostly from the coffers of public wealth. If these funds were to be spent on poverty alleviation—in the Muslim World or in the West—it could have transformed the lives of millions struggling below the poverty line.

We must understand that no one is more sensitive about His sanctities and the boundaries set by Him than Allah (swt) Himself. When these boundaries are crossed... when these sanctities are violated... when His pious slaves are oppressed, He (swt) is angered. His anger is severe against those who cross the limits and stand in opposition to Him and His punishment equally painful. We pray to Allah (swt) for our safety. Being deprived of the worship of Tawwaf around the Kabbah and the congregational prayers is an ominous warning sign. It is a clear indication of Allah’s anger, glory be to Him and may His Names be glorified. We ask Allah (swt) to protect us from all evil.

While this tribulation afflicts everyone today, let us not forget the pious reformers who have had to suffer from similar situations for years. They have been deprived of visiting mosques or praying in congregation. They have been prevented from going for Umrah or visiting any of the three Holy Mosques. Thousands of missing reformers have for decades suffered in the prisons of the tyrants, from the dungeons of Guantanamo to Hayber, Abi Za’bal, Tudmar and Abu Saleem. Muslims must learn some serious lessons from this calamity and start taking practical steps for the liberation of prisoners and missing persons across the Islamic World. A large number of Mujahideen and those present in the fronts have been prevented, for obvious security reasons, from praying in mosques, performing the Hajj or the Umrah. For almost three decades now, they have been waiting to see with their own eyes these blessed sites. We pray to Allah that that day comes soon. Let the Ummah take this opportunity to remember and reflect on the fact that the entire Ummah has been deprived of freely visiting the destination of the Prophet’s Night Journey- Al Aqsa- for over a century due to the Zionist occupation of the Blessed Land.
The Way Forward
A Word of Advice on the Coronavirus Pandemic

We believe that these are all signs and profound lessons that demonstrate the power of the Almighty. At the same time, this is equally an opportunity for the entire Islamic Ummah to seek the infinite mercy of Allah. And this mercy cannot be sought except by sincere repentance to the Merciful, the Magnanimous. We must utilize the approach of the blessed month of Ramadhan to return with utmost humility to our Lord. Now is the time to fulfill our duty towards our Creator and our Religion by holding on firmly to the Deen, to the straight path, and by fulfilling the rights of our brothers and sisters in Islam.

Today, humanity has become trapped in a darkness similar to the darkness that Dhun Noon (peace be upon him) found himself in when he was swallowed alive by a whale. The way out from this darkness is to seek refuge in the blessed prayer of the Prophet Yunus (peace be upon him). In the midst of this agony, let us all pray together to Allah: La ilaha ills anta subhanaka inna kunna min adh Dhalimeen (There is none worthy of worship except You; You are the Exalted. Verily we were among the wrongdoers.)

In this crisis, we would like to remind people of knowledge and callers to Allah to intensify their efforts to call people to Allah and invite them to repent sincerely. Now is the time to spread the correct Aqeedah, call people to Jihad in the Way of Allah and revolt against oppression and oppressors. We also call upon rich Muslims to step forward and show mercy towards the poor and deprived segments of society so that they may find some solace in these distressing times. There is a dire need today to take care of the orphans, widows, families of the prisoners and to support the sincere Mujahideen.

As we invite Muslims to repentance, let us, the Mujahideen in the fronts, too repent sincerely to our Lord and hold ourselves accountable for our actions. We must introspect and reflect on our deeds so that we may rid ourselves of our sins. We must turn this calamity into a cause for uniting our ranks, showing mercy to the weak, bringing an end to injustice in all its forms, giving the rightful their rights, putting our trust completely in Allah, disallowing all forms of wrongdoing, and exhorting our leadership to righteousness.

At this time of uncertainty, we must show greater mercy to the Ummah than ever. Our mercy and magnanimity must extend to all, the righteous and the sinner of this Ummah. We must continue to defend our Ummah, our Deen, and sacrifice everything in this cause. Above all, we must strive for the guidance of humanity.

A General Call for the Masses in the Western World to Embrace Islam

O’ people of the Western World! You have seen with your own eyes the power and might of Allah exhibited in this weak, invisible soldier. This is a God-gifted opportunity for you to reflect on the wisdom hidden in the havoc wrecked by a weak intruder. Your governments and armies are helpless, utterly confused in the face of this weak creature. Allah (swt), the Creator, has revealed the brittleness and vulnerability of your material strength. It is now clear for all to see that it was but a deception that could not stand the test of the smallest soldier of God on the face of the earth. The very technological advancement and globalization that man took immense pride in has become his undoing. Today, if someone sneezes in China, those in New York suffer from its consequences.
The Way Forward
A Word of Advice on the Coronavirus Pandemic

We invite you to reflect on the phenomenon that is Covid-19 and carefully consider its deeper causes. The truth remains, whether we like it or not, that this pandemic is a punishment from the Lord of the Worlds for the injustice and oppression committed against Muslims specifically and mankind generally by governments you elect. Your rulers have spread wars, destruction, and famines in regions that had no dearth of pre-existing challenges to cope with. They have stolen the resources and wealth of poor nations and, to advance this vile cause, propped up despotic rulers all over Muslim lands.

Consider the economic damage done by this pandemic. The underlying cause of this is your usury-based economy. Engaging in usury, as you would know, is a declaration of war on God Himself. Allah (swt) says in His Noble Book, ‘Those who consume usury behave as if they have been driven mad by the evil touch of the Satan. This is because they say that sale is just like usury; whereas Allah has made sale Halal (permissible) and usury Haram (impermissible).’

So will you not take this pandemic as a Divine warning to return to the natural disposition in which God created man, free from evil inclinations... to return to your Lord? This world is a temporary abode and on the Day of Judgment we shall all be facing accountability. We would like to share with you our desire that you should be our partners in the Heavens the expanse of which is far greater than the earth and the sky. Just as this world brought us together in a temporary life on earth, it is our profound desire, and God is our witness as we say this, that we come together in the Heavens to share together the bliss of an eternal life. It is in this spirit that we would like to introduce you to Islam and invite you to enter into peace, for this is the only path that leads to prosperity in this world and deliverance in the Hereafter.

Islam is a hygiene-oriented Religion. It lays great stress on principles of prevention so as to protect one from all forms of disease. This it implements through a system of personal hygiene that takes the form of a regular routine that is repeated several times throughout the day. The laws on preventive measures include the necessity of using only the right hand for eating, drinking and all decent activities, and the left hand for cleaning the body. Our Prophet (pbbuh) ordered the Muslims to abide by certain norms and etiquettes such as covering one’s face with a cloth or any protective cover when sneezing or coughing. The Prophet (pbbuh) taught us that he would recognize his sincere followers on the Day of Judgment by marks on their bodies that indicate repeated daily practice of cleaning and purification of one’s body and soul. These marks include the mark on the forehead (that is proof of adherence to prayer and prostration, which requires ablution) and the glow and freshness on parts of the body due to repeated daily practice of ablution.

