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Commandant's message



Dear Readers

Throughout the years the Hellenic National Defence College provides, through a comprehensive academic program, highest level knowledge on National Security and Strategic Studies, to officers of the Hellenic Armed Forces, officials of the Public Domain (close and broader), as well as officers from allied and friendly countries.

Within the above framework, HNDC's review "ATHENA" analyzes the drastically changing security environment and the formulation of National Strategy, using historical facts and lessons arising from them, as analytical tools.

In addition, the multitude of the activities conducted by the College as well as the high level of its academical training program are presented, introducing everyone to the high educational level of its graduates and the indisputable organizational capabilities of its staff.

In this semester's issue, focus has been given on the development of innovative technological applications and the way that these are used on operational planning and conduct, while examining at the same time the impact, through the ages, of the "leadership" factor on successful Strategy development. Possible security challenges, caused by the unprecedented global security competition are also presented, along with international initiatives on countering climate change as well as effects of modern battlefield characteristics to fighter's morale.

As the Commandant of the Hellenic National Defence College, I would like to thank the editorial team of "ATHENA" review, for grasping the need of outreaching the College's work, and for contributing, along with the rest of the College's Staff, to the intensive effort of upgrading College's academic work, as well as its projection.

I am wishing you all, to enjoy reading "ATHENA"!!

Athanasios SARDELLIS
Lieutenant General (HA)

Editorial

Eight months after the events in Gaza and twenty-nine after the initial Russian invasion of Ukraine, despite thousands of dead and wounded, human rights abuses and massive economic bleeding for those involved, no visible settlement is on the horizon. At the same time, new sources of tension are constantly emerging, changing the balance in the international environment. Knowing the strategy is perhaps the safest "algorithm" for reading and interpreting these events and perhaps risking some short-term predictions.

In the Greek section of the issue, articles with a significant range of topics are listed. The review includes the article by Panteion University Professor Mr. Gerasimos Karabelias on leadership in Thucydides and Xenophon. Then, the article by the Emeritus Professor of AUTH, Mr. Evangelos Livieratos, concerns the importance of geospatial imaging. Next we find the article by Mr. Ioannis Stamoulos, PhD of AUTH, about combat stress in the Israeli DFs. Finally, the section concludes with the article by Colonel Georgios Nikas, PhD candidate of NKUA, on the value of oral history.

Then, in the "Innovation" column, an article by Colonel (AFEng) Christos Dimitrousis on satellite communications in the armed forces. In the Book presentation column, three new publications are presented. Following are the essays of two students, Colonel (INF) Dimitrios Tsafoulis, a student of the 76th ES, on the topic of the strategic dialogue between Greece and the US in defense matters and Colonel (ARM) Ioannis Drakos, also a student of the 76th ES, on the topic of the initiatives of the World Bank and the IMF on Climate Change. Finally, photographic material from the School's activities follows.

The two new elements in this issue, are the English section of the review, which is being launched with the aim of expanding it gradually, so that it will soon cover half the pages of the review, as well as the intensive use of new technology. Specifically, the section starts with an article by Assistant Professor of Panteion University, Mrs. Maria Daniella-Marouda, on the granting by states of access to international organizations in areas with humanitarian crises.. The following is the essay by the Commander HCG, Mrs. Maria Makri, on the strategic implications of COSCO's investment in the port of Piraeus . Last but not least, the essay of Captain HN, Mr. Panagiotis Triandopoulos on the importance of Clausewitz today. In addition and regarding the use of technology, note the use of an artificial intelligence program for the design of the cover in this issue.

Brigadier (HAF) Dimitrios Bitsis

Director of Studies

Is state consent (to gain access) still valid when human dignity is at stake? Taking stock of relevant state and international organization practice as well as peace agreements and ceasefires: lessons learnt from Syria to Gaza and beyond.

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Introductory Remarks

The basic question in this paper lies in the heart of access for humanitarian aid and protection in times of crises, when human dignity is at stake and territories are disputed, or outside the effective control of the monitored state, whether in situations of violence, occupation, or armed conflict. Any possible answer requires a flexible, yet principled approach to access by all involved actors.

Humanitarian access: nature - conditions - actors

Humanitarian access is the ability of relief and protection offered by international organizations and humanitarian agencies to reach populations in need¹, as is affirmed by United Nations GA and the SC (i.e. UNSCR 2417/2018)².

¹ See Marouda M.D., Humanitarian Space, I. Sideris, 2012, as well as the Center for Strategic and International Studies Initiative on Access Challenges, Denial, Delay and Diversion: Access Challenges in an Evolving Humanitarian Landscape, September 18, 2019, accessed at <https://www.csis.org/analysis/denial-delay-diversion-tackling-access-challenges-evolving-humanitarian-landscape>

² UNSC, Resolution 2417 (2018), in which the SC Strongly Condemns Starving of Civilians, Unlawfully Denying Humanitarian Access as Warfare Tactics," UN, May 2018, <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13354.doc.htm>.

The ability to reach those in need of humanitarian protection and assistance, is however, depending on the consent of all relevant actors and especially of States effectively controlling territories. The requirement of consent, however, has resulted in recent years in an escalation of deliberate, willful obstruction of access, such as the one we see today in territories in Ukraine (controlled by Russia), or in occupied territories such as in the situation in Gaza³.

Access restrictions remain today one of the main obstacles of protection and assistance in areas of armed conflict, leaving nearly 380 million people in need of emergency assistance and more than 281 million people forcibly displaced (figures February 2024)⁴. Indeed, millions of people in Afghanistan, in Yemen, in Nigeria, Syria, South Sudan and Myanmar and in Gaza are left without protection, because of impediments to entry by governments and /or non-state actors, or restrictions of movement due to the ever-increasing security risks involved and the violence against personnel, and finally due to the interference with activities⁵. Siege, starvation, and obstruction as military tactics, impede agencies from operating. The complexity of the situations, active hostilities, as well as the proliferation of actors in areas of conflict, coupled with populism in donor states and skepticism about humanitarianism and solidarity itself, undermine humanitarian dialogue and diplomacy and hinder negotiations between humanitarian organizations and relevant stakeholders.

Legal regulation of access: state consent and a bona fides offer of assistance

Governments bearing the primary obligation to provide for the needs of people under their jurisdiction, must consent to impartial, neutral and independent humanitarian activities. This is provided for in international humanitarian law provisions (four Geneva Conventions

³ See current developments in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. (www.icj.org, www.icc.org)

⁴ See Global Migration Index IOM, 2024

⁵ See the mapping of Humanitarian Access obstacles and a world overview, December 2023) <https://www.acaps.org/en/thematics/all-topics/humanitarian-access>

of 1949⁶) and in customary law (see ICRC customary law study⁷). When discussing issues of access to territories that are disputed, or outside the effective control of the sovereign power, such challenges become almost impossible, with denial of access or attacks to humanitarian personnel as well as to those seeking relief and protections, as we have seen in Syria, Yemen, Libya and in Crimea and Eastern Provinces of Ukraine⁸.

Law of armed conflict /IHL provides the legal framework for the provision of assistance and the requirement of its facilitation. For instance, article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention establishes the duty for protected persons to be treated humanely; article 30 establishes the norm by which humanitarian organizations can assume the duties of the protecting power, and states that humanitarian organizations are to be granted “all facilities” for the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance; Article 23 broadens the scope to the whole of populations of countries in international armed conflicts and expressly calls for “free passage of all consignments of medical and hospital stores... and foodstuffs.” These provisions are bolstered by Articles 69 and 70 of Additional Protocol I of 1977, which add that humanitarian and impartial assistance should not be considered interference in an armed conflict and should be afforded rapid and unimpeded passage. In the distribution of relief consignments, priority shall be given to those persons, such as children, expectant mothers, maternity cases and nursing mothers, who, under the Fourth Convention or under this Protocol, are to be accorded privileged treatment or special protection. The Parties to the conflict and each High Contracting Party shall allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments, equipment and per-

⁶ In particular, ICRC, Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) (Geneva: August 1949 and the updated commentaries of the first and second Geneva Conventions in

⁷ Henckaerts J-M and Doswald-Beck L, Customary International Humanitarian Law Volume I: Rules (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and ICRC, 2005), <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/customary-international-humanitarian-law-i-icrc-eng.pdf>.

⁸ For an analysis of the access and consent see Marouda M.D., Jean Pictet’s Red Cross principles as tools to secure access and the continued validity of state consent requirement, in Julia Grignon, dir, *Hommage à Jean Pictet par le Concours de droit international humanitaire Jean-Pictet*, Zürich et Cowansville (Qc), Schulthess et Yvon Blais, 2016, 89-1032

sonnel provided in accordance with this Section, even if such assistance is destined for the civilian population of the adverse Party.”⁹

Limits or alternatives to the requirement of state consent

The notion of state consent in disputed areas, or areas outside the control of the legitimate government, or the sovereign state is under constant debate in recent years. This has been asserted as we have seen, for Syria when the Security Council for the first time ever, permitted humanitarian assistance without the consent of the legitimate government¹⁰, as a result of Syria’s refusal to allow humanitarian actors to provide assistance - with the exception of actors that would receive a license by the Syrian Red Crescent. The situation has fueled once again the debate over the validity or the limits of State consent with regard to humanitarian action especially in cases of unlawful denial of access¹¹. And even if IHL doesn’t specify what is an unlawful denial of access, one of the important limits to state consent refer to an interpretation by the ILC according to which, “while consent of the affected state is required, it cannot be arbitrarily

⁹ ICRC, Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 (Geneva: June 1977), https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0321.pdf.

¹⁰ Civilian Protection and Quality Access for Humanitarian Action in Syria,” CSIS, CSIS Brief, March 25, 2019, p. 3, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190325_HumanitarianAccess_Policy_WEB2.pdf. SCRES United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2165 (2014), S/RES/2165 (July 2014) <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2165>; Ben Parker and Annie Slemrod, “Outcry at UN plans to consolidate Syria aid operations in Damascus,” *The New Humanitarian*, April 23, 2019, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2019/04/23/outcry-un-plans-consolidate-syria-aid-operations-damascus>; “Violence in Northwest Syria Raises Grave Protection Concerns for Children,” UN Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, May 19, 2019, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/violence-in-northwest-syria-raises-grave-protection-concerns-for-children/>; Hardin Lang, *An Uncertain Future: Fragility and Humanitarian Priorities in Northeast Syria* (Washington, DC: Refugees International, July 2019), <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2019/7/22/an-uncertain-future-fragility-and-humanitarian-priorities-in-northeast-syri>

¹¹ A. T. Guzman, *Against consent*, 52 Virginia JIL 2012 747-790)

withheld”¹². In other words, that States cannot systematically block or severely impede humanitarian access to certain areas for a prolonged period if they are not themselves meeting the needs of the civilian population in that location¹³. Once an agreement has been reached, all necessary measures to facilitate such assistance should be provided¹⁴.

