RE-THINKING OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE AGE OF PANDEMICS

Raimonds Rublovskis,
Colonel (Retired), PhD Political Science, Mg. Hist., Mg. Military Studies

Abstract. The magnitude of COVID-19 pandemic caught the world off guard. Therefore, strategic anticipation in policy making, exit strategy out from COVID-19 environment, and strategic impact of the pandemic for international, regional, and national security in post-COVID-19 world will be the most important issues in the foreseeable future. Increasingly complex and complicated strategic security environment of the beginning of the 21st century will be characterized by further global and regional instability in failed and/or failing states, and regional crises and conflicts. Moreover, global security environment in post-COVID-19 world will finalize transition from unipolar, the United States dominated global security framework – legacy of post-Cold War settlement after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991-into multipolar global security order with China, Russian Federation, India and other actors who will be increasingly challenging the United States and the West politically, economically and militarily. Post-COVID-19 global security environment will be further challenged by decreased ability of international organizations, such as UN, OSCE, EU, and others, to address urgent and simultaneous security threats and challenges, therefore, the role of the state will increase both-internationally and domestically. However, since numbers of states are rather weak in terms of social cohesion and institutional capability- these states will be increasingly vulnerable to maintain effective institutional framework in order to address security challenges of the post-COVID-19 world. Moreover, these security challenges will specifically target small states due to the fact that small states are heavily dependent for their own security and defence arrangements on politically powerful and militarily capable global actors, therefore, small states will become increasingly vulnerable to address their political, social, economic and military challenges. The threat of terrorism, illegal migration, conventional military conflict, organized crime, cyber threats, CBRN threats, conventional arms control (CAC) issue, further development and control of nuclear weapons, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction- these are just a few domains of global and regional security, which will remain of utmost importance in post-COVID-19 world. Subsequently, defence, security and law enforcement institutions will face substantial legal, operational, moral, and institutional challenges in post-COVID-19 security environment. These challenges will include the limits of recruitment, standing operational procedures (SOP), rules of engagement (ROE), morale of personnel, and other relevant domains. Moreover, possibility of open involvement of active and former members of defence, security and law enforcement institutions into internal political affairs of a state will significantly increase.

Key words: COVID-19, Security, Multipolarity, Europe, Defence, Law Enforcement.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse security environment in post-pandemic world, and the impact of pandemic for global, regional, and national security; transition to new world order and shift from unipolar global security architecture to multipolar security architecture, as well as consequences of the transition to international organizations, global and regional actors, small states and, subsequently, for Europe and European Union. Additionally, the aim of this paper is to analyse the role of defence, security and law enforcement institutions in the post-COVID-19 world.

The post-COVID-19 global security environment will witness fundamental changes which would be fully comparable with major political, societal, economic and security changes in the past. Westphalian system of future nation states (1648) after Thirty Years War (1618–1648), Vienna Congress (1815) after the Great French Revolution in 1789 and Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815), Versailles system (1919) after World War I (1914–1918), Yalta – Potsdam security environment and the Cold War (1945–1991) after World War II (1939–1945), creation and development of bipolar global security system dominated by the United States and Soviet Union. The Paris Charter (1990), the end of the Cold War, collapse of Soviet Union in 1991 had created unipolar, the United States –

dominated global security environment. However, increasingly complex, and complicated strategic security environment of the 21st century has created further global and regional instability, failing and failed states, and increase of regional crises and conflicts. Such conflicts and crises like in Syria, Libya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Belarus, Ukraine and Afghanistan have been pivotal for further global and regional instability. Moreover, political, economic and military interests of the United States and their NATO Allies, Russian Federation and China have been fundamentally different on issue how to deal with these conflicts, rebuilt trust and confidence among the states, and as the result, Russian Federation and China have been increasingly challenging unipolar global security architecture which have been dominated by the United States and the West. It is highly likely that pandemic of COVID-19 will accelerate and finalize the transition from unipolar- the United States dominated security environment to multipolar global security environment where China, Russian Federation, and other significant regional actors will play prominent role. Post COVID-19 security environment will be challenging for international and regional organizations such as UN, OSCE, EU, NATO, and others. Taking into account the fact that most of those organizations were established during Cold War or immediately after Cold War period, within different global security environment and tasks suited for the Cold War period, it will be challenging for international organizations to maintain effectiveness and efficiency in the post-COVID-19 world.

