Valerijs Bodnieks[1]

Lessons learned and identified for the small states based on Russia's aggression in Ukraine: analysis of the case of Latvia

SUMMARY The history shows that each state must stand by and for itself for the cause of its independence and security and that it is especially complicated to survive on the international arena for the smaller states, nearing such an aggressive superpower like Russia. When aggressively influencing the target state, Russia utilized various forms of warfare and war, i.e., conventional warfare, narrative warfare, war of disinformation, war of influence, manipulation and information operations, cyberwarfare, and religious warfare. All these are in violation and ignoring the frame of international law, causing widespread suffering for Ukraine having global negative consequences. The current paper is based on the analyses of the concept of small states. Based on the case of Latvia, the goal of the paper is to analyze lessons learned and identified for Latvia and other small states based on the war in Ukraine. A period from Russia's invasion in 2022 to late 2023, i.e., a nearly two-year period since the war in Ukraine began, is chosen to be examined within the scope of the current research. The research has been carried out with qualitative research methods – document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Interviews have been conducted with the experts in the field. The content analysis – a quantitative research method is also used in the work.

KEYWORDS defense, security, war in Ukraine, Russia's aggression

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[1] Valerijs Bodnieks Dr. sc. pol., the Center for Geopolitical Studies, Riga, e-mail: valerijs.bodnieks@inbox.lv, ORCID: 0000-0003-2217-2340.

Introduction

Since 2014, the overall situation in the world has changed rapidly, with a notable acceleration following Russia's full-scale aggression in Ukraine in 2022. At present, above all are militarization, support for Ukraine, and the development of national capabilities. War is undoubtedly the most tragic form of political resolution that can occur between states, as it is also tightly connected to human suffering and large-scale negative consequences for both the state and its citizens. Russia has demonstrated how it has managed to concern and affect all of the aforementioned aspects. The history shows that each state must stand by and for itself for the cause of its independence and security and that it is especially complicated to survive on the international arena for the smaller states, nearing such an aggressive hegemon like Russia. When influencing the target state in an aggressive manner, Russia utilized various forms of warfare and war, i.e., conventional warfare, narrative warfare, war of disinformation, war of influence, manipulation and information operations, cyberwarfare, and religious warfare. All these are in violation and ignoring the frame of international law, causing widespread suffering for Ukraine and global negative consequences. Russia also influences democratic states with its different forms of hybrid warfare, which, as Russia's war in Ukraine proves, can transform into a conventional invasion. On the international arena, the hardest practice to sustain for small states is to survive. It is a serious playground with different nuances where the most critical aspects are to both exist and survive.

In the theoretical part of the current paper, the analysis of the concept of small states is performed, and various explanations and definitions regarding the aforementioned notion are presented. Based on the theoretical part concerning the small states and the analysis that is to be conducted and regarded toward the case of Latvia, the goal of the present paper is to analyze lessons learned and identified for Latvia and other small states based on the war in Ukraine. The current paper also serves as a framework for more extensive and elaborate research into the impact of Russian aggression on small states. A period from Russia's invasion in 2022 to late 2023, i.e., a nearly two-year period since the war in Ukraine began, is chosen to be examined within the scope of the current research paper. With the implementation of both document and content analysis as the empirical research methods, strategic policy planning documents for the security and defense of Latvia have been analyzed, as well as several interviews with

the experts in the field have been conducted. A content analysis has been used to view and research the number of times a reference to the state of aggressor, i.e., Russia, has been made within the policy planning documents. The present paper consists of several parts, within the contents of which the works of such authors as Hakan Edstrom, Dennis Gyllensporre, Jacob Westberg, Godfrey Baldacchino and Jeanne A.K. Hey, and others have also been analyzed.

