

EDITORIAL

THE NEW ROLE OF ARMED FORCES AS A RESPONSE TO ASYMMETRIC THREATS

The central theme of this issue is asymmetric threats with emphasis on the new role of the armed forces as one of several possible national responses. Asymmetric threats are not a new phenomenon. According to the literature, they are one of the oldest forms of threats, although in most cases the term asymmetric is not specifically mentioned. Asymmetry as a term referring to something that is not symmetrical or equivalent emerged later than the threats we today identify as asymmetric, and is consequently considered more modern. In reality, asymmetry is a form of threat that no one expects. It can relate to the organizational, personnel-related, and quantity-related, or some other aspect. It is important to note that an asymmetric threat emerges in a way that comes as a surprise. Our responses are therefore delayed, since such a threat was unexpected and we are not (yet) properly prepared to counter it. For this reason asymmetric threats are a big challenge. We can deal with them in different ways; one of them is certainly military. In asymmetric warfare, a very important effect is demonstrated with the use of minimal input, assertion of various interests – most often of an individual or group against a larger group or country – innovative approaches, and with high efficiency compared to the resistance of the target. When considering the role of the armed forces and their response to asymmetric threats, both the question and the answer to whether this should be the new role of the military are quite obvious. Asymmetric threats are a series of threats with a rich history, but it is their very innovation, effect of surprise, and inflicted damage that require a great deal of vigilance on the part of all whose fundamental mission is to ensure national security. In the past few years, Slovenia has faced various threats that could be classified as asymmetric, such as floods; ice storm; mass, group and individual illegal migration, and COVID-19. The state responded to them by activating various stakeholders, including the military. With its numerous past experiences acquired at home and abroad, the Slovenian Armed Forces has successfully joined state activities to normalize, assist in, restore and resolve the existing situation, and to provide order and security. Nevertheless, all stakeholders in the country who are involved in the

efforts tackling the emerging asymmetric threats, including the Slovenian Armed Forces, are constantly faced with new challenges. These are manifested in various forms such as the need for new knowledge, other forms of cooperation, provision of specific logistical support, changes in legislation, modernization of the self-protective equipment for the employees and the efficiency of communication and other devices. In order to be better prepared and more responsive to asymmetric threats in the future, we still need to do more to face the above-mentioned challenges. There are several ways to do this. One of them is to write articles on the role of the armed forces in asymmetric threats. The authors of articles in this issue share a variety of experiences, views and ideas on how to proceed in order to be better prepared and more effective in the future.

Rok Svetlič addressed the issue of the importance of human rights of an individual who asserts these rights as an illegal migrant in the country of arrival in relation to the rights of this country and the human rights of its citizens as well as all those who exercise these rights on behalf of the state when dealing with illegal migration. In his article *Monistic theory of human rights and paralysis of security systems – the case of illegal migration*, the author explores the role of security forces in ensuring the human rights of citizens.

Joint civil-military interaction as a tool in responding to hybrid threats is the title of a paper by **Thomas Matyók** and **Srečko Zajc**, who believe that in order to respond to asymmetric, hybrid and other forms of threats, it is necessary to find new mindsets and new ways to organize those providing security. One of their main messages is that new forms of threats require a joint effort of civilian and military institutions.

According to **Viktor Potočnik**, changes in security threats brought about changes in the nature of war and warfare. In his article *The changed character of war and the transformation of infantry squad, platoon and company*, he writes about the reasons for these changes, the nature of changes and the way in which they should occur in the organization, culture, doctrine, training, and other areas of military operation. The author notes that new development trends in the field of warfare mainly originate from the United States. In the future, however, the Alliance will have to make more decisions in this respect.

In the 2015 European migrant crisis, the European Union was faced with a new challenge also involving the armed forces. Different Member States chose different ways to involve their respective armed forces. Five years later, members of the Slovenian Armed Forces still support the Police in the protection of the Slovenian border and in dealing with a growing number of illegal migrants. More about this in the article *Illegal migration and the role of the Slovenian Armed Forces* by **Liliana Brožič**.

Readiness of European countries for the return of foreign fighters of the Islamic State is the title of an article by **Denis Čaleta** and **Sara Perković**. The authors are interested in establishing to what extent the citizens of Belgium and France, who have fought as volunteers on the side of the Islamic State, represent a threat to the European Union and their respective countries; how this is established, and what are the security measures in this respect both in the European Union and the above countries.

In the article *Asymmetric warfare threats in Greece: a descriptive analysis* **John M. Nomikos** provides an answer to the question how to systematically deal with asymmetric threats in the form of cyber-attacks and illegal migration in Greece. He presents Greece's cyber security strategy and the importance of greater intelligence cooperation to prevent, limit and protect all that is of particular importance to the security of the state and the society, as well as illegal migrants who are victims of organized crime.

Just as in other countries, climate changes are a major challenge in Hungary as well. In their article *Hungary's legal efforts to strengthen climate resilience* **Tamás Berek**, **László Földi** and **József Padányi** explore how to influence these changes, minimize their impact and address them from a defence and military perspective.

When we talk or read about the state, defence, and the military, we always first think of good organization, dynamic work, order, discipline, and security. Security for all. Let it stay that way.