

Summaries of the scientific works and publications

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Monographs

1. Stankov, Vasil. “GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE SYRIAN CONFLICT”. G.S. Rakovski National Defense College, 2019. ISBN 978-619-7478-25-9, 143 pages

http://rnda.armf.bg/vvp/vvp-content/uploads/2019/07/Monogr_Vasil-Stankov.pdf

The book deals with the main driving forces and reveals the motives of the key military and political factors behind the onset, development and prospects for resolution of the Syrian crisis. It also considers the multi-dimensional efforts for resolving the conflict and the possible scenarios for its outcome. In addition, it assesses the impact of the conflict on the security environment in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Black Sea Region. Finally, it highlights the implications of the Syrian conflict for security and for Bulgarian interests.

The main purpose of the monograph reflects the fact that Bulgaria is directly affected by the adverse implications of the war in Syria and its security is exposed to a number of risks and challenges, given its geographical location. Tension in the Middle East will likely remain high even after the end of the active phase of the conflict as controversies and the power struggle will continue. On the other hand, the conflict in Syria enables Bulgaria to achieve its geopolitical chances by maintaining a pro-active stance on the issues of the Middle East and by taking the role of a driver of stabilisation processes in the Western Balkans. This entails ongoing survey and analysis of the geopolitical aspects of the Syrian conflict and its regional repercussions.

The book focuses on the geopolitical dimensions of the conflict as a basis for analysis of the reasons for its onset, the patterns of its development and the ways to resolve it. It aims to present a comparative holistic picture of the motives of the actors and stakeholders, predict their intentions and

ambitions, as well as help formulate an adequate national stance and develop an efficient strategy to address the implications of the conflict directly affecting our country.

The study of the geopolitical dimensions of the conflict makes it possible to analyse its regional and global impacts and their multilateral effects on the geopolitical dynamics and the security environment. A conclusion is substantiated that the scale, scope and duration of the conflict are driven by the interests of many regional and global factors aiming to expand the spheres of their influence and gain long-term military, political and economic benefits. Highlighted is the argument that the prospects for the conflict settlement depend on the delicate balance between the geopolitical objectives of the parties directly involved in the conflict and the ambitions for participation in power of non-systemic actors such as the legitimate opposition and radical groups. A forecast is made that the balance could be achieved in the formula for power-sharing and distribution of Syria's sovereignty.

The analysis gives grounds to assume that regardless of the outcome of the conflict, Syria will remain a competitive geopolitical space for a long time and a source of instability caused by acute and divergent controversies among the main actors. The responsibility for preserving and maintaining peace will be with those members of the international community which did not participate directly or indirectly in the conflict.

The book provides arguments that the war in Syria has direct implications for the geopolitical processes and the security environment in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Black Sea Region. A positive manifestation of such developments would probably be the strengthening of the process of integration of Western Balkan countries in the EU and NATO. It is explicitly noted that while conflicts pose risks and challenges they also create opportunities for countries, through active position and constructive approach, to unite the efforts of the affected parties and be a factor of stability.

The monograph consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion.

The introduction presents facts in support of the statement that the civil war in Syria is one of the most severe and bloody conflicts in the world, which has a destabilising impact on the situation both in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean, on the one hand, and in the Black Sea Region, the Balkans and Western Europe, on the other hand.

The first chapter traces the reasons and the essential aspects of the conflict in Syria, clarifying further the cause and grouping of the numerous participants. Outlined are the conflicting parties and the main actors, including the paramilitaries supporting Bashar al-Assad's regime, the structures and units of the opposition and radical groups.

The second chapter makes analysis of the geopolitical characteristics and parameters of the conflict and examines in detail the stance and positions of the regional and global stakeholders within this context. It overviews the interests, motives and actions of Iran, Turkey, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar), Israel, Russia, the USA, the European Union and the BRIC countries.

