

## NAUKI O BEZPIECZEŃSTWIE / SECURITY STUDIES

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### **FACTORS AFFECTING THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE AGAINST HYBRID THREATS (THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AS A FOCAL POINT)**

#### **Introduction**

Once a hybrid threat has been identified, the next question is how to deter and respond to it. The problem of deterring hybrid warfare actors – or “hybrid deterrence” – can be seen as a part of the broader challenge of deterrence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Nothing could be more dangerous than just re-applying old recipes to new challenges. As the threat evolves, so must the answer to deter those who threaten<sup>1</sup>. Only a limited amount of literature is available regarding the factors affecting the strategy of deterrence. Raghda Elbahy aims to address the limitations of classical deterrence theory in dealing with violent non-state actors<sup>2</sup>. Patrick M. Morgan elaborates on the concept and theory of deterrence<sup>3</sup>. Tim Sweijts and Samo Zilincik examine the rise of cross domain deterrence (CDD) in the context of deterrence theory as a concept that has been developing over the past few years but predominantly in a military context and it argues that CDD is applicable also to hybrid domains. The authors adduce insights concerning the use and utility of CDD against hybrid threats and identify the prerequisites for deterrence to play a role in an overall strategic posture to deal

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<sup>1</sup> T. Prior, *Resilience: The ‘Fifth Wave’ in the Evolution of Deterrence in Oliver Thränert*, in: *Strategic Trends 2018*, eds. Martin Zapfe, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2UtiVW4>.

<sup>2</sup> R. Elbahy, *Deterring violent non-state actors: Dilemmas and implications*, „Journal of Humanities and Applied Social Sciences” 1(2019), no. 1, pp. 43–54.

<sup>3</sup> P.M. Morgan, *The Concept of Deterrence and Deterrence Theory*, July 2017, <https://bit.ly/2UgG0fZ>.

with cross domain hybrid activities<sup>4</sup>. Vytautas Keršanskas outlines key elements to guide the states of the Euro-Atlantic community in developing a deterrence strategy against hybrid threats<sup>5</sup>. Claudia Major and Christian Mölling try to associate the new conditions with old deterrence<sup>6</sup>. David Takacs introduces the basic concepts of deterrence and discusses the differences between the deterrent capabilities of Ukraine and the Baltic States<sup>7</sup>. Matus Halas endeavors to explain why deterrence does not work in the Baltics<sup>8</sup>. Literature review shows that, the factors affecting the strategy of deterrence against hybrid threats in the South Caucasus region have not been studied.

The objective of this paper is to highlight the factors, which affect the planning and implementation of the deterrence strategy. The research methods primarily used in the paper are comparative analysis and synthesis.

### Five waves in the evolution of deterrence concept

Deterrence is a military strategy under which one power uses the threat of reprisal effectively to preclude an attack from an adversary power<sup>9</sup>. Deterrence is a vital part of international security and defence. According to Ducaru, deterrence means “trying to prevent a conflict by convincing a potential adversary that the consequences of its actions, including retaliation, economic sanctions, political isolation, legal challenges or even military defeat, will outweigh the potential gains”<sup>10</sup>. Unlike traditional military deterrence, where the adversaries’ militaries stay away from each other, the deterrence against hybrid threats is supposed to stretch across the cyber, economic and social domains, takes place in precisely those areas in which the adversaries are most closely entangled. The assumption is that, once an attacker is exposed, it will stop attacking. Experiences show that, most of the “softer” tools do not stop a determined aggressor. However, according to Matus Halas, a smaller, non-military challenge can somehow be deterred by an equally small non-military threat<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> T. Sweijts, S. Zilincik, *Cross Domain Deterrence and Hybrid Conflict*, in: *The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies*, December 2019, <https://bit.ly/33wJfDe>.

<sup>5</sup> V. Keršanskas, *Deterrence: Proposing a more strategic approach to countering hybrid threats*, in: *The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats*, March 2020, <https://bit.ly/2RCLgbG>.

