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Putin's war of attrition and contemporary conditions of the political order of Central-Eastern Europe

SUMMARY This paper studies the Russian Federation's superpower aspirations under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, culminating in Ukraine's military invasion in February 2022. The analysis here displays several fundamental factors responsible for the threats that the Kremlin's great-power policy poses to modern international security systems and, above all, to the political order of Central and Eastern Europe. The research questions concerned the fundamental issues responsible for the primary forms of antagonism destabilizing the mutual relations between Russia and Ukraine, inscribed in the context of the multidimensional dynamics of contemporary geopolitical conditions. The discourse presented by the authorities in the Kremlin points to ambiguity, ambivalence of meaning, multifacetedness, and even inconsistency of the Russian narrative on international security, especially in the context of the war with Ukraine. That is why the above issues are considered the sphere of the most complicated problems of contemporary issues affecting Russia and Ukraine. Diagnosing the impact of the discussed factors can help understand and, over time, shape more effective international security strategies, as well as create better support programs that effectively solve Central and Eastern European security problems. In addition, finding answers to such research questions is significant in the context of contemporary global political changes, which – in conjunction with the “political correctness” issue – become a severe challenge for the entire global concept of international security.

KEYWORDS Russian Federation, Ukraine, Russo-Ukrainian war, international security system, Central and Eastern Europe

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Introduction

On February 21, 2022, Russian President Vladimir Putin acknowledged the independence of two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine – the Luhansk People’s Republic and the Donetsk People’s Republic – and ordered troops to enter the disputed region to carry out the so-called “peace operation” (New York Times, 2022). The next day, the Kremlin authorities recognized the claims of the pro-Moscow separatists to the entire Donbas region, thus setting the stage for a full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. It began with a combined attack by land, sea, and air forces on February 24, 2022. Initially, over a hundred missiles were fired from land platforms and warships at targets situated in Ukraine, followed by ground attacks along three main strategic axes: (1) north, from Belarus towards Kyiv; (2) eastern, from western Russia towards Kharkiv; (3) and southern, from the Crimea to Kherson (Hopkins et al., 2022).

The international community immediately condemned the Russian invasion. On March 2, 2022, by a vote of 141 countries in favor, five against, and 35 abstentions, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution to refrain from further unlawful threats or use of force against any member state. The above order emphasized the immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all armed forces from Ukrainian territory (United Nations, 2022a). Two weeks later, on March 16, the International Court of Justice, by thirteen votes to two, indicated interim measures against Russia to, among other things, “immediately suspend the military operation launched on February 24, 2022 (International Court of Justice, 2023). On March 24, the General Assembly reiterated that Russia must comply with Resolution ES-11/1, demanding that the Kremlin authorities immediately cease all hostilities against Ukraine (General Assembly, 2022).

Committed in February 2022, Moscow’s military aggression against Ukraine comes eight years after Russia illegally invaded, annexed, and occupied Crimea in February 2014. The Russian invasion of the Crimean peninsula clearly violated Articles 2(3) and 2(4) of the *UN Charter*, which the UN General Assembly condemned on March 27, 2014 (General Assembly, 2014). The Council of Europe further established that the result of the subsequent referendum organized by Moscow in Crimea and Russia’s illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014 had no legal effect (Council of Europe, 2014). Both acts of Russian aggression in 2014 and 2022 contradict the *United Nations Charter* and the 1994 *Budapest*

Memorandum, in which Russia explicitly committed to respecting Ukraine's "independence and sovereignty and existing borders" (General Assembly, Security Council, 1994). The memorandum also requires Russia to refrain from "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine" (*ibid.*).

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict: specificity and practicalities of the military clash and its geopolitical circumstances

Russia, which lost its status as a global power due to the collapse of the "Soviet Empire" (USSR), quickly revived its imperial tendencies in the first decade of the 21st century. The dynamic development of the countries of Asia and other regions of the world and the involvement of the Kremlin in the countries of Africa and South America caused a change in the international balance of power to the detriment of the democratic countries of the West. Russia saw this as an opportunity to pursue its strategic interests, prioritizing rebuilding its superpower status in world politics by monitoring the transformation of the global international security strategy through the transition from the current unipolar system to a multipolar world order. This paradigm was based on developing close relations with countries with an "anti-Western" province, such as China and Iran.