Continuous challenge: the definition of small states and the strategic choice of security

Research in regard to small states has been ongoing for a considerable amount of time. Thus, various attempts to define small states have been made, and challenges to ensure their security and defense have been raised. It happened because small states should survive in the international realm. Both absolute and relative definitions for the concept of small states exist. However, both are likewise most closely linked to the concept of small powers, middle powers, and great powers. The concept of small and large states and, thus, the distinction between them arose in the early 19th century. After the second world war the overall interest in small states as such declined due to the greater emphasis and focuse on the bipolar world and Cold War trends. (Edstrom, Gyllensporre & Westberg, 2019, p. 8) The research concerning the exploration of small states made its way back alongside Annette Baker's 1959 research regarding *The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II*. (Edstrom, Gyllensporre & Westberg, 2019, p. 8) At the same time, serious investigation and exploration of small countries did not occur until the late 1980s and early 1990s. (*ibid.*, p. 8) Among all studies on small states Hakan Edstrom et al. identified at least four directions of their definition or groups: according to qualifiable characteristics (size of economy, states development, size of territory, population, military capabilities, etc.), distinguishing from great powers, qualitative characteristics (within these definitions, the size of the state is not the decisive factor) and the relational explanation, which includes system ineffectual states (it is a group of system ineffectual states not able to influence acting alone or in groups). (*ibid.*, p. 8) Small states are weaker parts in relationship with great powers. Moreover, the blurred boundaries between micro state, small state, and middle power are noted to be the foundation of the scope of the definitions. (Baldacchino & Wivel, 2020, p. 4)

The definition matters, and as Christopher R. Browning has noted, the size of the state is closely linked to its ability and capacity of influence. (Baldacchino

& Wivel, 2020, p. 4) Godfrey Baldacchino and Anders Wivel proposed the three ideal definition types, i.e., none-great powers, material assessment, and political constructs, while also addressing the problems associated with the respective definitions. It is easy to claim that all states that are not considered to be great powers are automatically assigned to the small state group; however, during the time of the European Concert (1815–1914), the majority of the states within the world were thought to be small states, while, additionally the UN currently includes 193 states in total, many of which are considered to be small ones. (United Nations, 2024) The UN Security Council (UNSC) currently consists of five permanent members and ten non-permanent Member States, as well as in terms of the ratio of power, some states are said to have nuclear weapons and those without them. (United Nations Security Council, 2024) Nevertheless, not all states that do not have the aforementioned nuclear weapons can be excluded from the great powers group. Small states are constrained in regard to the range of their political actions, systemic influence; they are the so-called rule tackers and do not define stability concerning international relations. (Baldacchino & Wivel, 2020, p. 4) In terms of influence small states by uniting, can balance great powers. From a capability perspective, small states lack the power capabilities, which are primarily connected to military capabilities. This is particularly true and topical for the size of the population, as it is necessary for the exercise of their power and warfare, if needed to be initiated. Depending on the size of the state, there are other capabilities, besides the military ones, e.g., economic capabilities. The question thus is as follows: what is the criterion for measuring capabilities and their effectiveness? Moreover, economic resources are even referred to as the 'latent power'. (*ibid.*, p. 5) Additionally, various continents that have a range of states with vast natural resources and population but are very poor exist. From a military perspective, without the capacity in regard to the population, technological opportunities, which determine the possibilities of combat, have grown more significantly. In regard to the asymmetric relations, small states have been and will be on the weakest side. Hence, the quantitative factors, i.e., territory, population, economy, and military capabilities, predominate above all. (Vaicekauskaitė, 2017, p. 8)

Guntis Štāmers divides the various existing definitions of small states into three main groups: those based on quantitative criteria, those on qualitative aspects, and lack of autonomy. (Štāmers, 2001, p. 15) The just mentioned quantitative criteria are said to be measurable categories (i.e., population, size of the territory, level of development, the field of security and military capabilities), whilst

qualitative criteria are defined as national weakness or in other words inability (i.e., self-defense, ability to influence utilizing political decisions) and lack of autonomy which is recognized by the capability of the state to realize its interests alongside the ability to influence other states. (*ibid.*) Jeanne A.K. Hey bases the definition and views on small states on the idea of perception. (Hey, 2003, p. 3) Question lies within the dilemma of whether the people and the institutions of the state perceive themselves as being small, or whether people and institutions of other states claim so. (*ibid.*) Consequently, psychological criteria coincide with objective or measurable criteria.