The importance of hygiene and cleanliness for preventing disease and warding off viruses manifests itself in several facets of Islam. A simple illustration of this is that for fourteen centuries, Muslims have unanimously included chapters on laws regarding cleanliness and hygiene in the first section of their books on Fiqh or Islamic law. Laws of Fiqh regulate all aspects of Muslim life, from the personal to matters of economy, society, and the state, and it is instructive that the introduction to these books begins with rules on hygiene. Western societies must study how Islam, more than fourteen centuries back, came with a preventive cure to tackle the spread of viral diseases. The Prophet (peace be upon him)
issued strict orders that anyone who finds himself in an area infected by a viral disease must not leave that area or travel to any other region, town or village lest the infection spreads to new localities. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) taught us that the one who patiently remains in his locality when a viral disease spreads, his reward equals that of a martyr because of his choice to preserve and protect human life and prosperity in other localities.

Let us not forget that Covid-19 emerged from one of the filthiest places on earth, the markets of Wuhan, where all known norms of decent and humane dietary practices were trampled upon. From insects to rodents and reptiles, in short everything unsafe for human consumption, or the consumption of which is prohibited in all revealed religions, was sold and consumed there.

O, the people of the Western World! The callousness of your rulers is evident for you today. They are least concerned about the health of the societies they are responsible for. Instead of ensuring the provision of health facilities and medical supplies—some of which are as inexpensive and simple as face masks and PPEs—they are obsessed with supplies of war and the tools of human eradication. If they had only spent a fraction of this money on healthcare and public insurance—instead of satisfying their imperialist, expansionist cravings—they could have saved millions of lives.

To conclude, we would like to remind non-Muslims to utilize their time in quarantine for finding out more about Islam from authentic sources; reading, and reflecting on the merits that make Islam stand out from all other religions, isms and systems.

We have a brief message for the oppressive Crusaders and their hirelings among the Zionists and apostates: The fear and panic that has struck you is a good omen for us. We ask Allah to demonstrate His powers in your suffering and hasten your doom. 'Say, do you expect for us one of the two good matters (victory or martyrdom), while we await for you a severe punishment from Allah or a punishment at our hands. So wait, we too are waiting.'

O' Allah! Lift this calamity from the Ummah of Your Prophet, Your beloved (peace be upon him)!

O' Allah! We pray for Your infinite mercy on the Ummah of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)!

O' Allah! Give the Ummah for every grief a relief, for every tough situation a way out, and from every calamity protection!

O' Allah! Forgive this Ummah's sins and its transgression against itself!

O' Allah! Let the sons and daughters of the Ummah benefit from their hearing, seeing, and all their physical abilities for as long as they live!

O' Allah! Grant this Ummah its successors from among itself!

O' Allah! Direct this Ummah's revenge against its oppressors, and make Paradise its ultimate abode!

O' Allah! If this believing Ummah is not deserving of Your mercy, Your mercy is surely greater than its sins. O' Allah! No matter how great the sins of this Ummah, your forgiveness, mercy, generosity and kindness is greater.

O' Allah! Do not deprive your slaves of the gift of prayers in Your noble masjids, specifically the Haram and Al Aqsa!
O’ Allah! As Ramadhan approaches, this monotheistic Ummah stands before you in humility, beseeching you not to deprive it of the honour of standing before You in Your Blessed House (the Haram, Kabbah) in the blessed month!
O’ Allah! Turn the month of forgiveness into a month of sincere repentance for this Ummah, a month of lifting oppression and injustice from the Ummah of Muhammad (pbuh)!
O’ Allah! Give victory to your slaves everywhere!
O’ Allah! Open the lands and the hearts of your slaves for the Mujahideen!
Ameen, O’ Lord of the Worlds!
And our last prayer is that all praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.

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Advisory: capacity building at strategic level

Immacolata Ciotta

ABSTRACT

In the context of international interventions, both civil and military, the advisory function has progressively become one of the most important frontiers for understanding the effectiveness of capacity building. With an analysis approach oriented at the strategic level, the paper argues that the advisory function is more effective and sustainable for security sector reform, and for capacity building in general terms, than technical assistance (to be understood as the train-and-equip paradigm). To understand what is meant by advisory, the article compares the doctrinal approach of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the United Nations, organisations that orient capacity building towards similar principles. Although the three doctrines present important elements of convergence, there is a lack of standardisation, which is an obstacle to defining the advisory function in general. Furthermore, when examining the skills, roles and backgrounds of strategic-level advisors, critical issues emerged related to the lack of specific pre-deployment training, coordination between advisors and handover/turnover processes. However, it should be emphasised that conflict contexts are complex and involve many variables. Therefore, even the most competent advisor may only be able to realise part of the objectives. **Keywords:*** strategic advising; capacity building; role; skills; training.

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Introduction

Humanitarian interventions imply the progressive involvement of external actors, both military and civilian, in internal crisis with the aim of promoting democracy and good governance. This idea is closely linked to the one of development. In the pragmatic dimension, these objectives are translated into the implementation of capacity building, defined as:

“The process by which individuals, organisations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over a period of time”.2

Initially, it retained a top-down approach, in which donors and organisations intervened through the provision of capital and trained personnel (technical assistance). In particular, the security-development nexus ensured that Security Sector Reform (SSR) was introduced as a key aspect. This finds legitimacy in the idea that the monopoly of the use of force constitutes the foundation of the State, in the Weberian sense. Capacity building in this field was initially linked to the technical assistance dimension, embodied in the “train-and-equip” paradigm, however, the questioning of this approach led to the emergence of a new tool: strategic advising, specifically framed to achieve enhanced capacity. This article aims to fill this research gap by answering the following research question: What are the benefits of the strategic advisory function in capacity building?

The paper is divided into three sections. The first is concerned with providing a brief overview of capacity building and security sector reform, with the aim of explaining the reasons for the use of strategic advising as a tool in international interventions. The second section is devoted to a doctrinal framing of the advisory function. After providing a brief conceptual reconstruction regarding the major definitions of strategic advisory and advisor, the paper focuses on a comparative analysis of the function under consideration in the doctrines adopted by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU). The last section describes the potential limitations and contradictions inherent in the text of the doctrines. The third section is devoted to the presentation of the research findings, drawn from the official documents available and three semi-structured interviews with key figures of international missions involved in various capacities in the implementation of the advisory func-

tion (Head of Mission/HoM, training managers, former advisors). Finally, the conclusions synthesize the initial theoretical reflections, existing positions in the literature, and the results of the analyzed data, highlighting, without claiming to be exhaustive, a number of critical issues considered a sensitive data to a better or more complete implementation of doctrines dedicated to the advisory function at the strategic level.

