

CONTEMPORARY STRATEGIC CULTURE AND NEUTRALITY

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An important expression of contemporary strategic culture, as a specific relation to military force and its use, especially when it comes to Europe, is the practice of neutral states. Although it seemed that the direction of international politics was taking a form in which such a collective understanding of reality was hardly sustainable, neutrality, with many challenges, continues to exist, proving to be a very dynamic and adaptable concept.

The emergence of internationalism after the First World War, especially the intensification of integration trends after the end of the Cold War, strengthened the process of establishing the foundations for a new anti-war security vision of Europe. The basis of such efforts was the promotion of cooperation and dialogue and the suppression of the importance of military force in relations between European states, which commenced the process of establishing the strategic culture of the European Union as an authentic postnational model. A new strategic culture with a specific view of the character of relations between European states, which is quite different from traditionally understood contents of this concept, suppressed the importance of national security perceptions, as well as the effectiveness of the use of military force in international politics, promoting the idea of the indivisibility of security.

Undoubtedly, strong integration momentum and transnational type of threats has influenced the redefinition of the practice of neutrality, so the approach of neutral states to European and Euro-Atlantic integration has been considered a natural course of things. Thus, neutrality has been radically modified in some aspects today, so a great definition of such a concept, among other things, is no longer isolation, but emphasized international engagement. The abandonment or great redefinition of the

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main postulates of neutrality has prompted serious challenges to the importance of neutrality, the authenticity and scope of the strategic culture of neutral states. This is precisely why the value content of neutrality has begun to be considered debatable. Namely, for some people, such a concept is outdated, while others believe that it can still contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the world.

However, although radically modified, neutrality has not disappeared and is still a concept that is an important segment of international politics. The revival of *realpolitik* in international relations in recent years, as well as the challenges of the multipolar concept of international relations, represent important incentives for the legitimacy of the choice of neutrality and the affirmation of a strategic culture that favours the value postulates of neutrality.

Key words: *strategic culture, neutrality, integration processes, EU, multipolarity, Serbia*

Introduction

Today, culture is one of the most important factors in determining the direction of international politics. It is a particularly important theoretical framework for considering international relations in the post-Cold War period, in which ideational factors gain a dominant role in defining the framework of individual and collective constructions of reality. The enormous popularity of ethnocentrism and the conflicting potential of the advocacy of cultural particularities suggest that culture, which governs perceptions, communication and actions of individuals and political communities, primarily shapes the political and historical understanding of a political community today.

Strategic culture as a part of political culture, which deals with axiomatic beliefs about the benefits and desirability of the use of force in international relations, in a special way serves as a basis of choices about international behaviour, especially those related to international military behaviour and decisions about war. Precisely because of this, it is at the very centre of the security problems of the modern world and is very important for the understanding of security issues and the interpretation of political decisions and strategies of modern societies and their consequences.¹ By developing the concept of the role of military force, strategic culture forms the basis of strategic coherence and joint military action, thereby having a significant impact on the success of security and defence policy.²

¹ Filip Ejodus, "Bezbednost, kultura i identitet", *Bezbednost Zapadnog Balkana*, no. 7-8, October 2007-March 2008, Belgrade.

² Sten Rynning, "The European Union towards a Strategic Culture", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 34, no. 4, 2003.

Culture and identity do not represent a single and stable belief system that would be accepted by the entire population or the military and political elite at any given time. A significant dilemma related to strategic culture today refers to the question of how much it changes its traditional meaning, which is primarily defined by the attitude towards the use of military force. Is contemporary strategic culture changing in accordance with changes in the perception of security and changes in the evaluation of military force as an instrument of foreign policy and the readiness to use it? The fact is that military force is not fully effective as an instrument of politics, hence dilemmas regarding the readiness to use the military. Contemporary European experience confirms the idea that strategic culture should be redefined according to prevailing changes and trends in international politics and the concept of military force in relations between states.

Namely, the multilateralist and anti-war context of integrative courses in Europe, which had a huge mobilizing role, has opened up the possibility of establishing the foundations of a new postnational strategic culture. Such aspirations of the political elite of European countries have gradually reduced the influence of the militaristic perception that has defined the character of relations in Europe for several centuries. The European integrative courses based on supranational identity contents were primarily founded on the idea of a peaceful strategic culture, laying the foundations for the strategic culture of the united Europe and the cultivation of its strategic environment. At the same time, strong emphasizing of multilateralism gave a new impetus to the concept of collective security and opened up room for the increased international responsibility in the sphere of security.

Such aspirations were acceptable to neutral states, which considered such a perception of security to be valuable and culturally close. Emphasizing a non-military negotiation approach in resolving conflicts, suppressing the importance of military force, as well as emphasizing the importance of instruments of soft state power at the expense of hard power, represented the value postulates that were already practiced in the actions of neutral states. The aforementioned contents, especially contents based on the matrix of multilateralism, as an essential feature of the postnational character of the European strategic culture, changed the authentic perception of neutrality. At the same time, changes in the practice of the actions of neutral states strongly problematized some of the essential principles of neutrality, opening numerous conceptual and value dilemmas that, above all, referred to the relevance and reality of such commitment.

The current trends in international politics point to the weakening of the idea of global unity and the return of Cold War patterns in international politics, and the fragile persistence of the European strategic culture, especially the disavowal of the European integrative trends, once again impose a reconsideration of some of the content of the strategic culture of neutrality. The resurgence of the importance of military force once again confirms the pronounced dynamism of the practice of neutrality, but these trends do not necessarily mean the return to the traditional contents of practicing that concept. Undoubtedly, the flexible approach to practicing

neutrality, especially the prevailing trends in international politics, will continue to promote its further modification, whereby the contents of activism will continue to be indispensable in the actions of neutral states.

All of this raises questions as to whether neutrality as a foreign policy concept, which in the last few decades has experienced a significant transformation and acquired contents that deviate from the conventional understanding of neutrality, can still be considered credible. That is, how much the strategic culture of neutrality can remain an authentic culture and how significant it can be in the context of the postmodern complexity of the world, especially its intensified conflict dynamics and suggest strategic behaviour that implies responsibility to security as an indivisible good.

