

# STRATEGIC DETERRENCE: THE KEY COMPETENCES OF THE STATE BODIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Veljko Blagojević\*  
Tihomir Radanović\*\*

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The studies of strategic deterrence have expanded since the fall of the Berlin Wall from traditional to contemporary understandings, which are much broader in scope and content of deterrence as a function of the whole society. This is how we can talk about strategic deterrence, which is implemented not only by state bodies, but by the entire society. For several decades, Serbia and Serbs have been in a specific position of permanent crisis and constant tensions at international level. Such a situation is not favourable for strategic reflection and actions because most of the moves that are undertaken are the product of extortion and necessity, and not of strategic reflection and actions. When it comes to strategic deterrence, since the end of the 1980s there has been a lack of systematic study of the aforementioned issue in Serbia. The intention of this paper is to summarise the basic premises of modern studies of strategic deterrence and to offer one of the models of competence of the Serbian state bodies in deterrence, starting from the assumption that preventive action, as stated in the National Security Strategy, is a key principle and task of the Serbian national security system.

*Key words: strategic deterrence, national security system, competences of institutions, preventive action*

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\* National Defence School „Vojvoda Radomir Putnik”, University of Defence in Belgrade, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, veljko.blagojevic@mod.gov.rs

\*\* Tihomir Radanović, MA, University of Defence in Belgrade, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

## Introductory considerations

The studies of strategic deterrence, as well as the entire science of security, in the post-Cold War period have expanded from the traditional approach, which primarily involved military and diplomatic aspects of deterrence, to the engagement of various foreign policy means, such as economy, politics, psychological and informational aspects of bilateral and multilateral relations<sup>1</sup>. That is how people started talking about the so-called hard (traditional) and “soft” deterrence, which is certainly in the focus of contemporary consideration of theoretical strategic deterrence.<sup>2</sup> Considered in this context, strategic deterrence requires a high level of coordination and cooperation between various state bodies if effective deterrence of a potential threat is to be achieved. Therefore, some countries, such as Great Britain, have made organizational and functional adjustments, whose aim is that their government no longer functions only within sector ministries, but as a single unit, in the so-called single approach (*Whole-of-Government-Approach*).<sup>3</sup>

Serbia is in a more or less crisis period, it seems since the “break-up”<sup>4</sup> of the former SFRY, and was not in a position to strategically reflect and organizationally harmonize the competences of state bodies in order to more effectively deter potential opponents. This kind of crisis management essentially represents some negation of strategic actions and necessarily requires its transformation into a systematically arranged organization with precisely defined competences of state bodies for strategic deterrence. Therefore, it is necessary to regulate key strategic determinants as competences in the corresponding legal and by-law norms, in order to legally define the aforementioned matter. In this way, subjective organizational

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<sup>1</sup> Dragan R. Simić, *Nauka o bezbednosti – Savremeni pristupi bezbednosti*, Službeni glasnik i Fakultet političkih nauka, Beograd, 2002; Mladen Bajagić, *Međunarodna bezbednost, Kriminalističko-policijska akademija*, Beograd, 2012; Filip Ejđus, *Međunarodna bezbednost: teorije, sektor i nivoi*, Službeni glasnik i Beogradski centar za bezbednosnu politiku, Beograd, 2012; Saša Mijalković, „Nacionalna bezbednost – od Vestfalskog koncepta do posthladnoratovskog”, *Vojno delo*, 2/2009; T. V. Paul, Patrick Morgan, James Wirtz (ed.), *Complex Deterrence - Strategy in the Global Age*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009; Anthony C. Cain (ed.), *Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century*, *Air University Press Team, London, 2009*; Lela Chikovani, *How to Stop the Bear: Strategy of Small States*, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 2010; Henry Kissinger, *Lidersheep, Six Studies in World Strategies*, Penguin Press, New York, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Veljko Blagojević, „Iskustva i izazovi Srbije u realizaciji strateškog odvracanja”, in: Veljko Blagojević (ed.) *Zbornik radova Neutralnost i strateško odvracanje*, Medija centar „Obrana”, Beograd, 2022, pp. 236-237.

<sup>3</sup> On the features of strategic deterrence and the specifics of deterrence of neutral states and Serbia in contemporary geopolitical conditions see *Zbornik radova Neutralnost i strateško odvracanje*, Veljko Blagojević (ed.), MC “Obrana”, Beograd, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Miloš Knežević, “Mogućnosti i perspektive vojne neutralnosti Srbije – Suverenizam i neutralizam pred izazovima multipolarizovanja” in *Zbornik radova Neutralnost i strateško odvracanje*, Veljko Blagojević (ed.), Medija centar “Obrana”, Beograd, 2022, pp. 161-183.

weaknesses,<sup>5</sup> doubts about the competences of state bodies in the field of deterrence and defining competences in management and coordination between the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, relevant ministries, governmental agencies and non-governmental sector would be removed.