1. Capacity Building within the defence sector

1.1 From “train-and-equip” to strategic advising

When referring to capacity building in relation to the security sector, it enters the concept of security sector reform (SSR). It has become part of the standard toolbox of interventions within conflict-affected states and those seeking to stabilize or avoid fractures. Although there is no agreed definition, SSR typically refers to the reform, construction or reconstruction of security and justice sector institutions, including oversight and management bodies. SSR is usually undertaken by a state together with national and international partners, with the ostensible aim of improving the provision of safety, security and justice to its citizens, recognizing that security is a precursor to long-term peace. Thus, the primary task of SSR is to reinstall states’ monopoly on violence and populations’ trust in security forces. According to the OECD Handbook on SSR, there are four key objectives at the heart of these: the establishment of effective governance, oversight and accountability in the security system; the improvement of security and justice service delivery; the development of local leadership and ownership of the process; and the sustainability of justice and security delivery.

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seen long-term implications. For this reason, in some contexts the implementation of SSR has met with resistance resulting in the more classic and traditional training and equipping approach, which has seen the success of some armed forces reforms not accompanied by a parallel development of the justice sector (shelved at times). This application model focuses more on tactical and operational capacity building in terms of train and equip, the aim of which is to improve the skill level of security forces, leaving limited space for the component of policy change and reform. This approach can bring benefits, as security forces must be able to perform their tasks effectively and professionally, as developing democratic governance of the security sector does not in itself guarantee security. However, the provision of weapons, materials and other equipment may improve operational effectiveness but does not constitute SSR. Therefore, train-and-equip is an integral part of SSR but does not exhaust it. In relation to the concept of capacity-building, this assumes that equipping individuals with the adequate skills will be enough to ensure that a given capacity is effectively acquired at the individual, project, and organizational level. However, Jackson in 2011, also proposes another, more extreme view, arguing that “the lack of policy implications in technical capacity-building and training means that there is little resistance from national actors, while at the same time making it easier for donors to get quick and quantitative results”.

Nonetheless, in the definitions given in the previous paragraph, capacity-building is seen as a process that develops on three levels: individuals, organizations, and society. Therefore, qualified individuals, trained in train-and-equip, are only one of the necessary elements for this purpose. Indeed, improving one aspect (e.g., human and material resources) through training and equipping does not necessarily strengthen key components at the other two levels. Capacity development gaps might

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also lie at the organizational level: if individuals have the knowledge and motivation, but a change is not materializing, then an assessment may reveal that the blockage lies in the organization or system in which the individuals operate. Thus, capacity building would focus on strengthening institutional capacities (e.g., policies, procedures, decision-making, resource allocation). One of the reasons for which training is still often used, even though it is not always an appropriate capacity-building intervention, is that it is relatively easy to undertake. More complex capacity development and change processes, involving different dimensions and levels of capacity development, are more challenging to undertake and therefore require a higher level of support, more time, and resources.  

Between 2006 and 2008, the OECD, the World Bank and UNDP raised the argument that this approach, while having positive effects, also had serious shortcomings. These included, for example, sometimes a lack of relevance of general skills and information to specific contexts, the ad hoc nature of trainings (as opposed to a long-term capacity development process), and a lack of cultural sensitivity.

The 2016 European Peacebuilding Liaison Office report highlighted some of the critical issues and risks related to the train-and-equip formula in relation to SSR. The first relates to the lack of a definition of what train-and-equip entails. The second is the dilemma that the equipment could be misused or fall into the hands of non-state actors. The third criticism concerns isolated training-and-equipping exercises, which cannot replace broader reform processes, but can become an obstacle to reform, unless their design is accompanied by a clear design of future reforms that also affect the justice sector. Finally, such activity must always be supported by an intensive monitoring mechanism. Moreover, one of the challenges related to training missions concerns the control of civilian political forces over the armed forces. Indeed, the main risk with a lack of civilian oversight as well as a proper chain of command is that trainees may at a later point in time participate in a future military coup.

In conclusion, short-term initiatives must be designed to achieve longer-term goals. Long-term change comes from a change of mindset. The complexity of reform processes and often the resistance to

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130

14 Ibidem.
15 Ibidem.
reform mean that SSR is not a quick fix but a rather long process. The World Bank has indicated that such complicated reform processes can take up to a generation to conclude. As this analysis has shown, this is hardly achieved through the train-and-equip dichotomy. In this respect, what could be an important resource is strategic advising. Change the mindset by changing the brain.\textsuperscript{18} In this regard, an advisor must therefore adopt a time perspective that goes far beyond the duration of the employment of a single advisor.

2. Strategic Advising: Definition and Doctrinal Framework

The framework outlined in the previous chapter, in relation to capacity-building and SSR, finds a pragmatic configuration and a leading role in advising, reconfigured as a means to achieve enhanced capacity. Before turning to the practical dimension of the roles and training of advisors deployed in operational theatres, it is necessary to include these activities in a conceptual and doctrinal framework. This is an attempt to systematise one of the most debated issues within the international community, which in fact does not have an unambiguous and universally accepted definition of what is meant by advising and advisor respectively. The most prominent definition of Advising in Capacity-building context has been provided by Gerspacher, in 2016. In her book she defines advising as

\textit\textquote{a tool used by the international community to build the capacity of governments to govern societies emerging from conflict or transitioning from authoritarian to democratic regimes.}\textsuperscript{19}

Thus, the advising function is implemented during the post-conflict and peacebuilding phase, and it can be assumed that the long-term goal described by the definition often depends on choosing the right person. Therefore, for the purpose of this analysis, it is useful to compare the most relevant advisor definitions to outline and define who is a strategic advisor. In general, the term Advisor refers to an expert whose job is to give advice to another person or to a group of people. Although this definition could also fit the capacity-building context, the focus is too broad; therefore, a normative shift to the military application domain is necessary. As an example, consider the definition contained in US military doctrine;

\textsuperscript{18} Interview no.3, January 2022.

\textsuperscript{19} Gerspacher, N. (2016) Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance, Kumarian Press.
an advisor is identified as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) who serves with foreign security forces, or their ministerial-level security institutions, to advise, counsel, and assist their partner nation counterparts.\(^\text{20}\) Considering specifically the figure of an advisor employed in the capacity-building context, the most important and detailed definition identifies him/her as:

\[\text{an experienced practitioner who is sent by a foreign country or international organization to help build capacity of institutions in transitional societies. The adviser has no executive function. His role is limited to sharing advice, often in the form of recommendations for reforming or transforming an organization. An adviser typically works alongside a counterpart who is a high-ranking official within a ministry or agency.}\(^\text{21}\)

From the definitions taken into consideration, common elements can be inferred. First and foremost, the advisor needs to be an expert, SME or experienced practitioner; in essence an individual from the civilian or military world (as the case may be) who, by virtue of position, education, training or experience, is endowed with greater than normal competence or insight into a particular discipline. Common to the last two definitions, with reference to capacity-building, is the outcome, i.e., reforming and transforming the institutions of the host country, which is at the political-strategic level. Thus, the activity of sharing advice by the experience practitioner is implemented precisely at this level, having as counterpart a high-ranking official (i.e., ministerial-level). The elements highlighted by the previous definitions converge, from a functional point of view to a framing of the Strategic Advisor of last resort, in which he/she is identified as the experienced professional who performs the function of coordinator and collector of ideas, projects, actions and activities all combined to correspond to the objectives established in the mandate\(^\text{22}\). This last definition introduces a central element: the objectives set by the mandate. As advising is embedded in the broader context of the international community’s intervention in conflict areas, it is essential to outline the main differences and similarities in the approaches of

\(^{20}\) Centre For Army Lessons Learned’s (2019) Advising at the Senior Level – Lessons and Best Practice.

