

Transformation of the Strategic Culture of Ukraine under the Influence of the Russian Threat

Olga Reznikova

National Institute for Strategic Studies, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4126-4304>,
Email: reznikova1010@gmail.com

Oleksandr Hryhorenko

National Defence University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskiyi, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0633-7563>,
Email: alexhx.hryhorenko@gmail.com

Viacheslav Myronenko

National Defence University of Ukraine named after Ivan Cherniakhovskiyi, Ukraine,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0236-4134>
Email: slavik_kiev@ukr.net

Abstract. The article focuses on strategic culture as an analytical tool that provides a deeper understanding of a state's behavior and its strategic choice to use force, whether for aggression or self-defense, using Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine as a case study. While strategic culture is generally resistant to change, we identified shifts in Ukraine's strategic culture in response to external shocks in 2014 and 2022. This was based on an analysis of military-political behavior patterns, components, and manifestations of strategic culture, as reflected in state strategies on national security and defense, as well as in other relevant documents and texts. We argue that Russia's aggressive military-political behavior, shaped by Soviet-imperial revanchist sentiments, has become an existential threat to Ukraine. This study contributes to a better understanding of why some conflict resolution measures and strategies have proven ineffective in addressing the ongoing Russian war.

Keywords: strategic culture, military-political behavior, Ukraine, Russia, war.

Received: 15/04/2024. **Accepted:** 12/11/2024

Copyright © 2024 Olga Reznikova, Oleksandr Hryhorenko, Viacheslav Myronenko. Published by Vilnius University Press. This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Ukrainos strateginės kultūros kaita reaguojant į Rusijos keliamas grėsmes

Santrauka. Straipsnio dėmesio centre yra strateginė kultūra kaip analitinė priemonė, kuria naudojantis galima geriau suprasti valstybių elgseną ir strateginius pasirinkimus tiek kalbant apie agresiją, tiek apie savisaugą. Kaip atvejo studija yra nagrinėjamas Rusijos karas prieš Ukrainą. Nors strateginė kultūra paprastai vertinama kaip menkai kintanti, straipsnyje nurodomi Ukrainos strateginės kultūros poslinkiai, kurie įvyko dėl išorės spaudimo 2014–2022 metais. Tai daroma nagrinėjant karines-politines elgsenos tendencijas ir elementus, taip pat strateginės kultūros, kuri išsakoma valstybės nacionalinio saugumo ir gynybos strategijose bei kituose dokumentuose, apraiškas. Teigiame, kad Rusijos politinė-karinė elgsena, tapusi egzistencinės grėsmės Ukrainai priežastimi, buvo suformuota sovietinio-imperinio revanšistinio siekio. Straipsnis taip pat padeda geriau paaiškinti, kodėl kai kurios konflikto sprendimo priemonės ir strategijos buvo neefektyvios Rusijos pradėto karo metu. **Reikšminiai žodžiai:** strateginė kultūra, karinė-politinė elgsena, Ukraina, Rusija, karas.

Introduction

The emergence of strategic culture concept aimed to reduce uncertainty in international relations by providing a new analytical tool to explain the behavior of states and their strategic choices in the conditions of war and peace.¹ In practice, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, came as a shock to the political leadership of many democratic states, requiring solutions that contradicted the mainstream policies regarding Russia at the time. Although some experts and intelligence agencies considered a full-scale Russian war against Ukraine possible, almost no one believed in Ukraine's ability to resist a much more powerful aggressor. Therefore, the courage and bravery of Ukrainians were even more shocking to policymakers in February 2022.

In the context of the strategic culture concept, appropriate patterns of behavior and strategic choices are largely affected by the

¹ Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963); Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1977).

strategic culture formed in specific states.² The situation mentioned above underscores that the influence of the strategic cultures of Russia and Ukraine on their behavior and strategic choices was ignored or misinterpreted. According to Alastair Iain Johnston, states can interpret the same security conditions differently, due to differences in their strategic cultures.³ The inconsistency of expert assessments regarding the behavior of Russia and Ukraine can be explained by the fact that foreign experts considered the possible development of the situation around Ukraine through the lens of their own states' patterns of behavior under similar conditions. In the context of unprovoked full-scale Russia's war against Ukraine, which continues to endanger the international order, such strategic miscalculations have had severe consequences for many countries, especially Ukraine.

The failure of political leadership and governments in many countries to respond in a timely and effective manner to challenges and threats to national, regional and global security points to significant miscalculations in the analysis, assessments and forecasting of the development of the security environment and international relations. This underscores the need to develop an analytical toolkit associated with the strategic culture concept to enhance its practical value.

This article attempts to address this need by advancing two main arguments. First, we argue that most existing definitions of "strategic culture" represent a disordered set of stable and variable components that have an unequal impact on the ability of strategic culture to change. Based on the generalization of theoretical conclusions contained in the studied literature sources, we propose an approach

² John S. Duffield, "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism," *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 765–803, <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551066>; Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (January, 1999): 49–69, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210599000492>; Jeffrey S. Lantitis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 87–113, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.t01-1-00266>; Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

³ Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring, 1995): 32–64, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539119>.

to strategic culture that differentiates its components based on their changeability. Second, we argue that analyzing the strategic culture of a state mostly through the lens of its basic assumptions about the strategic environment – which A. I. Johnston called the “central paradigm” of strategic culture⁴ – while neglecting the operational assumptions that explain the state’s strategic choices, leads to miscalculations in strategic forecasting regarding military and political behavior. Therefore, we have developed four main patterns of military-political behavior as an analytical tool that contributes to a better understanding of the state’s strategic choice and predicting its actions in conditions of uncertainty or crisis. Based on a review of scientific literature, we found that, on the one hand, a pattern of military-political behavior is a component of strategic culture that influences it. On the other hand, a state’s military-political behavior can be a manifestation of its strategic culture and determined by it. As a component of strategic culture, the pattern of military-political behavior is one of the most changeable. A change in the dominant pattern of a state’s military-political behavior indicates a shift in its strategic culture. We assume that one of the problems in assessing and forecasting the situation around Ukraine on the eve of the Russian invasion was the failure to identify this shift in strategic culture. This could be because analyses of Ukrainian strategic culture focused only on its more stable components, paying less attention to the more changeable ones, particularly the patterns of military-political behavior.

Based on these arguments, *this article aims* to identify the presence and nature of changes in the strategic culture of Ukraine under the influence of the Russian threat during 2014–2024, as well as to explore the characteristics of Russia’s strategic culture that contributed to this threat. To achieve this research goal, the article is divided into four sections. The first section presents the concept of strategic culture, focusing on its components, manifestations, and reasons for its changes, as described in the scientific literature by Jack L. Snyder,

⁴ Ibid.

Ken Booth, John S. Duffield, Jeffrey S. Lantis, Alastair Iain Johnston, Yitzhak Klein, Stephen Peter Rosen, Colin S. Gray, Jeannie L. Johnson, and other researchers.⁵ Section two explains and substantiates the main research arguments based on discourse analysis, comparison, and synthesis. The third section contains an analysis of Russia's strategic culture, which provides a better understanding of the nature of the Russian threat emerging from its pattern of military-political behavior. Section four presents the strategic culture of Ukraine and its changes under the influence of the Russian threat during 2014–2024. This analysis contributes to a better understanding of the reasons behind Ukraine's strategic choice in the ongoing war.

Researchers pointed out that strategic culture is expressed and transmitted through the activities of state institutions, with documents and texts serving as the main sources of the strategic culture. The initial signs of its changes can be observed in the speeches of political and military leaders.⁶ Therefore, the main methods for analyzing the strategic cultures of Russia and Ukraine were the analysis, synthesis and comparison of state strategies and other state documents, as well as the speeches of the political and military leaders. Based on the behavioral pattern analysis of the mentioned documents and texts,

⁵ Ken Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315769738>; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Gray, "Strategic Culture"; Jeannie L. Johnson, *Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct* (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, 2006); Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Yitzhak Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 10, no. 1 (1991): 3–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495939108402827>; Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996); Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

⁶ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Banchoff, *The German Problem Transformed*; John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy after Unification* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture"; Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Robert Axelrod, "The Cognitive Mapping Approach to Decision Making," in *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*, ed. R. Axelrod (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 3–17, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400871957>.

we defined the models of military-political behavior of Russia and Ukraine through the prism of basic assumptions about the strategic environment and operational reasoning according to A. I. Johnston.⁷ We used changes in the pattern of military-political behavior of the state to indicate a shift in strategic culture.

Although strategic culture is quite resistant to change,⁸ it can evolve gradually⁹ or undergo sudden shifts due to the changes in political leadership, the security and geopolitical situation, the transformation of political elites, the cycle of technology development, institutional and organizational changes, etc.¹⁰ We argue that hybrid aggression launched by Russia in 2014 was a dramatic event for Ukraine that changed the security environment, caused psychological stress in society, and served as an impetus for changing the pattern of military-political behavior from a passive to a reflexive one, indicating a shift in the strategic culture of Ukraine. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the constant existential threat from Russia has become a system-creating factor in the formation of the modern Ukrainian strategic culture. Under such conditions, Ukraine's military-political leadership and society are rapidly forming a new preventive pattern of military-political behavior based on Euro-Atlantic values, collective security, and resilience. In the context of Ukraine's European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, this indicates the country's readiness to be an active contributor to European and global security. At the same time, Russia's fixation on Soviet-imperial revanchism¹¹ and autocracy has made its strate-

⁷ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁸ Harry Eckstein, "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 3 (1988): 789–804, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962491>.

⁹ Thomas Banchoff, *The German Problem Transformed: Institutions, Politics, and Foreign Policy, 1945–1995* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Oleksii Poltrakov, "Strategic Culture in the Functioning of National and Regional Security Systems," *Strategic Panorama* 2 (2008): 124–128; Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*.

¹⁰ Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

¹¹ Salma Shaheen, "The Russia-Ukraine War through the Lens of Strategic Culture: Implications for South Asia," *Journal of International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (2023): 247–64.

gic culture resistant to change, turning the country's behavior into a threat to the rules-based international order. This study contributes to the development of the analytical toolkit in the field of national security and foreign affairs.

1. The influence of strategic culture on the state's behavior in the field of national security: literature review

The debate surrounding the concept of strategic culture persists in scientific circles. Experts argue that while the role of strategic culture in international relations and security research is growing, the methodology for empirical research in this area remains debatable.¹² According to Antulio J. Echevarria, there is enough confusion between such terms like “politics” and “strategy” in the conceptual framework to further complicate it with such terms as “strategic culture.”¹³ Considering the relevance and validity of using the term “strategic culture,” J. L. Snyder concluded that, although the meaning of this term is in many ways similar to the term “politics,” it is still more appropriate to use “culture” because it is broader and includes mental (cognitive) attitudes and archetypes of behavior, which may or may not have a tangible expressions in politics, but still influence its formation.¹⁴

Analyzing the definitions of the term “strategic culture” proposed by various researchers, it becomes apparent that they all address the

¹² Frank L. Jones, “Strategic Thinking and Culture: A Framework for Analysis,” in *U. S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*, ed. J. B. Bartholomees (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2012), 287–305; Matthew R. Slater, ed., *Patterns of Influence: Strategic Culture Case Studies and Conclusions* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2020), 3–14; Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham, Md.: Hamilton Press, 1986); Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” 63.