Military neutrality between contestation and duration

Neutrality as a political concept, which can basically be reduced to state remaining impartial and out of armed conflicts, that is, not participating in hostilities of other states that are at war, is not new. Such a concept has existed since war itself; it was practiced even in ancient times, as well as during very intense medieval competitions in Europe. Neutrality entered the practice of international relations at the beginning of the modern era through the European system of states, which was founded by the Treaty of Westphalia and since then it has become an important element in international relations. However, due to the fact that the focus of historical interest was, above all, on the great European powers, their imperialist ambitions and colonial expansion, greater attention to the concept of neutrality and neutral states was absent. This is precisely why permanent neutrality, as a rather ambitious model of that concept compared to those known by the European practice of international relations until then, was recognized by a state only in 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, when its positioning in international law began.

Although it slowly gained international legitimacy, neutrality played an important role and was a significant tool for reducing tensions in Europe, especially when it comes to resolving conflicts over imperial ambitions and colonial heritage between European powers.³ Regardless of the fact that neutrality is considered to be a European invention, an important place in the history of modern neutrality also belongs to the US, which, for a significant part of its history after gaining independence, has favoured neutrality policy. The emergence of international organizations of collective security has opened up the room for sovereignty to

³ Through the neutralization of conflict zones in Africa and Asia, conflicts between European countries were avoided. This is confirmed by the case of the Congo, when the administration of those areas was entrusted to Belgium as a neutral country, as well as the change in the status of neutral waters, as in the case of the Suez Canal.

become a global phenomenon and encourage the process of decolonization and the transformation of former colonies into sovereign countries. A great number of countries that, in the bloc-divided world, preferred a position of non-alignment, joined the process of establishing a non-aligned movement that can be considered a global appeal for neutrality in the bipolar reality of the Cold War⁴. Although integrative processes in Europe and the end of the Cold War have influenced a strong redefinition of the concept of security, the practice of neutral states, although greatly modified, still represents an influential expression in the strategic culture of the modern world.

Neutrality has always been treated as a debatable concept. Undoubtedly, the modern trend of globalized politics further problematizes the theory and practice of neutrality. There are many controversies and dilemmas that accompany this concept, starting with what it means today - is it a credible, realistic and morally founded concept?

Although there is no universal definition, it is certain that neutrality implies state impartiality in relation to an armed conflict between two sovereign states. In other words, neutrality presupposes an armed conflict between two sovereign states, where a third state remains impartial.⁵ This leads to the conclusion that for a long time neutrality referred only to the case of war, so that in modern times it began to be practiced in peace, as well. Neutrality can also mean long-term non-alignment, which implies the promise of a state not to enter into an alliance with any state in the event of war, and also permanent neutrality, which is expressed by a declaration of neutrality aimed at the international community. In both cases, it is assumed that a neutral state will remain neutral in a possible war, whereby war means an armed conflict between two sovereign states.⁶ Inactivity and impartiality are particularly important determinants of neutrality, and in the event of war it is essential that a neutral state ceases activities with parties to a conflict or treat them in an equal, impartial manner. The contemporary concept of neutrality, which was affirmed during the Cold War, as well as after its end, promotes activism as a distinctive feature of foreign policy actions of a neutral state.

The concept of neutrality is ascribed a number of features that describe it as an ethnically debatable discourse. Such a disqualification is based on historical facts, especially if we consider the case of Sweden and Switzerland, which during World War II cooperated with the Axis powers and anti-fascism coalition. The globalized concept of international politics further exacerbates the moral dilemma over neutrality, especially if one takes into account the need for a global response to security threats that have global scope. The global war against terrorism, regardless of many controversies that accompany it, imposes a dilemma whether it is moral to

⁴ Leos Muller, *Neutrality in World History*, Routledge, New York and London, 2019, p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁶ Uprisings, revolutions and civil wars that take place in the territory of a sovereign state are not truly legitimate, so in such circumstances neutrality cannot be declared.

stand aside in the battle between good and evil. The increase in transnational threats to security, where temporal and spatial determinants are irrelevant, and the indivisibility of security is increasingly pronounced, makes the position of neutrality morally difficult to accept.

A special contradiction that further problematizes the validity of neutrality is the relationship between neutrality and the system of collective security. It is believed that there is the incompatibility of the status of neutrality with the UN membership, whose goals are international solidarity and collective security. These are the concepts whose conceptual definition makes them contradictory, bearing in mind that one is related to internationalism, and the other one to isolationism. While neutrality implies impartiality in war, collective security obliges states to participate in peacekeeping activities with other members of the international community, even when violent means are used. The concept of collective security appears for the first time in the convention of the League of Nations. Many countries have become members of this organization precisely because they believed that collective security is a better guarantee than neutrality. The Charter of the United Nations guarantees that members will defend every state in the event that it is the victim of illegitimate aggression. Article 2, Paragraph 5 of the Charter of the United Nations states that the UN members are obliged to provide assistance to the organization in actions that can be taken to establish peace, and Article 25 indicates that the members are obliged to accept and implement the decisions of the Security Council. It is clear that in the event of an armed conflict, when the UN, as a universal international organization, undertakes actions against the aggressor, impartiality and neutrality are not possible and are in contradiction with neutrality, which implies being out of any military associations.⁷

The continuity of realpolitik patterns in international politics raises the question of whether neutrality as a concept is possible, bearing in mind that long-term neutrality is typical for small states with limited armed forces. In the Melian Dialogue Thucydides unequivocally rejects neutrality on the basis of the right of the strong to do what they can, and the weak to bear what they have to. Realistic arguments in international politics are against neutrality⁸. Such views can be found in Machiavelli and Hobbes, and are confirmed by the experience of the neutral states of German neighbours in World War I and II. Therefore, neutrality is qualified as a lack of reality and a realistic insight into the dynamics of international relations, bearing in mind that powerful international actors can always cancel and devalue the efforts of neutral states to stay away from war conflicts. Frequent cases of violations of neutrality in World War I and II are the reason that the importance of neutrality in shaping the modern world is ignored and is considered an irrelevant, unrealistic and immoral policy.⁹

⁷ *Neutrality in the 21 Century-Lessons for Serbia*, ISAC Fund, Belgrade, 2013, p. 2.

⁸ Leos Muller, *ibid*, p. 11.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4.

However, although neutrality has very often been ignored, criticized and rejected, without seriously considering this political point of view it is not possible to understand the history of international relations. Ever since the French Revolution, neutrality has become the starting point in many international conflicts, and engagement after World War II and the end of the Cold War confirmed neutral states as credible actors in solving many conflicts around the world. Neutral countries have made a substantial contribution to the affirmation of the free trade paradigm. They are the most consistent advocates in the implementation of the principle of free trade in international politics, as well as the right of navigation in international waters. Moreover, they represent important industrial and financial centres and have played an important role in the world economy in the last three centuries. By their actions, they often reduce the harmful effects of war, and by advocating economic development and free trade, they have done incomparably more than the great powers with their militaristic ambitions.