<sup>6</sup> C. Major, Ch. Mölling, *Rethinking Deterrence: Adapting an Old Concept to New Challenges*, June 30, 2016, <https://bit.ly/2HbU46o>.

<sup>7</sup> D. Takacs, *Ukraine’s deterrence failure: Lessons for the Baltic States*, „Journal on Baltic Security” 2017, no 3(1), pp. 1–10.

<sup>8</sup> M. Halas, *Proving a negative: why deterrence does not work in the Baltics*, 11 Jul 2019, <https://bit.ly/2FwqhoF>.

<sup>9</sup> E. Wilkinson, *Resilience and Deterrence: Exploring Correspondence Between the Concepts*, in: *Deterrence. Advanced Sciences and Technologies for Security Applications*, eds A. Filippidou, Springer, Cham 2020, pp. 19–33.

<sup>10</sup> D. Takacs, *Ukraine’s deterrence failure...*

<sup>11</sup> M. Rühle, *In Defense of Deterrence*, April 30, 2020, <https://bit.ly/3hHEbkw>.

The logic of deterrence is to reduce the probability of an enemy attack. However, for deterrence to be effective it has got to be backed up by both political resolve and military capabilities<sup>12</sup>. A hybrid campaign uses multiple tools, vectors and activities, in coordination and with hostile intent, to achieve its objective. Key behaviours many states may need to deter include: 1) broad military aggression or use of force; 2) threats to critical national infrastructure; 3) threats to individuals, citizens or people living in a state's territory (physical risk, assassination, harassment, kidnap etc.); 4) interference in the state's core democratic or governmental functions; 5) wider violations of the rules-based international system and its norms. Besides these generally agreed hostile actions, each deterring actor should identify its own thresholds based on its national security threat assessment and systemic vulnerabilities<sup>13</sup>.

A state that is the subject of an attack by another state has a good reason to defend itself. If the state is the subject of an attack that qualifies as an act of war, then it has the right to use force in order to defend itself. The approaches to deterring hybrid threats are not mutually exclusive. And when applied to a particular context, several might be employed at the same time providing that, they did not undermine or contradict each other<sup>14</sup>. At the time of Russian involvement in Crimea crisis, Ukraine's military deterrence capabilities were solely dependent on its national army due to the lack of collective defence agreements and effective resilience capabilities. An agreement, which was supposed to guarantee Ukraine's territorial integrity was the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 was later contravened by Russia<sup>15</sup>. The bottom line is that, Ukraine's deterrence in order to thwart Russian offensive failed in that crisis.

The emergence of new strategic challenges necessitates the evolution and adaptation of traditional deterrent concepts<sup>16</sup>. It is difficult to guess whether aggressors who employ hybrid warfare can be deterred, and if so how – including to what extent existing deterrence theory and practice may apply. Therefore, it would be relevant to examine the theories of deterrence and the circumstances that necessitated the evolution of those theories. There have been different waves of deterrence theory. Developments in deterrence theory since the turn of the century may therefore be applied to deterring hybrid aggressors<sup>17</sup>. The emergence of deterrence in military theory dates back to the 1920s/30s when the first flight bombers were considered unstoppable by defensive measures. Then, strategists thought that large-scale attacks on one's cities could only be prevented, if the other side feared counter-attacks of similar or greater magnitude. Deterrence theory gained prominence and developed to its present

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<sup>12</sup> K. Iskandarov, P. Gawliczek, *Deterrence as a component of response to hybrid threats (The South Caucasus as a focal point)*, „Civitas et Lex” 2021, no 1(29), pp. 17–26.

<sup>13</sup> V. Keršanskas, *Deterrenc...*, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> *Can hybrid attacks be deterred? And if so, how do we do it?*, MCDC Countering Hybrid Warfare Project March 2018.