¹³ Antulio J. Echevarria, “Strategic Culture: More Problems than Prospects,” *Infinity Journal* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 4–7.

¹⁴ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

following key questions: 1) what does strategic culture consist of? 2) what does it affect? 3) who are its bearers? Most researchers define *strategic culture* as an integrated set of ideas, certain psychological reactions,¹⁵ patterns of behavior,¹⁶ norms, traditions, habits, values,¹⁷ symbols, preferences, beliefs,¹⁸ and assumptions,¹⁹ which are socialized in specific expressions of strategic thinking,²⁰ including in the context of understanding by members of the national strategic community and political elites of the role and effectiveness of military force in interstate relations,²¹ determination of specific tasks and means for achieving security goals,²² decision-making by politicians concerning the start of war, determination of its political goals and methods of conduct,²³ regarding arms procurement and response to crises.²⁴

Strategic culture forms a certain *way of thinking and acting* in the fields of security, military, and foreign policy, reflecting public opinion. According to Jeffrey S. Lantis, strategic culture can perform the following roles: 1) cognitive (formation of causal relationships and meanings); 2) evaluative (formation of a certain attitude in society towards events and other social groups through the prism of common values, norms, and moral judgments); 3) psychological (formation

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Duffield, "Political Culture"; Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*; Johnson, *Strategic Culture*.

¹⁷ Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture."

¹⁸ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*.

¹⁹ Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Johnson, *Strategic Culture*; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*.

²⁰ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

²¹ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

²² Johnson, *Strategic Culture*.

²³ Duffield, "Political Culture"; Alina Hrytsenko, "Strategic Culture as a National Security Policy Determinant: Ukraine's Strategic Culture Key Characteristics," *Strategic Panorama* 1–2 (2020): 14–20, <https://doi.org/10.53679/2616-9460.1-2.2020.02>; Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture"; Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*.

²⁴ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

of certain feelings in society, such as involvement, indifference, etc., and orientations when choosing a common identity, emotional attachment, loyalty to the authorities, etc.).²⁵

Generally, the formation of a state's strategic culture is influenced by factors such as historical experience, political regime, social organization, threats to national security, technological and organizational capabilities, general social culture and lifestyle.²⁶ However, public opinion can also influence strategic culture.²⁷

Regarding the influence of strategic culture on the state behavior and strategic choice, the researchers' conclusions vary. Some believed that such an influence is significant.²⁸ Valerie M. Hudson argued that strategic culture affects a state's actions in both the short and long terms.²⁹ According to Samuel P. Huntington, civilizational (megacultural) differences can also affect state behavior, significantly complicating the course of international conflicts and wars between representatives of different civilizations.³⁰ A. I. Johnston believed that strategic culture limits the behavioral choices of the state, creating prerequisites for the formation of a unique list of strategic choice possibilities based on acquired experience and certain ideological attitudes.³¹ J. L. Snyder observed that in many cases, strategic culture may not have a concrete expression in politics, but this does not negate its existence.³² A. I. Johnston agreed with this statement, adding that in this case strategic culture will express itself mainly at the level

²⁵ Lantis, "Strategic Culture."

²⁶ Gray, *Nuclear Strategy*; Slater, *Patterns of Influence*; Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

²⁷ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

²⁸ Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture," 87.

²⁹ Valerie M. Hudson, ed., *Culture and Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1997), 28–29.

³⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

³¹ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," 45–46.

³² Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*, 40.

of symbols.³³ Frank L. Jones noted that states act through people, and human beings are not entirely predictable in their actions.³⁴

To understand the mechanism of the influence of strategic culture on the behavior of the state and its strategic choice, it is important to trace its pathway from the sources (objects of analysis) through the process of socialization to the values and assumptions followed by policy-makers. To facilitate this task, A. I. Johnston proposed indicators that testify to the presence of a particular strategic culture in the state and allow for the analysis of its key elements:

1) *basic assumptions* about the orderliness of the strategic environment namely: the role of war in human affairs; the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses; the efficacy of the use of force. This was called the “*central paradigm*” of strategic culture. It reduces uncertainty about the strategic environment but it originates from deeply historical sources, not from current situation;

2) *operational assumptions* about what strategic options are most effective for dealing with the threat environment. These assumptions should logically flow from the “*central paradigm*”. Depending on the level of aggressiveness of basic assumptions, a strategic culture may determine whether a state’s strategy is of an offensive nature (zero-sum game, choosing in favor of the use of force) or of an adaptive nature (predominance of the role of diplomacy, compromises, search for mutually beneficial solutions, persuasion of the enemy).³⁵

This approach enables the prediction of strategic choices of certain actors based on their own basic and operational assumptions.³⁶ To define and understand a set of these assumptions, A. I. Johnston suggested analyzing *the objects (sources) of strategic culture*, which include material (concepts, doctrines, speeches of political and military leaders, literary and other texts) and immaterial (views, idioms, historical heritage, myths, symbols, beliefs, convictions, traditions)

³³ Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” 55.

³⁴ Jones, “Strategic thinking and culture,” 299.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46

³⁶ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

information carriers.³⁷ According to Robert Axelrod, the analysis of documents and texts from the perspective of strategic culture involves identifying causal relationships within and between them.³⁸ To a large extent, strategic culture is expressed and transmitted in the activities of state institutions, which are such culture bearers.³⁹ Therefore, it is crucial not only to identify signs and symbols of strategic culture in official documents over time but also to compare them with practical actions in the field of national security and defense.⁴⁰

Strategic culture influences decision-makers in different societies to think and act differently when faced with similar strategic circumstances and choices.⁴¹ Failure to consider strategic culture can lead to serious miscalculations, particularly in the predictive activities of intelligence agencies and foreign policy institutions. J. L. Snyder warned American strategists against the cognitive mistake of mirroring during strategic analysis of the enemy. He stated that researchers often constructed false models of the studied actors' strategic culture, adapting them to their subjective perception of the motivation or intentions.⁴² As J. L. Johnson observed, analysts usually try to find explanations for certain "irrational" actions of actors without understanding that these actions should be interpreted from the perspective of the strategic culture of these actors, not from the perspective of the researcher. After all, from the point of view of the studied actor, his actions appear logical and rational.⁴³

A. J. Echevarria explained that unsuccessful attempts to comprehensively analyze the strategic culture of a particular actor occur because researchers often make overly broad generalizations and provide a caricatured description of the world. At the same time, he con-

³⁷ Ibid., 49–50

³⁸ Axelrod, "The Cognitive Mapping."

³⁹ Lantis, "Strategic Culture."

⁴⁰ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

⁴³ Johnson, *Strategic Culture*.

sidered the main drawback of the strategic culture concept to be the uncertainty of its key definitions and logical contradictions within it, which complicate its practical application by leaders and strategists influencing the decision-making process. Eventually, A. J. Echevarria recognized that the concept of strategic culture enables analysts to overcome group thinking biases, warning them against a fairly common mistake: considering the intentions and actions of an actor through the prism of their system of moral, ethical values and rational explanations (self-reflexive sterility).⁴⁴ In other words, a certain asymmetry of motives and values can be traced in strategic thinking, which emphasizes the importance of understanding not only the rational but also the irrational motives behind actors' behavior.

According to Matthew R. Slater, strategic culture provides an opportunity to simultaneously analyze the logical and illogical elements of decision-making at the state level, as well as the internal and international aspects of these decisions.⁴⁵ Reflecting on the primary drivers in the formation of strategic culture, Peter Alexis Gourevitch considered internal factors as system-creating, influencing the actor's international behavior. However, he believed that a comprehensive analysis requires simultaneous study of the roles of national leaders (individual aspect), regional and global actors, international organizations (international aspect), and internal groups of influence and bureaucracy (domestic aspect).⁴⁶ Generally, applying the strategic culture concept in political analysis allows for understanding the motives, self-perceptions and behavior of national elites, strategists and policymakers.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Echevarria, "Strategic Culture."

⁴⁵ Slater, *Patterns of Influence*.

⁴⁶ Peter Alexis Gourevitch, "Squaring the Circle: The Domestic Sources of International Cooperation," *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (1996): 349–373, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300028599>.

⁴⁷ Alessia Biava, Margriet Drent, and Graeme P. Herd, "Characterizing the European Union's Strategic Culture: An Analytical Framework," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 20 (2011): 1–22, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02195.x>.

A.I. Johnston outlined the possible ways in which strategic culture influences states' behavior and their ability to predict strategic choice: 1) in the same strategic conditions, the behavior of states may differ under the influence of their strategic culture, which has differences; 2) the behavior of states in the same strategic conditions may not differ due to a similar strategic culture, but not due to its absence; 3) the behavior of states in the same strategic conditions may differ due to the minimal influence of strategic culture.⁴⁸

Researchers argued that the formation of strategic culture through the socialization of certain beliefs is a lengthy process resistant to changes.⁴⁹ A longer history of the state increases the likelihood of identifying behavioral patterns influenced by strategic culture.⁵⁰ The longer a specific strategic culture exists within society, the more unshakable it becomes.⁵¹ Researchers explained the strategic culture's resistance to change for the following reasons: 1) a widespread strategic culture has few alternatives, which do not have significant support in society; 2) it is difficult to change the evaluative and affective components of strategic culture; 3) the context of strategic culture is constrained by the psychological phenomenon of consistency seeking.⁵² How, then, can a permanent or slowly changing strategic culture provide variability in strategic choices that must respond to changes in the security environment? A. I. Johnston explained this by the fact that strategic choices are influenced by other factors that are not related to strategic culture.⁵³

Over time, strategic culture will evolve if political elites and public officials consistently adhere to its principles⁵⁴ and develop along-

⁴⁸ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁴⁹ Harry Eckstein, "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change," *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 3 (1988): 789–804, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962491>.

⁵⁰ Slater, *Patterns of Influence*, 205–214.

⁵¹ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture," 49.

⁵² Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*.

⁵³ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁵⁴ Thomas Banchoff, *The German Problem Transformed: Institutions, Politics, and Foreign Policy, 1945–1995* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

side society.⁵⁵ However, more significant and even drastic changes in strategic culture are also possible, which may be due to changes in political leadership, security and geopolitical situation, the transformation of political elites, the cycle of technology development, institutional and organizational changes, etc.⁵⁶ Researchers cited the formation of Germany's and Japan's antimilitaristic strategic culture after World War II (*hereinafter* – *WWII*) as vivid examples of strategic culture change.⁵⁷ According to Y. Klein, strategic culture is partly the result of the assimilation of the state's experience in the military sphere, especially if it is a recent experience.⁵⁸ The antimilitaristic strategic culture is largely based on limiting the role of the army in processes related to national security.⁵⁹

J. S. Lantis believed that dramatic and destructive events (revolution, war, economic crisis) can cause psychological stress in society and be the driver for a significant change in strategic culture. Resocialization leads to a new social compromise based on new political conditions. This begins the formation of a new strategic culture. J. S. Lantis also argued that the foreign policy implemented by a state can deviate from its strategic culture if they conflict with each other. When the contradictions between cultural attitudes and external conditions are stark, the strategic culture will adapt to the new conditions by finding a new public compromise on national security issues.⁶⁰

M. R. Slater argued that radical change in the political regime as a result of a revolution or under the influence of other events will significantly affect strategic culture through changes in laws, the organ-

⁵⁵ Oleksii Polttrakov, "Strategic Culture in the Functioning of National and Regional Security Systems," *Strategic Panorama 2* (2008): 124–128; John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy after Unification* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998).