It is particularly important to point out that European countries that practice neutrality are among the most successful countries in the world. Although these countries are small, according to many of their characteristics they are among the most developed countries in the world in an economic and social aspect, where, owing to high living standards, people live very well.¹⁰ They have an important place in global economy and are at the very top in terms of competitiveness and according to numerous valid parameters they are among the richest countries in the world. Although it is not possible to claim that neutrality is the main reason for the success of those countries, it can be said that a neutral foreign policy position was not an obstacle to their extraordinary progress. However, the fact that most European neutral states have been practicing neutrality for a long historical period and that it has become a particularly important content of their strategic culture and national identity, suggests that a neutral and impartial foreign policy concept represents an important aspect of their success.

It is important to point out that the contemporary practice of neutrality has overcome the paradox that views neutrality as an expression of isolationism and internationalism at the same time.¹¹ Neutral states have become the UN members, in principle accepting the position that solidarity and collective security are above neutrality. Thus, today, neutral states play an important role in the UN. The case of Switzerland and Austria, i.e. Geneva and Vienna, where the headquarters of some important international organizations and their activities are located, confirm that a combination of strong international engagement and the policy of neutrality is possible and welcome. In most cases, neutral states are considered to be the examples of better and fairer societies that have simultaneously advocated fairer frameworks of international politics, in contrast to the great powers and their struggle for hegemony. Hence, their commitment to peace, which would be based on a fairer international order, means internationalism, and not isolationism.

¹⁰ Leos Muller, *ibid*, p. 2.

¹¹ *ibid*, p. 25.

Neutrality is a key concept of international law. Neutral states have an important role in strengthening internationalism, humanitarianism and promoting responsibility to the world peace. They provide an alternative to many warlike and unpredictable aspects of international politics. They have confirmed themselves as better mediators in peace negotiations and the affirmation of the peace movement, making a substantial contribution to the establishment of international organizations and their activities. Therefore, neutrality is rightly considered the centre of internationalism. Free trade, peaceful international relations and a safe and stable international order are the basis of internationalism. Neutral states are much more interested in the establishment of international law than the great powers because it is a guarantee for their independence and sovereignty.

Although neutrality is the concept practiced primarily in Europe, it represents a model that some countries in Latin America and Asia are trying to adapt. Despite the fact that it is difficult to find neutral states out of Europe and the US, the Non-Aligned Movement still represents an association that gathers more than 120 developing countries, which is similar to neutrality in many aspects. This movement, whose founder was SFRY, was a very influential organization during the Cold War. Along with the increase in tensions between the US and NATO, on the one hand, and Russia, on the other, the option of non-alignment becomes particularly relevant, mainly for the countries that suffer the most from such a character of relations. Neutrality may become an acceptable option for many countries in Asia-Pacific, which are facing the consequences of geopolitical competition between the US and China. All of this can be a convincing reason for many small states to view neutrality as a reasonable foreign policy choice.

Despite often present ignorant attitude towards neutrality, it can be reasonably argued that this concept has not lost its appeal. Namely, there are many arguments in favour of neutrality and the importance of neutral states in the modern world order. The multipolar world of the 21st century and the enormous instability and unpredictability of international politics, especially the increased intensity of global conflict relations, makes neutrality a relevant and useful concept.¹² Neutral states have an important place in shaping the modern world for conflicting and unpredictable aspects of international relations, opening the perspective for postulating a strategic culture that will advocate strengthening international responsibility in relation to the issue of peace and stability in the world.

The European strategic culture and redefinition of military neutrality

The European political experience confirms the position on the changeability of strategic culture, and therefore the prevailing types of collective behaviour to national security issues. The emergence of the idea of the European community in the

¹² *Ibid*, p. 4.

second half of the 20th century opened the room for the transformation of warlike strategic culture, which dominated Europe during most of the modern era.¹³ The unique historical experience, especially the dramatic events related to World War I and II, have stimulated the need for a different reflection on the relations between European societies, in order to reduce the danger of another great war. Thus the process of creating a framework for the long-term harmonization of relations between European societies began, which for the first time should be based on the strength of common values. The end of the Cold War competition gave an even stronger impetus to such European aspirations, which accelerated the foundation of the European Union as a community of values, and the anti-war approach and idea of dialogue represented the outlines of an authentic European strategic culture.

Basically, the idea of single Europe was based on the idea of a security community as a concept that was supposed to reduce the traps of national geopolitics and the logic of diversity and national particularities characteristic of European states. The horrors of the world wars that were waged during the 20th century particularly legitimized integrative processes based on the anti-war perception of the European politics, and the basis of the cultivation of Europe were the ideas of democracy, the rule of law and human rights and freedoms as the most important ideas of the liberal value matrix. Such a European community also implied nurturing a specific concept of military power, starting from the idea that the EU power should not be in the domain of strategic military potential, but rather in the strength of value postulates and their integration ranges.

It is clear that the EU, as a postmodern concept of political organization, represented an authentic and inspiring model. The belief that the community of European states is not based on power arguments, but on power foundations of democratic standards of justice, equality and solidarity, hinted at new Europe and a new concept of organizing societies throughout the modern world. The specifics of the European unity is reflected in the fact that it is the first pluralist concept of the organization of political communities, which is not based on the power of force, but on the power of norms and standards.¹⁴

It is important to emphasize that the European unification on the anti-war matrix was the key reason that the EU is primarily viewed as a great peace project, whose essential definition is dialogue and cooperation instead of conflict, confrontation and violence that marked the history of European states. The concept of the EU security community, as a framework for harmonizing relations between European states, was announced as a new paradigm in thinking and practicing security in Europe. Basically, this extended, comprehensive, multilateral and international concept is based on the idea of the indivisibility of security and the importance of peace,

¹³ Robert Kejgan, *O raju i moći, Amerika i Evropa u Novom svetskom poretku*, Čarobna knjiga, Beograd, 2003, p. 13.