The third chapter deals with the international initiatives for political resolution of the conflict, analyses the prospects for its settlement and outlines the implications for the regional and global security and stability. It also explores the role and contributions of the UN SC, traces the most important results of the Geneva Peace Talks, negotiations in Astana and Sochi. In addition, it sets out possible scenarios for the outcome of the conflict. It furthermore assesses the impact of the conflict on the security environment in the Middle East, the Balkans and the Black Sea Region. Finally, it highlights the implications of the Syrian conflict for Bulgaria's security.

2. Stankov, Vasil. ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF THE MILITARY-POLITICAL SITUATION IN CRISIS REGIONS. G.S.

Rakovski National Defense College, 2019, 129 pages, ISBN: 978-619-7478-28-0

The monograph represents a systematic methodology for analysis and evaluation of the military-political situation (MPS) with a focus on its crisis conditions typical of the regions of interest for Bulgaria in terms of military and political risks resulting there from and the threats for the interests and security of the country and for our NATO and EU allies.

The main purpose of the book is to produce a methodological framework that would allow identification of correct approaches to the analysis of the MPS status and prospects for development, including trends with long-term or situation effect.

The MPS is examined as part of the dynamic system of the contemporary security environment which allows its elements in military and political analyses to be positioned in the wider context of security. This approach is conducive to determining the interrelationships between military political entities at different security levels and analyse the direction, intensity and effect of the interaction of military and political factors. Highlighted is the place of the MPS in the system of security factors and aspects, analysing its nature, meaning and basic structural elements.

The book defines the approaches and methods of MPS analysis in crisis regions. To this end, different statuses and criteria for assessment of MPS are studied, with a focus on the nature and meaning of the military and political crisis as a specific state characterised by various specific features. The monograph introduces the methodology for development of observable diagnostic indicators underlying the warning and forecasting functions of the analysis. It substantiates the importance of the systematic approach as a tool for MPS analysis and its use in the analysis of military and political crises in order subsequently to be able to explain the application of all methods for analysis of military and political information and evaluation of the situation in crisis regions.

The monograph presents in detail the subject-matter, the purpose and the

uses of five logical-intuitive and six rational-logical methods for evaluation and forecasting of MPS when making a crisis analysis. Also, it deals with the specifics of military and political analyses in the regions of interest for Bulgaria in the context of the two of the analytical methods considered, which are particularly suitable for warning and forecasting crisis processes of military and political nature. Highlighted is the manner of their use as well as the uses of the other analytical methods for the purposes of MPS analysis and evaluation against the background of the characteristics and parameters of military and political developments in the Black Sea Region, the Western Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean as part of the Middle East.

The monograph consists of an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion.

The introduction outlines that planning of adequate response options is impossible without prompt and accurate analysis of the MPS which allows the formulation of correct decisions. The completeness of the analysis and the precision of the evaluations are critical today when an event of tactical nature could have a high conflict potential and strategic implications on peace and stability. Therefore the issue of the methods of enhancing the efficiency and quality of MPS analyses in crisis regions and the opportunities for designing practical tools for MPS clarification, evaluation, warning (prediction) and forecasting in the regions of interest for Bulgaria is particularly relevant.

The first chapter deals with the contemporary security environment as a dynamic system, outlines the levels of security and identifies the objects located in them, as well as the security factors and aspects. It also examines the subject-matter and meaning of the MPS and reveals its basic structural elements.

The second chapter considers the subject-matter and the basic concepts associated with a military and political crisis as an MPS state and analyses its specific features in crisis regions. The systematic approach is derived as a means of MPS analysis and its use in the analysis of a military and political crisis is substantiated. Also, this chapter deals with the subject-matter and

different methods of analysis of military and political information and evaluation of a military and political crisis: logical-intuitive (Expert Evaluation Method, Team Generation of Ideas or “Brainstorming”, Morphological Analysis, Structured Analytic Techniques Method, the Delphi Method) and rational-logical methods (Key Assumptions Check, Critical Thinking, Analysis of Local Factors, and Detection of Disinformation).