Moreover, whether states (legitimate governments) maintain the ultimate right to grant or not consent, depends, on the nature, or the modalities of humanitarian assistance, or on who are the actors providing humanitarian protection. If action or assistance is partial or biased, not adequately and professionally controlled by the relevant humanitarian actors, then the government can legitimately deny access. States can also draft conditions or technical arrangements on how humanitarian action is provided for, based on the states’ general duty to care for and protect populations under their jurisdiction and responsibility. Therefore, if a State denies assistance and protection by humanitarian agencies and at the same does not provide for the basic needs or violates the rights of the people under their jurisdiction, then this abrogates their right to withhold consent¹⁵.

What if a State denies assistance. Can other States of International Organizations or even NGOs send assistance impose relief? By air supplies? In other words, can a permissive customary norm evidenced by State practice and opinio juris, allow relief without state consent, at least under exceptional circumstances? The answer has to be negative because State practice and opinio juris found in the ICRC Customary Law Study is

¹² See ILC, Draft articles on the protection of persons in the event of natural disasters, as well as OCHA, Oxford Guidance on the Law Relating to Humanitarian Relief Operations in Situations of Armed Conflict (New York: October 2016), <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Oxford%20Guidance%20pdf.pdf>.

¹³ “ICRC Q&A and lexicon on humanitarian access,” ICRC, June 2014, <https://www.icrc.org/en/doc/assets/files/2014/icrc-q-and-a-lexicon-on-humanitarian-access-06-2014.pdf>

¹⁴ Akande D and Gillard E-Ch., “Arbitrary With- holding of Consent to Humanitarian Relief Operations in Armed Conflict,” OCHA, August 2014, <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/dms/Documents/Arbitrary%20With- holding%20of%20Consent.pdf>.

¹⁵ Marouda M.D., Jean Pictet’s Red Cross principles as tools to secure access and the continued validity of state consent requirement, in Julia Grignon, dir, Hommage à Jean Pictet par le Concours de droit international humanitaire Jean-Pictet, Zürich et Cowansville (Qc), Schulthess et Yvon Blais, 2016, 89-103

not leading to such a conclusion¹⁶. Even if a well-established principle of international law allows humanitarian access by impartial actors since they are not deemed unfriendly acts or interference in a State’s internal affairs (Nicaragua), clearly differentiates interventions and actions within the mandate of IO, if performed under the fundamental principles of the Red Cross (impartiality, neutrality, independence)... and gives a certain margin of appreciation to actors during conflicts.

A second question, is when a State refuses consent or obstructs access, whether we could apply, by analogy, the ‘circumstances precluding wrongfulness’ to justify clandestine missions. The answer is also negative, since the ILC was careful to point out early on, that intervention for humanitarian purposes is not covered by the principle of necessity¹⁷. A cautious approach is needed, even if relevant state practice has referred to permissive SC Resolutions under Chapter VII UN Charter, who impose access ‘with all necessary means’. For instance with SC Resolution 688/1991 in Northern Iraq in 1991, a safe haven was established for the assistance of the Kurds through cross border operations from Turkey and Iran. Since then, we have also seen SC groundbreaking Resolutions on Somalia, as well as on Bosnia Herzegovina, when humanitarian access was imposed, and States consent remained largely a formality, whereas humanitarian concerns were prioritized. The same holds true for the situation in Libya (Resolutions 1970 and 1973/2011), and in almost all cases where multilateral peace operations, were given the mandate by the UNSC to use ‘all necessary means’ to, among other things, ‘ensure the security and freedom of movement of [...] humanitarian workers’, as was the case in Sudan, or ‘contribute to the creation of a secure environment for the safe, civilian-led delivery of humanitarian assistance’ as in Mali and the well formulated Resolution 2127 (2013) in CAR¹⁸.

¹⁶ See ICRC Customary Law Study,

¹⁷ Commentary (21) to Article 25 of the ILC Articles on State Responsibility, (A/56/10). ILC Yearbook, 2001, Vol. II, Part Two, p. 84.]

¹⁸ Marouda M.D., Jean Pictet’s Red Cross principles as tools to secure access and the continued validity of state consent requirement, in Julia Grignon, dir, Hommage à Jean Pictet par le Concours de droit international humanitaire Jean-Pictet, Zürich et Cowansville (Qc), Schulthess et Yvon Blais, 2016, 89-103

The debate reopened in Syria, following the unanimously adopted Resolution 2165/2014 authorizing UN agencies and their humanitarian partners to use cross-border operations ‘to ensure that humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies reaches people in need throughout Syria using the more direct routes’ without requiring the permission from the Syrian government. Yet in 2023, following earthquakes in Syria (in territories not controlled by Assad) access was hindered and cross border operations, were delayed resulting in hundreds of thousands of victims.

Concluding remarks

Humanitarian access should extend to the whole of the territory where beneficiaries in need of protection and assistance are present. To do so, humanitarian actors should also request permission to access territories beyond the effective control of the sovereign State. They have to negotiate with non-state actors (rebels, insurgents, tribes et al). Humanitarian action also involves protection against violations of international law /humanitarian law or human rights. Findings are shared with all concerned parties and not only with the legitimate authorities of the sovereign state.

International law and more specifically, rules and principles of international humanitarian law regulate humanitarian access in three main ways: Firstly, by making sure that consent is always requested. Secondly, that any request respects humanitarian principles (*bona fides action*), and thirdly that negotiations, or special agreements signed with all parties to an armed conflict do not confer legitimacy to non-state actors, the sovereign title over disputed territories, the recognition of puppet states, or the normalization of non-recognized governments etc. At the same time, international humanitarian law confers to *de facto* authorities, insurgents, or armed opposition groups the temporary international personality they need to pursue their international obligations. Such a personality is temporary in the sense that, it is valid for as long as they take part in hostilities, or occupation and until the dispute is settled peacefully, with the signing of a peace agreement.

The reason international law recognizes this special status, is because parties to a conflict, or occupying powers of territories, are bound by obligations under international law, human rights and humanitarian law, for as long as they are taking part in hostilities, or have the effective control of a territory,, they are for instance obliged to allow in the territories under their control humanitarian assistance and protection and address humanitarian imperatives.

Proposals offering a possible way out. Special agreements among parties to a conflict and achieving ceasefires as a possible way out

One way to address issues of access is through the special agreements or ceasefires, with specific clauses on modalities of access, until a final peace treaty or political solution is concluded. Such special agreements are signed between parties to the conflict and constitute clear commitments, providing an “important basis for follow up interventions to address violations of the law”. They provide for humanitarian actors, to have access to territories of a state, notwithstanding under whose control it is. In that respect the case in El Salvador and the special agreement that was signed between Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) and the government of El Salvador in 1990 is an interesting case¹⁹. The agreement was very significant in that the United Nations both endorsed it and agreed to monitor its implementation. Another relevant agreement was the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law signed in 1998 between the National Democratic Front of the Philippines and the Government of the Philippines²⁰.

¹⁹ Acuerdo de San José sobre Derechos Humanos 1990. A/44/971-S/21541, S/21541. A translated version is available on the website of the United States Institute of Peace, Peace Agreements Digital Collection. <http://www.usip.org/category/publications/peace-agreements>. Accessed 21 Jan 2016.

²⁰ Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines 1998. <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/agreements/pdf/phil8.pdf>. Accessed 5 December 2014. See also Comprehensive Peace Accord between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) 2006 (translation). United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org/publications/peace-agreements-nepal>. Accessed 20 Jan 2016.

Another possible 'alternative' proposal is to include relevant provisions in peace agreements (as for example in the Colombian peace process, as well as discussions for Yemen, or Afghanistan, CAR and Palestine) or even in ceasefire agreements²¹ (ie. OSCE, Minsk process in Ukraine or Nagorno Karabakh²²). Indeed, ceasefire agreements consist of three core elements, including cessation of hostilities, the separation of forces, and the verification, supervision, and monitoring of the agreement” and are therefore an important tool for monitoring human rights and action²³. They indicate the rights and obligations of the parties and most importantly that “effective implementation often relies on a monitoring mechanism, agreed to between all parties”²⁴.

Conclusion

So, to conclude, can and /or should international actors or agencies enter a territory without the consent of all duty bearers or is such a mission violating the nature and the mandate and modalities of independent and neutral humanitarian action? The only possible answer in order to allow access in such disputed areas, is that Host States have to be convinced that IOs, or their monitoring bodies and fact-finding commissions or agencies act independently from other political imperatives. Is this possible in a period where the human-

itarian space dialogue and diplomacy is shrinking or even vanishing? It remains to be seen.



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²¹ See Lane L., Mitigating humanitarian crises during non-international armed conflicts-the role of human rights and ceasefire agreements, 2016 *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 2016 2

²² See Minsk Protocol of 5 September [2014r]: <http://www.osce.org/home/123257> Minsk Memorandum of 19 September [2014]: <http://www.osce.org/home/123806> and Hau H., The Minsk Agreements and the OSCE Special Monitoring Missions, Providing Effective Monitoring for the Ceasfire Regime, 27 *Security and Human Rights*, 2016, 342-357

²³ See, Forster R.A., Ceasefires, In: Romaniuk S., Thapa M., Marton P. (eds) *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019, presenting a survey of the 267 ceasefire agreements located on the Peace Agreement Access Tool (PA- X), 2018, which identifies 11 items including ceasefire provisions that are included in 33% of the ceasefires listed. These 11 categories address three main areas, namely, humanitarian needs, security, and mechanisms mitigating conflict escalation. See also Public International Law and Policy Group. (2013). *The ceasefire drafter's handbook: An introduction and template for negotiators, mediators, and stakeholders*. New York: PILPG, p.1

²⁴ Haysom, N., & Hottinger, J. (2010). Do's and don'ts of sustainable ceasefire agreements at http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/DosAndDontofCeasfireAgreements_HaysomHottinger2010.pdf

Strategic Security Implications of COSCO's Investment in Piraeus Port for Greece and Its Western Allies

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For many centuries China used to be insular and isolated, which justifies its name as the Middle Kingdom. As a result, it posed neither a threat to Western security nor a security challenge. Nevertheless, Deng's opening up policy, in the 1970s, and Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as from 2013, has transformed China into a global player, mainly economically and politically. A notable example of this transformation is the Chinese privatisation of Piraeus port which is incorporated into this initiative. While the geopolitical factors and the economic benefits of the BRI have been widely discussed in the related literature, there is limited examination of the security implications of China's state-led foreign port investments, particularly regarding Piraeus port.