Živilė Marija Vaicekauskaitė, performing a compilation in regard to the security strategies of small states, proposes four strategies which are as follows: alliances, strategic hedging, policy of neutrality, and alliance shelter strategy. (Vaicekauskaitė, 2017, p. 10–13) Likewise, Andris Ozoliņš together with the strategies noted by Morten Kelstrup suggests four strategies for small states, i.e., isolation or demarcation, band-wagoning, policy of neutrality, and balancing strategy (counter-alliance). (Ozoliņš, 2001, p. 24–25) Isolation or demarcation implies not engaging in various international policies, which reduces the presence in conflicts and discourages involvement in the resolution of national issues of the large states. Band-wagoning means working with a stronger and bigger neighbor, e.g., at a regional level, whilst maneuvering refers to the act of balancing between various great powers.

According to qualitative and quantitative criteria, Latvia is considered to be a small state. Its preferred strategy is the alliance security strategy. The choice of security and defense, or in other words survival, has been determined by historical experience and an adjacent aggressor state – Russia. Latvia has joined the EU and NATO, as well as its behavior is based on international law and norms stemming primarily from Article 51 of the UN and secondly from international law. The biggest changes in security and defense, including those for small states, occurred after the First and Second World Wars. Without this turmoil, even after joining the EU and NATO, the greatest impact on Latvia's security and defense strategies occurred after 2014 and especially after 2022, when Russia showed its true face and intentions concerning the war against Ukraine. The various aspects and manifestations of the aggression targeted towards Ukraine and acted out by the Russian Federation should be viewed as an example of what lessons ought to be learned by small states, including Latvia, and later implemented in their security and defense strategies.

Various form manifestations of Russia's full-scale aggression in Ukraine

Russia started the war in Ukraine in 2014 (U.S. Department of State, 2024) and its continuation proceeded in 2022 with a full-scale invasion. The aggression initiated is with larger and smaller changes, or old and new Russian approaches regarding the ongoing war against Ukraine, permeating it with the lessons identified and learned for the civilized world. Both periods are thus referred to as the first and second independence wars of Ukraine. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine was initiated by the Russian President's now historic speech addressed to the entire world. (*New York Times*, 2022) Based on different justifying narratives Russia's President launched the so-known special operation: Russia's desire for peace, moral responsibility for peace in the region, Ukrainian aggression, Western influence in the region, the US as "empire of lies," NATO expansion, far-right nationalism and neo-Nazis in Ukraine, demilitarization and denazification in Ukraine etc. (Atlantic Council, 2022) All of the aforementioned was discreetly outlined in one phrase – 'Russia cannot feel safe, develop, and exist while facing a permanent threat from the territory of today's Ukraine.' (*ibid.*) The notice was legitimized through the permission of Russia's Federation Council, ratification of the Federal Assembly, including also references to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the request for mutual assistance made by the Luhansk and Donetsk Peoples Republics. Narrative warfare has been claimed to be the stand-alone tool of the war carried out by Russia since 2014 in various messages and speeches given by the leading elite. (*ibid.*) It is further developed through media loyal to the regime and propagandists. The base narratives, much like in a speech before the invasion, also appeared in the RF President's 2023 speech. (YouTube, 2023) Russia failed to overthrow political power in Ukraine at the start of the war but remains aiming to take full control of the illegally annexed areas of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson Oblast in late September 2022. (*Reuters*, 2022)