\(^{21}\) Gerspacher, N (2016) Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance, Kumarian Press.

\(^{22}\) CoESPU (2019) Strategic Advising Conference booklet.
the major actors involved. Indeed, each organisation may have a different mandate, hence a different approach. To outline these differences, this analysis reviews the doctrines of UN, NATO and EU, identified as key players in peacebuilding and post-conflict interventions. The resulting doctrinal scenario refers to the identification of the advisor to be deployed in civil, military, police or integrated operations.

2.1 Advising in UN doctrine

In the context of post-conflict societies, UN peacekeeping operations are often tasked with assisting in the reform, restructuring and reconstruction of law enforcement agencies. A substantial part of this process is, inter alia, the interaction between the UN police and the host country police, in order to achieve defined objectives. Under a mandate from the Security Council and at the request of the host state police, UN police co-locates with its national counterpart. Co-location enhances the ability of UN police officers to provide advice and knowledge transfer. In the UN framework, the advising function is detailed in the UN Peace Operations Manual Police Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising in Peace Operations, where advising is a key tool in capacity building and the broader police development process, and it is fundamental to the ability of the UN police to anchor police development truly within national ownership. Furthermore, it should be underlined that the advisor addresses the whole organisation, usually interacting with different individuals within it, so that the aim is not to enable a specific person, but the organisation. Within the UN doctrine, advising ranks among the operational activities related to Police Capacity Building and Development. UN mandated advisers work at a strategic level. In particular, they work at a strategic, medium to high management level. The basic aim can be identified as to establish a partnership with their local counterpart to achieve the goal of building (reforming or transforming) the institution. Advising is thus framed as a process, composed of sequential phases.

26 Ibidem.
27 Ibidem.
It is crucial to highlight from the very first phase defined as initial meetings with the counterpart how the matrix of activities is locally owned (at any stage). In addition, it is important to make it clear that the advisor is there to share ideas and expertise that the counterpart may find useful. The substantial purpose of this first phase is to make it clear that the advisor is there not as a visitor, but as a professional and experienced colleague who may have faced a similar challenge in the past. The second phase relies heavily on dialogue between the parties. In fact, according to the UN Doctrine, the identification and definition of the problem must be the result of a shared awareness between the advisor and the advisee. In addition, particular attention must be paid to the personal element of the advisee, who may feel uncomfortable identifying weaknesses and critical issues in his or her organisation. The third step is identifying a solution. It is always necessary that the idea for solving the problem is locally owned, so the UNPOL advisor may stimulate the solution search (e.g., by organising brainstorming). The UNPOL advisor needs to be part of the process but not the solution, in fact the fourth phase of development of a plan to address the problem requires highly structured work on the part of the advisor (i.e., sophisticated plans), but the plan must be understood and owned by the host-State counterpart. “Implementation of the plan, the fifth stage, does not involve the advisor’s function being exhausted. Thus, the advisor must be available and ready to address any type of problem that the counterpart may encounter in the implementation of the previously elaborated solution. Furthermore, strategic advising in relation to the UN must include compliance with a number of guiding principles outlined in the DPKO-DFS Guidelines on Police Capacity-Building and Development28:

- Multi-party, cross-societal consensus on police reform and broad engagement of relevant stakeholders through the reform process: The rationale is that police reform is as much a political as a technical matter. For this reason, to achieve police reform, the consensus of all key stakeholders is necessary to make the process nationally owned.
- Leadership role and engagement of the host-state institution: any substantial reform or transformation, to be effective and efficient, needs to be owned by the host-state. To this end, the active involvement of host-state institutions is essential, but (most importantly) they need to take the lead in these processes.
- Building a culture of accountability in the host-state institution:

Substantial changes do not (only) depend on a formal reorganisation. What is necessary is to induce a behavioural change within the profession. The UN doctrine refers to << building a culture of accountability >>, which is done through the inclusion of UN values in training and the construction of a disciplinary system.

- Encouraging improvements in the broader criminal justice system of the host State: Efforts towards the police reform alone would have little effect without parallel growth in both the judicial and correctional systems. Therefore, the UN identifies as a guideline the expansion of reforms to include the justice system.
- Insistence on international human rights and criminal justice standards, including comprehensive integration of women’s rights and gender equality commitments: UN advising must ensure that it always includes an underlying effort to advance human rights standards. Moreover, this effort must extend to inclusive integration from a gender mainstreaming perspective.

2.2 Advising in NATO doctrine

NATO’s strategic concept describes the requirement for the Allies to << develop the capability to train and develop local forces [police forces included] in crisis zones, so that local authorities are able, as quickly as possible, to maintain security without international assistance >>. In this context, the advisory function is widely placed, but the doctrines in which it is expressed in material terms are those related to the concepts of Security Force Assistance (SFA) and Stability Policing (SP). Both are placed in the frame of the broader Nation Building and Defence Capacity Building initiatives. This initiative, which was institutionalised at the 2014 Summit in Wales, has the aim to be an essential pillar of the Alliance’s broader Stability Projection Initiative. The focus is on strategic advising on defence and related security reform and institution-building, and on defence capabilities and force development. However, to give the most complete picture possible, a digression must be made as to what is meant specifically by SFA and SP. According to NATO doctrine, SFA encompasses all activities that develop and enhance, or directly support, the development of local forces and their associated institutions in crisis areas. They are clearly part of

30 Martinho, L. (2020) NATO’s defence and related capacity building (dcb) initiative.
the broader spectrum of NATO’s contribution to a comprehensive approach. SFA activities are applicable at all levels of operations: military strategic, operational, and tactical. The acronym GOTEAM (Generate, Organise, Train, Enable, Advise, Mentor) summarises the spectrum of SFA operations. In particular, advisory is part of the Military Assistance (MA) activities, materially implemented by the Special Operation Forces. MA is a broad category of measures and activities that support and influence critical friendly assets; it is implemented not only through advisory activity but includes (but is not limited to) capability building of friendly security forces, engagement with local, regional and national leadership organisations and civic actions that support and influence the local population. Within MA, advising is defined as follows:

“These are activities that enhance the performance of designated actors by providing active participation and expertise to achieve strategic or operational objectives”.