The paper aims to critically examine the security effects of COSCO's recent investment in Piraeus port. It explores the concerns of Greece's western allies, namely the EU and NATO/the US, and the concomitant security implications for Greece and its allies. The aim of the paper is to shed light on strategic thinking and planning in the wider domain of security related to critical infrastructure (CI) assets.

The study is organised as follows: Section 1 presents an overview of the key concepts and provides a brief historical background of the Sino-Greek relations. Section 2 addresses the geopolitical factors that account for the significance of Piraeus port for Greece, its allies and China's planning. Section 3 offers a critical analysis of the concomitant security implications. The conclusions sum up the most important insights of the research.

Key definitions

(Sea)ports refer to a water area and the land/buildings/facilities around it, where vessels take on and off goods and passengers (Progoulakis et al. 2022). Since two thirds of the earth's surface is covered by waters and the majority of world's trade is ship-carried (Patlias 2022), ports not only influence a country's competitiveness (Cullinane & Song 2002) but are also crucial to its military strategy (Watts 2005). The significance of ports has acquired even more popularity since public bodies, as the primordial owners of them, are gradually experiencing budget deficits (Anand & Grainger 2017). After World War II, there was an acceleration in public financing of national scale infrastructure development, including ports (Steele et al. 2017). Lately, several countries have implemented policies, such as privatisation, aimed at reforming their port industry (Cullinane & Song 2002), in the belief of enhancing the efficiency of port services and relieving governments' burden (Tongzon & Heng 2005).

The three main approaches in port privatisations seem to lie along a continuum (Pagano et al. 2013). These range from the pure public, where the public sector owns-operates the port, to mixed, where the public sector owns the port but leases the land to the private sector, which usually owns the equipment, and purely private, where the private sector owns and operates all functions of the port. Apart from benefits, shortcomings of port privatisation have been also well recorded in the port literature, rendering it only a partial cure (Baird 2000; Baird 2002; Tongzon & Heng 2005).

Most seaports in Europe and the US are publicly owned (Alden et al. 2022). Full privatisation of port infrastructure is still a rare choice, mostly applied in developing countries, with few examples in developed ones (Koenig et al. 2023). In such cases, however, a paradox emerges whereby countries are responsible for safeguarding their maritime infrastructure, most of which is owned, administered or operated by private, and frequently foreign or multinational companies (Pursianinen and Kytömaa 2023), leading to security implications.

A working definition of security entails the alleviation of threats to cherished values (Williams & McDonald 2018). The three oft-confused fundamental

concepts of security are vulnerabilities, threats and risks (Iliopoulos 2014). The more vulnerabilities there are, the greater potential for threats and the higher one's risk (Kidd 2022). Security is no longer only related to military threats to state survival, because since the end of the Cold War it has gradually broadened to include non-military threats (Nyman 2018). So, security implications denote the effects that actions or decisions will have on security issues.

The common denominator of the three concepts is their relevance to critical pieces of national infrastructure. CI describes systems and assets, physical or virtual, that provide needed goods and services to the general public, such as transport services (Progoulakis et al. 2022). Any disruption of such services could have a debilitating impact on national security, and domino effects on other CI sectors or EU Member States (MSs) (Yusta et al. 2011).

Lately, the European Commission (EC), the US Department of Homeland Security, and others, have been concerned about their national infrastructure security due to new threats (ibid.). In the aftermath of the 09/11 terrorist attacks, measures were taken globally for the protection of maritime infrastructure, in particular, as corroborated by the adoption of the International Ship and Port Facility Security code from the International Maritime Organisation (Progoulakis et al. 2022). Besides, the EU Directive 114/2008, as replaced by the Directive (EU) 2022/2557 (Pursianinen & Kytömaa 2023), sets a procedure for the identification and designation of European CIs. The Greek presidential decree 39/2011 constitutes legislation adjustment to the former.

Historical background

Both Greece and China are among the world's most important cradles of human civilisations. More than two millenniums ago they seem to have had some indirect exchanges despite their huge distance (Brattberg et al. 2021). The Chinese, out of respect, call Greece "Si-La", which means "the other great culture". In the early Cold War period, though, the two countries were enemies during the Korean War (1950-53). At the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Greek shipowners were the first to break the trade embargo imposed on China by most western countries

(Embassy of the PRC in the Hellenic Republic 2020). In terms of government system, China is nowadays a socialist republic led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), whereas Greece is a parliamentary republic. As for economy, while China has a peculiar state capitalist system, Greece operates a free-market economy.

Modern full diplomatic relations between China and Greece were established in 1972 (HMFA 2023), after President Nixon's visit to Beijing and the PRC admission to the UN. Greece adheres to the "one China" policy, by opposing Taiwan's independence (ibid.). China, in return, has held a supportive position on the Cyprus issue (Skordeli 2015). Until the early 2000s political contacts and economic linkages were rather limited (Rogelja & Tsimonis 2020). Bilateral relations began strengthening in the 1980s, when Greek PM A.Papandreou sought allies over the Cyprus-Aegean disputes (Brattberg et al. 2021). Similarly, the Karamanlis government, elected in Greece in 2004, adopted a more multidimensional foreign policy approach (Stroikos 2023).

The role of the Greek shipowners acted as a catalyst for opening up new opportunities (Catalayud 2023). Huliaras & Petropoulos (2014) highlight the ways in which specific business interests linked with the Greek shipping industry have had an impact on the Greek government's decision to promote closer relations with China. This is not surprising when considering that Greece is the largest ship owning nation worldwide (Patlias 2022). As shipping is a strategic national asset for Greece, Greek shipowners have always exerted a powerful influence over the Greek political system (Stroikos 2023).

The two countries established the Joint Committee on Olympic Games Cooperation in 2005 and the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2006. Since then, trade, investment, and tourism between the two have increased significantly (Skordeli 2015). Cooperation has also expanded in the science, technology, education, social, and cultural sectors (ibid.). The "flagship", however, of the Greek-Chinese relationship has been maritime collaboration. The investment by China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), China's largest state-owned shipping company, in Piraeus port from 2008 onwards, has been the "capstone" of this successful bilateral partnership (ibid.).

The significance of Piraeus port

Greece is strategically situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, at the juncture of three continents. According to the American Professor Spykman (1944), the key to world dominion is strategic control of the geopolitical unit of Rimland, which includes coastal Eurasia surrounding the continental core of Heartland (East Europe and Russia), rather than actual control of Heartland, as propounded by the geopolitical theorist Sir Mackinder (Gray 2004). Besides, Greece's eastern borders coincide with the external borders of the EU.

Based on Classical Geopolitics state actors are distinguished between sea and land powers (Kotoulas 2020). The great historian Thucydides (Strassler 1996) and the US naval officer and historian-strategist Mahan (1890) believed that national greatness was associated with the sea in peace and war. Greece is a sea power due to various factors, such as its geographical location, its geophysical formation, its respectable merchant and war fleet (Kotoulas 2020). Hence, in 1952 Greece entered NATO, which was then a security framework of sea powers preventing the expansionist policy of the land powers of the Soviet Union and its allies (ibid.).

Geography has influenced the country's development. Greece has plenty of ports playing a crucial role in the national economy. Its biggest port, that of Piraeus, dating from antiquity, is adjacent to the capital of Athens, with many strategic attributes (Karlis & Polemis). Located in the western Aegean, it constitutes the first major European port after Suez Canal, near the Dardanelles and Gibraltar. Because of its geostrategic position, Piraeus port is a faster alternative to feeding cargoes to central Europe compared to the sail around it (ibid.). This becomes a significant strategic advantage in an era of constant rises in fuel costs together with its adequate port equipment and tide-free draft that allow day round operations (ibid.).

An autonomous body for its administration was established in 1930 (Law 4748/1930). In 1999, PPA was transformed into a S.A. (Law 2688/1999). In 2002, a forty-year concession contract was signed between the Greek government and PPA S.A. (PPA S.A. n.d.). The latter entered the Athens Stock Exchange in 2003 (Pallis & Vaggelas 2017). Piraeus port is nowadays one of the largest in the Mediterranean, if not in Europe. It is

a hub for the coastal connection of the numerous islands with mainland Greece, an international cruise centre and a transit trade centre for the wider Mediterranean (ibid.). Its current facilities comprise various terminals and ship repair base/dry docks.

Piraeus port privatisation was two-phased. In 2008, Piraeus Container Terminal S.A., a COSCO Pacific subsidiary, obtained through bidding a thirty-five-year concession for the operation of two container piers (Qianqian & Davarinou 2019). This contract and its two amendments were ratified by the Hellenic Parliament (Laws 3755/2009, 4072/2012 & 4315/2014). In 2010, due to the public debt, the Greek government, under pressure by its creditors, agreed on a bailout programme including state assets privatisation (Pallis & Vaggelas 2017). In 2016, COSCO (Hong Kong) Group Limited, which submitted the only bid, won a tender call by the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (Karlis & Polemis 2018). The bid was EUR 280,5 million for the 51% of the shares and could after five years reach 67%, with the deposit of another EUR 88 million and the completion of specific investments (Qianqian & Davarinou 2019). The concession agreement, expiring in 2052, was ratified by the Hellenic Parliament (Law 4404/2016) and later modified by Law 4838/2021. COSCO, despite not having implemented all investments, acquired the extra 16% stake, through extension of time.