Small states will have increased challenges for their political, economic and defence sectors because small states are heavily dependent on politically powerful and military capable global actor or security organization where such and actor plays prominent role. Considering that within multipolar global security architecture there will be number of such an actors, the small states will be under increasing political, military and economic pressure. European Union's political stability and security will be increasingly dependent on global political, economic, and military dynamics, especially on the status of relationships between the United States/ NATO with Russian Federation and China.

Taking into account that military power in the 21st century has returned as one of the key assets of a states' international and foreign policy, it is obvious that the United States, Russian Federation and China will further develop and strengthen their military sector, whereas Europe's debellicased societies (Grey, 2005), significant decrease of military spending and military capabilities have significantly diminished Europe as credible military entity. However, post-COVID-19 security environment in Europe will have permanent security challenges which will persist in post-pandemic world, such as rapidly increased possibility of conventional military conflict, terrorism, organized crime, illegal migration, cyber threats, CBRN threats, conventional arms control (CAC), nuclear arms control and non-proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and other security issues. Subsequently, defence, security and law enforcement institutions will have substantial legal, operational, moral, and institutional challenges within abovementioned security environment.

National Security and Global Security Environment in the beginning of the 21st Century. Multipolarity and Challenges for International Organizations and Small States

The unipolar security order has been increasingly challenged by Russian Federation and rising China resulting into increased regional conflicts and security challenges. Since milestone speech of Russian President Vladimir Putin in Munich Security Conference in 2007, increased political, economic and military tensions among the United States, Russian Federation and China have resulted into number of regional security crises, such as Georgia in 2008, Syria since 2011, Ukraine since 2013, Libya, Iran, North Korea, Nagorno- Karabakh in 2020, Belarus in 2020–2021, catastrophic American withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, and many others. Moreover, fundamentally different security threat assessments among the United States, China and Russian Federation have led to fundamental problems in conventional arms control (CAC), control of nuclear weapons, and increased CBRN threats. Abovementioned facts led to conclusion that the United States' domination

has been increasingly challenged in last decade, whereas COVID-19, and aftermath of it, will rapidly accelerate all abovementioned security challenges resulting into full and final transformation of unipolar global security order into multipolar security order.

However, besides "new normal" security environment, one has to admit that a complex and unpredictable security environment of the beginning of the 21st century has created fundamental and simultaneous security threats and challenges for political, economic, social, military and environmental security of states and societies. Rapid development and scope of simultaneous security threats and challenges for global, regional and, subsequently, national security level, such as competing ideologies, further radicalization of societies due to ideological, political, economic and security challenges, rather weak institutional capabilities of international and regional organizations, increasing poverty and inequality, marginalization and exclusion, environmental degradation, unemployment, threat to social order, public safety and critical infrastructure, negative impact of uncontrolled migration. rise of terrorism, development of organized crime networks, illegal drug and human trafficking, cyber threats, CBRN threats, rapid development and use of new technologies- all abovementioned security threats are just a few which will seriously impact global, regional, and national security (Rublovskis et al., 2019). Considering fundamentally different approaches of various states, international and regional security institutions to address these threats effectively, it is obvious that it will be difficult to deliver one common and sustained policy in order to counter abovementioned threats in post-COVID-19 world.

These security challenges will especially and specifically target and apply to small states because small states heavily depend for their own security and defence arrangements upon a politically powerful and military capable global actor or upon a security and defence organization where such an actor plays prominent role. (Rublovskis et al., 2013) In this light, the key issue of determining whether or not state is small it is necessary to address key security and defence issues and take into account the fact that external factors shape a small state security mentality (Vayryanen, 1997). Therefore, it is obvious that global and regional security and military challenges will continue to have profound impact on political stability, economic development, and prolonged security, including very independence of small states. However, one would argue that in post-COVID-19 world there will be not just one politically powerful and militarily capable actor like the United States in previous unilateral global security environment but number of other states will create other security poles, especially China and Russian Federation. Therefore, within upcoming change of balance of power in favour of multipolarity, small states will have increasingly challenging security environment where their political, economic, social and military sectors' capacity will become increasingly vulnerable, and, in some cases, their very independence, territorial integrity, and governmental decision-making process will be fundamentally challenged by powerful global and regional actors.