NATO’s SFA concept, however, leaves the need to address local police forces open. NATO has recognised this policing gap stating that << there may be a need to fully support security sector reform by training and mentoring police forces and advising local government officials in the areas of law and order and the rule of law when other actors are hampered and unable to do so >> 32. Essentially, while the SFA focuses on the development, improvement and support of non-NATO military security forces, the strengthening of the SP focuses primarily on police reform and secondarily on other related institutions, including the judiciary, corrections, and national government.33 This policing gap can be bridged through a combination of different approaches: through the temporary replacement of the Host Nation police force and/or by intervening on their capacity, by raising their performance to acceptable levels.34 For the purposes of placing the advisory activity in the doctrine, only the type of reinforcement mission will be dealt with. It is necessary when the indigenous police exist and have a fair degree of accountability but have limited effectiveness such that advice (among other functions) is needed. NATO SP resources will not be entitled to executive policing powers, as these are main-

34 Ibidem.
tained by the indigenous police, and their tasks will consist of aiding. Thus, the advising function consists of activities that assist the host nation by providing subject matter expertise and advice to local forces. These activities are applicable from the tactical to the strategic level and in support of individuals or groups. In the NATO SP doctrine, the advising activity finds space in two of the four types of stability activities: Stability Policing in Security Sector Reform and Stability Policing in Support to Governance Tasks. Respectively, in the first type of stability activities, the figure of the advisor finds its place starting from the handover the responsibility from the military component to police leadership (in the ambit, therefore, of the Police Capacity Building), while in the second type, the advisor furnishes his experience with the purpose of allowing the host country to develop a long-term governance. Here, too, there are fundamental principles that the advisor must follow in the performance of his or her duties. In particular, the principle of local ownership finds ample space in both AJP-3.16 and AJP-3.22. It appears to be the condition sine qua non to obtain a long-term projection of stability. Furthermore, ample attention is dedicated also to the principle of Rule of Law, thus, the policies and practices of security of a country must be founded on the rule of law and connected to the wider sector of justice (in this is found the reference to the SSR). Closely related to the work of an advisor are the imperatives of understanding, strategic communication, trust, legitimacy, and sustainability. Without going through each of them, it should be noted that they are all related to a fundamental aspect of consultancy activities: establishing a relationship based on trust with host nation counterparts. Within this framework, culture, mission, and operating environment largely define the conditions under which an advisor must develop the relationships necessary to achieve mission success. Advisors must use their influence, developed through trust and teamwork, to explain to clients that their advice might be a viable alternative and is worthy of consideration.

2.3 Advising in the EU doctrine

The EU, within the framework of European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its successor the European Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), has positioned itself as a key actor (in terms of financial resources, personnel support, and political will) in the pro-
motion of SSR activities. CSDP allows EU to deploy civilian, police and military personnel in missions and operations outside the union, they are the key instrument for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), conceived and controlled by EU Member States through the Political and Security Committee (PSC) which exercises political control and strategic direction. Civilian CSDP play a crucial role in the conflict cycle, empowering partners to provide security and apply the rule of law on their own territory. The SSR missions are increasingly ascending in importance within missions conducted under the framework of the CSDP, helping achieve goals of establishing secure environments where the rule of law and human rights are respected.\textsuperscript{36} The EU’s approach is to make extensive use of the advisory function within the framework outlined above. However, it should be noted that it is also carried out at a political-strategic level by the EU Delegations, which are provided by the political mandate. In fact, while Capacity-building Missions are provided by a political part it presents a different aim and a more focused mandate on SSR. So, in the case of EU Delegations, the function we are referring to is precisely that of political advisory, while in the case of CSDPs advising ranges from the strategic to the operational level. It can be said, therefore, that for the EU, advising is one of the best tools for promoting SSR. Although advising cuts across the various levels of EU international engagement, doctrinal systematisation is only found in the Civilian CSDP missions. This is evident in the publication \textit{CivOpsCdr Operational Guidelines for Monitoring, Mentoring and Advising in Civilian CSDP Missions}\textsuperscript{37} of 2014, which defines (among others) the advising function. Indeed, prior to the release of these guidelines, staff involved in advising activities << mostly rely on learning by doing and lessons learned in the past >>\textsuperscript{38}. The advisor, for EU doctrine, provides expertise to institutions or organisations on operational issues, in order to develop their performance or strengthen their capacity to fulfil specialised task. Advisors usually do not work in a one-to-one relationship with an individual: advising can concentrate either on a solution to an individual problem (usually short-term) or on a long-term relationship with an organisation. The EU also identifies several key principles that the Advisor (applica-
ADVISORY: CAPACITY BUILDING AT STRATEGIC LEVEL

...ble at any level) is required to respect and implement within its function. Advising is to be conducted with respect for the culture of the host country, but without compromising core European values drawing on international law and standards, reassumed by article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU). The EU intervenes with a civilian CSDP strengthening mission only when the host country has made its own decision to move towards reform and/or state and capacity building. The most relevant principle for CSDP missions (the why\textsuperscript{39}) is local ownership, that can be identified as the local solution for a local problem, but constant reference must be made to international law and standards (including human rights and equal rights principles) in the implementation process. Furthermore, the element of sustainability is crucial to produce long-term effects; It refers to the capacity to ensure that the benefit is enduring. To achieve sustainability, it is important that advisors, the international community, the local authorities and the advisees share the same vision. The aim of Civilian CSDP is not to impose a western system on the host country but, to give the host country/representatives the tools needed to develop a system that fits for this individual country. This falls under the element of flexibility. The second block of principles to be found in the EU doctrine refers to the personal implementation sphere of the advisor. First, if we want to follow a temporal order of implementation, Awareness of the political, legal and administrative environment and Cultural Awareness are two of the basic principles that should be accompanied by a pre-deployment preparation. Thus, in order to avoid friction and to achieve the highest possible level of effectiveness, a preliminary study of the context in which the advisor will be immersed is necessary. The principles of Patience, Respect, Trust and Confidence all fall under the advisor’s personal capacities. In fact, in order to be effective in terms of capacity-building, the primary objective of the advisor must be to build a relationship that is functional to achieving the mission statement. EU doctrine establishes the need to structure the transfer of knowledge on the part of the advisor; in fact, it is useful for the purposes of success to divide objectives and activities in relation to the roadmap and the type of counterpart. The last principle seeks to guide the advisor with respect to its place among several other actors, so Cooperation with other actors is central. In fact, the civilian CSDP mission will not be the only international actor providing assistance in a given host country, for this reason

\textsuperscript{39} Ibidem.
it is necessary to act in terms of cooperation with other actors, in order to avoid friction and maximise activities to achieve its mandate.

2.4 Key findings: commonalities and discrepancies between doctrines

Looking at the above doctrines from a comparative perspective, there are elements of similarity to other elements of inequality that are worth characterising and arguing. The UN has the most structured doctrine when it comes to advising at the strategic level. The other doctrines also provide for advising at the strategic level but do not have an ad hoc doctrinal standardisation. The NATO concept of advising is built on two doctrines, which are certainly complementary, but which contribute to the creation of a complex and non-linear framework. However, NATO’s willingness to standardise the advising function (with reference to training) can be deduced from the 2018 initiative, carried out by the NATO SFA Center of Excellence consisting of a Workshop on Advising as Capability for SFA, held in Rome. The aim of that initiative was to address the strategic advisor profile in the NATO SFA environment from a multidisciplinary perspective and to have an arena of discussion on issues regarding training and education and lessons identified. Furthermore, the willingness to integrate the advising function in the two contexts of SFA and SP, is evidenced by the Seminar for Institutional Advisors on Stabilisation and Reconstruction (S&R), Security Sector Reform (SSR), Security Force Assistance (SFA) and Stability Policing (SP) co-designed by the NATO SP CoE and the NATO SFA CoE, in 2021. The EU implements advising at various levels, political with EU Special Representatives and EU Delegations and at strategic-operational levels with CSDP. However, the lack of a linear and comprehensive doctrinal framework creates several problems when looking at the material implementation of activities. Indeed, if the head of the political section in the EU delegation is not assertive, and there is an assertive strategic adviser in the mission, this may create overlaps/attrition. This is important and the leadership level must consider it in order to deconflict. For example, sometimes advisors are provided with fragmented information, while the EU delegation has comprehensive information: they need to share and deconflict.