Pallis & Vaggelas (2017) explain the reasons why this "master concession" privatisation cannot be considered a full one. The State still owns the land and the government retains the right to terminate, under certain conditions, the concession. This port prototype is a rare one, though, at least in Europe (ibid.). The privatisation process encountered strong local opposition, even though port capacity has impressively expanded under COSCO's auspices (Brattberg et al. 2021). Yet, the relevant statistics, whose veracity is questioned, signal the economic success of the Chinese company and not necessarily the real gains of the Greek economy (Tonchev 2022).

China's geopolitical planning

Deng's reforms, from the end of 1970s, brought China out of isolation (Cable 2017). It officially joined the WTO in 2001 and has become the world's largest goods exporter. The transfer of global production to China called for the development of mega-ports worldwide and the replanning of trade routes. Although a West-China economic power shift has been recently taking place (Tselichtchev 2012), whether China can really become the world's dominant power has been questioned (Fenby 2017).

Since the 2008 crisis, China has emerged as a large Outward Foreign Direct Investment player, in ports of the European south in particular (Tran & Zoubir 2022) for two reasons (Watterson et al. 2023). On the one hand, in 2006, shipping was designated by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) of China's State Council as one of the 'strategic industries'. On the other hand, a surplus of Chinese capital prompted investment in foreign infrastructure projects. So, China started constructing the "New Silk Road". The original Silk Road, from the second century BCE until the mid-15th century, forged trade networks by linking East Asia to Europe (McBride et al. 2023).

The BRI, or OBOR initiative, is a massive over-ambitious China-led infrastructure project, with almost one hundred and fifty countries involved so far (ibid.). Launched in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, it has been broadening China's economic, political/diplomatic, and cultural influence globally (Olinga-Shanon et al. 2019). The plan was two-pronged: the overland Silk Road Economic Belt (for road and rail transportation) and the Maritime Silk Road (sea routes and ports) (Fardella & Prodi 2017). It has stoked opposition, though, in certain countries with debt crises (Tran & Zoubir 2022).

The BRI, apart from obvious economic gains, - principally for China, but often also for the countries involved,- also has geopolitical motives. These are as follows: China exerts influence on critical geographic regions, achieves energy security, enforces technology-enabled authoritarianism, and establishes power-dependence relations, with a view to winning supporters in international politics, especially for hot button issues (Alden et al. 2022). This is accompanied by public diplomacy (ibid.).

Likewise, certain BRI dimensions (eg. digital, arctic and space silk road) have geopolitical implications. Hemming (2020) demonstrates how improving digital connectivity in BRI countries will enable the PRC to exploit their large data sets. While the BRI does not officially have a military component, closer interstate ties may also serve a military purpose, offering alternative routes in the case of conflict/blockade (Olinga-Shanon et al. 2019). Because of this, the US has shared other countries' concerns that the BRI could be a Trojan horse for China-led military expansion (McBride et al. 2023). Actually, the BRI soft power strategy is accompanied by hard power elements with the recent establishment of military bases abroad and an increase in Chinese armaments expenditure (Ashraf 2022).

Another vehicle for translating investment into political influence has been, since 2012, the 16+1 format or the Cooperation between China and Central-Eastern European Countries, including Greece, as from 2019. A look at the map reveals a split between Western Europe and these sixteen countries that were chiefly part of the Soviet Union. This urges Rhode (2021) to speculate about whether China is implementing a "divide and rule" policy. However, a weakened Eurozone does not likely serve Chinese interests, especially the internationalisation of yuan (Tzogopoulos 2020).

The Eastern Mediterranean is central to the Chinese geopolitical planning because of three concurrent phenomena (van der Putten 2016). Firstly, the Suez enlargement increases cargo transit daily capacity and reduces the entrance waiting time. Secondly, since the Panama Canal cannot accommodate huge container vessels, there is a shift from the transpacific to the transatlantic route. Thirdly, there has been an acceleration of global alliances by shipping companies.

The Mediterranean Sea has been under Western influence. Given that the US policy is currently focused on the Asia-Pacific theatre, while the EU lacks a common foreign and security policy, China is encouraged to penetrate into the region (van der Putten et al. 2016). The IR expert Li (2016), after offering reasons -economic, energy, commercial, and military ones- for and against China's going to the Eastern Mediterranean, insists that Beijing, given the recent discovery of offshore energy reserves there, seems to be balancing the promise of expansion with geopolitical risk because of the area's instability.

Greece is the cornerstone of China's European strategy, as it was the first European developed country to sign the BRI MOU with China in 2018 (Pagán Sánchez 2020). The latter has targeted several sectors of the Greek economy for exploitation, including transport infrastructure, energy, technology/telecommunications, real estate, and tourism (Alden et al. 2022). Investment in Greek property, in particular, has been facilitated by a generous 'golden visa' scheme which enables unrestricted movement of Chinese citizens throughout the EU (DeLion 2021). Piraeus port privatisation, described as the "head of the dragon" by President Xi Jinping (Stroikos 2023), fits perfectly into the larger BRI strategy, whose maps depict Piraeus at the centre of the Maritime Silk Road. COSCO, massively investing in port infrastructure in the Mediterranean, opportunistically became the first Chinese company to have held the majority of an EU member's port authority (Fardella & Prodi 2017). This investment exemplifies how China is leveraging Piraeus to gain access to European commercial markets (DeLion 2021) and has, thus, been publicised throughout the Chinese media (Ministry of FA of the PRC 2022).

Western allies' concerns

As Greece is integrated into key Western institutions, Western allies' response to Piraeus port privatisation deserves attention. To begin with, the EU, despite being one of the key BRI destinations, has mixed feelings about it (Pagán Sánchez 2020). Regardless of the reluctant official stance of the EC, which regards the BRI as a challenge to European unity, norms and values, each MS has developed its own strategy towards the BRI (ibid.). Even though it approved COSCO's "buyout" of the PPA S.A. in 2016, the EC has also expressed its reservations about Chinese influence in Greece (Psaropoulos 2019). Both international tenders concerning Piraeus port were scrutinised by EU institutions (Rogelja & Tsimonis 2020). The second phase of the privatisation was imposed by the third bailout programme, agreed by a Troika, including the EC and the ECB. According to Greek public opinion, the EU-forced austerity pushed Greece into the arms of China (Rhode 2021). Werner Hoyer, president of the European Investment Bank, in 2021, lamented over this "sell-off" (Varvitsioti 2021). Rhode (2021) wonders whether Northern Europeans

shot themselves in the foot by letting China set foot in such a strategic European position.

Although China's Piraeus investment did not produce at first a major response from the EU, within a decade, EU concerns had intensified. The EU's recently labelling China as an "economic competitor" and "systemic rival" runs contrary to their having viewed the EU-China relationship as a "maturing partnership" in 2003 (Alden et al. 2022). The EU has gradually become more conscious of Chinese predatory economic practices (ibid.). European attitudes have changed also thanks to China's deteriorating human-rights record, its poor handling of COVID-2019, and its aggressive diplomacy in Europe (ibid.). Consequently, the BRI and the 16+1 format have recently roused fears in Brussels and measures have been taken in this direction (ibid.)

Greece has often been criticised for supporting China within the EU decision system and other international forums. For instance, in 2016, Greece refused to be part of an EU critical statement on China's role in South China Sea disputes (Pagán Sánchez 2020). Its decision was astounding given its support for international maritime law as part of its disputes with Turkey over the Aegean (Psaropoulos 2019). In 2017, Greece was the only one that vetoed an EU's condemnation of China's human rights record at the UN (Karlis & Polemis 2018). Its move was regarded as a blow to the EU's position as a defender of human rights and contradicts Greece's calling upon its neighbouring Turkey to respect human rights (Stroikos 2023).

These are indications of the long-term strategic impacts of the "Piraeus port deal". The privatisation occurred when no other company/country was keen to invest in Greece (Psaropoulos 2019). This stance could be attributed to Greece's attempt to show that it has alternatives to the EU (Pagán Sánchez 2020). The above may also explain why in the case of Greece Chinese authorities and media alike have chosen a friendly stance to Greece rather than the confrontational attitude displayed in other European countries during the COVID-19 pandemic (Tonchev 2021). Yet, Rogelja & Tsimonis (2020) dispute framing pluralism in European politics as weakness and deny the idea of Greece's political dependence on China, the seventh largest investor in the country. This echoes a statement by the former Foreign Minister of

Greece N.Kotzias: “For them, it’s business as usual, but if we sell something it affects our political stance” (Psaropoulos 2019). Indeed, the majority of Chinese investment in Europe is in its west (Alden et al. 2022).

Stroikos (2023) argues that Greece’s foreign policy is still defined by its EU membership. In 2020, the largest Greek mobile network operator opted for Ericsson, instead of Huawei, as its only 5G equipment purveyor (ibid.). In the digital age, the power lies with the ones that control 5G technology instead of Rimland (Ellis 2020). Similarly, the Greek government declined to host a summit in 2022 for the 16+1 format and Chinese SOEs have been eased out of public tenders (Varvitsioti 2021). Greece also supported EU sanctions on China over human rights violations against its Uyghur minority in 2021 (ibid.). After all, the EU remains a valuable source of support for Greece regarding a variety of issues, like the migrant crisis and Turkey’s assertive behaviour (Stroikos 2023).

Through COSCO’s investment in Piraeus port, China has also come closer to NATO and the US, in particular. NATO is determined to protect Allies against the PRC’s efforts to divide the Alliance by using economic leverage to create strategic dependencies (NATO 2022). Meanwhile, US strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean is to maintain the status quo (Yegin 2022). Nevertheless, US military presence in the region has been waning since the end of the Cold War (van der Putten et al. 2016). So, the perceived risk lies in the siding of certain European countries, on economic grounds, with China as regards NATO decisions (Rhode 2021). The US fought to keep Greece, in particular, in the western sphere after World War II and the Mediterranean Sea has long been American or NATOic (ibid.). In the face of China’s active engagement in the 16+1 format, associated with its BRI, American and Chinese great power competition for Greece and other European countries is in play (ibid.) in a new “cool war” in the Mediterranean (van der Putten et al. 2016).

What is of concern to NATO is the emerging Chinese military presence in Eastern Mediterranean. Chinese Navy vessels securing safe passage for vessels against piracy in the Gulf of Aden have made port calls in the Mediterranean, including Greece/Piraeus (van der Putten 2016). Moreover, they have participated in regional operations or exercises with

Greek, Turkish and Russian military forces (Wishnick 2015). To further complicate the picture, US forces have also recently used Greece for exercises/deployments and Piraeus, in particular, for port visits (Alden et al. 2022).