Despite the Kremlin administration's strenuous efforts to restore Russia's status as a world power from the period of imperial splendor, the current state system seems to be much less "cosmopolitan" than in the era of Tsarist Russia or even the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, for Putin, this is not a problem but rather an advantage. The current "political correctness" defines the current political system of the Russian state in nationalist terms that emphasize deep historical ties with the Russian imperial cultural past. At the same time, the cultural traditions of many other nations and communities inhabiting the vast territory of Russia are ignored. Moreover, various cultural and religious traditions try to impose the character of "Russianness" understood as an element that unifies and integrates the "national identity" of modern-day Russia (Karatnycky, 2005). The religious factor plays an important role here. After a long era of systemic atheization and persecution of the Christian faith, President Putin restored the importance of the Orthodox Church and officially presented himself as a defender of its traditional – through and through – Christian and Russian cultural values. In this context, the president of Russia is formally exposed as the absolutist counterpart

of the tsar, protecting “Holy Russia” from the evils of the outside world (Lamoreaux & Flake, 2018).

To regain its former imperial glory, Russia’s political strategy favors strengthening nationalist tendencies to rebuild its influence, especially in the former USSR’s geopolitical space and neighboring regions. For this reason, Russia was not satisfied with the invasion of Georgia in 2008 or the invasion of Crimea in 2014. In 2022, the Putin administration launched a large-scale attack on Ukraine. Thus, the existing paradigm of global security, which guarantees the modern world order based on the provisions of international law, has been questioned (Fix & Kimmage, 2023). Launching the military invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, Putin justified military actions to stabilize the socio-political situation in this part of the former Soviet empire. Therefore, official propaganda portrayed the Ukrainians as a “variety” of recalcitrant Russians – stray sheep who should now be returned to the fold – and not as a nation to which international treaties guaranteed political sovereignty and independence after the collapse of the USSR (Kappeler, 2014). However, the military operations were called “special military operations” (Vedyashkin, 2021).

War and (un)-peace: a threat to the present-day concept of international security

The institutional collapse of the USSR meant that Russia was primarily deprived of vast territorial areas as well as demographic structure. Thus, although the Kremlin remained one of the world’s most important centers of political power, the state lost its superpower status. Despite this, the Russian Federation has never given up on its dream of becoming a great power with global significance and imperial aspirations. Along with surviving the painful period of political transformation in the 1990s, the 21st century began an intensified process of rebuilding the state’s superpower position. Thanks to the combination of new circumstances in the international arena, Russia has significantly benefited from the global increase in prices for energy and mineral resources, which has contributed to the reconstruction of the political and economic power of the state. During this period, the authorities in the Kremlin began to openly emphasize that it was difficult for it to come to terms with the unipolar formula of the world political order led by the US (Rumer, 2016).

Russia made great efforts to increase its political effectiveness and be accepted as a tremendous and severe power. It took up a hard fight to strengthen – and

even expand – its spheres of influence, especially in the former USSR countries and the immediate vicinity. The growing influence of the West on the territory of the former USSR countries, as well as the expansion of the EU and NATO to the East, have significantly narrowed Russia's room for maneuver. For this reason, Moscow has repeatedly expressed its discomfort and concern. Fascination – and even esteem – for liberal values presented by Western countries and the democratic awakening in countries belonging to the former Soviet sphere of influence played a prominent role here. In other words, the inhabitants of these regions began to prefer – instead of “Soviet-Russian” – Western political culture as a role model for their political systems. However, this fact later became an essential source of resentment and even conflicts (Lawless et al., 2022).

Although the EU and NATO did not pose a direct threat to the security of the Russian Federation – which has a powerful military arsenal, including nuclear weapons – they did, however, pose a challenge and created uncertainty and even anxiety for the authoritarian regime of Moscow. In other words, although the enlargement of NATO and the EU to the East did not pose a direct threat to Russia, these organizations could hinder the implementation of the great-power aspirations and aspirations of the Russian Federation. It is because states that enjoy the support of the West or are formally integrated with the Western security system have found it more challenging to incorporate them into the Russian sphere of influence. Thus, they constituted a serious problem for Moscow's expansive political strategy (*ibid.*).