Previously mentioned security challenges will further undermine institutional capability of international organizations which main task had always been to maintain peace, stability, prosperity and security-both globally and regionally. One would suggest that, global and regional security organizations also will suffer institutional and capability challenges in post-COVID-19 world. Almost all these international organizations, including UN, NATO, OSCE, and EU-were established and developed either immediately after World War II, during the Cold War, or within the post-Cold War political settlement. One would conclude that institutional structure and the set of tasks of these organizations have been designed for completely different global and regional security environment which has been fundamentally changed since then, and it means that existing global and regional institutional network is increasingly vulnerable to address security threats and challenges. Moreover, emergence and finalization of multipolar global security environment will deeply impact these international organizations such as UN, OSCE, NATO, EU, therefore, significant regional organizations, such as BRICS, SCO, CSTO will offer alternative options for political

cooperation, economic development, and military security, thus challenging existing international security framework which has been dominated by the United States and/or its European allies. On the other hand- the United States and the West will attempt to prevent further decrease of their political, economic and military influence by consolidating their allies into global political "framework of democracies".

Political and Military Relationships among the United States, China, and Russian Federation: The Shaping Factor for European Security

European security and political stability have been increasingly challenged since outbreak of number of global and regional conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Belarus, Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, which resulted in significant increase of uncontrolled migration form collapsed/destroyed states within immediate proximity from Europe and, subsequently, radicalization of societies in Europe and increase of terrorist acts, and increased political, economic and military confrontation with Russian Federation and China. One would argue that several strategic mistakes have led to political, social and security turbulences within Europe due to poor leadership of EU and several European states. For instance, the political leadership of some European countries failed to address timely and decisively urgent security challenges which arose from uncontrolled migration process across whole Europe in summer of 2015. Inability of European military, police, security and border guard institutions to deal with the border control on EU external borders and/or European states' borders, poor performance of police institutions to maintain public order and safety, inability of security institutions to prevent development of terrorist networks and terrorist attacks in Europe, intrusion of individual terrorists into law enforcement, security and military institutions, radicalization of personnel of these institutions – all those examples revealed ongoing vulnerabilities of European security and defence sector.

Yet another strategic challenge for Europe is fundamental transformation of global and regional security architecture and further decrease of Europe's ability to shape and counter current and emerging security threats and challenges (Munich Security Report, 2020). Highly likely, that post-COVID-19 global and regional security environment will further escalate decrease of European ability to shape global and regional security policy. Far-reaching power shifts in the world, substantial challenges from other powerful global and regional actors, and rapid technological change contribute to a sense of anxiety and restlessness in Europe. Arnold Toynbee in his work "A Study of History" developed concept of continuous cycle of *Challenge and Response* for civilization development (Toynbee, 1990), and COVID-19 seems to be previously unprecedented challenge for the world, and Europe, while the response is to be delivered yet.

Obviously, the world is becoming less European and less Western. But, more importantly, Europe itself may and will become less Western. This is what we call *"Westlessness"* (Munich Security Report 2020), and this assessment of current European security environment fits well into Oswald Spengler's conclusions of his work "The Decline of the West" a century ago (Spengler, 1993). For the past decades, the answer to the question what it was that kept Europe and The West together was straightforward: a commitment to liberal democracy and human rights, to a market-based economy, and to international cooperation and international institutions. After collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it seemed that the values of liberal democracy will become universal without serious opposition. According to Francis Fukuyama's "The End of the History and the Last Man" statement in 1992, "humanity has reached not just…the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but *the end of history* as such: That is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government". However, almost unchecked global spread of Western liberal democracy started to slow down and retreat in the beginning of 21ˢᵗ century, and one would argue that the *Clash of Civilisations* concept of Samuel Huntington

(Huntington, 1996) which states that people's cultural and religious identities will be primary source of conflict in post-Cold War world – has persisted.

Today, the meaning of the West is increasingly contested again, and one is witnessing "decay of the West' 'as relatively cohesive geopolitical configuration. (Munich Security Report, 2020). One would further emphasize that in post-COVID-19 security environment, abovementioned framework of values of liberal democracy, human rights, market based economy, international cooperation and international institutions will rapidly erode, therefore, one could argue that liberal framework of values will be in full retreat globally and, subsequently, in Europe. Rapid collapse of twenty years long sustained effort of the United States and NATO in Afghanistan in August of 2021 is vivid example of retreat of liberal democracy. The President of France Emmanuel Macron stated in August of 2019 "we were used to an international order that had been based on Western hegemony since the 18th century. Things change and as the result of these changes is also the emergence of new powers whose impact we have probably underestimated for far too long" (Munich Security Report, 2020). As the result, Europe's ability to safeguard its security and prosperity and conduct of an independent foreign policy with the necessary means is already being challenged on various fronts. It is obvious that if Europe will not learn the language of power, it would disappear "geographically" (The Economist, 2019) or have others to determine its fate. (Munich Security Report, 2020).