<sup>15</sup> D. Takacs, *Ukraine's deterrence failure...*

<sup>16</sup> T. Sweijjs, S. Zilincik, *Cross Domain Deterrence...*

<sup>17</sup> *Hybrid Warfare: Understanding Deterrence...*, p. 38.

state during the Cold War nuclear stand-off between the USA and the Soviet Union<sup>18</sup>. Knopf highlights four waves in deterrence theory<sup>19</sup>. The first wave came in the direct wake of the invention of the atomic bomb in the mid-1940s, with scholars considering its effects on international stability<sup>20</sup>. The first nuclear bombs demonstrated a similar offensive advantage, and Bernard Brodie, in 1946 after having witnessed their destructiveness, was among the first to observe that “from now (on the military establishment’s) chief purpose must be to avert wars”<sup>21</sup>. The second wave emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. It applied tools like game theory to develop much of what became conventional wisdom about nuclear strategy (at least in the West)<sup>22</sup>. Starting in the 1960s but really taking off in the 1970s, the third wave used statistical and case-study methods to empirically test deterrence theory, mainly against cases of conventional deterrence. With the advent of nuclear weapons, the term deterrence has been largely applied to the basic strategy of the nuclear powers and of the major alliance systems. The premise of the strategy is that each nuclear power maintains a high level of instant and overwhelming destructive capability against any aggression, i.e. the ability, visible and credible to a would-be attacker, to inflict unacceptable damage upon the attacker with forces that survive a surprise attack. Knopf suggests that, the fourth wave finds its origin in the events of 9/11 and focuses on the problem of asymmetric threats and great powers dealings with rogue or weak states and terrorists (including in the context of regional rivalries). Consequently, deterrence moved away from attempts to calculate and measure the number of weapons or a specific capability to deter against a particular threat at a particular time<sup>23</sup>. Fourth wave deterrence theory is characterized by two key elements that are relevant to hybrid warfare. First, a shift away from the relatively symmetrical mutual deterrence of state-actors towards deterring “asymmetric” threats from non-state and pseudo-state actors. Second, the recognition of a broader concept of deterrence that goes beyond military means. In the fourth wave’s world of deterrence of non-state actors, this realization might be termed performative deterrence: closely related to Schneier’s term “security theatre”, it is the notion that displays of capability, even when they are not grounded in real capability, possess deterrent value. The illusion of capability can be more important than the capability itself<sup>24</sup>. However, Tim Prior suggests the “fifth wave” of deterrence theory. The fifth wave of deterrence development, in another words concept of resilience is rising at a point when established international security practices are fumbling to respond effectively to security challenges. Resilience can increase the ability of security institutions to cope with and respond to complex threats

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<sup>18</sup> A. Bendiek, T. Metzger, *Deterrence theory in the cyber-century. Lessons from a state-of-the-art literature review*, Working Paper RD EU/Europe, 2015/ 02, SWP Berlin, May 2015.

<sup>19</sup> E. Wilkinson, *Resilience and Deterrence...*

<sup>20</sup> T. Sweijts, S. Zilincik, *Cross Domain Deterrence...*

<sup>21</sup> A. Bendiek, T. Metzger, *Deterrence theory...*

<sup>22</sup> E. Wilkinson, *Resilience and Deterrence...*

<sup>23</sup> K. Iskandarov, P. Gawliczek, *Deterrence as a component of response to hybrid threats...*

<sup>24</sup> *Hybrid Warfare: Understanding Deterrence...*, p. 38.

in a deliberative manner. Security policy, decision-making processes must match the complex threat environment they seek to govern by being flexible, proactive, and distributed<sup>25</sup>. We apparently observe that, there is a chasm between the first three (dealing primarily with nuclear deterrence) and last two (from terrorists to guerrillas and hackers to propagandists) theories with regard to actors. By now, it is widely acknowledged that traditional concepts of nuclear and conventional deterrence that were developed and implemented during the second half of the twentieth century, no longer suffice in today's strategic environment.