The third chapter highlights individual methods of warning and forecasting of a military and political crisis (Indicators and Scenarios and Formulation of Strategic Forecasts). The analytic methods examined are mapped against the practical MPS context in the regions of interest for Bulgaria – the Black Sea Region, the Western Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

The conclusion outlines that the MPS forecasting and evaluation in crisis regions underpin crisis planning as they serve to develop a strategic evaluation and formulate the response options for military and political crises. Such options support the design of the response plan, which may be based on minimising the effect of adverse factors and reinforcing the effect of favourable circumstances. Therefore the warning and forecasting functions of the analysis may help derive specific advantages and benefits for our country in a crisis situation.

Articles and reports published in scientific editions, referenced and indexed in word-renowned scientific information databases

3. Stankov, Vasil. The Role of the European Union for the Settlement of the Conflict in Syria. Socioint, 6th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, 24-26 June, 2019-Istanbul, p.511-514. ISBN: 978-605-82433-6-1.

http://www.ocrints.org/socioint19_e-publication/abstracts/a287.htm

The article “The Role of the European Union in the Settlement of the Conflict in Syria” features the efforts made by the EU and the Member States

to contribute to the settlement of the Syrian conflict, arguing that the political and diplomatic potential of the EU allows it to engage on a larger scale with the peace process, since the conflict's implications have a significant impact on the European countries. An overview is made of the individual efforts of the lead Member States and the absence of a coherent allied strategy. Then, the article points to the financial contribution of the EU and Member States aimed to relieve the humanitarian situation on the ground and highlights the key aspects of the strategy "Towards a comprehensive EU approach to the Syrian crisis", adopted by the Union in June 2013. Finally, the article concludes that it all depends on political will and particularly on the ability of the European leaders to find the synergy in their joint effort and prove that the EU is capable of playing a decisive role in the settlement of global and vitally important security issues.

Keywords: European Union, Conflict, Syria, contribution

4. Stankov, Vasil. International Peace Initiatives to Resolve the Conflict in Syria. Socioint, 6th International Conference on Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, 24-26 June, 2019-Istanbul, p.493-498 . ISBN: 978-605-82433-6-1.

http://www.ocerints.org/socioint19_e-publication/abstracts/papers/275.pdf

The article reveals the international efforts to bring the conflict to an end and start a meaningful peace process that would reconcile the conflicting parties and engage them in a series of negotiations aiming to initiate a National Dialogue, draft a mutually acceptable Constitution and prepare free and fair elections. The article outlines the peace endeavors of the United Nations Security Council, describes in detail the so called Geneva Peace Process. Then, the article analyzes the peace efforts undertaken under the leadership of the countries engaged to the greatest extent with the events on the ground – Russia, Turkey and Iran, and summarizes the results achieved at the meetings held in Astana in order to negotiate conditions for the cessation of military operations and the launch of a peace dialogue between the regime and the opposition. Finally, the article concludes that the political settlement requires a balance

between the geopolitical objectives of the outside factors involved and the power ambitions of the internal players.

Keywords: Conflict, Syria, Negotiations, Peace Process

Articles and reports published in unreferenced journals with scientific peer-reviewing or published in edited co-work volumes or in specialised editions for classified information

5. Stankov, Vasil. Iranian Involvement in the Syrian Conflict.

KNOWLEDGE –International Journal Vol.30.6.March, 2019, p. 1437-1440. ISSN 1857-923X (for e-version). ISSN 2545 – 4439 (for printed version).

<https://ikm.mk/ojs/index.php/KIJ/article/view/949/381>

The article begins with an overview of Iran-Syria relations and the reasons for the Iranian support for the Syrian regime at the outset of the conflict and onwards. A detailed description is made of the common interests defining the lasting military-political, economic and security cooperation between the two countries. Subsequently, there is an analysis of the nature and scope of the Iranian involvement in Syria and its regional and internal implications. Finally, the article outlines the role of Iran in post-conflict Syria and the possible stance of its opponents and allies on Iranian intentions to sustain its presence and influence in the country.

Keywords: Iran, Syria, involvement, conflict, balance of interests.