The lack of coordination and fundamental differences over Europe's strategic direction between France and Germany, United Kingdom's departure from European Union, further disagreements on European policies towards the United States, Russian Federation and China, as well as fundamentally new threat of COVID-19 outbreak in Europe in February/March of 2020 have shown increased vulnerabilities of Europe within political, economic, social and military sectors of security, and proved disunity of states within EU. Furthermore, disintegrated and reluctant efforts of different European states to address COVID-19 threat, and lack of the leadership of various EU institutions, for instance, European Commission with rather slow and late decisions during COVID-19 crises throughout 2020 and 2021, have proved that EU institutions were not prepared for crisis and they are rather useless for critical situations like outbreak of COVID-19. Moreover, this situation has further complicated security environment, for example, closure of internal borders by some EU states led to potential outbreak of violence and threat to public security and safety on the certain border (Germany/ Poland border in March of 2020). Further spread of COVID-19 has already put extreme pressure on law enforcement, security, and military institutions of European states.

Considering abovementioned aspects, it is, however, obvious that Europe and the West as such, is in retreat, in decline, and under constant attack both- from within and from outside. (Munich Security Report, 2020) One would conclude that rapid and simultaneous security threats and challenges, including outbreak of COVID-19, have created an unprecedented problems for security environment in Europe, increasing pressure for political, economic, social, military and environmental sectors of security, and, subsequently, unprecedented challenges for law enforcement, security and defence institutions. One would argue that there is the deepest systemic crisis in entire history of EU, and strategic decisions have to be taken concerning whether EU will proceed as economic union or political project, moreover, the ability of European Union and European states to deal successfully with COVID-19, as well as political, economic, social and military consequences of this crisis will definitely determine very survival of European Union as political and economic project.

One would argue that European security developments will be fundamentally determined by several strategic factors: further dynamics of American- Russian-Chinese-European political, economic, ideological, and military relationships, further developments of global and regional conflicts (Middle East, Iran, Ukraine, North Korea, Afghanistan, and others), and the ability of European Union to maintain sustained internal coherence of the Union. One of key issues in the future is how EU will address its security concerns within the US – Russia relationship framework considering increasingly

negative trend of political, economic and military aspects of those relationships. However, the US -Russia relationships are of paramount importance and status of these relationships is the key to effective solutions of global and regional security, political and economic development. Unfortunately, the escalation of events in Ukraine since 2014 has drawn NATO-Russia relationships into deep systemic crisis, with Moscow seen by the Brussels as security threat. Lack of trust, mutual suspicion of intents and actions of each other, fundamentally different threat perceptions and security concerns-characterizes current security situation, therefore, enhanced dialogue and new framework of confidence building measures is urgently needed within the US/NATO – Russia relationships framework However, an attempt of the United States to maintain and sustain its so far unrivalled global political, economic and military leadership via increasing forward global presence and support of Arab Spring in the Middle East, the Afghanistan Government, and Maidan in Ukraine has been challenged by Russian Federation and People's Republic of China. Extremely dangerous escalation over Ukraine has occurred in April and November of 2021 resulting in large scale Russian military exercises and deployment of Russian military forces in close proximity of Ukrainian border.

One would assume that the United States will try to maintain its position as the world's preeminent global military superpower; the United States will face a series of deepening strategic dilemmas when confronting warfare from now through 2030. U.S. adversaries- China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and terrorist groups, likely will remain constant but U.S. allies are liable to change as Europe becomes increasingly fragmented and inward-looking and as Asia reacts to the rise of China (Cohen et al., 2020). The Biden Administration has outlined its goals, means and ways in order to retain American global leadership. The main approaches of current American security policy consists of, firstly, "America is back" approach with American attempts to strengthen democracies and prevent spread of authoritarian regimes across the globe. However, recent catastrophic disaster of American withdrawal from Afghanistan and fall of this country under Taliban regime dealt very serious blow to the credibility of the Biden Administration and, subsequently, to the ability of the United States to remain credible and trusted global partner. Taking into account abovementioned point of view of President Biden and the Biden Administration on American global security and defence policy, it is obvious that Russian Federation and China are named as American arch rivals in political, economic, ideological, and military domains (Biden, Foreign Affairs, 2020).