⁵⁶ Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁵⁷ Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*.

⁵⁸ Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture."

⁵⁹ Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*.

⁶⁰ Lantis, "Strategic Culture."

ization of political processes and state administration, foreign policy, a change in the priority of national interests, etc. In this case, as in the case of a newly created state, the formation of a new strategic culture will not be completely devoid of historical influence. This is because certain social subgroups within the state may have a history that is much older than the new political order. At the same time, although history will always be the main component of assessing strategic culture, the absence of a state's history does not diminish the value of studying its strategic culture. The researcher also pointed out that in the case of a high level of dependence of a newly created or weak state on another more powerful state or a group of states, this will have a noticeable (but not always decisive) impact on the formation of the strategic culture of such a state and its strategic choice.⁶¹

2. Theoretical framework for the research

The use of strategic culture as an analytical tool is based on understanding the influence of historically established values, threat awareness, and national behavior patterns on the state's strategic choice. Researchers pointed out that the peculiarities of states' strategic cultures are key to understanding the main tasks, goals and limitations in the fields of national security and foreign affairs.⁶² It is also important to detect changes in strategic culture in a timely manner, which will increase the accuracy of forecasting of the state's strategic choice in the future. The question arises about signs for identifying such changes. In this regard, it is necessary to distinguish stable and variable components of strategic culture and define which changes in them will indicate a shift in strategic culture.

According to A. I. Johnston, key elements of strategic culture are basic assumptions of the state about the orderliness of the strategic

⁶¹ Slater, *Patterns of Influence*, 208.

⁶² Ihor M. Koval, Olha I. Brusylovska, and Volodymyr A. Dubovyk, eds., *Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy of Ukraine* (Odesa: Odesa National University named after I. I. Mechnikov, 2017), 8.

environment (central paradigm) and operational assumptions about the strategic options needed for dealing with the threat environment.⁶³ We argue that some of the basic assumptions of the state, based on historical experience and geographical location, are the most stable. Components of strategic culture such as norms, traditions, habits, values, symbols, preferences, and beliefs develop over time and make strategic culture quite resistant to change. Threat awareness, as a component of strategic culture, is, on the one hand, a consequence of the specific historical experience of the country, and on the other hand, a result of the analysis and forecast of the security environment. Thus, this component is more changeable due to specific human activity. At the same time, when a state changes its threat assessment, this may not immediately affect its military-political behavior. Although the pattern of military-political behavior reflects the basic and operational assumptions of the state, we argue that it is the most variable component of strategic culture, and its change indicates a shift in strategic culture. This assumption is based on the conclusion that socio-political practices are flexible enough and this flexibility contributes to preserving the national identity.⁶⁴ A shift in strategic culture may be temporary if it reflects the worldview of the political leadership rather than that of society as a whole, or if it represents a reaction to a specific situation rather than a reflection of society's core values and assumptions.

Based on the aggregation, analysis, synthesis and comparison of theoretical conclusions contained in the studied literature sources,⁶⁵ we propose such an approach to strategic culture that involves differentiating its components according to their changeability. The logic of connections between these components is as follows. The most

⁶³ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture."

⁶⁴ Yuliia Y. Rudenko, "Consolidation Model of National Identity as the Basis of Ukraine's National Stability Strategy," *Politica* 1 (2024): 21–26, <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-9616.2024-1.3>

⁶⁵ Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*; Booth, *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture"; Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*; Gray, *Nuclear Strategy*; Johnson, *Strategic Culture*.

stable components, as the fundamentals of strategic culture, influence the behavior of state leadership and policymakers and, along with specific activities as analysis and forecasting of the security environment, determine a dominant pattern of military-political behavior. According to this approach, strategic culture is a system of symbols, values, traditions and principles formed under the influence of the geopolitical situation, features of political system and unique historical experience. This constitutes a common worldview of the ruling elite and society's identity, shaping the framework for strategic analysis, forecasting of the security environment, establishing relations with other actors, and making strategic choice favoring specific patterns of military-political behavior.

Using behavioural pattern analysis⁶⁶ and generalization of the experiences of different countries,⁶⁷ we have developed four main patterns of military-political behavior as an analytical tool that contributes to a better understanding of the state's strategic choice and predicting its actions under conditions of uncertainty or crisis. These patterns of military-political behavior include:

- *proactive*: initiating offensive, aggressive, or expansionist actions, either through armed aggression or active influence measures;
- *reflexive*: responding to potential threats or direct aggression (offense) by other actors. This involves defensive actions to repel military attacks or respond to active influence measures of the enemy;

⁶⁶ Assem El-Ansary, "Behavioral Pattern Analysis: Towards a new representation of systems requirements based on actions and events," in *SAC '02: Proceedings of the 2002 ACM symposium on Applied computing, March 11 – 14, 2002, Madrid, Spain* : 984–991, <https://doi.org/10.1145/508791.508983>; Axelrod, "The Cognitive Mapping."

⁶⁷ Slater, *Patterns of Influence*; Shaheen, "The Russia-Ukraine War"; Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*; Michael Kofman, "The Moscow School of Hard Knocks: Key Pillars of Russian Strategy," *War on the Rocks*, January 17, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/01/the-moscow-school-of-hard-knocks-key-pillars-of-russian-strategy/>; Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*; Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*; Rosen, *Societies and Military Power*; Johnson, *Strategic Culture*.

- *preventive*: taking measures to limit the enemy's offensive capabilities in advance, anticipating real external threats, and building up capabilities to strike in response to potential aggression;
- *passive*: exhibiting a belief in the absence of a serious external threat and not preparing for war. This behavior often stems from an antimilitaristic strategic culture or significant dependence on a more powerful partner state or alliance.

Features of a specific behavioral pattern of the state can be revealed by analyzing state strategies, other documents, and speeches of political and military leaders. Real decisions and actions should be taken into account to confirm the relevance of these messages. According to researchers, strategies in the field of national security and defense largely reflect the state's strategic culture.⁶⁸ It is important to recognize that a state's actual strategy may differ from its declared one, which may have a largely symbolic character. For instance, a symbolic strategy includes declarative ideas and narratives related to security policy goals, which may diverge from real operational objectives and decisions. Simultaneously, the strategy of symbols helps to create an "image of the enemy" in society and shape an appropriate security policy on this basis.⁶⁹ These approaches can be used to legitimize certain state behavior (in particular, identifying the nature of a strategic problem or threat and determining the response based on the historical parallels), thereby limiting alternative discussions. The analysis of the state's strategic culture is of particular interest if the country is an aspirant for joining a certain alliance. This contributes to a better understanding of the correspondence of its strategic culture to the dominant one in the alliance.

Strategic culture can evolve gradually or undergo sudden changes. Dramatic and destructive events induce psychological stress in

⁶⁸ Axelrod, "The Cognitive Mapping"; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture."

⁶⁹ Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture", 56–60.

the society and serve as an impetus for changing the strategic culture of certain states. The initial signs of such changes can be observed in the speeches of political and military leaders, who enjoy significant public support.⁷⁰ Analysis of changes in the strategic culture of a state can help to detect in time the transformation of the country into a threat to the rules-based world order. Positive changes in the strategic culture of an aspirant state can create new opportunities for the development of the appropriate alliance.

To study strategic cultures of Ukraine and Russia, strategic and doctrinal documents related to national security and defense of these states, as well as speeches by their political, military, and societal leaders, scientific articles, analytical papers, and other texts containing features of strategic culture were selected as objects of analysis. Special attention was given to understanding the role of war in human relations, ascertaining the nature of the enemy and the threat it poses, analyzing the experience of the state and the assessments of its strategists regarding the effectiveness of the use of force. Additionally, the analysis focused on identifying dominant patterns of military-political behavior of states, comparing stated security goals in official documents with actual objectives and decisions implemented in practice to exclude the symbolism of strategic documents.

To ascertain the strategic cultures of Ukraine and Russia, which existed before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the period from 1991 to 2021 was selected. This period coincides with the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, resulting in the emergence of new independent states such as Ukraine and Russia. Special attention was given to events in 2014–2015, marked by the occupation of parts of Ukrainian territory (Crimea and Donbas) by Russia and the involvement of the Russian Armed Forces in the war in Syria, which significantly altered the global security environment. The period from 2022 to 2024 was

⁷⁰ Banchoff, *The German Problem Transformed*; Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*; Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*; Duffield, "Political Culture"; Lantis, "Strategic Culture"; Johnston, "Thinking about Strategic Culture"; Klein, "A Theory of Strategic Culture."

analyzed to define whether and what changes occurred in the strategic culture of Ukraine under the influence of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

3. Russian threat in the context of strategic culture

The inheritance of Russian strategic culture has a pronounced character. A centralized militaristic political system, based on the idea of mass troops, has existed for many centuries and continues to be a feature of modern Russia. This inheritance arises mainly from the political culture and national psychology formed by geography.⁷¹

Soviet-imperial revanchism, a blend of values from the USSR and the Russian Empire, emerged as a key factor in shaping the modern Russian strategic culture. Immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin began fostering the potential for revanchism to thrive within the Moscow elite and broader Russian society. In 2000, the golden double-headed eagle was adopted as the Russian coat of arms – a symbol representing the Russian Empire as the successor to the Byzantine Empire, adhering to the principle of “symphony” between secular and religious power. This furthered the religious and historiosophical justification of the concept of “Moscow – the Third Rome,” actively promoted by Neo-Eurasianism founder Aleksandr Dugin.⁷² Additionally, in 2002, a slightly modified version of the Soviet anthem was reinstated as the official anthem of the Russian Federation. By 2014, Russian observers openly acknowledged that the ideology of “post-Soviet revenge” had become the dominant and unifying force across all segments of Russian society, including liberals, neoimperialists, realist-statesmen, nationalists and marginal groups.⁷³

⁷¹ Fritz W. Ermarth, “Russia’s Strategic Culture: Past, Present, and... in Transition?”, *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, October, 2006, <https://irp.fas.org/agency/dod/dtra/russia.pdf>

⁷² Aleksandr Dugin, *Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia: Thinking Spatially* (Moscow: Arktojeja, 1999).

⁷³ Igor Zevelev, “The Russian World Boundaries,” *Russia in Global Affairs*, June 07, 2014, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-russian-world-boundaries/>.