The nature and specificity of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict should also be considered in this context. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused a geopolitical storm that heralds far-reaching changes in the international order of the modern world. Compared to the assault on Ukraine by Nazi Germany in 1941, the above conflict became the largest and most destructive war in Europe since the end of World War II. Moreover, serious fears exist that this could begin a new Cold War or even escalate into World War III. Ukraine's fierce resistance, supported by the United States and its allies, has dashed Russia's hopes of a quick and decisive victory. It is difficult to predict exactly how this conflict will transform the current international order. However, it is almost inevitable. The Russo-Ukrainian war will undoubtedly be a turning point, as will the “Cold War” that began in 1945. Also, the current era of globalization, initiated by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, heralds a fundamental paradigm shift in the contemporary international security strategy (Taylor, 2022).

Yet, on the eve of the Russian invasion in 2022, Ukraine was among the poorest countries in Europe. The main reason for this was the high degree of corruption and the slow pace of economic liberalization and administrative reform of state institutions. As stated by Oliver Bullough:

Since 1991, officials, members of parliament, and businessmen have created complex and highly lucrative schemes to plunder the state budget. The theft has crippled Ukraine. The economy was as large as Poland's at independence. Now, it is a third of the size. Ordinary Ukrainians have seen their living standards stagnate, while a handful of oligarchs have become billionaires (Bullough, 2015).

Nevertheless, the Russian invasion has significantly damaged Ukraine's economy, as well as future prospects for economic development and improvement of the living standards of its citizens. Only in the first year after the Russian invasion did the country's GDP fall by as much as 35% compared to the pre-war period (Mackinnon & Gramer, 2022).

While the military conflict has made Russia the subject of criticism and its actions condemned by the international community, Ukraine has gained worldwide support. As stated by UN's political affairs Chief Rosemary DiCarlo, the Russian occupation is contrary to international law, and the international community fully recognizes Ukraine's sovereignty, unity, independence, and territorial integrity (United Nations, 2022b). The destruction by Russian forces of many parts of the country by murdering, raping, torturing, deporting, and terrorizing defenseless civilians, attempts to destroy Ukrainian identity, attempts to wipe modern independent Ukraine off the map by killing and Russifying its population will be referred to as genocide (Hook, 2022).

The Russian Federation's occupation of a sovereign state in violation of international law has made Russia even more isolated in the international arena. As the war drags on, the occupying forces are using – and will probably continue to use – several inhumane methods (including the extermination of civilians), which can be described as crimes against humanity. Although most countries (140 countries) – especially the US and its Western allies – consider Ukraine a sovereign and independent state, some countries, such as China and India (38 countries), do not take a position. Only Belarus, North Korea, Syria, and Eritrea (4 countries) have openly supported Russian military actions against Ukraine. Mali and Nicaragua, on the other hand, abstained. The Russo-Ukrainian war continues to arouse the interest of the whole world in political, economic, and

security dimensions, taking on various extents. The above clash has also witnessed the polarization of public opinion and sharp conflicts of interest between global and regional modern powers (Gans, 2023).

Political and economic interests undoubtedly play a prominent role in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Therefore, attitudes towards this conflict vary greatly. Among European countries, despite certain dissonances in their attitudes to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, there is a general disagreement with the Kremlin's military actions. In this context, the EU does not see the attack on Ukraine only as a military invasion of a sovereign state. For most Western countries, the Russian-Ukrainian war is a serious violation of international law and a significant challenge to the current global order and cooperation strategy. Moreover, this military conflict also threatens the modern concept of security, a fundamental element of peaceful coexistence based on democratic political principles.

Outlook of Russia-West relations: the end of an epoch and three scenarios for the future

the future of relations between Russia and the West depends to a large extent on the course of the war in Ukraine. Putin's war with Ukraine has fundamentally changed Russia's relations with Western countries, making it impossible to return to any form of partnership in the foreseeable future. It is hard to imagine Western governments that would cooperate in a harmonious relationship with the Kremlin regime as long as it remains in power and refuses to accept responsibility for the damage done to Ukrainian infrastructure and, above all, for war violations and crimes against humanity. Moreover, negotiating any constructive agreement does not seem straightforward in the face of annexing four more Ukrainian provinces (Van Der Togt, 2022).

Therefore, it is difficult to forecast how the outcome of this war will affect neither Ukraine and Russia nor the collective West and the "Global South." Whether a rule-based multilateral order can be restored and how significant players and regions will match up remains to be seen. In this regard, the final outcome of the war will be decisive. Broadly speaking, we can imagine three possible scenarios: (1) Ukraine's victory, (2) Russia's triumph, and (3) a long, convoluted stalemate.