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41 https://www.nspcoe.org/seminar-for-institutional-advisors/
42 EU MMA&T Course, CoESPU, 2021.
As far as common elements are concerned, the concept of local ownership finds ample scope in all the doctrines outlined above. One can highlight the centrality of this concept in theorising; nevertheless, it is considered more controversial in implementation, as it will be highlighted in chapter three. The fundamental characteristics of the relationship to be built between the advisor and the advisee are exhaustively outlined across (homogeneously) the three doctrines. However, the practical side requires that the person playing the role of advisor can implement them. This introduces two issues that need to be addressed: pre-deployment training and recruitment process. The former constitutes one of the most relevant issues currently in the strategic advising debate, as training methods to transform the experienced practitioner into an advisor are often controversial and not standardised. This issue will be defined and characterised within the next chapter, in fact, intentionally the roles of advisors relative to each doctrine have been bypassed and not included within this chapter. The second is an issue with a very important practical implication, as advisors are often seconded by the member states of the international organisation, the recruitment process being attributed to the state of origin. This creates, first, a lack of homogeneity as each state has its own method of selection and creates a very practical problem when the person appointed as an advisor may not be suitable for any reason whatsoever either for life in the field or for the mission in general.

3. Equipping Advisors to carry out capacity building at strategic level

By focusing on the professional profile of those in the strategic advisory function, it is possible to deepen the concept of advising itself, considering its individual level. It should be stressed that in missions, advisors are an integral part of the operation. Typically, in such missions, a small team of political advisers or officers is assembled to provide support to a counterpart. An adviser will not necessarily have only one interlocutor but there may be an entire institution. The transformation of a subject matter expert into a strategic advisor follows a very precise procedure. First, the expert needs to be equipped with a set of skills that need to be enhanced through a pre-deployment learning and training process. In addition, the mandate of a strategic advisor, containing his or her roles, needs to be as well defined as possible. These steps imply the emergence of a series of critical issues and challenges that will be analysed and discussed below.
3.1 Methodological note

This section will present the methodological premises necessary for the critical analysis of the interviews and documents examined below. First, it is appropriate to emphasize the difficulty encountered in finding documentation functional to the analysis. The scarcity of unclassified material attesting to the best practices and lessons identified of the strategic advisory function within operations and missions is noted. For this reason, it was necessary to resort to interviews in order to find the necessary information. In addition, it is crucial to highlight that the people interviewed were three men. Secondly, for reasons of confidentiality and since the precise identification of the interviewees was not necessary for the purposes of the analysis, it was decided to maintain a regime of anonymity, referring to the contributions as interview no. 1, 2, and 3.

3.2 Skill set of an effective advisor

International organisations recruit professionals whose experience is relevant to the mission end state. This approach sees professional expertise as an essential element, the advisor must identify the options to be considered when developing new procedures and practices. In general, the hard skills dimension is uniformly framed, by doctrines and literature, as sector technical expertise. In the military and police, the hard skill that is the premise of everything is rank.\textsuperscript{43} In many cases, a sense of offence is triggered in the counterpart when a lower-ranked advisor is sent. It follows that, especially in the military and the police, it is important to avoid a low-level colleague alongside the adviser. The principle should be applied that senior advice requires a senior person. In the ministry it is different because they are area experts and civilians are used to using technical experts.\textsuperscript{44} Undoubtedly, experience as a professional and technical competence are important, but taken individually they are insufficient and porous.\textsuperscript{45} For this reason, it needs to be complemented by a range of additional knowledge and skills aimed at capacity building. These fall into the domain of soft skills, understood as the skills of a knowledge broker. Essentially, being an effective advisor boils down to a certain

\textsuperscript{43} Interview no. 3, January 2022.
\textsuperscript{44} Interview no. 2, December 2021.
set of personal skills and qualities. However, it is almost impossible to draw up an exhaustive list of these, as each situation may require an ad hoc additional skill. The analysis below aims to demonstrate the complexity underlying the role of an advisor. The advisor, like any expert, has to identify gaps and needs and then sift through his or her experiences for practices that could fit the context and contribute to systematic capacity building efforts. These skills can be traced back to macro-categories, namely: the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar cultural and institutional environment, develop a relationship of trust, solicit information, diagnose problems and find solutions.\textsuperscript{46}

For the first category, the advisor must be culturally aware, in the sense of being provided with the knowledge that the cultural differences between the adviser and others and that culture affects the way advice is given and received.\textsuperscript{47} In the case of a complex theatre of operations such as Somalia, for example, it is necessary to be aware of clan dynamics and the centrality of the family element; it is relevant for the advisor to know that power in such a context is divided among the clans.\textsuperscript{48} This awareness contributes to the creation of the so-called flexible approach, which is goal-oriented.\textsuperscript{49} Not only professional and cultural awareness but also a political awareness is necessary; it is to be understood as the understanding of power dynamics and politics on the ground.\textsuperscript{50} One of the main preconditions for being a strategic advisor is the ability to develop a relationship of trust with the counterpart. Without trust, the advisor will almost certainly not be able to gain access to the principal, other relevant actors, or information. Nor will the advisor be listened to. However, gaining trust depends to a large extent on how the advisor interacts with the principal and how he or she is perceived.\textsuperscript{51} The advisor, in fact, provides tools that the advisee uses, in which context trust is to be considered a crucial element. For this reason, empathy, respect, humility, and the ability to build relationships are fundamental characteristics, among others, of an advisor profile and cannot be excluded from his curriculum.\textsuperscript{52} The objective of the advisor is to penetrate the other’s way of thinking in order to enhance capacities. End state must be seen as the goal not the methodologies to be used. The alternative method should

\textsuperscript{46} Ibidem.
\textsuperscript{47} Gerspacher, N (2016) Strategic Advising in Foreign Assistance, Kumarian Press.
\textsuperscript{48} Romano, G., De Angelis, L. (2021) Carabinieri Abroad: Lessons from experience (Part II), CoESPU.
\textsuperscript{49} Interview no. 1, November 2021.
\textsuperscript{50} Interview no. 3, January 2022.
\textsuperscript{51} EU MMA&T Course, CoESPU, September 2021.
\textsuperscript{52} CoESPU (2019) Strategic Advising Conference booklet.
never be imposed, it should be offered as a valid alternative. Furthermore, technical experts are used to exercising authority and taking the lead in their professional life, but to be effective as consultants, they must demonstrate technical competence while behaving not as leaders but as supporters. This also brings out leadership and ownership. The latter means not forcing anyone. One of the mistakes that is often made is to force the action of influence in order to implement the mandate. But it is necessary for the advisor to understand that ownership in these contexts means compromise. However, the advisor must be clear about what is negotiable and what is not (e.g. human rights are never negotiable).