### **Factors affecting the deterrence strategy**

The South Caucasus is a region, which lacks unity among its nations. The region is plagued with so-called "frozen conflicts" – three serious threats, which undermine the security in the region and beyond. Azerbaijan's 20 percent had been occupied by Armenia until the war broke out in late September, 2020. Thanks God Azerbaijani Army managed to successfully liberate occupied lands. Georgia has still been struggling to restore its territorial integrity for decades. The dearth of trust between the countries makes the whole region vulnerable to external meddling. For instance, if the Baltic countries expect threat only from Russia, Azerbaijan is subject to the threats posed by Armenia and non-regional actors who support Armenia.

Erstwhile deterrence used to focus first and foremost on military measures. Newly emerging threats are significantly different from previous ones. Thus, the nations in the South Caucasus region face new challenges, highlighting non-military means. Therefore, the conduct of deterrence is now broader and deeper than before. It is under greater pressure due to technological, political and cultural developments and operates in a much more elaborate overall environment. Thus the goal of developing effective empirical theory on deterrence remains, at various levels, still incompletely attained. The same is true of mastering deterrence in practice. Nevertheless, deterrence remains important and fascinating<sup>26</sup>.

Once the hybrid tactics are unleashed, it would probably be too late to stop it. Luke Coffey suggests several ways to prevent hybrid threats before it is too late based on Russian strategy, which in fact pay off in the case of South Caucasus countries:

- first, good governance should be established on the local and national level. If people feel like they are governed fairly, then they become less susceptible to disinformation and propaganda efforts. Where there is endemic corruption, a lack of strong local government, and the disconnection of central government to legitimate political grievances on the local level, the stage is set for foreign (external powers') meddling. Abkhazia and South Ossetia are the best examples

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<sup>25</sup> K. Iskandarov, P. Gawliczek, *Deterrence as a component of response to hybrid threats...*

<sup>26</sup> P.M. Morgan, *The Concept of Deterrence...*

for this point. When Azerbaijani government initiated anti-corruption reforms and several local authorities were banged up, it was crystallized that, those corrupted people had been manipulated by the external actors and their stooges in the country so-called the “fifth column” with the purpose of undermining the trust of the people in their state.

- secondly, there must be economic freedom. People need to feel like they have economic stability and that their children have a bright economic future. Pursuing pro-growth policies that help grow economic prosperity is an important part of countering hybrid tactics. People who feel as if they have economic opportunities are less susceptible to foreign intrusion. Azerbaijan is economically more independent than other countries of the region. Armenia is the most dependent one, especially on Russia and Armenian lobby, which make it more vulnerable. Georgia’s efforts to integrate into the West reduces its economic dependence on Russia.
- finally, there must be a bond of trust and respect between the people at large and law enforcement agencies (intelligence services). If people believe they are policed fairly and that intelligence services are not overstepping their bounds, then society will become more resilient against hybrid tactics. In addition, law enforcement is often the first line of defense in a hybrid war scenario. A very capable and professional law enforcement and intelligence service can mitigate the effectiveness of agents provocateurs acting on behalf of external powers. Georgia has made giant strides with regard to implementing reforms in law enforcement agencies. Azerbaijan is still struggling to neutralize the representatives of the “fifth column”, who infiltrated into law enforcement agencies. The “police-citizen” confrontation that took place on June 7, 2020 in Baku is an example<sup>27</sup>. When the citizen was affronted by the policeman, he was recorded by his colleague. The recording was disseminated more rapidly than expected. This fact proves that, there are employees within the police organization who work in the interest of external actors. However, the processes initiated by President Ilham Aliyev to neutralize these agents have produced remarkably efficient results<sup>28</sup>.

According to Luke Coffey, while these three measures are easier said than done, if they are genuinely pursued by national and local governments, they can deter hybrid tactics or at least reduce the effectiveness of such tactics<sup>29</sup>.