The prospect of a Ukrainian victory

Under these circumstances, the West can continue fully supporting Ukraine militarily, politically, and economically until Russia finally withdraws its troops from Ukrainian territory. Containment and deterrence are once again crucial elements in determining the West's approach to Russia in order to preclude further escalation into a full-fledged war between Russia and NATO. While Russia's use of tactical nuclear weapons cannot be ruled out, such a situation would only lead to an almost complete breakdown of relations with the Kremlin. It would – probably – contribute to further isolation. Moreover, it also applies to Russia's relations with the “Global South,” including China (Jureńczyk, 2022).

Ukraine's victory can, therefore, be defined in various ways. The fact that Moscow has failed to push Ukraine back into its sphere of influence (Русский мир) can be considered a victory for Ukrainian courage and love of freedom and independence. However, regardless of the outcome of this war, it will be a long road to complete reconstruction and reconciliation, both internally and in relations with Russia and the Russians (Lovett et al., 2023).

When it comes to restoring territorial integrity, there may be several options. A complete victory could mean pushing back the Russian armed forces and occupying not only the territories Moscow recently claimed it was annexing “forever” but also the return of Crimea to Ukrainian control. Other options are the return of the territories occupied since February 24, 2022, or the restoration of Ukrainian control over the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics (parts of Donbas occupied since 2014 and recently proclaimed by Moscow as independent republics).

Whatever form Ukraine's victory might take, it would have enormous consequences for Ukraine and Russia (Spencer, 2023). As mentioned earlier, the reconstruction of Ukraine would be a significant undertaking that could not be carried out without large-scale international support comparable to the Marshall Plan after World War II. A severe concern would also be whether Russia could be forced to pay at least some of the war damage it caused to Ukraine and whether the West could use the Russian Central Bank's frozen assets of about \$300 billion for reconstruction and rebuilding (Valero et al., 2023). The EU should play a central role in this undertaking, especially in the context of Ukraine's obtaining the status of a candidate country aspiring to fast membership in NATO and EU structures. However, EU membership negotiations will continue to be based on conditionality and entail a complex internal transformation process to consolidate the rule of law and fight corruption (*ibid.*).

Ukraine's victory would, therefore, mean a severe defeat for Russia, not only in the military but also in the political dimension. In other words, it would end Putin's dream of restoring the Russian empire and forcing Ukraine to join the Russian world, dominated by Russian culture and its "traditional values." It would not be the first time in history that a military defeat would also lead to a change of internal regime. The Russian political authority, based on autocracy, repression, and legitimized by propaganda, would have to bear the consequences of military defeat: political, economic as well as moral.

But there are also other possibilities of a possible turn of events. It may mean a new "time of trouble" in which individual regions of Russia will want to gain independence, engaging in internal conflicts and civil wars. It would neither threaten the entire state's internal stability nor raise serious questions about the control of nuclear weapons. Russia's failure could also lead to the takeover of power by another – even more authoritarian – political regime. A new rule by a nationalist and revanchist leadership who would wait for another chance to impose their will on other parts of the Russian world, presumably including Ukraine. However, a democratic revolution in Russia seems the least likely option since over half a million – mostly young – Russians have left the country since this phase of the war on February 24. The potential for change seems to be diminishing accordingly, and the loyalty of those left behind still needs to be tested (Lovett et al., 2023).

In the case of the Ukrainian victory, the future of Russia-West relations will be determined by the fate of the present regime or the outcome of the government system change in Moscow. The possibility of a retaliatory power suffering from a Weimar-type set of symptoms or prevalent instability with pro-self-rule movements from the North Caucasus to ethnically defined units in Siberia should not be underestimated. In such cases, the West should – first of all – respond to contain instability within Russia's current borders. The retaliatory regime in Moscow could also be stopped and prevented from retaking risks against Ukraine only by ensuring it could not regain its military strength and restart the war. In all such cases, a constructive relationship with Russia would be unlikely as internal problems would distract attention from external endeavors. Moscow's relations with Beijing may also precede rebuilding affairs with Europe and the West (Charap & Priebe, 2023).

The possibility of Russia's win

Under the current circumstances, a Russian victory scenario could only be presented as unlikely, especially after the recent successful Ukrainian counter-offensives. In contrast, Putin may have previously portrayed a limited annexation as a victory. Such a scenario could only be envisaged if the West stopped supporting Ukraine. Russia's victory would mean reducing quasi-independent Ukraine to the category of a state completely dominated by Moscow and forced to unconditionally accept the annexation of the former imperial provinces of the "Novorossiya" (the territories of separatist Transnistria, i.e., the Donbas, the Donetsk People's Republic, and the Luhansk People's Republic) (Taylor, 2014).