With a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia began its military campaign from a force perspective, or in other words with a conventional invasion. In abstract terms, it can also be called the 'metal to metal' war. Active accumulation of its forces has been done by Russia in the Ukrainian border area since November 2021, with a continuation that manifested itself in February 2022 with the activities of special services, activities carried out by diversion groups, extensive

missile launching, and the entry of large-scale RF military force formations into Ukrainian territory (Jureńczyk, 2023, pp. 169–170). Invasion forces were up to 220 thousand servicemen, plus more than 80000 persons from military units of mobilization reserve, up to 18000 persons from federal service of the National Guard, and up to 8000 persons regarding private military companies. (MFA Ukraine, 2022) At the beginning of the war, the most significant battle was for the capital of Ukraine – Kyiv, as the existence of Ukrainian statehood depended on it. Russia has been using rockets such as "Tochka-Y," "X-59," "X-22," "Iskanders," "X-55/55CM," "Kalibr," "X-47 Kindzhal," "X-101" and "P-800 Oniks" continuously in Ukraine, launched from rocket carriers in the Black Sea, planes (TU-22M3, MiG-31K, TU-95MC) as well as onshore (S-300, S-400). Drones (UAVs) are likewise widely used: in particular Iran's Shahed-136/131, which Russia, advancing in technology, replaces with Geran-2 or Geranium-2. (*Army Technology*, 2023) The tactics and methodology concerning the use of unmanned aerial vehicles or drones are constantly developed by both parties involved in the war. This is particularly apparent with a first-person view (FPV) drones. A moral effect not only on the political elite of the state, but also on its population is present when drones are utilized. Artillery and unmanned aerial vehicles have had the biggest negative consequences and impact on critical infrastructure and civilians. Brutal massacres of Ukrainian civilians takes place constantly, but the most visible examples of Russia's cruelty are Bucha and Irpen during the initial phase of the war. (*war.Ukraine*, 2022) It can be said that Russia's war against Ukraine is a war of logistics, drones, and artillery, but besides missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles, Russia also utilizes all kinds of military equipment, e.g., tanks and infantry vehicles. This is evidenced by the widespread losses from the Russian side: as of early 2024, live force – 360010, planes – 329, tanks – 5983, artillery systems – 8482, etc. (*Armyinform*, 2024) Russia makes widespread use of the FAB-500 high explosive bombs to destroy different types of facilities. One of the strongest elements in the RF is the EW systems (Krasukha-4, TORN, SB-636, Sveta-KU, etc.), the role of which will increase in the application of UAVs among other things. Russia during aggression in Ukraine widely uses Russia's private military companies (Redut, Wagner etc.). (*The Guardian*, 2023a) The most widely seen and heard was Wagner with J. Prigozhin, which recruited vast masses of prisoners and also succeeded on the front. (*The Guardian*, 2023b)

Alongside invading Ukraine and occupying the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) (*BBC*, 2022a) and Zaporizhzhia NPP, Russia has posed a danger and a threat to the whole world. (*BBC*, 2022b) Issue of Zaporizhzhia NPP, nuclear

weapons, and the blasting of the Kakhovka dam are being used as elements of a war of influence and manipulation. It is a war that influences and targets people's minds. Any risk regarding use of strategic or tactical nuclear weapons, or risk regarding normal functioning of NPP, should be considered as strategic question. The aim of influence and manipulation is freezing the conflict, sitting at the table of diplomatic discussions and holding peace talks, being viewed as winners within the cyberspace regarding decision making, and reducing the amount of Western support for Ukraine. Russian disinformation, information, and influence operations play an important role in the overall act of influencing and manipulating. Disinformation and influencing the cyberspace from Russia's side has been continuously present in Ukraine both before and during the war. The most obvious cases when Russia used disinformation: blasting of the Kakhovka dam, discrediting of Ukraine and its President, clandestine transplantation, crimes committed by Ukrainians against humanity, and black market weapons. (Center for Countering Disinformation, 2024) Already prior to the full-scale invasion in Ukraine, influence agent operations have been used by Russia to influence the adversary's various areas of public life (i.e., politics, security and defense, ideology, science, etc.). (Danylyuk, 2020, p. 18)