One of the primary sources of the Russian strategic culture is the state's military doctrines, which reflect Moscow's perspective on the role of military force in achieving geopolitical objectives. In the first decade following the USSR's collapse, the Russian Military Doctrine emphasized the exclusively defensive nature of Russia's military policy.⁷⁴ However, the revised version in 2010 introduced provisions legitimizing the use of the Russian Armed Forces abroad.⁷⁵ This stance is maintained in the current iteration of the Russian Military Doctrine.⁷⁶

In 2005, Vladimir Putin declared the collapse of the USSR as “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century.”⁷⁷ This underscored the symbols of profound significance to him as the leader of a totalitarian regime. It is evident that the potential capture of Kyiv in 2022 would serve as a new historical symbol for the Kremlin, coinciding with the centenary celebration of the USSR's establishment (officially dated December 30, 1922). Unfortunately, Ukraine and the West largely underestimated the significance of these symbols within Russia's strategic culture, leading to shortcomings in the analysis and forecasting of Russia's future behavior.

The victory of the USSR in WWII stands as another powerful factor influencing the Russian strategic culture formation. Aleksandr Bartosh concurred with this notion and identified fundamental stereotypes within the Russian strategic culture that have developed over the centuries:

- *the dilemma of Eurasianism*, requiring strategic choices between Europe and Asia throughout history;

⁷⁴ Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on April 21, 2000 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, https://www.ng.ru/politics/2000-04-22/5_doktrina.html.

⁷⁵ Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on February 5, 2010 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>.

⁷⁶ Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on December 12, 2014 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation, <https://rg.ru/documents/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html>.

⁷⁷ Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, <https://www.prlib.ru/item/438195>.

- *the inability to form coalitions and secure the support of reliable allies*, often illustrated by the saying attributed to Russian Tsar Alexander III, stating that Russia's only loyal allies are its Army and Navy;
- *a high level of tolerance for significant human losses and readiness for self-sacrifice among the population*;
- *the absence of alternatives to victory*, stemming from the successful conclusion of two "patriotic" wars for Russia.⁷⁸

According to A. Bartosh, a defining characteristic of Russian strategic culture has been and continues to be the imperative of achieving victory in war, which demands that the *Russian people are prepared to make sacrifices to ensure success and maintain unwavering confidence in achieving it*.⁷⁹

Military representatives wield significant influence over the formation of Russia's strategic culture. However, their operational assumptions have gradually begun to deviate from the aforementioned stereotypes. General Valerii Gerasimov, Russian General Staff Chief, emphasized the growing importance of nonmilitary means in achieving political and strategic objectives, which, in some cases, prove to be more effective than the use of force. He emphasized the shift towards employing political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures implemented with the use of the population's protest potential. This is augmented by covert military operations, including information warfare and actions by Special Operations Forces.⁸⁰ These concepts and strategies became known as the "*Gerasimov doctrine*."

Within a year of the general's article being published, Russia put this doctrine into practice during the occupation of Crimea and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine in 2014. The

⁷⁸ Aleksandr Bartosh, *Strategic Culture: Textbook for Universities* (Moscow: Yurait, 2021), 203.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 205.

⁸⁰ Valerii Gerasimov, "The Worth of Science consists in Prediction," *Voенно-promyshlennyi kur'er* 8, no. 476 (2013): 1–3.

Kremlin's actions were characterized by a combination of diplomatic, economic, informational, and covert measures, with military intervention by the Russian Armed Forces carefully concealed under the guise of "pro-Russian rebels' actions." This *proactive pattern* of Russia's military-political behavior enabled it to maintain dialogue with leading European states, particularly France and Germany, and achieved strategic goals regarding Ukraine: preventing its further integration into the EU and NATO by fostering a "frozen" conflict within Ukraine, thereby pushing Kyiv into the framework of the "Minsk Agreements."

The Kremlin's subsequent and notably successful move was its military intervention in Syria in September 2015. With minimal costs to Russia, the Syrian campaign not only enabled Moscow to preserve Bashar Assad's authoritarian regime but also facilitated a return to negotiations with Washington. The positive experience of Russia's intervention in Syria served as a foundation for the further strategic thinking development within the upper echelons of the Russian Armed Forces. Reflecting on the results of the military campaign in Syria in 2015–2016, V. Gerasimov emphasized that Russia and the USA were able to achieve mutual understanding and agree on a ceasefire. Furthermore, he concluded that employing indirect and asymmetric actions and methods in waging hybrid wars could effectively undermine an opponent's sovereignty without the need for direct military occupation.⁸¹

In 2019, V. Gerasimov published an updated vision of military strategy,⁸² which can be summarized as follows:

- against the backdrop of the need for comprehensive application of political, economic, informational, and other non-military measures, the central focus of military strategy is the preparation for and conduct of war by the Armed Forces;

⁸¹ Valerii Gerasimov, "Guideline to defend Russian Federation in the Conditions of the use "traditional" and "hybrid" Methods of Warfare," *Vestnik Akademii Voennykh Nauk* 2, no. 55 (2016): 19–23.

⁸² Valerii Gerasimov, "Vectors of Military Strategy Development," *Red Star*, March 04, 2019, <http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/>.

- alongside classical principles such as surprise, decisiveness, and continuity of strategic actions, three key principles of strategy are highlighted: the prevention of war, early preparedness for war, and the coordinated use of military and non-military measures with the Armed Forces playing a decisive role;
- plans were made to increase the number of the Russian Armed Forces to 475,000 military personnel by 2025, along with the adoption of both nuclear and nonnuclear deterrence measures against Russia's adversaries, primarily the USA;
- the fundamental basis of the strategy should be a system of foresight scenarios for starting and conducting armed conflicts;
- building on the experience gained in Syria, Russia refined its "strategy of limited actions," establishing a self-sufficient joint force group. Key factors for the success of such a group include the use of precision-guided weapons, the establishment of an integrated intelligence system, extensive use of robotic systems (especially UAVs), and a layered system of electronic warfare.

During this period, other senior Russian military commanders, including Southern Military District Commander Aleksandr Dvornikov and Eastern Military District Commander Sergei Surovikin (who later became commanders of Russian occupation forces in Ukraine), published their researches, analyzing their combat experience in Syria and emphasizing significant improvements in Russian approaches to the organization and conduct of military operations.⁸³

At that time, international observers noted the development of Russia's strategy and its successful application in Syria and Ukraine,

⁸³ Aleksandr Dvornikov, "Headquarters for New Wars," *Voенно-promyshlennyy kur'er* 28, no. 741 (2018), https://vpk.name/news/222202_shtaby_dlya_novyh_voin.html; Sergei Surovikin and Yurii Kyleshov, "Features of organizing the Management of an Inter-specific Group of Troops (Forces) in the Interests of a Comprehensive fight against the Enemy," *Voennaya misl* 8 (2017): 5–18.

as well as the strategic miscalculations of the USA. Michael Kofman observed that Russia emerged as a capable adversary, able to shape the environment to deter the American threat. Moscow demonstrated proficiency in influencing Washington's decision-making cycle and maintained dominance in the strategic dimension at the psychological level in this geopolitical confrontation.⁸⁴ Samuel Charap pointed out that in both Ukraine and Syria, the Kremlin effectively used a minimal military resources to bring Western countries back to the negotiating table.⁸⁵

Following Russia's occupation of parts of Ukraine and its military intervention in Syria, a new trend was observed – *the development of Russia's strategic culture toward improved analysis and forecasting of the security environment, as well as more effective utilization of soft-power tools*. As a result, the effectiveness of Russia's strategic choice has increased significantly. By successfully blending military and nonmilitary (hybrid) measures, Moscow executed short-term and limited-scale military escalations to create more favorable conditions for further dialogue with its rivals, primarily the USA.

In 2014–2019, Russia completed shaping a *proactive pattern of military-political behavior*; seizing the initiative in foreign and security policy, and taking offensive measures to secure its national interests. Meanwhile, the “central paradigm” of Russia's strategic culture remained unchanged in terms of symbols, values and worldview. Moreover, Russian leadership has successfully employed a strategy of symbols to portray Ukraine and NATO as enemies, thereby shaping security policies that are supported by its society. Moscow's aggressive behavior, characterized by its revanchist attitudes, and the lack of an effective international response to Russia's violation of international law in 2008, 2014, and 2015, determined the severity of the Russian threat, which later became existential not only to Ukraine but also to the rules-based world order.

⁸⁴ Kofman, “The Moscow School.”

⁸⁵ Samuel Charap, “Russia's Use of Military Force as a Foreign Policy Tool. Is There a Logic?” *Ponars Eurasia*, October 19, 2016, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russia-use-of-military-force-as-a-foreign-policy-tool-is-there-a-logic/>.

On the eve of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the former CIA director and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates attempted to explain V. Putin's behavior by suggesting that his actions were driven by a fear of losing control over Ukraine because the political and economic model of the new Ukrainian state could become more attractive to the Russians.⁸⁶ This statement aligns with Zbigniew Brzezinski's assertion, voiced in 1997, that without Ukraine, the Russian imperial restoration based either on the Collective Security Treaty Organization [CSTO] or on Eurasianism was not a viable option.⁸⁷ It seems that V. Putin deeply believes in this, choosing a purely confrontational approach toward both Ukraine and the collective West. Despite the threat of undoing the diplomatic and economic gains Russia has made over the past twenty years, as well as the Kremlin's successful implementation of the "Gerasimov doctrine," the Kremlin opted for brute military force, initiating a full-scale war against Ukraine in February 2022, calling it a "special military operation."

The main miscalculation of this strategic choice lies in the Kremlin's false analysis and forecasting of the security environment around Russia and the world. According to RAND experts, before the start of the war, Russia made several strategic mistakes, namely: a false assessment of Ukraine's ability and will to fight, ignoring the development of the military and political systems of the Ukrainian state; misjudgment of the West's response, believing that the war and natural gas shortages would fragment Western unity and limit NATO's support for Ukraine.⁸⁸

Along with false forecasting, V. Putin counted on the success of his manipulation of historical facts and public opinion inside and outside Russia. The goal was to propagate the notion that modern

⁸⁶ Robert Gates, "Putin has overplayed His Hand on Ukraine", *Financial Times*, January 21, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/31a6f5b0-402d-4a84-bf3b-8c72a254eb81>.

⁸⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Basic Books, NY, 1997), 112.

⁸⁸ Bryan Frederick, Mark Cozad, and Alexandra Stark, "Understanding the Risk of Escalation in the War in Ukraine," *RAND Corporation*, September 21, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.7249/RBA2807-1>.

Ukraine owes its existence solely to the Russian Bolsheviks, who formed the Soviet Union. Moreover, according to V. Putin, the Bolsheviks created Ukraine at the expense of Russia's territorial concessions (primarily referring to the "illegal" transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic).⁸⁹ Thus, *it is evident that the Kremlin's distortion of historical facts allowed for the creation and entrenchment in the minds of V. Putin's supporters of certain symbols that serve to legitimize Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.*

In November 2021, V. Putin, during the collegium of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, once again accused Ukraine of failing to fulfill the "Minsk Agreements" and blamed NATO for crossing "red lines" with regards to its expansion eastward.⁹⁰ This was another manipulation by the Kremlin aimed at shifting the emphasis from Russia's nonfulfillment of the requirements of the Budapest Memorandum⁹¹ and its violation of the goals and principles defined by the UN Charter.