It could trigger much closer Russian-Chinese cooperation, especially, within military domain. Such a military alliance could seriously challenge the United States and NATO. Therefore, from American perspective, such dangerous situation could be avoided, if Russia would be kept outside potential US-China conflict, and persuaded not to take serious attempts to forge military alliance with China. From the Russian perspective, American global and regional political, economic, and military actions are directly aimed against Russian political, economic and security interests, and Russian perception is that Americans will definitely try to seek to impose regime change in Moscow, and further aim for complete fragmentation of Russian influence in its near abroad via so called "colour revolutions", or even worse, Russia itself. Therefore, although Russian political leadership remain pragmatic, and they are prepared to reach agreements, irrespective of counterpart's ideology, in the Kremlin's view, the United States and European Union's support for democracy and human rights is just their political tool of foreign policy that is more effective in changing regimes than in, subsequently, building democratic systems of governance on their ruins (Trenin, 2020). Unfortunately, current situation, which is further complicated by outbreak of COVID-19, requires much more strength of political will on all sides in order to understand fundamental security concerns and, subsequently, achieve satisfactory level of mutual trust and confidence. Therefore, it depends on current American and Russian political leadership whether the gap and mistrust between the United States and Russian Federation will further increase or there will be serious attempt to bridge the lines in order to solve urgent security challenges in post-COVID-19 world. Biden-Putin Summit in Geneva in June 2021 and their further

conversation in December 2021 has delivered cautious optimism on the future of American-Russian relationships. However, Russian proposals to negotiate new- legally-bound set of treaties concerning stop of further NATO enlargement into Ukraine and Georgia, and withdrawal of NATO military infrastructure from Central- Eastern European members of NATO would, probably, cause new escalation of events in the beginning of 2022.

However, fundamental security concerns and threat perceptions of Russian Federation towards the collective West remains the same since the end of the Cold War, signature of Paris Charter in November of 1990, and dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. From Russian perspective, sequence of events in Europe in 1990ties, such as breakdown of Yugoslavia in 1992 and subsequent military conflicts in former Yugoslavia (1992–1995), military action of NATO against Yugoslavia in 1999, recognition of independence of Kosovo, enlargement of NATO into Eastern Europe and within the former Soviet Union territory as well as simultaneous enlargement of European Union Eastwards did not contribute to overall security and stability in Europe, and all abovementioned events have fundamentally different assessment- positive from the West perspective and negative from Russian perspective. Moreover, EU Eastern Partnership initiative is seen by Russian side as an attempt to challenge Russia politically, economically, and militarily in Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, and Caucasus Region, therefore, Russia had to respond in kind. Events in Belarus in August-November of 2020 just confirmed this point of view in Russia. One of the most important strategic answers and changes of Russian foreign and security policy is the fact that Russia has fundamentally pivoted away from the European choice that Russian President Vladimir Putin announced in early 2000s, and that the country had de facto pursued since the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991 (Trenin, 2020).

This pivot to Russia's own cultural and historical heritage, with an emphasis to the imperial period, is often described as Eurasianism, and Eurasian integration process will also shape parts of former Soviet Union. The European influence remains, but in its historical rather than the contemporary, EU- shaped form (Trenin, 2020). As the result, in 2016 Russian President Putin came up with Russia's National idea: patriotism. In this version, Russian patriotism is above all about the state, which is the highest civic value. Attitudes toward the state have become the main criteria in judging historical and contemporary figures and ordinary citizens. The Russian state is believed to be the centre of Russian world, a civilization that traces its spiritual and temporal roots to Byzantium and Orthodox Christianity (Trenin, 2020). It is obvious that the longer-term consequences of the coronavirus will include further intensification of the US-Chinese rivalry, and the emerging Sino-American bipolarity. Subsequently, Russia's top priority should be to carefully maintain equilibrium-though not equidistance-between the United States and China (Trenin, 2020) One would conclude that Russian Federation will sustain its policies in order to build a new-more equal, multi-polar global international order and cooperate with the United States, China, EU and other significant global and regional actors in order to effectively address global and regional security, defence, political and economic threats and challenges. However, this comprehensive cooperation will be possible only if parties will recognize each other's political, economic and security interests. Unfortunately, it seems that main actors are shifting towards further escalation of political, economic, and military conflict.