A Russian victory could also threaten Ukraine's sovereignty, which would lose about 20 percent of its territory to Russia. Its survival would hinge on the West and organizations like the EU and international financial institutions. While NATO membership would be ruled out in such a situation, the Ukrainian state could count on security guarantees from its Western partners to prevent further territorial aggression by Russia. Given this turn of events, much would depend on whether the outcome of the war would lead to a formal political settlement and under what conditions (Charap & Priebe, 2023). Russia's victory over Ukraine would also entail broader claims and demands to change the European security order per Moscow's wishes. As expressed in the December 2021 proposals for the US and NATO, Moscow demands a complete withdrawal of NATO to the position it occupied before 1997. It would mean leaving the whole of Central and Eastern Europe without the guarantee of NATO, which today is obliged to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity. In other words, withdrawing from these commitments would mean leaving these countries at the mercy of the Kremlin (Pifer, 2021). At the same time, non-NATO countries in the region, such as Moldova and Georgia, would have legitimate concerns about their independence and sovereignty. Therefore, as many political leaders have stated, the war in Ukraine is also our war (McGrath & Cook, 2022).

Indeed, the political regime in the Kremlin would also feel justified by the victory and would present it as a rebirth of Russia's superpower due to a heroic struggle, similar to the win in the Great Patriotic War (World War II). All internal contradictions in Russia would be pushed aside, as the regime of power would legitimize all the suffering of the population as a sacrifice necessary to restore "Great Russia" to its rightful place in the world. However, it would be doubtful that Russia could survive its economic and financial isolation from the West in the long term. After the initial enthusiasm of part of society, the natural consequences

of Moscow's actions would become apparent, and it would be doubtful whether support for the Kremlin would be maintained in the long term. In such a situation, it may still be necessary to intensify internal repression and further isolate the country from the outside world. Russia's dependence on China would also increase, making this country an "incapacitated partner" of Beijing. Relations with the West would be significantly strained in practice. A return to normal functioning would be impossible, although some European countries may have voiced the need to reconcile relations with Moscow. But in my opinion, most Western countries would still side with Ukraine, and Moscow would remain isolated from the Western world. Diplomatic contacts would only prevent the escalation or resumption of new conflicts (Hird et al., 2023).

Impasse and discrepancy

In this scenario, Russia would dominate the East but could not go much further. Both countries would find themselves in an impasse that modern analysts describe as "a grinding struggle." However, suppose the war escalates into a long, drawn-out military conflict. In that case, everything will hinge on the capability of both sides to sustain their military efforts, keep fighting, and prevent the other from making significant progress on the battlefield. In this case, it would be decisive for Ukraine to support the West not only in preventing a Russian military breakthrough but also in preventing the conflict from escalating into a direct NATO-Russia war (whether with or without the use of nuclear weapons) (Cook, 2023).

An important role here is also played by maintaining the productivity of the Ukrainian economy (economic support). Yet, in the first year of the conflict, the Ukrainian economy suffered eight times more than the Russian economy and is close to collapse. While the sanctions packages may hit the Russian economy long-term, Moscow can still benefit from higher energy prices, even by selling it at significant discounts to countries like India and China. However, if the West manages to gradually close any loopholes in financial, technical, and energy sanctions, Russia's capacity to continue the war in Ukraine could be severely limited (Seddon et al., 2023).

But the most critical events in this scenario will occur on the home front, neither in Russia nor the West. So far, a coalition of Western countries has supported Ukraine militarily, financially, and humanitarian. In this regard, alliance unity remains a crucial factor. In Russia, support for a "special military operation" seems to be dwindling as mobilization brings war to the "internal" dimension

of the state. It also applies to residents of larger cities, who could now ignore what was happening in Ukraine. When the actual effects of the sanctions begin to affect the wider population, repression and propaganda may not be enough to ensure – at least passively – the legitimacy of the regime’s policies. It is not yet known whether there will be severe divisions between the various factions of the political elite, as well as between the center and regions of the country. Still, sustained support from the West could lead the Kremlin’s political regime to a dead end (Mackinnon & Gramer, 2022).