In December 2021, the Kremlin published policy papers, later referred to as "Putin's ultimatum." They were draft treaties between the Russian Federation and the USA,⁹² the Russian Federation and NATO⁹³ on security guarantees. The main Russia's demand in each of these documents was the official refusal of the USA/NATO to fur-

⁸⁹ Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," *Kremlin*, July 12, 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.

⁹⁰ "Vladimir Putin took part in an extended meeting of the board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," *Kremlin*, November 2021, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123>.

⁹¹ Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Budapest, 5 December, 1994, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%203007/Part/volume-3007-I-52241.pdf>.

⁹² "Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Security Guarantees. Draft," *Ministry of foreign affair of the Russian Federation*, December 2021, https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/.

⁹³ "Agreement on measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation and member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Draft," *Ministry of foreign affair of the Russian Federation*, December 2021, https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790803/.

ther expand the Alliance to the east and to place military bases and medium- and short-range missiles on the territory of the former Soviet republics. Additional external factors contributing to the Kremlin's decision to invade Ukraine included the hasty withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan at late 2021 and the events of January 2022 in Kazakhstan, when Russian troops, as part of the CSTO forces, suppressed protests in Astana.

One powerful internal factor that gave V. Putin confidence in his decisions and actions was the *conformism* of the Russian elite, a key feature of its strategic culture. During the meeting of the Russian Federation Security Council on February 21, 2022,⁹⁴ when the situation around Donbas was discussed, none of representatives of the Russian military and political leadership, security forces, diplomatic corps, or executive and legislative authorities expressed viewpoints that diverged from V. Putin's.

In his memoirs about the results of the Russo-Japanese War, General Aleksei Kuropatkin, then Military Minister of the Russian Empire, wrote that in Russia people with a strong character and independence were never promoted but persecuted. In peacetime, they seemed restless to many commanders. As a result, such people often left state service. On the contrary, he stressed, people without character or beliefs, but agreeable and always ready to agree with their superiors' opinion, came forward.⁹⁵ The most recent and vivid examples of this were the dismissal of the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Air and Space Forces, General S. Surovikin and the commander of the 58th Combined Arms Army, General I. Popov, as well as the death of the leader of the "Wagner" private military company Ye. Prigozhin, who openly spoke out against the Russian military command and made an unsuccessful attempt to carry out a "march of justice" to Moscow.

⁹⁴ "The Head of state held a meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in the Kremlin," *Kremlin*, February 21, 2022, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67825>.

⁹⁵ Anton Denikin, *The Old Army. Officers* (Moscow: Airis-press, 2005), 104.

There are a series of extremely negative consequences for Russia as a result of the Kremlin's wrong strategic choice to start the war in Ukraine, namely:

- contrary to the Kremlin's expectations, Ukraine proved capable of effectively resisting the Russian "blitzkrieg," and Western countries united around the idea of a decisive collective response to the Russian threat, consolidating around the USA/NATO;
- reliance solely on military force and the prioritization of military means over nonmilitary options significantly limited Russia's diplomatic maneuverability and led to its isolation from the Western countries. The most painful result was the breakup of economic relations between Russia and the EU countries, which had been the largest importers of Russian raw materials and exporters of technologies. This caused a sharp increase in Moscow's dependence on Beijing's political and economic support;
- the large-scale increase of the military threat from Russia pushed Sweden and Finland to quickly join NATO, which proved the opposite result of the goal that the Kremlin set when starting the war – to prevent NATO expansion;
- the Russian army and its command showed very low professional competence at the beginning and during the war against Ukraine resulting in huge losses for the Russian Armed Forces.

After an unsuccessful attempt at a blitzkrieg, Russia, on the one hand, has resorted to a "war of attrition," and on the other hand, to cover up its weaknesses by maintaining a high level of the threat of using nuclear weapons against both Ukraine and other Western countries. This demonstrates that Russia's attempts to change its strategic culture in 2013–2021 could not take hold for long. The ways of waging war in Ukraine after 2022 indicate the revival in Russian strategic culture of post-Soviet stereotypes and operational assumptions of the early 1990s. Soviet-imperial revanchism remains a key factor in shaping modern Russian strategic culture, influencing its

strategic choice aimed at the establishing control over the entirety of Ukraine at any cost. The willingness to sacrifice the socio-economic development of the state and the lives of its people for the sake of imperial ambitions is a characteristic that significantly distinguishes the strategic culture of Russia from that of Western democracies. This distinction must be considered when seeking a solution to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

4. Evolution of strategic culture of Ukraine

Ukrainian strategic culture evolved under extremely challenging geopolitical circumstances, primarily due to Ukraine's geographic location. Ukrainian experts noted that the central paradigm of Ukrainian strategic culture was shaped by the influence of the glorious past of Kyivan Rus and the Galicia-Volyn Principality.⁹⁶

Throughout the centuries, Ukraine has been a battleground for competing powers such as the Russian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and Austria-Hungary. The devastating Eastern Front of WWII traversed Ukraine, resulting in significant human and material losses for Ukrainians, who suffered immensely alongside other Soviet peoples.

That is why "security policy through diplomacy" has become a defining feature of Ukrainian strategic culture. This was a consequence of the fact that the Ukrainians' own abilities were not sufficient to gain independence by force. This policy contributed to the formation of such a feature of Ukrainian strategic culture as the search for a strong partner state. Thus, in the 17th century hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi sought the support of the Muscovite Kingdom, in the 18th century hetman Ivan Mazepa sought support from the Swedish Kingdom, and in the 20th century hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky sought support from Germany. Attention should be paid to the inherent desire of Ukrainians for mutual respect in such partnerships. Violation

⁹⁶ Koval, Brusylowska, and Dubovyk, *Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy*, 12.

of this requirement leads to aggressive resistance from Ukrainian society, as seen both in the Middle Ages and in modern history (e.g., the Orange Revolution of 2014). The willingness of Ukrainians to join forces with a stronger ally is intertwined with intolerance of despotism. This explains the attempts of Ukraine in different historical periods to break free from the control of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire.

In the works of Ukrainian philosophes and writers such as T. Shevchenko, I. Franko, I. Drach etc., a clear emphasis is placed on the priority of the spiritual essence of a person and the concept of cordocentrism in Ukraine, as well as adherence to the principles of goodness, justice, honesty, and humanity in social relations.⁹⁷ This creates a unique mode of thinking that manifests itself in social and political spheres.

Ukrainian researchers pointed out that Russia has always hindered the final creation of a Ukrainian national state. On the other hand, after the collapse of the USSR, Ukrainians inherited some features of Soviet strategic culture, namely sentiments about the status of a great power and a sense of equality with Russians regarding issues of Soviet heritage.⁹⁸ For a long time, Ukraine experienced a clash of two systems of values: those imposed by the former Soviet political regime and those shaped by national identity, new strategic orientations and social development priorities. Despite this clash, the period was marked by a notable absence of significant conflicts, indicating an evolutionary transition to a new political culture and the displacement of USSR values that were alien to Ukrainians.

Under the Soviet rule, Ukrainians endured political repressions, genocide during the Holodomor of 1932–1933, and a loss of long-term strategic thinking, as strategic decision-making was centralized in Moscow rather than in Kyiv. The weakness of strategic thinking led to strategic miscalculations by the Ukrainian government in 1991–2014, including the loss of nuclear-weapon status, the degra-

⁹⁷ Rudenko, “Consolidation Model of National Identity.”

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 15

dation of the national defense industry, the downsizing and loss of professionalism in the armed forces, and the underestimation of the Russian threat.

Consequently, Ukraine's political elite became marginalized. According to Ukrainian researchers, this marginality was characterized by personalistic national psycho-identification, intellectual and motivational ambivalence, socio-cultural eclecticism, and other factors.⁹⁹ In our opinion, this marginality fostered corruption in Ukraine and eroded trust in the political leadership, which prioritized personal enrichment over the nation's development.

Oleksandr Kyrychuk identified key features of the modern Ukrainian mentality and behavior patterns:

- *introversion*, in terms of environmental perception, leading to a focus on internal individual concerns;
- *cordocentrism*, marked by sentimentalism, empathy, aestheticism in folklore;
- *anarchic individualism*, emphasizing personal freedom without clear self-development objectives;
- *emotionality*, where emotions and feelings often prevail over will and intellect.¹⁰⁰

These characteristics influenced Ukraine's political elite, which during 1991–2014 could not overcome anarchic individualism and achieve the consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation around a cohesive long-term national strategy. This suggests that during this period, the strategic culture of Ukraine was characterized by a *passive pattern of military-political behavior*.

Despite the fact that Ukraine's National Security Strategy of 2012 advocated for nonalignment and positioned Russia as a strategic partner, these symbolic gestures failed to prevent Russia's invasion of

⁹⁹ Olena Donchenko and Yurii Romanenko, *Archetypes of Social Life and Politics (in-depth regulations of psychopolitical daily life)* (Kyiv: Lybid, 2001), 214–215.

¹⁰⁰ Oleksandr Kyrychuk, "Mentality: essence, functions, genesis," in *"Mentality. Spirituality. Self-development of the individual: International conference, June 18–25, 1994, Lutsk, Ukraine"* (Kyiv, 1994), part 1: 7–20.

Ukrainian Crimea and Donbas in 2014. Historically, openness to national and cultural convergence with other states was a feature of the central paradigm of Ukrainian strategic culture.¹⁰¹ This openness was the reason why the Ukrainians neglected the threat from the Russian Federation in the period after the collapse of the USSR (1991) and before Russia's occupation of Donbass and Crimea (2014).

In the context of Ukrainian strategic culture, we should consider the relationship between strategic culture and nuclear weapons, as emphasized by J. Snyder.¹⁰² In our opinion, the period of addressing the issue of Soviet nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine (1991–1994) could have been key to forming a new central paradigm of Ukrainian strategic culture, based on the principle of self-reliance rather than dependence on a stronger partner.

At the end of 1991, Ukraine had 220 intercontinental ballistic missiles, 44 heavy bombers with 1,068 cruise missiles and 1,750 nuclear warheads for air-based cruise missiles on its territory.¹⁰³ Gradually, the domestic and international discourse regarding the prospect of Ukraine possessing nuclear weapons transitioned from the stage of “limited nuclear deterrence” to “nuclear disarmament for the purpose of obtaining diplomatic and economic dividends.”

In the early 1990s, a noticeable feature of Ukraine's strategic culture was the complete lack of identification of Russia as a threat. In 1994, the President of Ukraine L. Kravchuk noted that “Russia and Ukraine have lived side by side for 350 years; they have never used weapons against each other and will not.”¹⁰⁴ In the end, Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons it inherited from the USSR and signed the Budapest Memorandum in 1994. This document provided security guarantees to the new Ukrainian state in connection with its acquisi-

¹⁰¹ Koval, Brusylowska, and Dubovyk, *Strategic culture and foreign policy*, 15.

¹⁰² Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.

¹⁰³ Marco De Andreis and Francesco Calogero, *The Soviet Nuclear Weapon Legacy SIPRI Research Report No. 10* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 23.