¹⁴ Stanislav Stojanović, Ksenija Đurić Atanasievski, "Deficiti i ograničenja globalnog upravljanja", *Srpska politička misao*, Beograd, 2/2016.

dialogue and democratic social organization as the main ideas of the EU and its values. The power of such ideas was not disputed, so it was also a natural tendency to promote commitment to such value postulates.¹⁵

The outlines of the new European community, which bases its effectiveness on nurturing a specific political discourse, simultaneously represented the foundation of the emergence of a new European strategic culture as a specific cultural construct. Basically, the character of the new European strategic culture with its hybrid identity was postnational and implied overcoming the traditional security concept that was primarily nationally defined¹⁶. At the same time, by affirming the strategic culture of peace, the EU possessed strong socializing potential in encouraging international responsibility in the European neighbourhood, strengthening international responsibility in relation to the issue of peace and stability and affirming multilateralism in international politics.

Along with the European integration, the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and security unification under the umbrella of NATO took place, with the simultaneous promotion of the US and Atlanticist perception of the world, which also radically changed the foundations of the strategic culture of European societies. The end of the Cold War and the transformation of NATO, which followed after that, made this alliance a proponent of a transnational strategy of actions in the sphere of security, as well as a key security actor in the Euro-Atlantic area. In a short time, NATO asserted itself as a promoter of modern approaches to security and became the centre of an intercontinental network of cooperation, encouraging multilateralism in solving security problems. A special contribution to such tendencies was provided by the NATO programme Partnership for Peace, promoting this alliance into a global security forum.

The European strategic culture that was being developed, regardless of numerous conceptual ambiguities, was also the culture that inspires, and its anti-war aspect and strong transnational trend of considering security made this concept close in value to the strategic cultures of European neutral states. The EU goals were viewed as complementary to the goals of neutrality, and the integration of cooperation in the field of security and defence, in a way that implied overcoming the traditional security concept, seemed to neutral states very encouraging for improving the security of the European continent, as a starting point in defining CSDP¹⁷.

¹⁵ The support and full participation of the European NATO member states in the aggression against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and their adherence to the US concept of warlike strategic culture meant the cancellation of the main principles of the authenticity of Europe as a peace project. Adhering to such a US pattern devalued the commitment of Europeans to improve prerequisites for overcoming war in the European area based on the idea of a security community, founded on dialogue, trust, closeness in values and a common perception of security.

¹⁶ Biava Alessia, Drent Margriet, Herd P. Graeme, „Characterizing the European Union's Strategic Culture: An Analytical Framework”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2011, pp. 1–22.

¹⁷ *Neutrality in the 21st Century - Lessons for Serbia*, ISAC Fund, Belgrade, 2013.

Neutral states began to view the EU ambitions as a continuation of their practice of neutrality.¹⁸ Thus, neutral status soon ceases to be an obstacle for rapprochement, and later for the EU membership, especially because the Maastricht Treaty did not question the specific security and defence policies of its members. Thus, neutral states neglect and gradually abandon the concept of total defence and increasingly turn to the comprehensive concept of defence. This meant that instead of inactivity and indifference, as authentic features of neutrality, European neutral states emphasize the concept of activism, which is viewed as an opportunity for stronger influence in international politics.

At the same time, NATO, as the greatest security association and a key global actor in the security sphere, implied respect, and the clear pro-liberal value rhetoric was a natural continuation of the relationship of the Western European neutral states with the alliance. At the same time, the importance of neutrality as a security concept during the Cold War declined with its end, so the closeness with NATO was considered a national interest, as it represented a possibility of improving national security. Along with such trends, most neutral states during the Cold War implemented a proactive positive component of military neutrality, simultaneously establishing effective defence forces. Then there is a stronger approach of neutral states to NATO. The idea of redefining and reducing the military is becoming relevant, with the condition that they are more efficient and with an emphasis on the content of cooperation.

The end of the Cold War and the decline of tensions in Europe intensified the process of transformation of the neutrality practice of the mentioned countries and the redefinition of the main principles of their strategic culture. The processes of European and Euro-Atlantic integration proved to be decisive factors in the transformation of the neutrality status of Sweden, Finland, Ireland and Austria, and to a lesser extent Switzerland, which increasingly noticeably left the framework of traditional neutrality and, under the influence of dominant European trends, began to pay much more attention to cooperation and integration¹⁹. From a concept that implied credible defence potential, during the Cold War the transformation of neutrality took place in the direction of abandoning that concept and focusing on cooperation in the security sphere. The increase in transnational forms of threats, which are not related to the so-called hard security, warned that credible forces are not enough, but it is necessary to consider national security through multidimensional patterns. Opting, instead of abstention, for solidarity with other European states, the essential definitions of neutrality were abandoned and the room was opened not only for the rapprochement of neutral states to the EU, but also for the intensification of cooperation with NATO as an organization that primarily represents a military alliance.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Igor Novaković, "Stalna neutralnost u Zapadnoj Evropi i strateška kultura", *Vojno delo*, 8/2019.

Switzerland, which has been the synonym of neutrality for more than two centuries, in its foreign policy approach most consistently adheres to the traditional concept of neutrality. Basically, it implies self-sufficient defence potential and avoidance of international organizations that promote political or economic integration. Starting from the fact that a strong military dimension is the most effective guarantee of neutrality, Switzerland has persistently practiced the belief that the only credible policy of neutrality is the one that is supported by an appropriate armed force, that is, armed neutrality.²⁰ Such an understanding of neutrality is included in the national culture and is considered a part of the Swiss national identity. Therefore, this country was persistently committed to establishing credible military structures, so it was often stated that it does not have an army, but that it is an army.²¹

At the same time, especially after the end of the Cold War, Switzerland persistently promoted the positive component of neutrality through the provision of good services, which is why it has become common to perceive its neutrality as a contribution to the world peace. This opened a possibility for the establishment of closer cooperation with the EU and NATO, as the key actors of the European security. Namely, although the European and Euro-Atlantic courses did not reduce the importance of the armed component of Swiss neutrality, they encouraged the process of re-examining the principle of self-sufficiency in defence, expressing an interest in greater cooperation with the EU and NATO. This was followed by the intensification of cooperation with the EU and NATO and inclusion in the activities of the Partnership for Peace programme, which strengthened its international perception as a country that promotes peace.