Persistent Security Threats and Challenges in the Post-COVID-19 World
However, there are several avenues of approach where enhanced political and military cooperation between the United States, European Union, China, and Russian Federation is practicable and mutually beneficial. Potential of cooperation between the United States, EU, China and Russian Federation could be significantly improved within following areas: fight against terrorism, uncontrolled migration, illegal human trafficking, organized crime, drug trafficking, fight against pandemic, climate change, conventional arms control, non- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and negotiations on nuclear weapons and control of cyberspace.

Global fight against terrorism should be one of top priorities for the United States, EU, and Russian Federation. This includes increasingly effective actions against home-grown terrorism in the US, Russia and Europe and requires enhanced and efficient intelligence information exchange among the actors. Secondly, it requires complete and decisive defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq and, thirdly, sustained assistance of re-building effective state institutions in Syria and Iraq and establishment of prolonged peace in the Middle East.

Achievement of previously mentioned goals would definitely significantly decrease level of uncontrolled migration from the Middle East and Northern Africa into Europe and it would increase the ability of European military, police and security institutions to deal with uncontrolled migration and gain control over the process of migration. Combating organized crime networks is another important field where the United States, EU and Russian Federation can and should effectively cooperate. Illegal human trafficking, illegal drugs trafficking, illegal economic and finance networks-all those issues could be effectively solved via enhanced cooperation among abovementioned actors.

Over 30 years after the end of the Cold War, military tensions have returned to Europe. Both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia are boosting their deployments in close proximity to one another and in multiple domains. At the same time, a host of new or dramatically improved conventional and nuclear capabilities have been fielded, introducing a significant level of uncertainty into the security environment. (Charap et al., 2020) Currently, most of the treaties that formed the core of the arms control system are either gone or being undermined, and conventional arms control is yet another fundamental European security challenge with unsettled framework. It is especially relevant for wider European security provisions. On the one hand, fundamental security and defence documents of Russian Federation clearly state the sum of actions that constitute direct military endangerment and direct military threat to Russia, therefore, any, even limited military conflict would rapidly escalate into full-scale NATO-Russia conflict, therefore conventional arms control is increasingly important issue which cannot be separated from other important global and regional security such as non- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, development of nuclear capabilities and missile defence systems. On the other hand, although it once served as a cornerstone of European security, the current regional conventional arms control (CAC) regime is outdated and largely irrelevant to today's challenges. (Charap et al., 2020). Moreover, increasing lack of openness, mutual trust and confidence between NATO and Russian Federation will further challenge security situation and overall security level in Europe.

Any future conventional arms control negotiations and agreements have to incorporate measures which would reduce the risk of conflict through misunderstanding and miscalculation and address military drivers of potential NATO-Russia conflict in Europe via innovative CAC measures, which would increase warning and decision-making time, complicating surprise attacks, and lowering overall tensions (Charap et al., 2020). Furthermore, any future CAC agreement has to provide an effective means in order to address European security issues and sub regional security and defence issues, therefore, one has to address also issue of permanent and rapid development of technologies within military domain. Emerging new types of conventional military capabilities should be included within any future negotiations of conventional arms control framework. One would conclude that there are several issues which will have significant impact on any future conventional arms control negotiations and agreements for Europe. Firstly, status of NATO/US relationships with Russian Federation will have profound influence on the Region and, therefore, it is definitely important to take into account not only arguments of European states but also Russian security concerns and considerations within the future conventional arms control framework. It could require development of special sub regional conventional arms control agreements which would politically and legally reinforce overall CAC agreement.

Secondly, future CAC agreement has to be legally and politically sound and effective to fulfil its tasks and, therefore, one would argue that stability of global and regional security environment will be further challenged by new arms race which includes several domains: space, cyberspace, conventional arms, nuclear weapons and CBRN. Considering previously mentioned issues and since both-NATO Alliance and Russian Federation – are nuclear powers, any escalation of situation between NATO/US and Russian Federation could rapidly turn into nuclear stand-off. Military drivers of potential Russia-NATO conflict include military activities or exercises in strategically sensitive locations, enhanced readiness, massing of forces or capabilities, long-range strike deployments, and threats to vulnerable lines of communications (Charap et al., 2020). Therefore, further development of nuclear capabilities and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is yet another global and regional security challenge which will have fundamental impact also on European security. The possibility of new arms race among multilateral actors, such as the United States, Russian Federation, People's Republic of China, India and the others, including Iran and North Korea, would not be limited only within space, cyber-space or conventional arms domains. The domain of CBRN threats and nuclear military capabilities in particular, will certainly witness new developments, however, one has to take into account the fact that entire system of control over nuclear weapons is not in its best shape, for example, after the collapse of the INF Treaty, global security has faced unconstrained arms race in the domain of intermediate-range missiles (Ifft, 2020).