¹⁰⁴ “Kravchuk: Nonproliferation Treaty to be signed as soon as possible,” *La Repubblica*, 29 June, 1994, US National Security Archives.

tion of nonnuclear status, given by three the most powerful nuclear nations at the time – the USA, Russia and the Great Britain.

Kyiv’s unsuccessful attempts to gain control over part of the Soviet nuclear arsenal ultimately cemented the principle of security policy through diplomacy as the main element of the central paradigm of Ukrainian strategic culture. The promised security from the nuclear states created an illusion of complete safety among Ukrainians. The Budapest memorandum “actually put to sleep in Ukraine the natural for any state reliance on hard power to maintain its own security. Paradoxically, the loss of such an important element of hard power as nuclear weapons pushed the political elites of Ukraine to neglect the development of conventional deterrence and the army.”¹⁰⁵

The Military Doctrine of Ukraine from 2012 provided for the possibility of seeking assistance to the guarantor states of Ukraine’s security in accordance with the Budapest Memorandum to deter a potential aggressor or in the event of armed aggression.¹⁰⁶ This indicates Ukraine’s complete loss of strategic awareness of the Russian threat during the period of 1991–2013. During this time, Ukraine followed a passive pattern of military-political behavior based on the belief in the absence of a serious external threat and lack of preparation for war.

The Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014–2015 characterized by its hybrid nature aligned with the “Gerasimov doctrine.” Russia’s occupation of Crimea and Donbas were dramatic events for Ukraine, fundamentally altering its security environment and inducing societal psychological stress. They provided the first impetus for changing the strategic thinking of Ukrainians. While Ukraine lacked the military strength and mental readiness to confront a superior adversary, it was compelled to revise its military-political behavior model in response to these events.

¹⁰⁵ Koval, Brusylovska, and Dubovyk, *Strategic Culture and Foreign policy*, 29.

¹⁰⁶ Decree of the President of Ukraine dated June 08, 2012 No. 390/2012, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3902012-14403>.

The Revolution of Dignity in 2014 marked the beginning of a profound transformation in Ukrainian strategic culture. As V. Kryvoshein noted, at that time Ukrainians truly embraced liberal-democratic values such as freedom of speech, civil society oversight of political authorities, and entrepreneurial initiative.¹⁰⁷ Simultaneously, a renewed sense of national patriotism emerged. Despite linguistic diversity, most Ukrainians identified themselves with the Ukrainian political nation – the nation of a young European state aspiring for a free democratic future, distancing itself from the Soviet totalitarian past.

The case of Ukraine and Russia shows that belonging of states to the same family of languages or religion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the formation of a common strategic culture or their combination within one civilization. In particular, despite the dominance of Orthodoxy and the fact that Ukraine and Russia belong to the Slavic language group, the nature of the war that the Kremlin started in 2014 corresponds to the description of a war between representatives of different civilizations given by S. P. Huntington. This contradicts his conclusions that the “fault line” runs precisely through Ukraine, suggesting that the existential threat to Ukraine is not Russia, but rather the probability of civil conflict and state collapse.¹⁰⁸ The idea of the “Russian world,” which was promoted by the Kremlin to realize its imperial ambitions, quickly collapsed in Ukraine and other states neighboring Russia.

Kyiv initiated military reforms, aligning with NATO standards and bolstering its defense capabilities. Ukraine’s National Security Strategies of 2015 and 2020 identified Russia’s aggressive actions as the foremost threat, aimed at crippling Ukraine’s economy, destabilizing its socio-political stability, dismantling the state, and annexing its ter-

¹⁰⁷ Vitaly Kryvoshein, “The Effect of “the revolution of dignity” in Political and Legal Culture of Ukrainian Society,” *The Bulletin of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. Series: Philosophy, philosophy of law, political science, sociology* 2 (2016): 37–58.

¹⁰⁸ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 36–37, 252–253.

ritory.¹⁰⁹ However, to restore peace and protect Ukraine's territorial integrity, priority was given to peaceful means in line with international law. Although these strategies focused on a wide range of threats, they leaned towards a *reflexive model of military-political behavior*.

One significant issue with Ukraine's National Security Strategies of 2007, 2012, 2015, and 2020 was their limited implementation and lack of concrete plans. Oversight was formal, lacking established reporting procedures, indicators, and criteria for assessing results, and their compliance with the declared goals was not analyzed by policy-makers.¹¹⁰ All this indicates the declarative nature and symbolism of these strategies.

From 2019 to 2021, Ukraine underwent further democratic development with a generational shift in the political elite. Older officials, steeped in Cold War confrontation, were succeeded by a younger generation favoring global cooperation. The irreversibility of the European and Euro-Atlantic trajectory was enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine in 2019. Despite a certain shift in strategic thinking, *Ukrainian strategic culture persisted in underestimating the importance of security and defense sector development and maintained a belief in the low likelihood of a "big war."* This belief was grounded in the reasonable assumption that Russia would prioritize maintaining its occupation of Crimea and Donbas and waging a hybrid war against Ukraine (thereby making it impossible for Ukraine to join the EU/NATO) over launching full-scale aggression, which could nullify its political and economic gains of the past two decades.

The long-term prevalence of antimilitaristic sentiments among the political elite of Ukraine and the declarative nature of security and defense policy left Ukraine ill-prepared for Russia's invasion in 2014. Subsequent lessons from the hybrid war prompted reforms in

¹⁰⁹ Decree of the President of Ukraine dated May 26, 2015 No. 287/2015, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/2872015-19070>; Decree of the President of Ukraine dated September 14, 2020 No. 392/2020, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3922020-35037>.

¹¹⁰ Olga Reznikova, *National Resilience in a Changing Security Environment* (Kyiv: NISS, 2022), <http://doi.org/10.53679/NISS-book.2022.01>.

the field of national security and defense, enhanced cooperation with NATO and the EU, and strengthened national resilience. These measures positioned Ukraine to better resist aggression at the outset of Russian war in 2022. The aforementioned external shocks changed the direction of Ukraine's strategic culture development and the measures taken have anchored this shift.

As mentioned earlier, the modern Ukrainian strategic culture is shaped by stressful events, which J. L. Johnson referred to as "external shocks."¹¹¹ The first of such shocks was Russia's occupation of Crimea and parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of Ukraine in 2014. However, Russia's armed aggression in February 2022 represented the most powerful "external shock" Ukraine has faced since gaining its independence. This furthered the transformation of Ukrainian strategic culture in the following ways:

- awareness of Ukrainian identity, based on the acceptance of Western democracy values and a strong refusal to return to the Soviet mentality. In this regard, the ongoing war is perceived in Ukraine as a battle between authoritarianism and democracy. According to sociological surveys, in 2022, 87% of Ukrainians unequivocally stated that they do not seek the restoration of the Soviet Union (compared to 69% in 2021 and 53% in 2000);¹¹²
- an unambiguous strategic choice of Ukrainian political elite and society in favor of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. According to sociological polls, in 2014, the number of supporters of joining NATO among Ukrainian citizens was 44%, and 53% for the EU, but by May 2023, these figures had increased to 89% for NATO and 92% for the EU;¹¹³

¹¹¹ Johnson, "Strategic Culture," 24.

¹¹² "Attitude of Ukrainians to the USSR (September–October 2022)," *Razumkov Centre*, December 27, 2022, <https://razumkov.org.ua/napiamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/stavlennia-ukraintsi-v-do-srsr-veresn-zhovten-2022r>.

¹¹³ "What integration direction should Ukraine choose: referendum concerning joining the Customs Union, the European Union or NATO (May 2015)," *KIIS*, June 19, 2015, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=530&page=1>; "Ukrainian support for NATO and demand for inclusive democracy reach record highs," *KIIS*, June 30, 2023, <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1255&page=1>.

- a strong commitment to the fastest possible increase in combat capabilities and modernization of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The new generation of Ukrainian commanders, unlike their Russian counterparts, is prepared for a transparent public discussion of its failures. Analyzing the problems of counteroffensive in 2023, former Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi recognized the danger of reverting to the “trench warfare” model seen in 1914–1918 and tried to find solutions to this situation.¹¹⁴ Among other things, he suggested focusing on the need to achieve air superiority over Russia; building up and preparing military reserves; and increasing the efficiency of antimine, counterbattery, and radio-electronic warfare of Ukrainian units.

Understanding the existential threat from Russia as a system-forming factor in the modern Ukrainian strategic culture, the military-political leadership and the civil society in Ukraine are rapidly adopting a new *preventive model of military-political behavior* based on Euro-Atlantic values, collective security and resilience aimed at effective resistance in the “war of attrition” imposed by Russia. In particular, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Ukraine’s main objective is to effectively utilize weapons and military equipment to inflict maximum losses on the enemy.¹¹⁵ In the context of Ukraine’s European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations, the change in the strategic culture of Ukraine in favor of a preventive model of military-political behavior indicates the readiness of Ukraine to be an active contributor of European and global security.

Probably, in August 2024, we observed a transition to another pattern of Ukraine’s military-political behavior: proactive. This relates

¹¹⁴ Valerii Zaluzhnyi, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to win in It,” *The Economist*, November 01, 2023, https://infographics.economist.com/2023/ExternalContent/ZALUZHNYI_FULL_VERSION.pdf.

¹¹⁵ “The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Oleksandr Syrskyi named the main tasks facing the Defense Forces,” *NV.ua*, February 24, 2024, <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/sirskiy-nazvav-golovni-zadachi-ukrajinskoji-armiji-50397154.html>.

to the operation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Kursk region of Russia. This operation proved the readiness and ability of Kyiv to use the tactics of adventurous and unexpected actions against the Kremlin on its own territory. However, the viability of this conclusion has yet to be tested.

As we can observe, changes in threat perception and patterns of military-political behavior are the first signs of a shift in Ukraine's strategic culture under the influence of Russian threat. These changes are beginning to affect more stable elements of strategic culture, suggesting that this shift is sustainable in nature. Certain changes in the central paradigm of Ukrainian strategic culture are observed as well. Despite the remaining commitment to rely on strong partner and the importance of the security policy through diplomacy principle, Ukraine is trying to be more self-reliant, which means relying more on its own capabilities. First of all, this refers to building up the capabilities of the national defense industry. In 2024, 70% of the total sum of all agreements concluded by the Defense Procurement Agency of Ukraine was allocated to Ukrainian manufacturers of arms and military equipment.¹¹⁶

In addition to procuring arms abroad, Kyiv is making efforts to attract Western partners to establish defense production within Ukraine. In 2024, the German company Rheinmetall announced the opening of a repair center for the German military equipment, and the Czech company Sellier & Bellot intends to build a cartridge factory in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Ukrainian corporation "Ukrbironprom" has signed an agreement with the American defense firm Northrop Grumman to establish a joint venture to produce artillery shells in Ukraine according to NATO standards.¹¹⁷

Amid hesitation by the U.S. and other leading Western countries regarding the supply of long-range weapons and permission to use

¹¹⁶ "70% of the total sum of all agreements concluded by the Defense Procurement Agency of Ukraine was allocated to Ukrainian manufacturers," *lb.ua*, May 4, 2024, https://lb.ua/society/2024/05/04/611686_70_vid_sumi_vsih_ugod_agentsii.html.