In the case of Austria, whose neutrality was not its free choice, but a consequence of specific international relations between the victorious powers after World War II, the end of the Cold War opened up the room for a more comfortable attitude towards the assumed framework of its neutrality. Austria was committed to developing a concept of national security aimed at guaranteeing independence and neutrality, consistently treating the use of military force as a last resort. The conclusion is that Austria has never fully practiced the classic concept of neutrality, especially since the time when, along with the intensification of the European integrative trends, the importance of the classic concept of neutrality began to decline greatly. As a part of its neutral security policy, Austria has primarily emphasized solidarity within Europe, as well as not belonging to associations that go beyond the borders of Europe. This circumstance had an impact that, within the framework of neutrality, it relates its security policy to Europe, gradually transforming the principle of abstention into the principle of cooperation. It became the EU member, and then joined the NATO programme Partnership for Peace, making a substantial contribution to the activities conducted within these associations,

²⁰ Dragana Đurašinović Radojević, "Švajcarska oružana neutralnost", Zbornik radova *Uticaj vojne neutralnosti Srbije na bezbednost i stabilnost u Evropi*, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 2017.

²¹ Igor Novaković, *ibid.*

believing that it does not violate the foundations of neutral policy. Likewise, the cooperation within the European and Euro-Atlantic framework did not question the concept of neutrality and a clear commitment to contribute to the strengthening of peace and stability in the world. Its international engagement confirms it as an impartial mediator in peace negotiations and a reliable host to important international organizations. All of this points to the conclusion that Austrian neutrality remains a political concept in various discourses at the international level.²²

It is well-known that traditional non-alignment and neutrality are constitutive factors of the Swedish strategic culture, and sensitivity is an important feature of the Swedish ethnic identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that Sweden, although its neutrality during the world wars was largely compromised, after World War II opted for non-alignment and equidistance in relation to the great powers, using the status of neutrality for the balance between the great powers in the Baltic region. It has also established credible defence forces based on the concept of total defence supported by the powerful defence industry. Furthermore, Sweden has cultivated a comprehensive concept of security through the concept of total defence long before it became modern through combining and integrating national capacities, linking foreign policy, development and security. In this redefined concept, the Swedish Armed Forces still have an important role, but the changed strategic environment after the end of the Cold War justified the shift of focus from territorial defence to international peace engagement.

Adhering to the slogan: *realpolitik* nearby - idealism globally, Sweden, as a small country, has also viewed neutrality as an extraordinary opportunity to find itself in an arena reserved for more powerful actors, and therefore considered internationalism a fundamentally important element of national defence.²³ It has practiced a proactive policy of neutrality and, establishing an image of a state that provides good services, has criticized the Cold War actors and thus gained significant moral credibility in international relations. It has advocated the cooperation of the Nordic countries, trying to relax the Cold War tensions. Based on the belief that the UN is the best arena in which it confirms its neutrality, it has been greatly involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance, confirming the culture of solidarity as its important identity definition. It has developed strong preferences for a multinational framework of actions and has become more ambitiously involved in international peacekeeping operations, favouring political rather than military options in solving crises around the world.

However, in the case of Sweden, neutrality proves to be an extremely dynamic concept that depends on the character of relations in the international system. The intensive processes of the European and Euro-Atlantic integration and the strong erosion of the neutrality discourse, which became more obvious with the end of the

²² Biehl Heiko, Giegerich Bastian, Jonas Alexandra, *Strategic Cultures in Europe*, Springer VS, Potsdam, Germany, 2013, p. 28.

²³ *Ibid.*

Cold War, make the Swedish neutrality increasingly questionable, and the standard motto: *realpolitik* nearby - idealism globally, has ceased to be a reflection of its concept of nonbelonging²⁴. Although it still prefers the UN as a place for multinational cooperation, Sweden has intensified relations with other regional organizations, mainly with NATO and the EU. The accession to the European Union in 1995 imposed a situation where, within the framework of the European integration, neutrality is interpreted as an anomaly and a limiting factor for the actions of political elites, especially if it is believed that the EU is a natural area of cooperation. Traditional self-defence is identified as an important interest of the state, but nonbelonging to military alliances does not limit the possibility, if necessary, to support associations formed by neighbouring states, including other European countries. Sweden is unequivocal in its position that, regardless of its neutrality, it will not remain passive if neighbouring states face threats, showing an increasingly clear commitment to collective defence. The transformation of defence and the shift of focus from traditional peacekeeping operations to peace enforcement operations are followed by the strengthening of closeness with NATO, so Sweden has participated in a great number of operations under the flag of this organization, even though it is not a formal member. Nevertheless, NATO membership is not an option, which is deeply rooted in the concept of nonbelonging. However, it is evident that global relations and supranational associations have changed what neutrality used to be, and the case of Sweden confirms the growing contradiction between declarative policy and practice.

Finland is considered the country with a strong defence strategic culture, and national defence plays a central role in the development of the Finnish national identity. The legacy of World War II, especially the narrative of resistance to the Soviet Union, most significantly establishes frameworks of the Finnish strategic culture and its need for the armed force, and historical memory manifests itself as the realism of a small state.²⁵ All of this points to the conclusion that the uniqueness of the Finnish defence choice is primarily defined by geopolitical factors, which is why the realistic interpretation of the Finnish strategic culture is its main interpretation. The realism of a small state is based on the strength of belief in the capability of self-defence, but there is also skepticism about the offensive use of military force. The concept of territorial defence is the main reason why the armed forces have a special social status. However, a significant part of the strategic opinion has emphasized the importance of participation in international crisis management, which has influenced Finland to be viewed as a country capable of participating in traditional peacekeeping and mediation missions. Although there is widespread skepticism about the scope of the use of the military in international politics, Finland has also taken part in demanding international military operations because it has believed that military efforts provide a stronger influence in international politics.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 28.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 113.

The end of the Cold War and the socialization process of Europe has had a very strong influence on the problematization of some of the main contents of the Finnish strategic culture, especially the dilemma for the policy of nonbelonging and total defence. Finland has become a member of the EU, but not NATO, and the continuity of international engagement has been supplemented by participation in NATO and EU operations and other cooperative activities. The integrative processes and multilateral engagement have softened views on the need for defence capabilities of hard power, apostrophising the importance of dialogue and cooperation as important contents of improving national security. Such trends have influenced the reduction in the military budget and the size of the military, including the reduction in the reserve. The intensification of relations with the EU and NATO has not changed the key foundations of national defence, and the reduction measures are more a consequence of emphasized material development than the evolution of strategic culture. In the international sense, Finland has no ambitions to international leadership, and the general goal of its foreign policy is still the strengthening of national defence. However, changes in the international system, as well as the weakening of historical memory, open the possibility for great reshaping of the Finnish strategic culture.²⁶

Although neutrality is primarily a European invention, the specific course of political processes after the collapse of the USSR and the strength of the European integrative processes and liberal principles of social organization have influenced Moldova and Turkmenistan to declare the idea of permanent neutrality as their security concept. If the Non-Aligned Movement is excluded, the proclaimed neutrality of these countries represents one of the few examples of neutrality outside the European continent. Ukraine also belongs to this group, which declared its neutrality in 2010, but with the election of the pro-Western president Petro Poroshenko, it was withdrawn in 2014.