COSCO is the Chinese Navy’s main partner for logistical support in many commercial ports (van der Putten 2016). The pattern of deployments/visits of People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) vessels in the civilian port of Piraeus, following its commercial acquisition, is likely to continue unless Greece and/or NATO/the EU step in (DeLion 2021). Inevitably, growing economic Chinese interests in the Eastern Mediterranean will entail the need for China’s military power projection (Skordeli 2015).

The prospect of Greece hosting a Chinese naval base in the Eastern Mediterranean also raised alarms (van der Putten 2016). In July 2014, the Greek PM A.Samaras reportedly told President Xi Jinping that Chinese navy vessels would be welcome to Crete for maintenance/repairs/refuelling and even proposed joint naval patrols and anti-piracy operations (Collier 2014). This statement of intent, which places hostile forces on Crete, also hosting a NATO naval base, called into question Greece’s commitment to NATO (ibid.).

Still, Stroikos (2023) argues that the Sino-Greek relationship remains mainly economics-driven at a time when Greece is strengthening strategic ties, especially in defense and energy, with its traditional allies. Athens currently promotes itself as a reliable NATO/US ally in the region, while China and Turkey have not condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Seeing that China, at least for now, eschews a security role, Greece, in light of the strategic uncertainty in its vicinity, is forced to reconcile potential conflicting interests (Lau 2020). The US, concerned about China’s growing presence in Greece, encourages American companies to invest in it, mainly in ports of strategic importance (eg. Alexandroupolis, Elefsis Shipyards) (Nedos 2020).

Implications

First of all, COSCO’s state ownership poses a challenge. The Chinese state is nowadays the world’s largest holder of international port interests (Watterson

et al. 2023). DeLion (2021) draws the difference between Chinese SOEs and other public or private companies worldwide. The former are accountable to the CCP that appoints higher-ranking personnel in them (Laband 2018). SASAC holds a majority shareholding in the holding companies of China's SOEs (Watterson et al. 2023). This structure ensures that when the CCP wants to move in a certain direction, SOEs must follow (ibid.). COSCO's central party committee has provable links with China's security services (Jones & Veit 2021). The company's designation as one of the "important backbone" SOEs forming part of China's defence-industrial base means that COSCO is expected to assist the PLA anywhere (ibid.). Party discipline is enforced among COSCO's employees (ibid.).

Two Chinese laws are related to COSCO. The 2017 National Intelligence Law states that all organisations and citizens shall assist national intelligence efforts (Alden et al. 2022) and receive protection and compensation in return (DeLion 2021). The 2010 National Defence Mobilisation Law specifies that almost all assets or human capital shall assist the PLA and militia in mobilisation activities for national defence purposes (Jones & Veit 2021). Consequently, espionage in Piraeus port has been presented as a risk associated with COSCO's state ownership.

Kardon & Leutert (2022) support that the PLA collects intelligence from overseas commercial ports and may choose to embed plainclothes personnel into Chinese SOEs. This intelligence is normally related to the callings of ships, including foreign navies (ibid.), and its gathering may sometimes be facilitated by sophisticated systems (Michaels 2021). Greek authorities reportedly blocked an attempt by COSCO to roll out Hellenic Port Community System, as it would give all information only to COSCO (Watterson et al. 2023). Furthermore, Kardon & Leutert (2022) assert that signals intelligence and other sensors may be discreetly placed in Chinese SOEs' port terminals. Parenthetically, new legislation for safeguarding US ports from potential security risks was introduced in 2023, which mandates that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency conducts inspections of foreign cranes from countries considered adversaries of the US, like China, for possible security vulnerabilities before being put into operation (Bruno 2023).

Commercial espionage may be equally alarming. Collecting and processing data on supply chains and related facts can provide a competitive advantage to Chinese SOEs (Watterson et al. 2023). China is known for using cyber operations for industrial espionage and intellectual property theft (DeLion 2021). Of course, commercial espionage is not unique to Chinese SOEs (Watterson et al. 2023). What differentiates it from that of other private companies worldwide is that Chinese SOEs, because of their links to the state, can benefit from military equipment, specialised personnel, and intelligence during such operations (ibid.).

Another risk posed by COSCO's Piraeus deal is related to military entrapment. In light of the new PLA strategic doctrine focussing on global projection (Rawat 2021), Beijing is procuring ports in geostrategic regions under commercial pretences that can be subsequently appropriated for military missions, like reconnaissance (Watterson et al. 2023). The 2016 National Defense Transportation Law requires that civilian infrastructure is built to military specifications and enables PLAN to mobilise civilian transportation resources to support expeditionary missions (Rawat 2021).

The full extent to which Beijing intends to appropriate its SOEs' international port assets for military purposes is unknown. Still, these ports are regarded by the Chinese as dual-use assets and can support military missions economically and without the geopolitical consequences that formal overseas bases would trigger (ibid.). This exposes a recipient state to unique risks, since in the event of a conflict, were it to allow its territorial waters to be used to support PLAN combat operations, this could be interpreted by China's adversaries as a belligerent gesture, whereas if it were to reject such operations, this could result in countercharges by Beijing (Watterson et al. 2023).

A more worrisome security threat for Greece is that in 2015 China issued the Technical Standards for the Implementation of National Defence Requirements for Newly Built Civil Ships. The Chinese government directed that all civilian Chinese-built vessels be capable of supporting military operations in wartime and provides funding to offset the cost between the civilian and military versions (DeLion 2021). Given COSCO's size of container fleet worldwide, every Chinese ship sailing into Piraeus could be serving a military purpose (ibid.).

Beijing's control over COSCO's investment in Piraeus port could be used as a vehicle of political influence that undermines the EU's unity. This is due to the principle of unanimity, where all EU MSs have to agree on common foreign and security policy matters (Council of the EU 2023) and indicates that influence over even one country can give China significant leverage over the EU (DeLion 2021). Rogelja & Tsimonis (2020) object to the notion of China as a threat to EU unity, as it opposed a "Grexit" from the Eurozone in 2015, since this would reduce the profitability of its Piraeus investment.

Most critically, Beijing, through COSCO, can credibly threaten to disrupt the operations of Piraeus port, by diverting port traffic or halting terminal operations, acting in commercially irrational ways, to the detriment of Greece for the advancement of political objectives. Actually, Chinese SOEs are not discouraged from behaving in a way that will have adverse effects on their profitability, because they are generally insulated from commercial failure (Watterson et al. 2023). Port states, by contrast, are not similarly protected from investment failure and, thus, run a greater risk (ibid.).

Indeed, there are some safety valves in the relevant concession agreement to offset potential security risks, such as the establishment of two bodies, namely the Regulatory Authority for Ports and the Public Authority for Ports, law enforcement by designated authorities, foresight in the event of a war or severe crisis, and requisition of the port under certain circumstances. Probably, one of the unsettling issues is the fact that the Greek side, unlike port privatisations in other countries, does not retain the right to intervene in the policy planning of Piraeus port investments. That might have strategic/security repercussions.

Conclusions

The article aimed to critically analyse the security implications for Greece arising from the Chinese privatisation of Piraeus port. The key insights of the study are summarised as follows:

In the first section, key concepts were defined. Seeing that ports constitute CI, their privatisation carries security implications. A brief historical account of Sino-Greek relations was later offered by emphasising the

factors that, shortly after the turn of the millennium, spurred this relationship between two distant countries. The analysis revealed the influential role of Greek shipowners.

In the second section, the geopolitical factors behind the Chinese privatisation of Piraeus port were explored. The analysis showed how its privileged geostrategic position, combined with Greek sea power, gave rise to its development and, ultimately, to its privatisation. It was, then, examined how this privatisation stems from China's ambitious geopolitical planning, by analysing the fundamentals of China's recent emergence as a global economic power and the BRI's main features. It was clear that China capitalised on the financial crisis and the relative "power vacuum" to establish a presence in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Piraeus port privatisation was identified as central to the Maritime Silk Road, with an impact on the Greek economy.

In the third section, the security effects for Greece and its allies were assessed. It was, first, shown whether the Chinese investment in Piraeus has affected the EU decision making process, by concluding that Greece's stance is defined by its EU membership. Then, the concerns of NATO and the US, related to decision making and the emerging Chinese military presence in Greece were elucidated. After explaining their (in)validity, by underlining Greece's alignment with its traditional allies, the concomitant security implications were presented. The paper demonstrated how security risks such as economic coercion, military entrapment, espionage, and the duality of port facilities privatised by Chinese SOEs as well as that of Chinese vessels are linked to COSCO's state ownership and specific Chinese legislation. The results suggest that the Chinese privatisation of Piraeus port, despite the identified challenges, in the light of existent safety valves, does not seem to constitute an important security threat for now.

In conclusion, regarding COSCO's investment in Piraeus port, the Greek state should be geopolitically alert to the accompanying security implications.

Above all, Greece should avoid repeating past mistakes in possible future privatisations of ports, or other CI in the country, particular those of geostrategic importance.

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What insights does the work of Carl von Clausewitz offer to strategists? Is Clausewitz still relevant today?

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INTRODUCTION

In history of humanity, from the very first moments and forms of organized societies to the modern era of nation states and great alliances, regardless the kind of social organization, there is one phenomenon that is intertwined with human nature and relations between organized groups, either small (e.g. cities or tribes) or huge (e.g. states, kingdoms, empires), and that is no other than war. This phenomenon was closely related to the struggle between humans and groups for natural resources and power and was eventually the outcome of the unsuccessful negotiations that came up as a result of the continuous claims of the most powerful part and the unwillingness of the rest to comply with these claims. The way the war is fought is relevant to the certain period that the conflicts happened and consequently to the technological advances used for weapons as well as the experience gained by the previous conflicts and implemented in the military tactics of each belligerent. The one thing that was and still is unchangeable is human nature that essentially affected several aspects of the battles fought and determined the result thereof.