6. Stankov, Vasil. Modern Dimensions of the EU-Turkey Defense

Cooperation. Annual military scientific conference with international participation named Modern aspects of security – challenges, approaches, solutions, June 20-21, 2018. G.S. Rakovski National Defense College's Yearbook, Command and Staff Department, 2018, pages 422-426. ISSN 1312-2991.

<http://rnda.armf.bg/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Godishnik-fksht-2018.pdf>

The article describes Turkey's attitude towards the European defense initiatives and its aspirations to participate on an equal basis in the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in order to become an integral part of the

European Common Security and Defense Policy. The article highlights the driving factors behind the Turkish intention to achieve full membership in the European Defense Agency (EDA) and other EU defense institutions. Further, an analysis is made of the present obstacles hindering EU-Turkey defense cooperation including Turkey's ongoing disputes with PESCO member states such as Greece and the Republic of Cyprus. Finally, there is an assessment of Turkey's potential to contribute to the European defense architecture vis-à-vis PESCO's future development scenarios.

Keywords: Turkey, defense agreement, structured cooperation, European Union, operational capabilities.

7. Discussing the Implications of The Syrian Crisis Upon The Regional In/Security. Annual military scientific conference with international participation named Modern aspects of security – challenges, approaches, solutions, June 20-21, 2018. G.S. Rakovski National Defense College's Yearbook, Command and Staff Department, 2018, pages 416-421. ISSN 1312-2991.

<http://rnda.armf.bg/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Godishnik-Iksht-2018.pdf>

The article begins with a description of the humanitarian and security aspects of the Syrian civil war, primarily the refugee influx and the rise of terrorism in the Middle East and worldwide. Then it analyzes the origins and the true reasons for the initiation of the conflict with an emphasis on the grave socio-economic, political and civil rights issues in pre-war Syria. Furthermore, it points out that the most important reason for the civil war is the deep crisis the ruling regime was experiencing both domestically and internationally because of its decreased legitimacy. Finally, the article highlights the Syrian conflict as a factor destabilizing the situation in the Middle East, the Western Balkans and the Black Sea and summarizes the opportunities to be presented by post-conflict reconstruction in Syria.

Keywords: regional implications, Syria, refugees, terrorism, Middle East, Western Balkans, Black Sea

8. The Syrian Conflict and the Possible Scenarios for Achieving Stability and Peace. Military Journal, G.S. Rakovski National Defense College, issue 1-2, 2019, pages 17-22, ISSN 0861-7392.

<http://rnda.armi.bg/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1-2.pdf>

The article “The Syrian conflict and possible scenarios for achieving stability and peace” reveals the geopolitical parameters of the Syrian civil war as the main reason for its significant impact on the regional and global security environment. Then, the policies of the key players in the conflict are outlined and the options for reconciliation are evaluated in the context of the escalating struggle for power and influence. Also, an overview is made of the recent dynamics in the conflict and the actions of Turkey, Russia and Iran following the US decision to pull its troops out of the country. Finally, there is a detailed analysis of three possible scenarios for the settlement of the conflict and their regional and global implications.

Key words: conflict, Syria, geopolitical parameters, security environment, power balance, scenarios

9. Implementation of the System Approach in the Analysis of Military-Political Crises. Military Journal, G.S. Rakovski National Defense College, Sofia, issue 3, 2019, pages 13-17, ISSN 0861-7392.

The article “Implementation of the system approach in the analysis of military-political crises” views the system approach as a practical applied tool for analyzing the military-political environment capable of revealing the dynamics of its components and subsystems, as well as their mutual integration and interdependence. Highlighted are the main features defining the military-political environment in crisis areas related primarily to the immediate risks and threats to the security and the interests of the military-political players and a recommendation is made to develop a list of warning indicators which would notify of the emergence and development of a crisis. Then, the article outlines the different types of indicators with an emphasis on the warning ones and identifies the criteria every indicator should meet in order to be an effective analytical tool. Finally, an overview is made of the aspects of the system

approach implemented in the analysis of a crisis in the context of the changes inflicted to the features, the scope and the composition of the system of the military-political environment.