Through collecting and combining ideas from security policy practitioners, Vytautas Keršanskas suggests the following key elements that should drive the planning and implementation of a deterrence strategy:

1. Communication. When deciding on a deterrence strategy, one should consider steps to ensure that a hostile actor understands that the pressure imposed is linked to its hybrid activity. Effective communications are crucial to ensuring this and can reduce the risk of the hostile actor spinning the narrative

<sup>27</sup> *Yasamal hadisələri: suallara cavab varmı?* 13 İyun 2020, <https://bit.ly/30Q7M53>.

<sup>28</sup> L. Coffey, *How to Defeat Hybrid Warfare Before It Starts*, January 21, 2019, <https://bit.ly/32yu4zt>.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

by portraying the actions as provocative or hostile. Lawrence Freedman stresses the possibility of deterrer badly articulating or aggressor misunderstanding the threat, thus rendering deterrence ineffective<sup>30</sup>. For instance, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan (2004–2020) Elmar Mammadyarov's activities might be referred as a badly articulated element of deterrence strategy. As the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev stated: "When Armenian Prime Minister says "Nagorno-Karabakh is Armenia and full stop" I respond to his claims, but I have never heard our Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacting to it at any level. Azerbaijani nation has not either. Who has to do it first? Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But they keep silence. I have told that we cannot speak about any cooperation with Armenia until any progress in the negotiation process. But they discuss Covid-19 with them. Do we have to help Armenian aggressors?"<sup>31</sup> That is the primary reason why the Minister of Foreign Affairs was immediately fired. Because he undermined the deterrence strategy of Azerbaijan against Armenia and its external supporters. President Ilham Aliyev's public statement on October 26, 2020 is an example of perfect communication. Referring to the question of a TV correspondent President Ilham Aliyev stated: "I am asked, what do you do with Turkish F-16s? I'm tired of answering. Go open, you have a satellite, don't you see what's going on? Go and see where F-16s are, in the air or on the ground? Everyone knows that they in the airport. They have been brought for training and stayed there when the war broke out. Our Turkish brothers kept them to give us moral support. And if there is aggression from outside, they will see those F-16s in the air"<sup>32</sup>. It was a clear message for external actors, which could have meddled in regional affairs, for instance through giving support to Armenia.

2. Resolve. Making the hostile actor believe that the deterring actor has the political will to deny benefits and impose costs, even if it comes at a price to oneself, is an important element to impact its cost-benefit calculus. While Georgia failed to do it in 2008, Azerbaijan showed its military-political will through not only denying Armenian offense, but simultaneously punishing them. Thus, Armenia will not dare to test Azerbaijani temper until at least an indefinite date.

3. Agility. Hostile actors may hope to achieve their aims through surprise or developing new forms of attack. The deterring actor thus needs to show that it is agile enough to respond to new challenges. Exercising is a key element, helping responsible authorities be well-equipped and prepared to act quickly. The counterattack launched by Azerbaijan against Armenia in May 2018, which resulted in gaining control over the village of Gannut in Nakhchivan is a perfect example of this element. Because, this is a fact that, the probability of Armenian attack on the border with Nakhchivan is much lower than other borders of Azerbaijan. Kars treaty is a primary guarantor of Nakhchivan'

<sup>30</sup> A. Bendiek, T. Metzger, *Deterrence theory...*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Prezident Xarici İşlər naziri Elmar Məmmədyanovun sərət tənqid etdi*, Jul 15, 2020, [shorturl.at/mnwU7](https://at/mnwU7).

<sup>32</sup> *Azərbaycan Prezidenti İlham Əliyev xalqa müraciət edib*, AZƏRTAC, 26.10.2020, <https://bit.ly/3dZkxQS>.

security, which constitutes the best deterrence against Armenian aggression. Having considered this matter (the least expectation of attack), Armenia tried to carry out an act of sabotage in the border with Nakhchivan. However, the units of Azerbaijani Army in Nakhchivan launched a counterattack and restored its control over the village of Gunnut and surrounding strategic hills. It should be noted that, annually scheduled exercises of Azerbaijan and Turkish Armed Forces in Nakhchivan have a vital impact on the preparation of the Army.