During all these years, from the ancient times till today, many people tried to analyse the phenomenon of the armed conflicts, define its nature and find out the reasons that lead to war, as well as to better understand what are the elements, aspects and parameters that if handled and adjusted carefully can lead to the desired victory. In all these analyses, there is one part that refers to tactics and maneuvers which is relevant to the time of reference and the evolution of military technology at that time. Nevertheless, there is another part which focuses on the nature of war which

is closely connected with human nature itself. Few of these analyses written by strategists and generals became of timeless value and their principles adopted by army leaders through many centuries.

One of the most seminal strategists that notably influenced with his work his successors regardless their nationality and origin is Carl Von Clausewitz, the Prussian Officer who wrote "On War", a treatise dealing with the main principles of armed conflicts. Clausewitz introduced the concept of "Direct Approach" which later became one of the most important theories in military strategy and international relations. His work was studied and analysed by several scholars and strategists and turned to be an important influence on the way the war is fought for the years that followed his death and the publication of "On War" till mid-20th century. From this point on the rapid evolution of military technology made many analysts to believe that the nature of war has changed, and in some cases that Clausewitz's work and principles is obsolete.

The purpose of this essay is to focus on the main insights that Clausewitz offered to strategists and try to find out whether these insights are still relevant today in the contemporary wars.

"ON WAR" - AN OVERVIEW

The main work of Carl von Clausewitz is the treatise named "On War" consisting of eight books, each one of which deals with a different part of war, from nature to strategy and planning, as well as all the possible stances of the armed conflicts. It is considered among few other writings as one of the main and most seminal works for the later strategists and has been influential for several of the great army leaders of the late 19th century till today. In this treatise, the writer has included all the gained experience from the battles he participated, as well as the theoretical knowledge through his studies at the "General War College" ("Allgemeine Kriegsschule") of Prussia and the days spent next to General Gerhard von Scharnhorst, who was Commandant of the war college at that time (and later became aide-de-camp-general to King Frederick William III), his mentor and friend. Clausewitz concentrated all the principles he considered essential for preparing, planning and successfully conducting

a war, introducing it as a different way and means to continue politics in order to achieve the goal set.

The treatise is impossible to be analyzed in a small essay like this one. Scholars and strategists spent lots of years studying it in their effort to decode and fully understand the ideas and principles that Clausewitz introduced in his work. Thus, we need to focus on the main principles and briefly present the essence of his theory in order to realize what was the impact of his work onto future strategists, and if there is any applicability of his theory in modern warfare and international relations in general. To this extent, we must take in mind the historical time during which Clausewitz lived and experienced all these conflicts that later transformed into a theory. At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the entire world was transforming through consecutive revolutions and uprisings from a feudalist, monarchist and imperial status of world order, to a new one consisting of nation-states. In addition, the first formations on conscript army required the wide participation of people and organized staffs appeared for the first time, controlling and regulating the overall operation and functionality of great masses of armies. So, we must take into consideration the way the states act in the matter of war and their interaction with each other as well as with their people.

As said before, according to Clausewitz, strategy is the means to achieve the political objectives by effectively using military force and defining the purpose of the war. In that context, decision making is difficult and to make the right decision requires certain skills like perception, powerful will, good judgment, courage and intensity. To form the right strategy someone have to consider several attributes like the moral, physical, mathematical, geographical and statistical. When referring to these attributes, we mean the morale and intelligence abilities of the key factors of the belligerents (People, Government, Armed Forces, and Allies), the size of the army and its fighting skills and power, the lines of operations and the moves of the troops, the terrain impact and the logistics means.

A nation's spirit, an army's or a general's spirit and the state of mind of the population are factors of different nature that can have variable impact on the development of the military actions. Except the military leader's talent and skills which tend to be similar to the

belligerents due to similar training in modern armies, war virtue and the national sentiment of an army are factors that need to be taken under serious consideration when planning a fight. Especially war virtue is mainly inherent but it can also be cultivated through proper training. It must not be related with courage but with enthusiasm, team spirit, and the righteous cause of the fight instead. For an army this can be expressed with pride, trust to the leader as well as endurance to deprivation and hardships, that essentially affects positively the performance.

According to Clausewitz, the noblest productive force in the field of battle is courage. It also helps overcome difficulties during the battle and it is considered "sine qua non" skill for a leader that can inspire his subordinates and must not be confused with the instinctive reaction of someone in danger. For a people's spirit and sentiment to be trained in courage the only way is addiction to war in terms of boldness. Another notion that is primary is surprise which refers to the time and spatial supremacy over the enemy that can cause panic and confusion to the enemy lines and it consists of fast and accurate acts and decisions, and right assessment of the tactical situation. When achieved, it suppresses enemy's time to think and react and dramatically reduces fighter's morale. It is often related with deceit and can basically be of use in tactics and not in strategic level.

An unpredictable factor that can significantly affect the outcome of a battle or a war is the friction to war. Numerous details that cannot be taken in mind initially when planning the battle or war can create frictions that should be dealt with, or else they will increase the difficulties in achieving the goal. All these frictions can be caused by various reasons like the weather, natural hazards, ability to swiftly overcome the enemy positions etc. The only way to mitigate the impact of the friction to the outcome of a battle resides to the experience, will, right judgment and training of leaders and troops from the peace time in order to avoid misjudgment and mistaken acts during the war or battle.

The successful outcome of the war, from a military perspective is based upon the art of conducting and managing the fight and it depends on the moral and material powers. A conflict is a sum of skirmishes with the use of armed forces and pertains to tactics, while the

use of conflicts in order to achieve the overall purpose refers to strategy. Hence, we can define tactics as the ways and methods to use armed forces in skirmishes while strategy is the theory of use of skirmishes to achieve the goal of war. These two concepts although separate are interdependent and interlinked. Narrowly defined, the art of war is the effective use of all the available means in a conflict, but in a broader sense includes all the necessary acts to thoroughly prepare the army for a war like recruiting, training, equipping and supplying the troops. All the above in combination with the moral and spiritual skills referred to the previous paragraphs can severely affect the outcome of a conflict.

Some other concepts introduced by Clausewitz and considered of significant importance are the centre of gravity and decisive battle, concentration, simplicity, probability and chance, interaction and the dynamic character of the process. By the term "centre of gravity" Clausewitz means the essential parameter, attribute or asset that should be struck (in terms of the 19th century, "neutralized" for contemporary analysis) in order to fully destroy the enemy's army and this can be done by concentrating the general action, the main effort and the main assembly of the forces to a certain time and place to fight the decisive battle upon the result of which the outcome of war relies. Here we must notice that Clausewitz primarily means destruction of enemy's courage rather than the physical destruction of the enemy's troops. Concentration however is more than gathering together all the troops and forces as said above. For the writer, it also includes mental and moral concentration of the people engaged in the conflict.

Simplicity is fundamental if the leader wants the plan to be executed step by step in due time without hesitation and drawback. Only a simple plan can be easily understood by the inferiors. Probability and chance, while possibly diverting someone from the original plan, may create space for a commander to exploit all the enemy's weaknesses that he can detect but that entails the proper state of vigilance and agility that the proper training and preparation can offer. Interaction must not be neglected. The enemy also acts and has the same purpose as we do. So, we have to adapt to the enemy's actions rather than stay still and think that the only plan evolving is ours. The latter

in terms of strategy means that it is a dynamic process that needs "constant rejuvenation" by rethinking, analysing and adapting our plans to all the emerging circumstances.

Having in mind all the above, Clausewitz stated that all these previously written parameters of war form a kind of trinity which is widely known as "The Fascinating Trinity" or "The Remarkable Trinity". This kind of Trinity comprises of the following key elements: a. Primordial Violence, Hatred and Enmity, b. The Play of Probability and Chance and c. The Element of Subordination, as an Instrument of Policy, which makes it subject to reason. According to Clausewitz's further analysis, the elements refer to the people, the army and the government respectively. Support of the people, as the one element of the Trinity, is necessary and without it is impossible for a state to go to war. Probability and chance mean all the random incidents that have an unpredictable impact on a conflict and that is the point where the Commander's "genius" plays a primary role to the outcome. War is a matter of the State and going to war is a decision made by the government. The primary role in war is for the army but other power factors of the state also play an important role, like diplomacy and economy. All these factors contribute to a dynamic manner from the beginning of a crisis until balance is reached. That is for the government to wisely decide after reasonable calculation if the war serves the state's interests.

To summarize the brief analysis of Clausewitz's "On War" we can extract some major concepts of the writer which can be synthesized onto the following: "appropriateness of means", "Purpose, Objective and Means", "Frictions, Probability and Chance, Moral Factors", "War Plan". Reality is the cornerstone of Clausewitz's analysis as it deals with human factors, army's virtues and commander's skills which if taken seriously can enhance the probability of success of the war plan or else they can severely afflict it. Above all we must note that war is politics by other means and serves a state's purpose as set by its government.

CLAUSEWITZ'S INFLUENCE

Clausewitz's work was seminal to latter strategists and generals of the second half of 19th century and, of course, to the first half of the 20th century. His work was thoroughly analysed by many scholars, strategists and generals. Certainly, his work was not immediately understood by all the latter but each one of them added something to the overall understanding of "On War" which was the foundation for the international relations theory of direct approach. The first decades that followed the publishing of his work were not so much influenced by Clausewitz and the analysis was only for the primary and obvious concepts of his theory but while the time passed and the application of his theory seemed successful on the battlefield, more and more readers tried to delve deeply into his work to thoroughly understand the details of his writings.

The first to read, study and understand Clausewitz were his compatriots and among them is the important general Helmuth von Moltke (the elder) who was a disciple of Clausewitz. He understood the principles of war as described by Clausewitz and applied them to the battles he fought during the mid-19th century. He believed that "the purpose of war is to carry out the policy of the government with arms" and emphasized to all the instructions given in "On War" in regard to the lines of operation, the proper training of his subordinate commanders, the simplicity of the given orders and the right dissemination of them to the units and the way to effectively use the available means. All the above made him one of the most successful army leaders of the modern era and led him to the position of Chief of Staff of the Prussian Army for almost thirty years. He was considered as a "Prussian military organization and tactical genius".

Another case of Clausewitz's influence to German Generals was the war plans and implementation of them during the Second World War. While invading France, the German generals gathered together the main mass of their forces to a certain point at a certain time and easily broke the considered unbreakable defence line of Maginot (ligne Maginot), effectively applied the principle of concentration and the decisive battle, as after this battle the invasion of Paris and the collapse of the French military resistance was a matter of time.