Turkmenistan, which pursued an isolationist policy after the collapse of the USSR, declared its permanent neutrality in 1991 by the Declaration on the permanent positive neutrality. The permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan was confirmed by the Special Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1995, which is the first resolution of such a kind in the world. Turkmenistan rejects engagement in any alliance that implies a military component, emphasizing the importance of positive elements of neutrality, thereby breaking up with the Cold War patterns that characterized the strategic culture of the Soviet Union.

Moldova declared neutrality shortly after the end of the Cold War. Such a status was incorporated as a constitutional provision in the 1994 Constitution. In the National Security Concept, which was adopted in 1995, such a foreign policy commitment was confirmed, as a response to the expressed sensitivity of its international environment. Namely, due to Moldovan geopolitical position, where the interests of major European powers intersect, permanent neutrality is considered the most effective way to protect national interests, as well as regional stability.²⁷ In the context of such a commitment,

²⁶ Biehl Heiko, Giegerich Bastian, Jonas Alexandra, *ibid.*, p. 122.

²⁷ Svetlana Cebotary, "The Republic of Moldova between Neutrality and NATO Membership Status", Year 1, Vol. 3, September 2010.

Moldova undertook neither to take part in military conflicts and military alliances, nor it would allow foreign bases to be stationed in its territory. It is a member of the Partnership for Peace programme, within which it expresses its readiness to contribute to the improvement of stability in the surroundings.

It is clear that the specific discourse of the development of the idea of community in Europe and the expanded concept of security have greatly influenced cultural changes in the perception of security, radically changing some of the main postulates of neutrality. However, the mentioned processes have not eliminated neutrality, so it continued to be a part of not only the European political experience. In other words, the supranational and regional integration that characterized the last decades of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century did not challenge the basis of the strategic culture founded on neutrality, regardless of great modification of its contents.

Neutrality between the European culture of community and the “return of history”

The processes of disavowing the concept of the European integration, the global financial crisis and the crisis of the idea of a global society have encouraged the processes of strengthening national perceptions among European states. It is evident that multilateralism is facing enormous challenges, that transnationalism is in crisis, and European states, although they share values, continue to disagree on fundamental issues in the analysis of threats and the use of force. All of this indicates that special strategic cultures are part of the political reality of the EU, which confirms that it does not have the potential for a strong strategic culture. In its actions, there is no strategic coherence in the acceptance and use of military force due to obvious differences in national views, starting from states that believe that force has to be used to defend national interests to states that advocate the position that it has to be limited as much as possible. Some states advocate a strategy that includes transatlantic relations, while others believe that a common strategy has to be based on the European autonomy.²⁸ National strategic cultures are a fact, and national resistance to the EU standards is an incentive for factions in the European cooperation and integration. The process of the European renationalization and increasingly strong economic restrictions emphasize the traditional national position, i.e. they bring back the territorial concept of defence to the focus of national attention. This means that there is no single European strategic culture of the EU, and without a strategic culture that will have an impact on the capability to mobilize people and resources, it cannot be a strategic actor.²⁹ For the EU in the era of continued national diversity, the question arises as to what kind of past the future of the EU will resemble.³⁰

²⁸ Sten Rynning, *ibid*, p. 483.

²⁹ Biehl Heiko, Giegerich Bastian, Jonas Alexandra, *ibid*, p. 394.

³⁰ Sten Rynning, *ibid*, p. 490.

The decline of Euro-enthusiasm, especially the Ukrainian crisis, as well as the return of the Cold War perception in international politics, reopen debates on the adequacy of security concepts including noticeable turns in the strategic cultures of neutral states, as well as new turns in the practice of neutrality of European states. Without questioning the European commitment, there are efforts in neutral states to a different perception of military power and its importance. This is precisely why there are noticeable trends that bring military neutrality closer to its traditional form, primarily in the domain of the importance of military power and the armed forces. The prevailing defeatist and sovereigntist approach emphasizes the importance of the military readiness of neutral states. Ambition and neutrality are again primarily related to national priorities, while other interests are taken into consideration with less enthusiasm. This actualizes the reevaluation of strategic culture and the redefinition of strategic responses to possible threats from the East, so the focus has been returned to the negative components of neutrality.

Thus, the Baltic countries, Sweden and Finland, without questioning the formal status of neutrality, fearing their neighbour from the East, brought up the issue of alliance, not excluding the possibility of joining NATO. The cooperation with neighbouring NATO members has been intensified, the Partnership of Expanded Opportunities with this organization has been defined and the Memorandum on providing support to NATO has been signed. The specificity of the Memorandum is that it does not exclude the possibility of stationing NATO forces in the territory of Sweden and Finland, which would represent an explicit violation of the rules of neutrality. The cooperation with the US, which is viewed as the main guarantor of security, has also been intensified, as well as regional cooperation by the establishment of the Nordic Defence Cooperation, with the simultaneous strengthening of bilateral cooperation. Of course, all these arrangements insist on the status of military neutrality, but the intentions of these countries are very clear that, in the event of an attack on neighbouring countries, they cooperate with NATO. It seems that the clear warnings of the Russian Federation have not diminished the strength of such efforts, which means that the interpretation of military neutrality is placed in extremely flexible frameworks.

At the same time, Sweden and Finland have reactualized the importance of military forces. In Sweden, above all, social attention to security and defence issues has increased, with a simultaneous increase in defence allocations.³¹ The concept of total defence has once again become the basis of defence preparations, so their importance is emphasized and the demand for the synergistic engagement of all segments of society is pointed out. The system of conscription is reintroduced, although in a reduced form, and special attention is focused on expanding the mobilization base of personnel in the event of an armed conflict. Finland, which has not given up the concept of total defence and the recruitment concept of the armed forces, has intensified activities that have a clear ambition to make the defence system more effective.