4. Attribution. Hostile actors are more likely to think twice before proceeding with hybrid action if they believe that they will be detected, and that the public attribution of the attack will be broadly supported by a range of states. Multilateral attribution is therefore particularly important. Attribution, paired with response or resilience building activity, is a critical political tool in deterring a hostile actor. The attitude of the world community towards the confrontation on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan is an example of this element. The image of Azerbaijan which has been burnished for the last two decades made even the external supporters of Armenia behave prudently.

5. Solidarity. Combining different national capabilities makes deterrence more efficient. Solidarity can manifest itself in different forms: within the nation or among the nations. One of the most striking examples of the first form was observed in Turkey in July 2016, when the people neutralized the military coup. A collective response to the nerve agent attack on UK soil (when a broad coalition of countries expelled over 150 Russian diplomats) is an example of the second form. The unity of Azerbaijanis against Armenian aggression is also an example of national solidarity, which was observed in late September and encouraged both Azerbaijan Armed Forces and the Commander in chief for further successful operations. The support of Turkish population both in Turkey and Iran to Azerbaijanis is an example of solidarity among the nations<sup>33</sup>.

In order to counter hybrid activities effectively, and to understand the grander scheme of things, supranational organizations and multifaceted cross-border cooperation are needed<sup>34</sup>. Turkish soldiers' participation in the training in Azerbaijan in August 2020, was the best signal to Armenia and its external supporters, which endeavored to undermine the security of energy projects initiated by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Depending on the level of willingness of different actors to work together, Chris Kremidas suggests three levels of national and multilateral cooperation and collaboration that would enable the governments and societies in the South Caucasus region to better address hybrid threats:

- “whole-of-government approach”, in which all agencies and ministries from national to local level cooperate, set broad common goals, and share information;
- “whole-of-society approach”, which is similar to a whole-of-government approach but also includes engagement with the private sector, academia and civil society;

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<sup>33</sup> V. Keršanskas, *Deterrenc...*, p. 18–21.

<sup>34</sup> *What Are Hybrid Threats?*, <https://bit.ly/3051XE9>.

- “comprehensive approach” in which like-minded groups or states work together with international organizations and entities, as well as the private sector and civil society<sup>35</sup>.

Having scrutinized the experiences of Georgia and Ukraine, Azerbaijan has created a precedent for other countries plagued with separatism. Thus, Azerbaijan has successfully applied all three approaches in pursuit of its objectives with regard to “Nagorno-Karabakh conflict”. Armenia is apparently supported by other countries. It is obvious that, Armenia’s economic conditions do not allow it to purchase such number of military equipment. However, Azerbaijan does not deny, where it buys its military equipment from. Even though Azerbaijan used to import its military equipment from Russia, for the last couple years it managed to diversify its military trade with the countries like, Israel, Turkey, Belarus, Pakistan and etc. This policy contributed to overall success of Azerbaijan’s operations in Nagorno-Karabakh.

There are ways partners and international organizations can support a state and contribute to its security and stability by helping it to counter the above disruptive actions, through:

- strengthening defense capability by providing armaments, training, strategic advice, technical assistance. As we told, Azerbaijan has a capacity to maintain its armament. Together with importing arms and military equipment, Azerbaijan improves its domestic military industry. However, Azerbaijan desperately needs partner with good will, like Turkey. Based on bilateral and NATO programs Turkey provides trainings for Azerbaijan. The scale and content of the training should be simply extended. Apart from it, other members of NATO can also enhance the cooperation with Azerbaijan as a reliable partner of the Alliance;
- providing diplomatic support through multilateral institutions, by mediating conflicts or by pressing the sides in a conflict to adhere to peaceful forms of conflict resolution. Unfortunately, international organizations, like UN, OSCE and etc. have proved to be impotent with regard the settlement of frozen conflicts in the region, like Nagorno-Karabakh. After approximately 30 years Azerbaijan decided to solve this problem. However, it sticks to the requirements of the international law and implements the resolutions of the UN;
- integrating into defense organizations, creating supportive military infrastructure or bases, or otherwise providing some security guarantees. Azerbaijan is only country in the region which is a member of Non-Aligned Movement, since Armenia is in CSTO and Georgia has expressed its will for NATO membership. Even though Armenia is a CSTO country, it hugely benefits from NATO, Georgia is the most enthusiastic partner of the Alliance. Azerbaijan has also been utilizing NATO mechanisms successfully. These facts underscore the reputation of NATO in the region. Azerbaijan has embedded its name as a winner of the Second Karabakh War. This fact in turn will attract foreign military personnel for lessoned learned in this war and most probably