One of the most representative paradigms of the importance of Clausewitz's "Fascinating Trinity" is the case of the Italian invasion to Greece during WWII. After the consecutive Italian provocations which reached the peak at torpedoing the warship "ELLI" on August the 15th 1940, Greek people started growing sentiments of iniquity, anger, enmity and hatred for Italy, while the time passed until the official declaration of war was enough for proper preparations for the Greek army, avoiding thus any strategic surprise. At the same time Government rationally assessed the situation and set the political purpose of the conflict. All these trinity elements (People, Army and Government) were in absolute balance and led Greece to a major victory against all odds.

On the other hand, there are several cases where the trinity was led to instability because of wrong decisions and neglect of at least one of its factors. The first case to mention is the Greek military campaign to Asia Minor after WWI. The people following almost ten years of war, was tired and after the first years of victories withdrew its support to the cause while, on parallel, the government lost trust to it and failed to adapt the purpose of the war to the emerging circumstances. That led to a major and frustrating defeat. The second and more interesting globally case is the Vietnam War. In this case the people's importance to the war equation was ignored. After WWII USA assumed its responsibilities as the western world leader, trying to spread democracy and liberal ideals worldwide but its concept of war was obsolete, mostly relied to a "neo-eighteenth-century approach". US fought a war in Korea without even declare it and that weakened the support of the people and the belief to the cause. The same mistake was made in Vietnam and there were lots of negative reactions from the people creating instability to the trinity that eventually led to withdrawal of US led coalition from the area and the end of the war. That was the very point when American scholars, strategists and generals turned to the thorough study of Clausewitz once again and tried to understand the reasons of their defeat.

RELEVANCE IN MODERN ERA

It is obvious that Clausewitz influenced lots of leaders, both political and army, who tried to understand the essence of his work and implement it in their strategic thinking and acting. The relevance of Clausewitz's principles and directions was easily recognizable till the mid-20th century when war was fought more or less the same way as the days Clausewitz wrote his work. The last decades, starting from the Cold War years, we are experiencing a rapid evolution of the military technology (among other technologies) and the invention of arms and weapons that can cause mass damage and can be thrown from a vast distance (standoff weapons, WMD). All these new developments forced the general staffs to devise new doctrines suitable to the emerging reality and the politicians to change their perception of the armed conflicts as they can take place far away and from a long distance. Another important change is that the conflicts around the world mainly these last three decades are regional and, also, not between great coalitions and alliances or even states but the war is fought against abstract enemy, like the Global war on Terror. In this case the key player in Clausewitz's theory, which is the belligerent states, is not clear or even is totally absent. The question is if the Clausewitz's theory can be of any relevance today.

Recalling the conflicts starting in 1980's we can say that the major events are the soviet war in Afghanistan, the first and the second Gulf War and the US invasion in Afghanistan, as well as the recent Russian invasion in Ukraine. Of course, there are fundamental differences between the way the war fought at Clausewitz's days and now, so all the directions regarding the lines of operations and the way to use the army units are obsolete as there are now much better capabilities and technology. That's why Clausewitz's theory was criticized by several analysts and strategists. This is familiar, as it was receiving criticism since the very beginning of the 20th century by scholars that perceived strategy in a different, more "indirect way". Others stood against the importance of the decisive battle and tried to prove that it is not necessary for winning. The essence of the relevance of Clausewitz's theory today is based upon the war plan, the probability and chance and the capability to adapt to them as well as to the balance of the fascinating trinity.

Ignorance or deliberate neglect of Clausewitz's principles led some of the greater contemporary armies to defeat, while, when these principles were fostered, the victory came naturally. In the case of the first Gulf War, when General Schwarzkopf planned and executed "Operation Desert Storm" we can recognize that the principles of the decisive strike and concentration of forces were applied while the purpose set by the government was clear and accepted by people. Hence, the trinity was in perfect balance and led to a short and fully successful conflict. On the contrary, when US government introduced the Global War on Terror, even if in the beginning there was the rage again terrorist groups and full support to the cause by the American citizens, the planners tended to neglect the main principles of Clausewitz's theory. No decisive battle was fought, they never paid attention to the interaction and the dynamic process and they acted as if the enemy was standing still. They couldn't adapt to the geography of the field of battle and underestimated all the moral factors that eventually led Taliban to victory. The troops and the people got tired of an expensive war whose purpose was blurred and not understandable. Similar situation faced the soviet troops when fought to Afghanistan in 1980's.

Another case that proves that several Clausewitz's insights are still relevant today is the recent war in Ukraine. Russians invaded without taking in mind the will of Ukrainian people and the support from the allies. Moreover, they never concentrated the means to a main effort but they were widely spread all over northern and eastern Ukraine. Their attacks in cities and civilians grew the spirit of resistance and the belief to the righteous cause of the war for Ukrainian people. Hence, a military intervention which seemed to be quite easy, now has evolved to a war with severe casualties for both parties and after the first days that fear came up for the power and the intentions of Russian Government and armed forces, now the rival alliances got stronger and they reinvented their purpose while Russian people cannot understand the meaning of their government's actions.

CONCLUSION

In this essay we tried to take a brief look in Clausewitz's theory on war. Firstly, we presented some of his basic ideas and principles on what war is about and how to manage to achieve the best outcome, as well as the link between war and politics. Like all phenomena of great importance in history of humanity that affect or even produce history, war has been analysed by many strategists, scholars or analysts, usually people with significant experience acquired in the field of battle. Each one of them studied the past conflicts and tried to adopt all the lessons learned to its contemporary technology and tactics. It is true that the military technology is a sector of technology that often steers the developments and greatly affects tactics on the battlefield. Hence, each book, treatise or analysis of war although aims to a better control of the weapons and application of tactics in the hope that it will remain timeless, cannot foretell the evolution and the emerging changes which eventually change many or in some case all the principles mentioned in these works.

Thereafter we presented how Clausewitz's theory and insights influenced several army leaders and helped them achieve major victories. Clausewitz's treatise "On War" is a very concise and comprehensive analysis that its principles proved of great value for the contemporary army leaders that chose to implement them on the battlefield. This work introduced several new concepts like the "decisive battle", "concentration" and the "frictions of war" and changed the way of thinking of political and army leaders, setting the foundations of "direct approach" and the interconnection of politics and war. In this context it remained invaluable till the mid-20th century. Nevertheless, like all theories was intensively criticised either by scholars of rival nations and theories (e.g., Sir Basil Liddell Hart) or by future analysts who think that this analysis is obsolete and cannot be applied to modern military technology and tactics.

Finally, we searched Clausewitz theory's relevance with modern era's wars. Clausewitz's work is not easy to comprehend. It needs thorough analysis and intense effort to understand all the aspects of war, from politics and preparation to the way the war ends to our favor. Clausewitz's insights proved to be constantly up to date when it comes to politics, to the

"fascinating trinity" and to the way a great army must be managed and commanded. Critical elements of his theory, like people and government, must not be neglected. Whenever in recent wars someone chose to ignore them faced the unpleasant consequences. Clausewitz's work is not a handbook with certain instructions of what to do in war, step by step. It is an effort to understand war as a phenomenon closely connected with the human nature and decode all these behaviours that can lead either to victory or to defeat. In the light of the above, Clausewitz's insights are and will be relevant for many years to come.

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Captain (HN) Panagiotis Triantopoulos was born in Mytilene in 1974 and grew up in Patras. He was admitted in Hellenic Naval Academy in 1991 and graduated in 1995, named Ensign (HN) and currently holds the rank of Captain (HN) since 2022.

He has served on several Hellenic Fleet vessels mainly as Executive and gunnery officer. He has served as Commanding Officer of HS KARAVOGIANNOS. He has also served at the Hellenic National Centre for Space Applications (NCSA) of the HNDGS and consequently as staff officer and head of department of Satellite Intelligence Programs of the HNDGS. He also was National Representative at the HELIOS-II, MUSIS and CERES programs. He has served as head of department in the HNGS, as Chief of Staff and Commander of the Hellenic Naval Command of Ionian Sea. From 2020 he serves in HNDGS JOC initially as staff officer and since 2022 as Director of Watch. He was appointed as Military Assistant to the first Hellenic Force Commander of EU "Operation IRINI" from October 2020 to April 2021.

He is a graduate of the Hellenic Naval Staff College, the Hellenic Supreme War College and the Hellenic National Defence College.

He holds a Master of Science degree in Information and Communications Technologies (ITT) from the Hellenic National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and a Master of Arts degree in Applied Strategy and International Security from the University of Plymouth.

He has been awarded with all the medals, decorations and commendations stipulated for an officer of his rank and seniority.

He speaks English and French.

Presentation of the International Senior Course conducted at HNDC

General

A leader's ability to articulate a straightforward, adaptable plan sets the stage for successful outcomes. This planning must be supported by decisive, well-informed decision-making and a proactive approach to risk.

Encouraging a culture where questioning and ethical considerations are welcomed enhances the decision-making process, ensuring that actions are not only effective but also just. The concept of effective leadership leading to effective followership underscores the symbiotic relationship between leaders and their teams, highlighting the essential foundation of mutual respect and the collective drive towards a common goal.

At its core, leadership during a crisis is profoundly human-centric. It's about understanding, motivating, and caring for the people you lead. The emphasis on the individual leader and their relationship with their team members serves as a reminder that, at the end of the day, the effectiveness of any response to crisis hinges on human connection, empathy, and collective effort.

The International Senior Course (ISCASDD) in the Hellenic National Defence College likely featured a comprehensive curriculum aimed at providing senior military officers and civilian officials with advanced knowledge and skills in defense and security studies.

It is a resident, 3-month course planned for foreign officers of friendly and allied countries, with limited participation of Greek students, at the rank of Colonel and Lt Colonel. The course is held in English once a year, aiming to the Development of a common perception and understand more broadly issues of defense, security, and international relations. Furthermore, students can work across international and interagency boundaries, and think critically about the above-mentioned issues. The number of participants varies from 10-14 students.

Aim

This course's aim underscores the importance of developing high-level strategic leaders capable of navigating the complexities of the modern geostrategic environment. By focusing on strategic thinking and critical analysis, it prepares students to excel as flag officers and defense staff officers, ensuring they can effectively contribute to national and international security efforts. Here's a breakdown of how the course's aim translates into specific educational and professional growth areas:

Development of Strategic Thinking

Analytical Skills: Enhancing the ability to analyze global trends, assess risks, and understand the implications of geopolitical events on national security.