Key words: approach, analysis, military-political environment, indicators, crisis

10. Does NATO Need a New Strategic Concept? Compendium of the International Scientific Conference “Modern Security and Contemporary Technologies”, March 15 2019, Volume 2, pages 363-366, Scientific and Technical Engineering Association “Industry-4.0”, ISBN 978-619-7383-13-3.

The report traces NATO’s mission vis-à-vis the changing security environment and describes the debate about the feasibility of the project to update its Strategic Concept. There is a retrospective analysis of the allied strategic documents and a correlation is made with the essence and the momentum of the changing security environment throughout the various periods of Alliance’s development with an emphasis on the Strategic Concept adopted in Lisbon on November 19, 2010.

Analyzed are the changes in the security environment following the adoption of the Concept and the contents and the directions of the debate on the necessity of a new strategic paper are examined.

Keywords: NATO, Strategic Concept, security, challenges, threats.

11. Turkey’s Regional Strategy vis-a-vis the European Integration of the Western Balkans. Compendium of the International Scientific Conference “Modern Security and Contemporary Technologies”, March 15 2019, Volume 2, pages 367-371, Scientific and Technical Engineering Association “Industry-4.0”, ISBN 978-619-7383-13-3.

The report explains why the Western Balkans is suitable for the implementation of Turkey’s regional strategy and analyzes the accession to the EU of the WB countries. A thorough justification is made of the idea that for

various reasons (weak statehood, unstable institutions and grave economic and social problems in most countries) the WB region is the natural choice for the implementation of Turkey's regional strategy. There is a detailed analysis of the perspectives for the objectives of Turkey's regional policy being achieved given the European integration of the WB countries and the interests of the global players.

Keywords: Western Balkans, Turkey, European Union, strategy.

12. Turkey's Aspirations for Transnational Influence. Compendium of the International Scientific Conference "Modern Security and Contemporary Technologies", March 15 2019, Volume 2, pages 372-376, Scientific and Technical Engineering Association "Industry-4.0", ISBN 978-619-7383-13-3.

The report reveals Turkey's intentions to become a global player by engaging various institutions and organizations intended to enhance its cooperation with the Turkic World. A detailed description is made of the role, the mission and the tasks of the main state institutions and NGO's aiming to spread out and expand Turkey's cultural and informational footprint and create conditions for its transformation to political influence.

In conclusion it indicates that the implementation of this strategy in Europe and on the Balkans is hindered by palpable obstacles and challenges originating from the controversial events in Turkey itself, which do not match the socio-political criteria and standards of most European societies.

Keywords: Turkey, influence, Turkic World, cooperation.

13. Stankov, Vasil. Specific Features of the Intelligence Analysis of Military-Political Crises (G.S. Rakovski National Defense College's specialized edition for classified information, Vh. № СИ-28-98/25.10.2019 г., Reg. № RB 211101-001-04/4-1948/23.10.2019 г.)

Unclassified Summary: The article explores the specialized ways and methods for identifying the risks and threats to national and allied security

upon the onset and the unfolding of military-political crises as a tool for developing response options. The need for checking the credibility of the incoming messaging and interpreting it correctly is explained and the ways to identify misinformation are outlined. At the end, the intelligence analysis of military-political crises is featured as a building block and a crucially important phase of the national and allied crisis response planning.

14. Stankov, Vasil. Analytical Review of the Situation in Northern Syria. (G.S. Rakovski National Defense College's specialized edition for classified information, Vh. № СИ-28-98/25.10.2019 г., Reg. № RB 211101-001-04/4-1948/23.10.2019 г.)

Unclassified Summary: The article highlights the major military-political factors to be taken into account in the analysis assessments and forecasts of the MPS in Northern Syria. Underlined is the importance of each MPS element and its role in the intelligence production. Attention is paid to the need for analyzing and assessing the conflicting sides as a potential source of military-political risks and threats. Analyzed is the impact of the unfolding military-political events upon the current features and upon the upcoming status of the MPS, more specifically upon the military-political relations between the major parties involved.

Signed: _____ (II)
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