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<sup>35</sup> Ch. Kremidas-Courtney, *Countering hybrid threats: We can't just buy a solution*, 15.02.2019, <https://bit.ly/2OXfuVx>.

it will be realized through NATO programs. Azerbaijan conducted a new type of warfare its experience will be disseminated through Alliance members. Azerbaijan is a member of NAM, however it does not mean that Baku may not establish a strategic cooperation with other countries. Azerbaijan proved to be capable of defending its national interests even though external actors did not refrain from overtly supporting Armenia<sup>36</sup>.

## Conclusions

Since the character of the threats change, the means to either deter them or respond to them have to adapt to new security environment. While erstwhile enemies preferred to confront their opponents, today's aggressors avoid direct engagement. The South Caucasus is one of the regions, which has been a playground of regional and non-regional actors for flexing their muscles. Now external actors do not directly meddle in internal affairs of the South Caucasus countries. They either capitalize on the separatist movements or support one of the regional countries against others. For the last 120 years Armenians have proved to be manipulated by external actors. This fact necessitates the development of short and long-term deterrence strategies for other regional countries, namely Azerbaijan and Georgia. Armenia is an open enemy of Azerbaijan, while it has territorial claims in Georgia and the deterrence strategy of Tbilisi with the support of the West against Armenia and external actors behind it is an example of general deterrence. Azerbaijan does not have any ambitions in Armenia. Baku's primary objective is to restore its control over occupied territories. The frozen conflicts are the main threats to the security in the region and beyond and external actors are interested in prolonging these conflicts. While Georgia's deterrence failed in 2008, the war which broke out in late September between Armenia and Azerbaijan proved that, for the last two decades Azerbaijan had been successful in developing long-term deterrence strategy both against regional and non-regional threats. Therefore, based on the experience of this war, military, political, economical, legal, etc. aspects of this strategy should be studied and the results ought to be reflected in the National Security Concept for the foreseeable future. Against the backdrop of stated threats, Azerbaijan has to adapt its deterrence strategy to the evolving security environment. The factors mentioned in the paper should be considered throughout the development process of deterrence strategy.

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<sup>36</sup> G. Tarkhan-Mouravi, *Old and new threats to security in the South Caucasus*, „Wschód Europy” 2016, vol. 2, pp 155–168.

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**FACTORS AFFECTING THE STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE AGAINST HYBRID THREATS (THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AS A FOCAL POINT)**

## SUMMARY

The genesis of deterrence has been studied in the paper. The characteristic features of deterrence strategy have been presented. The evolution process of deterrence concept has been delineated, five waves of deterrence have been brought to the spotlight. The factors affecting the implementation of a deterrence strategy have been underscored. The South Caucasus has been chosen as a focal point and its comparison with other regions has been conducted. The vulnerabilities of the countries in the region have been presented. The recommendations have been made for developing a robust deterrence strategy against external actors. Azerbaijan's strategy of deterrence for the last couple of years was thoroughly studied regarding its deterrence strategy. The authors endeavored to touch upon various aspects and elements of Azerbaijan's deterrence strategy in comparison with other countries in the region.

**KEY WORDS:** hybrid threats, the strategy of deterrence, South Caucasus