¹¹⁷ "For Ukrainians, the production of weapons is not just a job, but a way to save lives and the country. Why Ukraine attracts US defense companies," *Voice of America*, July 21, 2024, <https://www.holosameryky.com/a/vyrobnystvo-zbroji/7706738.html>.

them, Ukraine is working to develop its own long-range weapons production. One of the most significant developments in this area is the “Neptune” cruise missile. In August 2024, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced the successful test of the first Ukrainian-made ballistic missile.¹¹⁸

One of the most important integration project in the defense industry is Brave1. This is a Ukrainian government platform designed to unite innovative companies with ideas and developments that can be used in Ukraine’s defense.¹¹⁹ Brave1 brings together Ukrainian experts who can turn ideas and prototypes into functional weapons for the Armed Force of Ukraine within weeks, rather than months or years. The Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Strategic Industries, Ministry of Economy, National Security and Defense Council, General Staff of the Armed Forces and Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine are all involved in Brave1. There are several main clusters of innovative technology accredited to Brave1, including electronic warfare, security and intelligence, unmanned aerial vehicles, unmanned ground vehicles, unmanned underwater vehicles, and various weapons and military equipment.

These examples indicate significant changes in the military-political behavior pattern of the Ukrainian state, showcasing a shift toward more proactive and effective interaction with partner states, centered on joint resistance to the Russian threat. The increased focus on ensuring national security and defense through internal means, alongside the search for effective external security guarantees, was a direct result of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation. This shift has become firmly embedded in Ukraine’s security and foreign policy and defines the trajectory of changes in the state’s strategic culture.

¹¹⁸ “Ukraine Announced Creation of a Ballistic Missile, Is It the Sapsan SRBM or Something Entirely Different?” *Defense Express*, August 28, 2024, https://en.defence-ua.com/industries/ukraine_announced_creation_of_a_ballistic_missile_is_it_the_sapsan_srbm_or_something_entirely_different-11669.html

¹¹⁹ “Ukraine launches BRAVE1’ tech cluster to boost military capability,” C4isrnet, April 26, 2023, <https://www.c4isrnet.com/unmanned/2023/04/26/ukraine-launches-brave1-tech-cluster-to-boost-military-capability/>

Ukrainian society is rapidly shedding introversion and anarchic individualism, giving priority to the principle of national unity. Thus, at the end of 2023, the share of Ukrainian citizens who were convinced that the country is moving in the direction of solidarity and unity amounted to 69%, while in October 2020 this indicator was only at the level of 35%.¹²⁰ Despite certain differences in views on specific values, Ukrainian society is not disintegrated. National identity has significantly strengthened since 2022. This is due to the effectiveness of tolerance practices in Ukraine and the high level of trust between different social and ethnic groups, as well as between the society and the government. This is supported by the conclusions of Ukrainian scholars and sociological surveys.¹²¹ According to the public opinion poll conducted by the Razumkov Centre, 91% of surveyed Ukrainians are proud to be citizens of Ukraine. In comparison, the figure was 68% in 2015, 62% in 2010, and 62% in 2000.¹²² Another Razumkov Centre poll showed high levels of trust in state and public institutes such as the Armed Forces of Ukraine (94% of respondents trust them), volunteer units (89%), volunteer organizations (86%), the State Emergency Service (83%), the National Guard of Ukraine (82%), the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine (73%), the State Border Service (72%), the Security Service of Ukraine (71%), the President of Ukraine (68%), the Church (63%), public organizations (63%), the National Police of Ukraine (58%), mayors of the city (town, village) where the respondents live (53%), the National Bank of Ukraine (51%).¹²³

¹²⁰ "Ukrainians are going to a united political nation or to a split," *KIIS*, January 22, 2024, <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1361&page=1>.

¹²¹ Rudenko, "Consolidation Model of National Identity," 24.

¹²² "The identity of Ukraine's citizens: trends of change (June, 2024)," *Razumkov Centre*, July 25, 2024, <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/sociology/press-releases/the-identity-of-ukraine-s-citizens-trends-of-change-june-2024>.

¹²³ "Citizens' assessment of the situation in the country. Trust in social institutes, politicians, officials and public figures (December, 2023)," *Razumkov Centre*, December 28, 2023, <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/research-areas/surveys/citizens-assessment-of-the-situation-in-the-country-trust-in-social-institutes-politicians-officials-and-public-figures-december-2023>

The values shared by the Ukrainian society – solidarity, justice, freedom, trust, tolerance, responsibility, kindness, and morality – remain constant and form the foundation of the central paradigm of Ukraine’s strategic culture. These qualities reinforce the unity of the Ukrainian society and its resilience against the Russian threat. The unique features of Ukraine’s strategic culture should be considered when seeking a solution to end the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine.

Conclusions

The case of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine proved that the analytical potential of the strategic culture concept is not fully revealed, and specific analytical tools need to be developed. The analysis of the strategic culture allows us to better explain the behavior of states and their strategic choices in the conditions of war, peace, and uncertainty. At the same time, many erroneous assessments and foresights, developed even while taking into account the influence of strategic culture on the state’s behavior, prove the need for further development of knowledge in this area.

Strategic culture is formed over a long period under the influence of many factors, and includes both stable and changeable components. Stable components, such as norms, traditions, habits, values, symbols, preferences, and beliefs, make strategic culture resistant to change. Threat awareness and pattern of military-political behavior are variable components, and their changes are the first to indicate a shift in strategic culture. External shocks and events that induce societal psychological stress can be the impetus for changes in strategic culture. Analyzing changes in a state’s strategic culture can help detect the transformation of a country into a threat to the rules-based world order in time. A shift in strategic culture can be temporary or sustainable. It depends on whether changes in the variable components of strategic culture align with the core principles its central paradigm.

Russia’s strategic culture was largely shaped by the legacy of the USSR, particularly in terms of symbols, values, and worldview. This

formed the basis of its “central paradigm,” which has not undergone significant changes over time. The Russian political elite is conformist and completely dependent on the will of V. Putin, characterizing Russia’s political system as an autocratic regime. Given this, the influence of the political elite on the formation of Russian strategic culture is minimal. However, the influence of the Russian military elite on strategic choice and the state’s behavior is quite noticeable. An important feature of Russian strategic culture is the idea of the victorious resolution of war, which requires Russians to be morally and physically ready for significant sacrifices. Successful military operations by Russia in Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2014), and Syria (2015) contributed to the formation and anchoring of a proactive pattern of military-political behavior of the Russian Federation.

In 2014–2015, Russian military strategists attempted to develop an analytical and prognostic toolkit in the military sphere and to improve methods of interstate competition by shifting the emphasis to the use of nonmilitary methods for achieving political and strategic goals, including waging hybrid war. This can be seen as an attempt to change operational assumptions, an important component of the Russian strategic culture. However, the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the conduct of war by conventional methods with a large number of losses demonstrated a return to the post-Soviet stereotypes of the Russian strategic culture, rooted in the legacy of the USSR.

The aggressive military-political behavior of Russia, the absence of effective international mechanisms to deter its aggression, and the weak response from leading nations to Russia’s violations of international law have defined the framework of the Russian threat. This threat has become existential not only for Ukraine but also for the rules-based world order. For the Russian society, the restoration of the Russian Empire holds more value than the economic and social development of the country. This explains why economic sanctions against the Russian Federation have been largely ineffective in curbing its aggression. The Soviet-imperial revanchism continues to be a key factor in shaping the modern Russian strategic culture and drives

its strategic choice aimed at establishing control over all of Ukraine, regardless of the cost, including human lives. This approach starkly contrasts with that of Western democracies, and these differences in strategic cultures must be considered when seeking a solution to end the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Ukraine's strategic culture was formed in extremely difficult and unfavorable geopolitical conditions. From 1991 to 2014, a passive pattern of military-political behavior of the state prevailed, and the antimilitaristic political elite of Ukraine was focused on its own interests, which did not contribute to the consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation. The national security strategies were largely declarative and symbolic for a long time. The Ukrainian strategic culture was dominated by an underestimation of the importance of developing the security and defense sector, and a firm belief in the extremely low probability of a "big war."

Significant changes in the strategic thinking of political elites and the strategic culture of Ukraine took place under the influence of external shocks. Russia's occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions in 2014 was a dramatic event for Ukraine that changed the security environment and caused psychological stress in society. The period from 2015 to 2021 was marked by significant reforms in national security and defense in Ukraine, leading to a transition to a reflexive pattern of military-political behavior.

During Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the state's and society's readiness to respond an aggression was at a significantly different level. The constant existential threat from Russia has become a system-creating factor in the formation of the modern Ukrainian strategic culture. Under such conditions, the military-political leadership and the society of Ukraine are forming a new preventive pattern of military-political behavior based on Euro-Atlantic values, collective security, and resilience, aimed at effectively confronting Russia in the "war of attrition" it has imposed.

The operation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Russia's Kursk region, which began in August 2024, may be a sign of further change

in the pattern of military-political behavior of Ukraine from preventive to proactive, characterized by more offensive tactics. The evolution of the central paradigm of the Ukrainian strategic culture is also evident. While continuing to value a security policy through diplomacy, Ukraine is increasingly trying to rely on its own capabilities. As a result of Russia's armed aggression, the Ukrainian society is rapidly shedding introversion and anarchic individualism, giving priority to the principle of national unity. This situation has led to a strengthening of Ukraine's national identity and its resilience to the Russian threat.

Striving for justice is a core characteristic of both the national identity of Ukrainians and their strategic culture. The distinct features of Ukraine's, Russia's and Western countries' strategic cultures must be taken into account when thinking about the "freezing" of the ongoing war or other "partial" solutions. Such outcomes would not signify the true end of the war but would merely delay it for a certain time. The terms of the war's resolution will not only shape Ukraine's future but also determine the future of the world order.

References

- Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2005/04/25/1223_type63372type63374type82634_87049.shtml.
- "Agreement on measures to ensure the security of the Russian Federation and member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Draft". *Ministry of foreign affair of the Russian Federation*, December 2021.
- Almond, Gabriel A., and Sidney Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Andreis, Marco De, and Francesco Calogero. *The Soviet Nuclear Weapon Legacy. SIPRI Research Report No. 10*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- "Attitude of Ukrainians to the USSR (September–October 2022)." *Razumkov Centre*, December 27, 2022. <https://razumkov.org.ua/napriamky/sotsiologichni-doslidzhennia/stavlennia-ukraintsiv-do-srsr-veresn-zhovten-2022r>.
- Axelrod, Robert. "The Cognitive Mapping Approach to Decision Making." In *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Political Elites*, edited by Robert Axelrod (3–17). Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400871957>.