For what concerns communication, the advisor’s skills could be divided into active and passive communication. The former is understood as both verbal and non-verbal communication. A communicator with the ability to transmit advice in an easily understandable way. It means listening for specific information rather than listening to what the interlocutor wishes to share. To persuade, the advisor has to appeal to every artifice of language, in fact non-verbal communication becomes particularly relevant when an interpreter is needed. The second is framed as active (patient) listening, understood as the ability to pay attention to the needs of the counterpart. In conclusion, it is crucial that the advisor is self-critical. He is deployed carrying his own set of values and principles, but he must be prepared to question some of them to understand that in some cases his priorities will not be the right ones for the host nation.

3.3 Roles: What does an advisor do?

It is not possible to draw an all-encompassing picture of what roles a strategic advisor can play. The different roles of being an advisor require different ways in which advice is delivered. Depending on whether the main objective is capacity building or results, the advisor will have different roles; this is determined by the mission statement. As this is mainly a policy-driven activity, the political role of the mission, as well as its internal organisation and the timeframe that is dictated, must be examined when defining the roles of the expert. An advisor will have to

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53 Interview no, 2, December 2021.
54 Interview no. 3, January 2022.
56 Interview no. 2, December 2021.
58 Interview no. 3, January 2022.
assume different roles depending on the situation. The role of reflective observer will almost certainly be the starting point, as a counselor will have to learn to understand both the context and the counselor. The practical expert, on the other hand, is a role that a counselor should try to avoid as this means leaving the role of counselor and just being an implementer. Although these roles may vary, some are common to any strategic advisor. According to Wesslau\textsuperscript{59}, the core functions of advisory are: upwards, downwards, inwards and outwards. In general, for an in-mission advisor, the upward function involves advising the mission leadership. The downward function implies that the advisor puts his expertise at the service of the whole mission, especially in the field of operational planning. The inward function represents the interaction with headquarters and its experts. The outward function consists of engaging with external stakeholders, such as the partner country and actors in the international community. This last function is the most relevant and widespread in strategic advising. In fact, many strategic advisors are not in-mission advisors but assigned to the outward function. In this context, the role is essentially to interact with the local counterpart in the partner country structure, probably in a government ministry or department. The other three functions can be traced back to this. In fact, having a principal belonging to a ministry as advisor means performing an upward function, not with respect to the mission, but to the local principal. The downward function is expressed in the performance of the advising function also with respect to other actors of the principal structure other than the principal. The inward function would be the interaction with the employer, to be identified in the mission or in the team of advisors, depending on the specific case. Within the mission or as part of a team, this would include coordination and co-operation with other representatives of the mission. The strategic advisor is an advisor who understands and can give advice on political aspects of the reforms that the mission and the country concerned propose to implement. Therefore, he or she must be aware of the consequences that some advice might have on the rest of the mission. To understand what they really need, and thus what the direction of good advice might be, a necessary step is observation, through which one can understand what type of support the other party needs.\textsuperscript{60} Moreover, this process can also take place by

\textsuperscript{59} Wesslau, F., (2013) The political adviser’s handbook, Folke Bernadotte Academy.

\textsuperscript{60} EU MMA&T Course, CoESPU, 2021.
talking to people other than your counterpart. Indeed, in case the counterpart is reluctant to change the status quo, the advisor can try to identify *change agents* (e.g. if the counterpart is the minister on his staff, one can try to engage someone else to get information).  

3.4 Learning and Training: Preparing for strategic advising

Once recruited, advisors need preparation before being deployed. As a prerequisite for this, the subject matter expert needs to take on the mindset of an advisor. The fundamental change is in the mindset of the practitioner, who must understand that his or her experience and skills are not aimed at performing the tasks themselves, but rather at serving the advisor. Advisors generally lack authority, so the practitioner’s necessary shift is to be able to pursue goals through creative means that do not involve projections of authority. Since one of the main guiding principles highlighted by all the doctrines examined is that of ownership, the advisor should always bear in mind the need to compare himself as much as possible with his local counterpart. Hence the need to question the assumptions of one’s own background in favour of a more flexible approach. As pointed out, one of the roles of the advisor is to build a peer-to-peer relationship with his counterpart, establishing a relationship based on trust and confidence.

As a function of this, he/she should always seek the cooperation and collaboration of the counterpart. Speaking of learning and training, at this point of the analysis, we refer to pre-deployment training. It should be emphasised that this is certainly not exhaustive, but it is important for the development of the soft skills identified above. Eyre in 2019 identifies the need to move from training and skills development to more integrated training, consisting of the intersection of two elements: training and learning. The traditional *performance* focusses of training, embodied in training, remains almost exclusively on developing the technical skills of staff in isolation. The real need is in recognising that it is no longer sufficient to *train* only for the transfer of knowledge or skills. From the outset, we must seek an approach that proactively

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61 Ibidem.  
63 Ibidem.  
64 Interview no.1, November 2021.  
ADVISORY: CAPACITY BUILDING AT STRATEGIC LEVEL

considers soft skills and interactive behavioural learning in tandem.\textsuperscript{66} In other words, the DCAF (ISSAT), stressed the importance of continuing to design specific training in the following four key areas, including\textsuperscript{67}:

1. Capability – Capacity / Proficiency / Skill / Aptitude / Intelligence / Potential / Experience (Organizationally, Operationally, Technically and Individually);
2. Knowledge (transfer) – Products / Services lessons / Good practice / Case studies / Networks (partners / associations/ institutions);

In this context, scenario-based exercises, the use of role-plays and work in small groups are of fundamental importance. This practice should reflect the real-life challenges and opportunities of counselling missions and offer trainees time to integrate the various tools provided to them during training.\textsuperscript{68} Lecture-based sessions are essential for teaching content, but they should be kept keying concrete messages and the instruction should incorporate most of the instructional time to experiential learning. The advantages of bringing together a wide range of nationalities, work experience and genders is also crucial. \textsuperscript{69}Methodology is one of the key elements in the learning and training of an effective advisor. Interactive training provides the opportunity for practitioners to practice the skills they have learnt, to know when to use a specific tool and how to combine skills and knowledge to arrive at the fluid and personalised approach that is needed for effective counselling. Several sources support the importance of a scenario-based exercise, the use of role-players and working in small groups. This practice relates to the projection of in-mission challenges into the training environment, to make the examples discussed as realistic as possible. The advantages of bringing together a wide range of nationalities, work experience and genders were also part of the discussion. A heterogeneous group creates the environment for stimulating ideas, concepts and discussions. Counselling can also consist of introducing new concepts on fundamental

\textsuperscript{67} CoESPU (2019) Strategic Advising Conference booklet.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibidem.
rights and principles which are usually not on the other side’s horizon.\textsuperscript{70}