Besides the aforementioned forms of hostilities, Russia also is exercising a form of cyber war against Ukraine. In 2022 Ukraine, 2194 incidents were detected in the cybersphere, 1148 of which were critical and high-level incidents (Russia's Cyber Tactics, 2022), while, in the first six months of 2023, the number of incidents doubled. Meaning, that the number of incidents grew from 1.9 in a single day to 4–5 in a single day. In 2022, there were 57 incidents per month, while, in 2023, there were 128 incidents per month. (Russia's Cyber Tactics, 2023) The most important directions affected by these actions are the military and security sectors, the government sector, telecommunications and IT, the media, critical infrastructure, etc. (*ibid.*) The aim for executing all of the measures mentioned is to affect Ukraine's ability to defend itself and counter Russian forces.

The actions of Russia in Ukraine combine all of the following forms of war with the main aim to destroy Ukraine completely: conventional invasion, narrative warfare, war of disinformation, war of influence and manipulation, war of information operations, and cyber warfare. In addition, Russia's influence and its intertwining with the ideology of war through religious or Orthodox prism are also worth noting. Russia continuously utilizes religion in the war against Ukraine as a weapon. (Locked faith, 2023) It's obvious why Ukraine has

recognized the Russian regime alongside its aggressive ideology as Ruscism. Peace is not an unalterable constant, and with Russian activities in Ukraine, the entire civilized world is reviewing its security and defense strategies, whilst also rewriting the history and methodology of warfare and refining of new technologies. It is all a new playground, with lessons learned for particularly small European states. In addition, the different types of hostilities form a mixed field of warfare influence, or effect, with broad potential for victories and losses, as they all overlap with each other.

Lessons learned and identified for the small states from the war in Ukraine: analysis of the case of Latvia

Regarding the lessons learned Latvia has been chosen as the main object for the present analysis. It is one of the Baltic States with all Baltic States common historical experience and understanding of Russia being an aggressor state. Latvia is located in a single geographic area with other Baltic States and provide substantial support to Ukraine, it also learns from the ongoing hostilities by implementing the lessons learned and identified in its national security and defense strategy. The lessons learned by Latvia can simultaneously be applied to other small states in the region and Europe. The principles of Latvia's defense and security policy derive from the security and defense strategic documents – National Security Concept and State Defense Concept adopted in 2023. At the same time, experts in the field provide insight into the experiences gained.

In the NSC of Latvia, following the Russian aggression in Ukraine, Russia is mentioned 129 times (NSC, 2023), which is considerably more frequent than in the 2015 NSC of Latvia, which was adopted after Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine, where Russia has been referred to 43 times. (NSC, 2015) In comparison, the 2023 Latvian SDC mentions Russia 45 times (SDC, 2023), while the 2016 SDC – 20 times. (SDC, 2016) In the mentioned strategic documents of Latvia, after Russia invaded in Ukraine a widespread emphasis on Russia as a state of aggressor and a potential enemy is shown. When investigating the two new concepts that appeared, it is obvious that they have arisen under the influence of the new security reality. Both Latvia and West must and will have to be reckoned with in a longer time perspective concerning Russia being a potential aggressor. This has been determined and largely influenced by Russia's war in Ukraine, and already manifests itself in the lessons contained within Latvia's strategic documents as a vision and task of the future.