Moreover, April of 2020 marked the 10th anniversary of the New START Treaty. The nuclear arms reduction agreement between the US and Russia, originally signed in 2010, was due to expire in February of 2021 unless it were extended by Presidents Trump and Putin, and one would argue that it would be reckless to forego the benefits of New START when the alternative to extension is "no limits, no verification, and no transparency" (Rusten, 2020). Fortunately, The Biden Administration proposed to prolong the Treaty in February 2021. Return to effective conventional and nuclear arms control framework is global issue which could be successfully addressed only if global actors will cooperate in order to decrease tensions because one has to understand very serious consequences, also for European security, if relationships between the United States and Russian Federation will further deteriorate, especially in the domain of arms control. Cyber security is yet another global challenge which is increasingly important to address it timely and effectively taking into account, firstly, importance of cyber security in fight against the terrorism and, secondly, increasing tensions among global actors over political issues on possible interference via cyber space on political processes and elections.

Conclusions

Although, COVID -19 has brought previously unprecedented challenges, abovementioned security issues will remain and even increase after the end of the pandemic- conventional and nuclear arms control, global security problems among the United States, China, Russian Federation, and European Union. Moreover, security issues of the Middle East, Iran, North Korea, Belarus, Ukraine and others will remain as well in post-COVID-19 world. One must conclude that, most probably, there will be fundamental geopolitical, institutional, and ideological changes in post-COVID-19 world. The most important strategic transformation will accelerate finalization of transition of global security architecture from unipolar- the US dominated- global security order into multi-polar global security order with China and Russian Federation as contenders to play significant role in future global and regional security architecture. Moreover, it seems that China has successfully countered outbreak of the pandemic, and it will strengthen China's political and economic situation. (Jinping, 2018) Rapid development of technologies and artificial intelligence will be further used for increased surveillance, information, and data collection by a state; therefore, the values of liberal democracy will further diminish globally and regionally. Further change of balance between security of society and human

rights will change in favour of security, therefore erosion of democracy and liberal order will continue, and some countries will crack under these multiple and simultaneous pressures. (Osman, 2020). Obviously, Francis Fukuyama's concept of the end of the history and globalization is over, whereas, the world after COVID-19 will witness the return of the strong state. However, one would argue that countries are quite different, and many states will prove unable to meet the expectations of their people (Osman, 2020). The most challenging areas for the state to prove it effective will be: economic recovery and struggle with rapid increase of unemployment, security and state's ability to maintain public order and security, and ability of state's institutional framework to perform its duties within confused and complex COVID-19 environment.

Obviously, European Union will face further political, social, and economic and security challenges in post-COVID-19 world and very cohesion of the Union will be at stake. Furthermore, members of the EU will pursue fundamentally different concepts of further development of the Union, which could trigger possible disintegration of European Union. However, one would argue, that disintegration of EU would be global political and economic disaster of such a scale that there will be serious attempts to avoid this scenario. It is self-evident that abovementioned challenges of European Union and hypothetical scenario of disintegration will primarily impact small states of EU, for instance, the Baltic States, which are heavily dependent economically on EU, and militarily on NATO. The pandemic also highlighted increased role of the state and diminishing role of international organizations, such as UN, OSCE, EU and others, therefore, reassessment of role of international organizations and their ability and capabilities to address current security challenges will be paramount. It is obvious that international organizations which were created in different security environment of the 20th century for different tasks are not suited to address security challenges of the 21st century effectively.

One would argue that global security threats and challenges, including the outbreak of COVID-19- are the same for the United States, Russian Federation and European Union, therefore, these security threats should be addressed comprehensively and collectively. However, because of abovementioned mentioned transformative trends and dynamics, the bigger changes will come in a chain of reactions what will initially affect economies, many areas of our lives, the organization of many societies and domestic politics. In turn, these changes will unleash new forms of global strategic confrontations (Osman 2020).

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