3.5 What challenges?

This analysis reveals several challenges in various areas of the strategic advising function. There is a lack of standards in both recruitment and training. Standardisation is a key and necessary component as it avoids discrepancies. It would also foster cooperation and continuity between consultants, especially during rotation periods or handovers. What is missing is standardised curriculum of recruitment and training among NATO, UN and EU and the contributing countries for advising at strategic level. Some of the failures were caused by the wrong selection of the advisor. The complexity of the advisory mission environment requires selecting the right person with specific characteristics and personality. However, the question at hand is according to which criteria the right advisor should be selected. The lack of common standards among contributing countries (as in the case of the EU) means that (in some cases) a bias is placed in the selection of the right person.\textsuperscript{71} The International Community must establish consistent staffing requirements, advisor standards and performance metrics, and clearly defined advisor objective. This would help to solve the problem of the number of available strategic advisors. Often, those that are available are vital for internal tasks within the armed forces in the home country.\textsuperscript{72}

Coalition advisors must be staffed and trained for their specific advisory position and must have the necessary subject matter expertise and experience. However, training at the strategic level is complicated to provide, which is why we refer to the concept of learning by doing;\textsuperscript{73} it consists of the experience accumulated through various missions and positions held concurrently. By doing so, the problem created is a lengthening of the phase of understanding the operational environment. In fact, the deployed expert possesses the basic hard skills that he develops during the mission and not before.\textsuperscript{74}

If the duration of the deployment ranges from six months to a year in general, standardising training in the pre-deployment phase could contribute to mission success. Another issue at stake is precisely the duration of deployments. The task of influencing and advising a for-
eign counterpart implies building a personal relationship. So, what is the ideal duration of such a mandate is a debatable issue; however, some agree that six months is insufficient. The ideal duration could be one year, considering the psychological implications, rotating shifts could be organised.75 Ideally, after returning home, qualified officers with international experience are facilitated to occupy national posts from which they could be easily disengaged. This would facilitate their ready availability for the next international posting.76 Looking at the challenges created within operational theatres, all steps affecting the advisor’s tasks must be assessed. The closely intertwined processes of handover and turnover create practical challenges. Handover is a necessary step to ensure that the handover from one advisor to another is as smooth as possible. However, it should be emphasised that this process should not interfere with the handover process, which is a priority for those about to leave the operational theatre.77 The (often strictly necessary) use of an interpreter between the advisor and the advisee creates problems. In this case, the advisor only does fifty percent of the work, the other half is left to the interpreter. That is why there is a need for a specially trained interpreter.78 However, there is a shortage of trained interpreters and sometimes local interpreters are used although they are inadequate due to fear of reverence or simply their inability to render the message as intended by the advisor.79

In contexts, characterised by the presence of numerous international actors, coordination becomes a relevant issue. There will be many people seeking to give advice and this needs to be coordinated.80 Even within the same organisation, it may happen that the different bodies required to coordinate in the field answer to different chains of command, which makes the synergy that should be there a human question (friction may arise).81 At the political/strategic level, within the EU, there is sometimes no clear division between the role of the EU Delegation and that of the CSDP mission, as they respond to two different hierarchical chains. On the other hand, within the UN this problem is not found, there is a much clearer organisation.82 If this cooperation, both within the

75 Interview no.2, December 2021.
76 Romano, G., De Angelis, L., (2021) Carabinieri Abroad: Lessons from experience (Part II), CoESPU.
77 Interview no.2, December 2021.
79 Ibidem.
81 Interview no.1, November 2021.
82 Interview no.3, January 2022.
organisation itself and with the rest of the mission, is not achieved, what could happen is the so-called *advisor fratricide*, i.e. advisors or teams of advisors competing with each other.\textsuperscript{83} Advisors with the same objectives, poorly coordinated and with no exclusive advisory principle contribute to the creation of this problem. For example, in the Afghan context there is an almost total lack of coordination at the strategic/political level. In that case, it was the prerogative of the advisors concerned to reach an agreement among themselves.\textsuperscript{84} Looking at operational theatres, the question of coordination triggers an upstream reflection: the lack of useful, common, and shared monitoring tools on advice between NATO, the UN or the EU and contributing countries. This generates a waste of resources by duplicating programmes and efforts.\textsuperscript{85} The process should translate the identified lessons from the reports and direct experiences of former strategic advisers into lessons learned. These lessons learned are particularly relevant in fragile areas. There is less capacity to absorb mistakes in fragile states. In conclusion, this challenge is the lack of well-defined evaluation processes.\textsuperscript{86}

### Conclusion

Interventions by the international community since the 1990s can be analysed through the lens of the security-development nexus. As such, the international community has developed the concept of capacity building, seen as the process of transforming a nation’s ability to effectively implement policies and programmes for sustainable development. However, this process brings several issues along, both from a lexical point of view (in relation to the wording building or development) and from the point of view of practical implementation.

At the basis of international interventions there is the will to stabilise states recently affected by conflict, and the first requirement for a state to be such, in the Weberian sense, is the monopoly of the use of force. Capacity building in this sense is expressed through SSR, a concept that is just as problematic in the literature as it is in the international political debate (in terms of approach). Initially, it retained a top-down ap-

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\textsuperscript{84} Interview no.2, December 2021.  
\textsuperscript{85} CoESPU (2019) Strategic Advising Conference booklet.  
\textsuperscript{86} Interview no.1, November 2021. Interview no.2, December 2021. Interview no. 3, January 2022.
proach, in which donors and organisations intervened through the provision of capital and trained personnel (technical assistance). It was then realised that the necessary approach involved the application of two principles: local leadership and ownership. They translated into a bottom-up approach, putting the host state’s will, ideas, and projects at the heart of assistance. Although this principle was recognised, capacity building in this field was initially still linked to the technical assistance dimension, embodied in the *train-and-equip* paradigm. However, the structural limitations and problems raised by this paradigm led to the diffusion and use of the strategic advisory function. Specifically framed to achieve enhanced capacity with a bottom-up approach. The comparative analysis of doctrines is relevant for understanding military change. Although the UN, NATO and EU doctrines have many elements of convergence, the substantial differences mean that there is no standardisation. This creates an obstacle to a general definition of who a strategic advisor is and what their functions are. In addition, the doctrines highlight numerous principles that are not, however, deepened and reflected in a defined process of lessons identified and learned. Consequently, there is a need for standardisation and updating of the doctrine itself, in the light of experience in the field. This analysis has reviewed the skills, roles, and training of strategic advisors, highlighting the myriad challenges that these issues raise. The expertise and experience of advisors is crucial to ensuring a certain level of success. However, it should be emphasised that conflict-affected environments are complex and involve many variables. The most competent advisor may only be able to accomplish part of what needs to be done. In conclusion, the advisory function must always be placed in the broader context of the mission. Thus, it relies heavily on the political mandate of the mission and the (equally political) willingness of the host country. Reconciling these two elements implies an absolute respect and continuous pursuit of the elements and objectives of local leadership and ownership.
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