The new NSC clearly defines Russia as a threat that can use military force against other states in violation of international law, manifesting that in a not humanitarian manner. (NSC, 2023) The strengthening of NATO and the Eastern flank, the strengthening of the role of the EU, the cessation of hostilities in Ukraine, and active foreign policy activity in various formats should be highlighted among Latvia's priorities for threat prevention. The keyword is active participation, because it also describes activities to address and eliminate military threats. From the military perspective, the priority is to strengthen the resilience of society and to improve the comprehensive defense system, as well as defense capabilities must invest and develop a numerically significantly larger and combat-capable army, a developed and implemented NATO front defense strategy also is highly important. (*ibid.*)

Essential work is being carried out to build the responsibility, preparedness, and capacity of individuals, which are one of the most important elements in the national defense architecture of connecting mutual assistance between the state and the survival of individuals in the event of aggression. (Nikers, 2024) This manifests itself in the form of the civil sector and the defense sector functioning as a whole united unit. Examples of cooperation between public authorities, municipalities, and the business community, using all available resources, have been especially taken from the case of Ukraine. (*ibid.*)

The following should be highlighted from the NSC in regard to Russia: its learning from its mistakes and measures taken to restore combat capabilities, the increase in the threat of nuclear weapons, the use of war hybrid weapons, the attitude of ideologues and propagandists towards the Baltic States, the use of Belarus. (NSC, 2023) The NSC also emphasizes strengthening the border, response to overcoming disasters and civilian crises, resistance and resilience of critical infrastructure, protection of the information space, security of journalists and cyber threats, as well as economic ties with Russia and Belarus. From the perspective of Latvia, in overcoming all potential threats, it is to instill a culture of resistance in society from the very childhood, which, as an example, manifests itself in the introduction of the National Defense Education and the State Defense Service, combining it with a civil defense structure with the maximum involvement of the civil sector. (Nikers, 2024) The aforementioned is indeed essential because, in the case of Ukraine, it can be seen that the military engages in war, while the civilian sector is doing substantial work within the social and daily state functions. (*ibid.*)

To win, to manipulate the minds of the public and military-political elite, and fully control Ukraine, Russia extensively utilizes various means and methods at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels in its war with Ukraine. Latvia has taken serious steps in the field of military industry, the defense and purification of information space, the further development of the cyber field, and various other capabilities are priority. (*ibid.*) Latvia in comparison to Ukraine has one substantial minus which needs to be taken into consideration, i.e., the lack of operational depth.

Throughout the 2023 Latvian SDC, the emphasis is placed on Russia being a direct threat to Latvia's statehood. Russia's threat manifests itself in a desire to divide the world, undermining the existing security architecture, ignoring international law, threatening with the nuclear weapons, and instrumentalizing its satellite nations against the Western civilized world. Several hazard scenarios are coming from the Russia. (SDC, 2023) It is hybrid warfare, information warfare, sabotage against critical infrastructure, sudden military invasion. (*ibid.*) The main task for Latvia is the defense of it's territory and population, because even temporary loss of territories results in large losses, as well as it should be noted that the defense of the state is the responsibility of the entire state. Strengthening the capabilities of the armed forces, high combat readiness, increased personnel, interoperability and integration with NATO are all highly important. The SDC emphasizes the responsibility of each individual within the first 72 hours and engagement with the resistance movement. (SDC, 2023) The overall trend from the SDC is comprehensive defense by the whole society, i.e., every individual, business, church, industry, public administration, etc. This principle is integrated into the entire national defense system. As it happens in Ukraine, if war starts, all politicians must be in their common positions and function as an example in resisting an aggressor rather than fleeing from the state. (Nikers, 2024)

Particularly for small states, with the launch of Russian aggression, there are various lessons to be taken. Latvia has adopted a new NSC and SDC. Since the beginning of the war, Latvia has strengthened its voice on the international arena and is being heard more widely by the EU and NATO. (*Interview*, 2024) On the other hand, from the beginning of the war, internal barriers have been removed from the agenda, which prevented Latvia's internal environment from being arranged and rectified in relations with Russia. From a conventional point of view, it is a war of resolution between new technologies and cheapness, because by using simple systems (artillery, creation of protective ditches, minefields, etc.),