³¹ Igor Novaković, *ibid.*

When it comes to Switzerland, Ireland and Austria, the changes initiated by them due to the Ukrainian crisis and the tightening of the Western relations with the Russian Federation are not so evident, but there are also noticeable activities that emphasize the importance of adequate military effects.

Regardless of their expressed geopolitical sensitivity, Moldova and Turkmenistan have remained committed to preventive positive elements of permanent neutrality³². Turkmenistan declares its permanent neutrality as an important factor of regional stability and security, which is why it has expressed an effort to strengthen the elements of cooperation with its environment. The partnership with the UN allows this country to confirm its neutrality status, launching many initiatives for further affirmation of this concept. The strong economic dependence on Russia is balanced with the programme of cooperation with NATO, but Turkmenistan strives to consistently adhere to an isolationist policy. Considering the pronounced turbulence of the Caspian Basin, it is clear that the neutrality of this country will face great challenges.

The Moldovan permanent neutrality has been considered a strategy that should offer a long-term effective basis for the protection of national independence, above all, when it comes to the relationship with Romania and Ukraine, as the first neighbours, the Russian troops in Transnistria, as well as the Russian effort to restore its influence in the post-Soviet area. At the same time, it has been believed that such a commitment corresponds closely to modern European trends and European solidarity, as well as to international responsibility to peace and stability in the world. The unpredictable course of relations in the surroundings and the conflicting geopolitical perceptions of important international actors have to a significant extent paralysed Moldova from undertaking measures to leave the declarative frameworks of neutrality. In other words, strategic documents have not further elaborated the concept of neutrality, and there is no international recognition of its neutrality, which leaves a dilemma whether the concept of strengthening neutrality represents a factor of stability, or a new challenge with the East and West, bearing in mind that the territory of Moldova is a zone of great geopolitical sensitivity.

The dramatic processes of the dissolution of the former SFRY, the crisis in Kosovo and Metohija, the NATO aggression and the illegal declaration of independence of the so-called Republic of Kosovo have decisively influenced the Republic of Serbia to opt for the concept of military neutrality in 2007. The basis of such a commitment is the Resolution on the protection of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order, which was adopted by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The Defence Strategy, which was adopted in 2019, defines military neutrality as a long-term commitment after more than 10

³² Starting from the fact that neutrality is the basis of foreign policy, Turkmenistan declares its role as a mechanism for establishing fruitful cooperation to strengthen friendly good-neighbourly relations. In this sense, the concept of Turkmenistan's neutrality is perceived as a synonym for self-isolation.

years. This concept implies relying on one's own forces, not joining military alliances, and contributing to the improvement of security in the immediate and distant surroundings. At the same time, as is the case with other neutral states, the Republic of Serbia is committed to Europe and is establishing strategic partnership relations with the Russian Federation, China and the US. It is a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and has an observer status in the CSTO and the Shanghai Initiative.

Although the concept of neutrality is neither greatly institutionalized in a legal and political manner nor it has the valid international verification, which leaves the room for different interpretations³³, it can be argued that such a commitment is a pragmatic decision in a strategic sense. International, spatial, historical and cultural reasons do not dispute the validity of such a commitment. The tragic experience of recent history, especially the painful experience from the NATO aggression, as well as the expressed conflicts of the great powers, which are based on opposing geopolitical identities and concepts, makes military neutrality a rational choice.³⁴

The multipolar trend of international politics is an aspect that greatly confirms the validity of such a decision. The unipolar moment in international politics has left no room for the freely expressed will of particularly small states, and such an exclusive international policy had had devastating effects on the national interests of Serbs. The multipolar model of international politics implies a much more moderate relationship in international relations, and the commitment of the main proponents of multipolarism to adhere to the international legal order heralds a perspective in which there would be much more room for a more appropriate position of small states, especially neutral states.

A particularly important aspect in support of military neutrality is the relationship between the key actors in international politics, who, at least declaratively, do not oppose the concept of military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia. The European orientation and aspirations for the EU membership of Serbia do not contradict military neutrality as its security concept. It is well-known that the founding act of the EU does not dispute such a possibility, so the EU does not oppose the military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia, while Russia and China even less doubt such a concept. Regardless of the fact that NATO is interested in full control over the Balkans, it also does not formally dispute the Serbian military neutrality, while the CSTO and Shanghai Organisation have no particular reason not to support such a commitment.

It is important to emphasize that the convincing reasons for military neutrality are in the spatial and cultural properties of the Serbian national identity, which means that this concept can be supported by some of the main contents of the Serbian strategic culture. A more detailed analysis suggests that the Serbian strategic culture

³³ Veljko Blagojević, "Potencijal politike neutralnosti Republike Srbije u savremenim međunarodnim odnosima", Zbornik radova *Uticao vojne neutralnosti Srbije na bezbednost i stabilnost u Evropi*, Institut za međunarodnu politiku i privredu, Beograd, 2017.

³⁴ Milomir Stepić, "Geopolitički temelji srpske strateške kulture", *Vojno delo*, 8/2019, Beograd.

in an ideological sense ensures the acceptability of such a concept, especially when it comes to the existential geopolitical sensitivity of the Serbian territory and the pronounced conflict of strategic relations in this part of Europe. Likewise, the positioning at the border of different religions, civilizations and empires, which has influenced the establishment of a specific national code and contributed to the development of an independent, distinctive and strongly rooted collective identity, does not contradict the decision on military neutrality.

Such a specific cultural discourse, which is the result of the centuries-old struggle of the Serbian nation to emancipate itself from foreign conquerors and great empires and which is largely based on medieval mythology and the ideal of warrior and sacrifice, establishes a special relationship towards values such as independence and freedom, as the main ideological basis of neutrality. Namely, the axiomatic belief of such a libertarian tradition in the importance of the idea of independence and uniqueness, which represents the main idea of the Serbian political tradition, has a strong integrating and mobilizing potential for the protection of freedom and independence. In such an established strategic culture, independence and freedom have no price, and the ethical and axiological value of such an approach, which has been founded on the narrative of the Kosovo myth, has a huge impact on defining the attitude of the Serbian nations towards the challenges of strategic reality.³⁵

An important argument in support of the position that military neutrality is a strategic choice is its potential of compromise in overcoming the present division within the national identity of the Serbian nation.³⁶ Turbulent history, the complexity of the geopolitical position, as well as the expressed conflict of the current strategic relations, have established some exclusivity in considering the assumptions for a less dramatic framework for the preservation of national interests, which has opened up the room for two variants of identity to exist in the Serbian strategic culture at the same time, although not with equal intensity. It is the political and cultural division in the Serbian society regarding the present civilizational ambivalence in relation to the East and West and the belief that they represent two fundamentally different worlds and two incompatible cultures.³⁷ From such a perception of the cultural milieu, incompatible patterns of national and state identification arise, where on the one hand there is national liberal traditionalism, and on the other there is modernism and pro-European emancipation. Military neutrality and advocacy of a self-sustaining security system, which will not be isolated, but equally open to cooperation with all important actors in international politics, can have a significant impact on overcoming the differences of dominant traditions in the identity definition of the Serbian nation.