Future-Oriented Planning: Cultivating the ability to foresee future challenges and opportunities, preparing for them through strategic foresight and contingency planning.

Mastery of Critical Analysis

Problem-Solving: Developing the capability to approach complex problems with nuanced, well-reasoned solutions that go beyond surface-level responses.

Decision-Making: Strengthening decision-making skills with a comprehensive understanding of the strategic context, allowing for informed choices that consider long-term outcomes.

Strategic Leadership Capabilities

Leadership Skills: Advancing leadership qualities that inspire confidence and foster cohesion among diverse teams, encouraging innovation and resilience.

Communication: Improving the ability to communicate strategic visions effectively, both within the organization and with external partners, including through diplomatic and negotiation skills.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for National Security Organizations

Operational Knowledge: Deepening understanding of the operational aspects of national security, including defense strategies, military capabilities, and the integration of civil-military operations.

International Relations: Enhancing knowledge of international relations and diplomacy, particularly concerning defense and security alliances, partnerships, and the role of international organizations in peacekeeping and conflict resolution.

Ethical Considerations: Emphasizing ethical leadership and the moral complexities of defense and security decisions, promoting integrity and accountability in all actions.

Leading in a National and International Strategic Environment

Global Awareness: Building a broad understanding of global issues and their impact on national security, fostering a global perspective on defense and strategic planning.

Adaptability: Cultivating the ability to adapt to changing geopolitical landscapes, embracing innovation, and remaining flexible in the face of uncertainty.

Collaboration: Promoting collaboration across national and international entities, enhancing the ability to work within coalitions, alliances, and with non-state actors for collective security efforts.

This course's aim is not only about imparting knowledge but also about shaping the character and capabilities of future leaders in national and international security environments. It is designed to prepare students for the complexities of modern security challenges, equipping them with the skills necessary to lead with foresight, integrity, and strategic acumen.

Participation

Eligible for attending our courses are:

Officers from the three Services of the Armed Forces with the Rank of Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel, previously graduated from Supreme Joint War College.

Senior officers from Hellenic Police, Fire Service and Coast Guard.

Public servants holding a bachelor's degree from various Ministries and public or private organizations

International Senior officers from NATO, PfP, MD, and other friendly countries, following the approval from the Ministry of National Defence Officers.

Opportunities after Graduation

The partnership between Hellenic National Defence College (HNDC) and the University of Plymouth offering a Master of Arts in Applied Strategy & International Security is a significant opportunity for students pursuing careers in defense, security, and strategic planning. This collaborative effort leverages the strengths of both institutions to provide a comprehensive and deeply relevant educational experience. Here's a closer look at the structure, benefits, and implications of this partnership:

Structure of the Program

Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning (APCL): The University of Plymouth recognizes the successful completion of the HNDC's International Senior Course (ISC) as equivalent to 60 credits towards the MA in Applied Strategy and International Security. This system facilitates a streamlined pathway for HNDC graduates to pursue their master's degrees, acknowledging the depth and relevance of their prior learning.

Co-organization and Participation: The course is co-organized by the University of Plymouth and the HNDC, with lecturers and instructors from both institutions contributing. This collaborative approach

ensures a rich diversity of perspectives, enhancing the learning experience for students.

Focus Areas: The program is designed to cover a wide range of topics relevant to contemporary security challenges, including but not limited to strategic thinking, defense diplomacy, crisis management, and leadership in a multicultural environment. The course content is continuously updated to reflect the latest developments in international security and strategic studies.

Benefits to Students

Advanced Qualifications: Graduates of this program are awarded a Master of Arts in Applied Strategy & Defence Diplomacy, a qualification that is recognized internationally and enhances professional prospects.

Practical and Theoretical Insights: The course provides a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical insights, preparing students for the complexities of modern security challenges and strategic decision-making.

Networking Opportunities: Students have the chance to interact with a diverse cohort of peers and professionals from various backgrounds, fostering a network that can be invaluable for future collaborations and career opportunities.

More on our International Senior School can be found on our website. <https://setha.army.gr/en/international-senior-course/University-Of-Plymouth>

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Visit to the HNDC by the Ambassador of Israel Noam Katz

On Tuesday 5 March 2024, the Ambassador of Israel, H.E. Mr. Noam Katz visited the Hellenic National Defence College, where he gave a lecture on “The War Against Terrorism - Regional Aspects: Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean”.



Visit to the HNDC by Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) of NATO, General Philippe Lavigne

On Tuesday 12 March 2024, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) of NATO, General Philippe Lavigne, visited the Hellenic National Defence College. He has been welcomed by the Commandant of the College, Lieutenant General Athanasios Sardellis, and briefed on the organization, mission, and education program of the College. Subsequently, General Philippe Lavigne delivered a speech to the students regarding NATO’s transformation and Alliance’s future challenges.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

Lecture to the HNDC by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Mr. Matthew Lodge

On Wednesday 27 March 2024, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Mr. Matthew Lodge, visited the Hellenic National Defense College, where he gave a lecture on “The crucial issue for our collective security, Russia’s invasion in Ukraine and the war that is still raging there.



Lecture to the HNDC by the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. George J. Tsunis.

On Friday 29 March 2024, Mr. George J. Tsunis, Ambassador of the United States of America visited the Hellenic National Defence College, where he gave a lecture on “Regional Partnerships & Energy Security” followed by a discussion with the students.



Visit of the United States Army War College to the Hellenic National Defence College

On Thursday 18 April 2024, the United States Army War College visited the Hellenic National Defence College. USAWC students were briefed about the HNDC’s mission, activities and educational work and visited HNDC’s facilities.

The visit is part of the US Army War College’s program visiting foreign countries during current academic period.



Visit of the Royal Jordanian National Defence College (RJNDC) to the Hellenic National Defence College

On Monday 22 April 2024, the Royal Jordanian National Defence College visited the Hellenic National Defence College. Royal Jordanian National Defence College students were briefed about the HNDC’s mission, activities and educational work and visited HNDC’s facilities.

The visit is part of the Royal Jordanian National Defence College’s program visiting foreign countries during current academic period, aiming to strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing educational exchange.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



Visit of United Kingdom's Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) to the Hellenic National Defence College

On Monday 20 May 2024, the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) of the United Kingdom visited the Hellenic National Defence College. RCDS students were briefed about the HNDC's mission, activities and educational work and visited HNDC's facilities.

The visit is part of the RCDS program visiting foreign countries during current academic period.



Participation of Hellenic National Defence College Commandant in the 53rd NATO Conference of Commandants

From 07 to 10 May 24, Hellenic National Defense College (HNDC) Commandant, Lieutenant General Sardellis Athanasios, participated in the 53rd NATO Conference of Commandants, which was co-organized

by the NATO Defense College (NDC) and the National Defense University (NDU) of the United States, in Washington D.C.

Delegations from more than 40 countries participated in the Conference and its theme was "Developing Leadership for the next 75 years of the Alliance". Prominent professors of US Universities, senior executives of large private companies and High-ranking NATO officers, were the main speakers.

At the beginning of the session, the Conference was greeted by SACT Commander, General Philippe Lavigne, while at the end, US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles Brown, gave a speech.

On the sidelines of the Conference, HNDC Commandant met in private with the Commandants of NDC, NDU and other Allied Colleges, as well as with academics, enhancing collaborations with Allied Colleges and upgrading HNDC's Curriculum and education programs.

At the end of the Conference, NDC Commandant announced the co-organization with HNDC of the 54th NATO Conference of Commandants in Athens, in 2025.



Visit of the XXV General Staff Course of Spain to the Hellenic National Defence College

On Monday 10 June 2024, a delegation of the XXV General Staff Course of Spain visited the Hellenic National Defence College and was briefed about HNDC's structure, mission and academic work.

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

The visit is part of the XXV General Staff Course program visiting foreign countries during current academic period.



Graduation Ceremony of the Postgraduate Programme organized by Panteion University in collaboration with HNDC

On Tuesday 11th of June 2024, in Panteion University premises, took place the graduation of 24 officers HNDC's graduates, who attended the Postgraduate programme "Master of arts in Strategy Security Studies" organized by Panteion University in collaboration with HNDC.

The ceremony took place in "ARISTOTELIS" ceremonial room, with the presence of HNDC Commandant Lt. General Athanasios Sardellis, and was attended by the following Panteion University Professors:

Vice Rector for Finance, Planning & Development, Professor Christos Papatheodorou.

Dean of the School of International Studies, Communication and Culture, Professor Yannis Skarpelos.

Head of the Department of International, European and Area Studies, Professor Konstantinos Yfantis.

Supervisor of the Postgraduate programme, Professor Charalampos Papatotiriou.



(Photos HNDC / Public Relations Department)

PURSUIITS:

HNDC's pursuit from the six-monthly edition of "ATHENA", is the strengthening of the dialogue, through the pages of the review, on issues related to national defense and security.

In addition to articles, papers and essays, criticism on the content of the review as well as new ideas for its improvement are also welcome. We expect the review to highlight a "forum" character in which everyone can willingly contribute with views and ideas.

THE HNDC REVIEW PUBLISHES:

- Scientific papers.
- Articles and students essays concerning national defense, national strategy, international relations and relevant fields of interest.
- Minutes of Conferences organized by the College.
- Educational and other activities of the College.
- The published works and articles express the author views and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the College.
- Papers containing classified information or expressions that are inconsistent with the ethos and spirit of the College shall not be published.

PUBLICATION TERMS:

- The texts and articles must be between 2000-4000 words and must include scientific documentation-bibliography, while they must be submitted electronically in .docx, dot, txt or pdf formats.
- The bibliographic notes must be according to APA (American Psychological Association) style.
- Papers, when required, must be accompanied by the relevant maps and plans, together with subtitles. Photos are published only if their content is deemed necessary for the fuller information of the reader.
- Any cooperation must be delivered in electronic form to: res1@hndc.mil.gr.
- Submission for publication can be made at any time. The review is published twice a year.
- Comments, suggestions and criticism of articles should be submitted to the e-mail: res1@hndc.mil.gr. The editorial board selects the papers, students essays and articles to be published.