In the meantime, any negotiation could serve only a temporary cessation of hostilities. It is difficult to predict a significant change in the strategy of both sides. Moreover, there is a desire to continue the conflict and pursue strategic goals for both countries. In other words, Russia’s war goals have not changed. So is Ukraine’s readiness to regain lost territories and restore full sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

Conclusions

According to Kremlin analysts, both the systemic structure of the Russian Federation and the geopolitical formula of the Commonwealth of Independent States – established on December 8, 1991, as a result of the “Bialowieza Agreements” – are unstable, largely illegal, and even accidental. The political actions undertaken by President Putin clearly indicate the desire to change the world order created after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In their activities, the authorities in the Kremlin use the entire spectrum of political, economic, and military tools to return to their former hegemonic position not only in Central and Eastern Europe but also in the whole of international relations (Kozyrev, 2020).

Russian experts, studying the contemporary changing international reality, preach a theory about the collapse of the geopolitical balance of power, in which the United States – with its ideals and liberal values – loses, and in its place, there is a “great geopolitical revolution” (great reset). A strategic transformation is taking place, which emerges new leaders of the international order and shapes a multipolar world of various centers of power. This world is distinguished by multiple non-hierarchical ideas, patterns, and cultures, but highly dynamic and multifaceted. In this world, Russia – or rather the ideologues influencing the Kremlin’s policy – sees itself as a model non-consumer society, preferring such values as religion, spirituality, and tradition, which guarantees a return to the great-power position. The above ideals, philosophy, and even military

force can be a tool of international influence. According to Russian analysts, one should accept the fact that the growing importance of Eurasia will characterize the following decades. It will become the “axis of the world” around which international politics will be shaped. Therefore, the geographical location, existing potential, opportunities, civilizational wealth, as well as great-power aspirations open up lucrative prospects and opportunities for civilization for Russia.

However, as long as the current political regime in the Kremlin remains in power, Russia-West relations will be based on containment, deterrence, and coordinated efforts to limit Russian influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, a fundamental change in Russia's political strategy could bring a new relaxation or more constructive relations in the security and cooperation policy field. Under the current political regime, such a reset remains completely unthinkable. The start and continuation of a bloody war aimed at eliminating Ukraine as an independent state have become a challenge for the entire Western world. Yet, as long as the Russian political regime has the will and ability to continue its aggression, this conflict has little chance of a peaceful resolution in the near future.

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Putinowska wojna na wyniszczenie a współczesne uwarunkowania ładu politycznego Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej

STRESZCZENIE Głównym celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie mocarstwowych zapędów Federacji Rosyjskiej pod przywództwem prezydenta Władimira Putina, których apogeum stanowi militarna inwazja na Ukrainę w lutym 2022 r. Przeprowadzona tutaj analiza ukazuje szereg fundamentalnych czynników odpowiedzialnych za zagrożenia, jakie wielkomocarstwowa polityka Kremla stwarza dla współczesnych systemów bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, a przede wszystkim dla ładu politycznego Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Postawione pytania badawcze dotyczą fundamentalnych zagadnień odpowiedzialnych za podstawowe formy antagonizmów destabilizujących sytuację wzajemnych relacji pomiędzy Rosją a Ukrainą, wpisanych w kontekst wielowymiarowej dynamiki współczesnych uwarunkowań geopolitycznych. Prezentowany przez władze na Kremlu dyskurs wskazuje na wyraźną niejednoznaczność, ambiwalencję znaczeniową, wieloaspektowość, a nawet niespójność rosyjskiej narracji na temat bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, zwłaszcza w kontekście wojny z Ukrainą. To właśnie dlatego powyższe kwestie uważane są za sferę najbardziej zakłóconych problemów współczesnych zagadnień dotyczących zarówno Rosję, jak i Ukrainę. Zdiagnozowanie wpływu omawianych czynników może zatem pomóc w zrozumieniu, a z czasem także w kształtowaniu bardziej efektywnych strategii bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, jak też w tworzeniu lepszych programów wsparcia umożliwiających efektywne rozwiązywanie problemów bezpieczeństwa Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej. Ponadto, znalezienie odpowiedzi na tak postawione pytania badawcze jest niezwykle istotne w kontekście współczesnych globalnych przemian politycznych, które – w połączeniu z kwestią „poprawności politycznej” – stają się poważnym wyzwaniem dla całej globalnej koncepcji bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego.

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