³⁵ Zoran Krstić, Borislav Grozdić, "Kosovski zavet i srpska strateška kultura u 19. i 20. veku", *Zenit*, 2/2012, Beograd, p. 147.

³⁶ Srđan Starčević, Srđan Blagojević, "Odnos srpskog društvenog karaktera i vojne neutralnosti", *Vojno delo* 8/2019, Beograd.

³⁷ Filip Ejodus, *ibid*, p. 78.

Conclusion

The changes that took place at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century have altered and redefined some of the most important contents of strategic culture, confirming the position that culture and identity are in some sense social constructions, as well. The European strategic culture, especially the strategic culture of neutral states, convincingly proves this.

Although neutrality has never been the dominant narrative of the world history, the neutrality of a number of European states continues to be an important feature of the political experience of the modern world. The intensive integration courses in Europe and the peaceful strategic culture advocated by the EU, as well as the strong courses of internationalization of security, have not questioned the basis of the strategic culture, which is founded on permanent neutrality, regardless of great modification of its contents. This fact indicates that neutrality is not only the security and defence concept, but also the value definition of those societies. Therefore, it is still one of the most important elements of their strategic culture, which greatly defines defence policy and strategy.

Neutral states have an important historical mission that is often ignored, especially having in mind their role in developing international norms of free trade and international law, as well as developing humanitarianism and advocacy for peace. As a specific expression of the practice of relations between states, neutral states offer an alternative to dominant narratives and patterns of behaviour in international relations and human experience, opening room for a specific strategic culture. Although it is the concept that is accompanied by many contradictions and open disputes, which in the context of global processes disqualify it as a future concept, neutrality in all its modifications still has an important place in international politics, especially if one takes into account the key trends in the current international relations. The postmodern world is burdened with very complex problems, which makes it not only unpredictable, but also dangerous, so the importance of neutral foreign policy discourse can acquire new dimensions. Therefore, the widespread criticism of neutrality does not give the right to treat it as an outdated and insufficiently reasonable choice. This is supported by the fact that the European neutral states are highly functionally organized social states with powerful economies, which ranks them among the richest nations³⁸. All of them have a long history of neutrality, and for some of them neutrality is a significant component of their modern national identities.

The empirical picture of neutrality practiced today is not simple, both due to the fact that each of them is strongly founded in some historical, geopolitical and cultural circumstances, as well as due to different reception of prevailing trends in the international environment. However, it is clear that global processes, especially the

³⁸ Leos Muller, *ibid*, p. 14.

European integration trends, their anti-war context, non-military approaches to security, as well as the advocacy of non-military negotiation instruments in conflict resolution, have irreversibly changed some of the most important features of neutrality, opening the room for an increasingly greater inclination to the concept of activism as a characteristic of contemporary expression of this discourse. Thus, new contents of neutrality have become indispensable in defining the framework of neutrality not only of the European countries, declaring activism a new content in the strategic thinking of security. The current trends of re-advocacy of national perceptions in international politics do not question such contents of neutrality.

The declared military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia is a strategic choice from the point of view of preserving national interests. The complex geopolitical perspective of the national space and the projection of divergent relations in international politics, as well as the possibility of overcoming contradictory self-perceptions in the geopolitical identity of the Serbian nation, confirm the strategic acceptability of military neutrality. Some of the important contents of the Serbian strategic culture, which is often unjustifiably characterized only as a warrior one, in the long run can represent important support for such a commitment of the Republic of Serbia. This fact is of particular importance if it is known that strategic culture often makes the crucial infrastructure of successful strategies.

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Савремена стратешка култура и неутралност

Важан израз савремене стратешке културе, као специфичног односа према војној сили и употреби војне силе, посебно када је реч о европском простору, представља пракса неутралних држава. Иако се чинило да смер међународне политике задобија обресе у којима је такво колективно разумевање реалности тешко одрживо, неутралност, уз бројне изазове, наставља да траје, показујући се као веома динамичан и адаптиван концепт.

Појава интернационализма након Првог светског рата, посебно интензивирање интеграцијских трендова након окончања хладног рата, оснажило је процес стварања основа за једну нову антиратну безбедносну визију европског простора. У основи таквих настојања била је промоција сарадње и дијалога и потискивање значаја војне силе у односима између европских држава, чиме је започео процес утемељивања стратешке културе Европске уније као аутентичног постнационалног модела. Нова стратешка култура са специфичним погледом на природу односа међу европским државама, која је сасвим различита од традиционално поиманих садржаја тог појма, потискивала је значај безбедносних националних перцепција, као и делотворности употребе војне силе у међународној политици, промовишући идеју недељивости безбедности.

Несумњиво, снажан интеграциони замах и транснационални тип претњи утицали су на редефинисање праксе неутралности, па је приступ неутралних држава европским и евроатлантским интеграцијама сматран природним током догађаја. Тако је данас неутралност у неким аспектима радикално модификована и више није битно одређена, између осталог, изолацијом, већ наглашеним

међународним ангажманом. Напуштање или значајно редефинисање главних постулата неутралности изазвало је озбиљне изазове важности неутралности, аутентичности и домета стратешке културе неутралних држава. Зато су вредносни садржаји неутралности почели да се сматрају дискутабилним, тако да је за неке тај концепт застарео, док други сматрају да и даље може допринети јачању мира и стабилности у свету.

Међутим, иако радикално модификована, неутралност није нестала и она и даље представља концепт који је важан сегмент међународне политике. Оживљавање реалполитике у међународним односима последњих година, као и изазови мултиполарног концепта међународних односа, представљају важне подстицаје за легитимитет избора неутралности и афирмацију стратешке културе која фаворизује вредносне постулате неутралности.

Кључне речи: *стратешка култура, неутралност, интеграцијски процеси, ЕУ, мултиполарност, Србија*