- Bartosh, Aleksandr. *Strategic Culture: Textbook for Universities*. Moscow: Yurait, 2021.
- Berger, Thomas U. *Cultures of Antimilitarism: National Security in Germany and Japan*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.
- Biava, Alessia, Drent, Margriet, and Graeme P. Herd. "Characterizing the European Union's Strategic Culture: An Analytical Framework." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 20 (2011): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02195.x>.
- Booth, Ken. *Strategy and Ethnocentrism*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1979. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315769738>.
- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *The Grand Chessboard. American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*. Basic Books, NY, 1997.
- Charap, Samuel. "Russia's Use of Military Force as a Foreign Policy Tool. Is There a Logic?" *Ponars Eurasia*, October 19, 2016. <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/russia-s-use-of-military-force-as-a-foreign-policy-tool-is-there-a-logic/>.
- "Citizens' assessment of the situation in the country. Trust in social institutes, politicians, officials and public figures (December, 2023)." *Razumkov Centre*, December 28, 2023. <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/research-areas/surveys/citizens-assessment-of-the-situation-in-the-country-trust-in-social-institutes-politicians-officials-and-public-figures-december-2023>
- Decree of the President of Ukraine dated June 08, 2012 No. 390/2012, "On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine dated June 8, 2012 "On the new edition of the Military Doctrine of Ukraine"". <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3902012-14403>.
- Decree of the President of Ukraine dated May 26, 2015 No. 287/2015, "On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine dated May 6, 2015 "On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine"". <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/2872015-19070>.
- Decree of the President of Ukraine dated September 14, 2020 No. 392/2020, "On the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine dated September 14, 2020 "On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine"". <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/3922020-35037>.
- Denikin, Anton. *The Old army. Officers*. Moscow: Airis-press, 2005.
- Donchenko, Olena, and Yurii Romanenko. *Archetypes of Social Life and Politics (in-depth regulations of psychopolitical daily life)*. Kuiv: Lybid, 2001.
- Dugin, Aleksandr. *Foundations of Geopolitics: The Geopolitical Future of Russia: Thinking Spatially*. Moscow: Arktogeja, 1999.
- Duffield, John S. "Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism." *International Organization* 53, no. 4 (1999): 765–803. <https://doi.org/10.1162/002081899551066>.

- Duffield, John S. *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy after Unification*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Dvornikov, Aleksandr. "Headquarters for new wars." *Voenno-promyshlennyi kur'er* 28, no. 741 (2018). https://vpk.name/news/222202_shtaby_dlya_novyh_voin.html.
- Echevarria, Antulio J. "Strategic Culture: More Problems than Prospects." *Infinity Journal* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 4–7.
- Eckstein, Harry. "A Culturalist Theory of Political Change." *American Political Science Review* 82, no. 3 (1988): 789–804. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1962491>.
- El-Ansary, Assem. "Behavioral Pattern Analysis: towards a new representation of systems requirements based on actions and events." In *SAC '02: Proceedings of the 2002 ACM symposium on Applied computing, March 11 – 14, 2002, Madrid, Spain*: 984–991. <https://doi.org/10.1145/508791.508983>
- Ermarth, Fritz W. "Russia's Strategic Culture: Past, Present, and... in Transition?" *Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office*, October, 2006, <https://irp.fas.org/agency/dod/dtra/russia.pdf>
- "For Ukrainians, the production of weapons is not just a job, but a way to save lives and the country. Why Ukraine attracts US defense companies." *Voice of America*, July 21, 2024. <https://www.holosameryky.com/a/vyrobnytstvo-zbroji/7706738.html>.
- Frederick, Bryan, Cozad, Mark, and Alexandra Stark. "Understanding the Risk of Escalation in the War in Ukraine." *RAND Corporation*, September 21, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.7249/RBA2807-1>.
- Gates, Robert. "Putin has overplayed His Hand on Ukraine." *Financial Times*, January 21, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/31a6f5b0-402d-4a84-bf3b-8c72a254eb81>.
- Gerasimov, Valerii. "Guideline to defend Russian Federation in the Conditions of the use "traditional" and "hybrid" Methods if Warfare." *Vestnik Akademii voyennykh nauk* 2, no. 55 (2016): 19–23.
- Gerasimov, Valerii. "The Worth of Science consists in Prediction." *Voenno-promyshlennyi kur'er* 8, no. 476 (2013): 1–3.
- Gerasimov, Valerii. "Vectors of Military Strategy Development." *Red Star*, March 04, 2019. <http://redstar.ru/vektory-razvitiya-voennoj-strategii/>.
- Gourevitch, Peter Alexis. "Squaring the Circle: The Domestic Sources of International Cooperation." *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (1996): 349-373. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300028599>.
- Gray, Colin S. *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*. Lanham, Md.: Hamilton Press, 1986.
- Gray, Colin S. "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back." *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 1 (January, 1999): 49–69. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210599000492>.

- Hrytsenko, Alina. "Strategic Culture as a National Security Policy Determinant: Ukraine's Strategic Culture Key Characteristics." *Strategic Panorama* 1–2 (2020): 14–20. <https://doi.org/10.53679/2616-9460.1-2.2020.02>.
- Hudson, Valerie M., ed. *Culture and Foreign Policy*. Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1997.
- Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.
- Johnson, Jeannie L. *Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct*. Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Threat Reduction Agency Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, 2006.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain. "Thinking about Strategic Culture." *International Security* 19, no. 4 (Spring, 1995): 32–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539119>.
- Jones, Frank L. "Strategic Thinking and Culture: A Framework for Analysis." Edited by J. Boone Bartholomees. *U. S. Army War College Guide to National Security Issues*. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2012: 287–305.
- Klein, Yitzhak. "A Theory of Strategic Culture." *Comparative Strategy* 10, no. 1 (1991): 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495939108402827>.
- Kofman, Michael. "The Moscow School of Hard Knocks: Key Pillars of Russian Strategy." *War on the Rocks*, January 17, 2017. <https://warontherocks.com/2017/01/the-moscow-school-of-hard-knocks-key-pillars-of-russian-strategy/>.
- Koval, Ihor M., Brusylovska, Olha I., and Volodymyr A. Dubovyk, eds. *Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy of Ukraine*. Odesa: Odesa National University named after I. I. Mechnikov, 2017.
- "Kravchuk: Nonproliferation Treaty to be signed as soon as possible." *La Repubblica*, 29 June, 1994. US National Security Archives.
- Kryvoshein, Vitaly. "The effect of "the revolution of dignity" in political and legal culture of Ukrainian society." *The Bulletin of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University. Series: Philosophy, philosophy of law, political science, sociology* 2 (2016): 37–58.
- Kyrychuk, Oleksandr. "Mentality: essence, functions, genesis." In *Mentality. Spirituality. Self-development of the individual: International conference, June 18–25, 1994, Lutsk, Ukraine*, part 1, 7–20. Kyiv, 1994.
- Lantis, Jeffrey S. "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy." *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 87–113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1521-9488.t01-1-00266>.
- Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Budapest, December 05, 1994. <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%203007/Part/volume-3007-I-52241.pdf>.

- Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on April 21, 2000 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. https://www.ng.ru/politics/2000-04-22/5_doktrina.html.
- Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on December 12, 2014 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. <https://rg.ru/documents/2014/12/30/doktrina-dok.html>.
- Military doctrine of the Russian Federation, approved on February 5, 2010 by Decree of the President of the Russian Federation. <http://kremlin.ru/supplement/461>.
- Poltrakov, Oleksii. "Strategic Culture in the Functioning of National and Regional Security Systems." *Strategic Panorama* 2 (2008): 124–128.
- Putin, Vladimir. "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians." *Kremlin*, July 12, 2021. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>.
- Reznikova, Olga. *National resilience in a changing security environment*. Kyiv: NISS, 2022. <http://doi.org/10.53679/NISS-book.2022.01>. URL: <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/books/national-resilience>
- Rosen, Stephen Peter. *Societies and Military Power: India and its Armies*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Rudenko, Yuliia Y. "Consolidation Model of National Identity as the Basis of Ukraine's National Stability Strategy." *Politicus* 1 (2024): 21–26. <https://doi.org/10.24195/2414-9616.2024-1.3>.
- Shaheen, Salma. "The Russia-Ukraine War through Lens of Strategic Culture: Implications for South Asia." *Journal of International Affairs* 75, no. 2 (2023): 247–64.
- "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy." 2016. https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf.
- Slater, Matthew R., ed. *Patterns of Influence: Strategic Culture Case Studies and Conclusions*. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University Press, 2020.
- Snyder, Jack L. *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Nuclear Options*. Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1977.
- Surovikin, Sergei, and Yurii Kyleshov. "Features of organizing the management of an interspecific group of troops (forces) in the interests of a comprehensive fight against the enemy." *Voennaya misl* 8 (2017): 5–18.
- "The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Oleksandr Syrskyi named the main tasks facing the Defense Forces", *NV.ua*, February 24, 2024. <https://nv.ua/ukr/ukraine/events/sirskiy-nazvav-golovni-zadachi-ukrajinskoji-armiji-50397154.html>.
- "The Head of state held a meeting of the Security Council of the Russian Federation in the Kremlin." *Kremlin*, February 21, 2022, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67825>.

- “The identity of Ukraine’s citizens: trends of change (June, 2024).” *Razumkov Centre*, July 25, 2024. <https://razumkov.org.ua/en/sociology/press-releases/the-identity-of-ukraine-s-citizens-trends-of-change-june-2024>.
- “Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on Security Guarantees. Draft.” *Ministry of foreign affair of the Russian Federation*, December 2021. https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/.
- “Ukraine Announced Creation of a Ballistic Missile, Is It the Sapsan SRBM or Something Entirely Different?” *Defense Express*, August 28, 2024. https://en.defence-ua.com/industries/ukraine_announced_creation_of_a_ballistic_missile_is_it_the_sapsan_srbm_or_something_entirely_different-11669.html.
- “Ukraine launches BRAVE1’ tech cluster to boost military capability.” *C4isrnet*, April 26, 2023. <https://www.c4isrnet.com/unmanned/2023/04/26/ukraine-launches-brave1-tech-cluster-to-boost-military-capability/>.
- “Ukrainian support for NATO and demand for inclusive democracy reach record highs.” *KIIS*, June 30, 2023. <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1255&page=1>.
- “Ukrainians are going to a united political nation or to a split.” *KIIS*, January 22, 2024. <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1361&page=1>.
- “Vladimir Putin took part in an extended meeting of the board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” *Kremlin*, November 2021. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67123>.
- “What integration direction should Ukraine choose: referendum concerning joining the Customs Union, the European Union or NATO (May 2015).” *KIIS*, June 19, 2015. <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=530&page=1>.
- Zaluzhnyi, Valerii. “Modern Positional Warfare and How to win in It.” *The Economist*, November 01, 2023. https://infographics.economist.com/2023/External-Content/ZALUZHNYI_FULL_VERSION.pdf.
- Zevelev, Igor. “The Russian World Boundaries.” *Russia in Global Affairs*, June 07, 2014. <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/the-russian-world-boundaries/>
- “70% of the total sum of all agreements concluded by the Defense Procurement Agency of Ukraine was allocated to Ukrainian manufacturers.” *Lb.ua*, May 4, 2024. https://lb.ua/society/2024/05/04/611686_70_vid_sumi_vsih_ugod_agent-sii.html.