the technological superiority is no longer so important, or, in other terms, one is no longer as protected. (Graube, 2024) Existing warfare is a full-spectrum war in which new various technologies related to Latvian companies and Latvia's integration into the wider international military technology market can be tested. The challenge is to reconcile procurement with the rapidly dynamic development and application of armaments according to the necessary national capabilities and needs. In the case of Latvia, the development of capabilities and integration of lessons learned should be noted from the perspective of a single operational space, which is particularly important after the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO. A positive win for any state is that Russia's military-technological breakthrough has failed, as parity with NATO was proponent by Russia for a long time, but it now proved not to be the case. (*ibid.*) The Russian command control system likewise 'slows down' and 'limps', and that is exactly why Russia has stuck in a trench warfare phase and makes widespread use of artillery and drones with vital force. The voice of Latvia in regard to Russia being a threat has been heard worldwide. We are now being reckoned with. (*ibid.*)

Despite Russia's ability to conduct operations in the information space and continuous disinformation, the war has shown that states must be prepared to tell tragic stories and should have clear messages, because there ought to be truth about the consequences present – especially during the initial phase of the war (Bucha, Irpin, etc.) Russia had nothing to counter. (*ibid.*) It is a work with information and the informing of the public at the national and international levels to influence minds. In the West, with the use of political messages both the individual and the public are being prepared that a war is indeed possible. Hence, it is important to create awareness that everyone ought to do more for both their own and national security.

Conclusions

Small states are weaker parts in relationship with great powers. This applies to those states that are considered to be micro state, small states, and middle powers compared to a hegemon like Russia. Regardless of the security strategy that the state chooses, what matters is its existence and survival. Latvia has chosen a path in membership with the family of democratic states with NATO and EU or, in other words, it has chosen the alliance security strategy. The choices of today are determined by the historical experience. In the case of Latvia, the historical experience is regarding Russia, which has been waging a full-scale

war in Ukraine since 2022. This war dates back to 2014. Both periods are thus referred to as the first and second independence wars of Ukraine. Modern warfare differs from every other type of conducting war because it is tightly connected to technology, a shift in global understanding since previous conflicts, the hasty falsehood of Russia, and violation of international law through all-spectrum forms of warfare. The actions of Russia in Ukraine include the following: conventional invasion, narrative warfare, war of disinformation, war of influence and manipulation, war of information operations, cyber warfare, and the war of religion.

Russia with false narratives and disinformation refers to the USA as an 'Empire of lies,' one of the justifications for the invasion of Ukraine names far-right nationalism and neo-Nazis in Ukraine, demilitarization, and denazification. The unlawful conduct is justified by the Russian leadership in the decisions of the State institutions by appropriate ratification. Russia's conventional invasion manifested itself in the activities of special services, activities carried out by diversion groups, extensive missile launching, and the entry of large-scale RF military force formations into Ukrainian territory. Russia utilizes all kinds of Russia's military techniques in war against Ukraine. These include tanks, infantry cars, EW systems, drones, artillery systems, and various missile carriers. Private military companies, as well as the critical infrastructure of Ukraine and its destruction, play an important role in the war game of Russia. It is a war that influences and targets people's minds. Russia is trying to reach a favorable decision and a win within the information space to reduce shipments of Western support. Influencing, manipulation, and religion are all utilized, as well as cyber operations are carried out. Moreover, the different types of hostilities form a mixed field of warfare influence, or effect, with broad potential for victories and losses, as they all overlap with mutual influence. Losing or winning concerning one of them does not mean losing or winning in another. Hostilities happen in all of them. Every state, and especially small states, should be prepared for war in each of the domains.

The most significant matter concerning the war in Ukraine is the example and resilience, or remaining in place, of the state's political elite. Without a strong political elite, the state can be lost very quickly. Comprehensive defense by society as a whole must be not only a priority for small states such as Latvia, but a basic principle for each state in its defense policy. Lessons learned from Russian hostilities in Ukraine should be rapidly implemented in national security and defense strategies and tested in practice as part of joint exercises. What

is essential is to mentally prepare the public that Russia is an aggressor state and a potential enemy, one of whose most important goals is to plant the seed of doubt and win over people's minds. Russia ignores international law and conducts wars in a non-humanitarian manner. All of this must be done with active and decisive action.

In the military context, the priority is to strengthen the resilience of society and to improve the comprehensive defense system, while investing in defense capabilities and having an increase in terms of numbers. Each state needs to do a vital job of building the responsibility, readiness, and capacity of individuals, one of the most important elements in the state's defense architecture of connecting mutual assistance between the state and the survival of individuals in the event of aggression. The culture of resistance should be instilled in society from the very childhood. There should also be clear and understandable mechanisms for cooperation between public authorities, local authorities, and the business community, whilst utilizing all available resources. Every state and especially small states need to understand that it needs to protect its national territory from its very first centimeter. Strengthening the capabilities of the armed forces, high combat readiness, increased personnel, interoperability, and integration are all highly important.

From a conventional point of view, the war in Ukraine is a war of resolution between new technologies and cheapness, because with simple systems (artillery, creation of protective ditches, minefields, etc.), applied in large quantities, technological superiority is no longer so pronounced or, in other words, an individual is no longer as protected. In the meantime, warfare should test various new technologies related to the military industry and integration into the wider international military technology market. A positive win is that Russia's military-technological breakthrough has failed, as parity with Western states was proponent by Russia for a long time, but it now proved not to be the case. The Russian command control system likewise 'slows down' and 'limps', and that is exactly why Russia has stuck in a trench warfare phase and makes widespread use of artillery and drones with vital force. If there has been widespread talk concerning artillery, logistics, or drone warfare, then electronic warfare systems will be the next step to be taken. At the same time, any state especially small states count on air, sea, and land drones, which significantly replace the costly systems of the area concerned, whilst also having a considerable effect. This is especially true for sea and air drones. Small states must be prepared to tell tragic stories and have clear messages, because the truth about the consequences plays a very

important role as a message both internally and externally, especially during the initial phase of the war.

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Wyciągnięte i zidentyfikowane wnioski dla małych państw na podstawie agresji Rosji na Ukrainę: analiza przypadku Łotwy

STRESZCZENIE   Paradygmat historyczny pokazuje, że każde państwo musi samo bronić sprawy swojej niepodległości i bezpieczeństwa, a przetrwanie na arenie międzynarodowej jest szczególnie trudne dla mniejszych państw, sąsiadujących z tak agresywnym mocarstwem jak Rosja. Agresywnie wpływając na państwo cel, Rosja stosowała różne formy walki i wojny, tj. wojnę konwencjonalną, wojnę narracyjną, wojnę dezinformacyjną, wojnę o wpływy, operacje manipulacyjne i informacyjne, wojnę cybernetyczną i wojnę religijną. Wszystko to stanowi naruszenie i ignorowanie ram prawa międzynarodowego, powodując powszechne cierpienia Ukrainy i globalne negatywne konsekwencje. Niniejszy artykuł opiera się na analizach koncepcji małych państw. Bazując na przykładzie Łotwy, celem artykułu jest dokonanie analizy wniosków wyciągniętych i zidentyfikowanych dla Łotwy i innych małych państw na podstawie wojny na Ukrainie. W ramach bieżących badań wybrano okres od inwazji Rosji w 2022 r. do końca 2023 r., czyli prawie dwuletni okres od rozpoczęcia wojny na Ukrainie. W związku z wdrożeniem analizy dokumentów i treści jako metod badań empirycznych, przeanalizowano dokumenty dotyczące planowania polityki strategicznej na rzecz bezpieczeństwa i obrony Łotwy, a także przeprowadzono kilka wywiadów z ekspertami w tej dziedzinie.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE   obrona, bezpieczeństwo, wojna na Ukrainie, agresja Rosji