It is well-known that the functioning of the state apparatus (and thus the security system) and civil society is burdened by a lot of regulations and that there is a great danger that the legal regulation, which defines the competences of state bodies in the field of strategic deterrence, may to a certain extent contribute to such a situation even more. Nevertheless, we believe that there is an urgent need to adopt such legal regulations and thereby systematise the state actions in terms of deterrence, especially since it has been recognised as a priority principle and task in the National Security Strategy of Serbia.<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging the fact that there is a great number of legal and by-law regulations, the basic principle of the organization of strategic deterrence should be a minimal change to legal and general by-law acts, which ensure the systematic implementation of deterrence. In this way, conditions would be created for the most rational and efficient engagement of employees in state institutions, with a note that, for the purpose of this paper, they mean all institutions that are financed from the Republic budget and the budget of local governments. The competence of the Republic to legally define the matter of deterrence is indisputable because it comes from the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.<sup>7</sup>

Military deterrence is a traditional, but still relevant basis for comprehensive deterrence. Military power certainly represents a fundamental capability for deterrence in the context of support to foreign policy, diplomatic performance, economic cooperation with foreign countries and in terms of psychological and informational resistance and reliability.<sup>8</sup> Military power, in the context of strategic deterrence, can also be understood as the backbone of a society and/or state, with all its functions.

The revolution in military affairs has led to the massive use of satellites, unmanned aircraft, digital technology and other modern technical and technological achievements for the military. Such dynamics of the development of military capabilities can only be followed by the great powers that have human, technical, technological and scientific potential, which objectively reduces the military deterrence potential of small and

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<sup>5</sup> Nebojša Nikolić, „On Research Policy Profiling in Strategic Research for National Defence”, PaKSoM 2020, Proceedings of the 2nd Virtual Conference „Path to a knowledge Society – Managing Risk and Innovation”, Research and Development Center ALFATEC, Niš, 2020, pp. 207-213; Nebojša Nikolić, „On the Selection of Scientific Projects in the Strategic Research Institute”, XLVI International Symposium on Operational Research, SYM-OP-IS 2019, Kladovo, pp. 15-18.

<sup>6</sup> National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette no. 94/2019, Article 4.1 and 5.2.

<sup>7</sup> Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of RS, no. 98/2006, Article 97, special paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 10 and 16; Article 112, Article 139.

<sup>8</sup> Veljko Blagojević, *Moć i sila – Srbija i vojni faktor u međunarodnoj politici*, Medija centar „Obrana”, Beograd, 2022, pp. 393-418; Jack Wailing, *By Paraty and Presence – Deterring Russia with Conventional Land Forces*, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, London, 2020.

medium-sized states.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, they are forced to find strategic solutions based on alliances or, in modern conditions, less often, on the independent development of a respectable concept of total defence, which should provide the deterrence of a potential aggressor, based on the assessment that their losses in war will be unacceptably high. This group of countries certainly includes Serbia, which consistently implements a policy of military neutrality that implies relying on its potential for defence, both in terms of the production of weapons and military equipment, as well as in relation to the development of the operational capabilities of the armed forces and the concept of total (comprehensive) defence.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, it can be said that for small and medium-sized countries, such as Serbia, which is also military neutral, the acquisition of modern weapons and military equipment is a necessary imperative, which is often questionable for implementation for various reasons, such as economic possibilities for their procurement, but there are also political restrictions as the result of the decision not to join military alliances.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the development of a credible concept of comprehensive defence is a necessary condition for reliable deterrence, which will unequivocally indicate to a potential aggressor the fact that they have to count on great losses in the event of war. It is an important task for us and we will never be capable of saying that we have successfully carried it out, but we should continuously perform it. Considered in this sense, the reintroduction of conscription in Serbia is not only desirable, but necessary and related to the key strategic function of the armed forces, which is deterrence.<sup>12</sup>

## The competences of the state bodies of the Republic of Serbia in comprehensive deterrence

Providing systematic implementation of the principle of comprehensiveness, together with the principle of knowledge-worthiness and timeliness, certainly represents the key prerequisite for effective deterrence in modern conditions.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Veljko Blagojević, Igor Pejić, *Military Power in International politics – Past- Present- Future*, LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2019, pp. 9-41.

<sup>10</sup> The term “comprehensive” is the key to understanding modern concept of defence, which, in addition to armed resistance to an aggressor, also includes organized opposition in other spheres of social life, such as economy, culture, information and propaganda activities, traffic, cyber space, etc.

<sup>11</sup> Milomir Stepić, “Celishodnost vojne neutralnosti Srbije kao instrumenta strateškog odvrtačanja u kontekstu globalnih geopolitičkih trendova”, pp. 98-117 and Miloš Knežević, “Mogućnosti i perspektive vojne neutralnosti Srbije – Suverenizam i neutralizam pred izazovima multipolarizovanja”, pp. 141-189, in: *Neutralnost i strateško odvrtačanje*, Veljko Blagojević (ed.), Medija centar “Obrana”, Beograd, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Srđan Starčević, Srđan Blagojević, “Uloga služenja vojnog roka u razvoju srpske strateške kulture”, *Vojno delo*, 4/2020, pp. 85-104.

<sup>13</sup> The importance of the principle of comprehensiveness can perhaps be most effectively explained through the concept of the centre of gravity, which relies on the teachings of the classical theorists of strategic studies Sun Tzu and Carl von Clausewitz, who argued that the

Simultaneously, it is also the greatest challenge for the Serbian strategic studies, which entails a systematic definition of the competences of state bodies in the function of strategic deterrence. When analysing this problem, the first thing that can be noticed is that it is a purely legal problem that can be boiled down to the distribution of the competences of state bodies. Nevertheless, it is necessary for strategic studies to provide key parameters that would serve as a starting point to lawyers for the systematic organisation of strategic deterrence<sup>14</sup>.

The competences of the Ministry of Defence are well-organised and meet the basic requirements for engagement in deterrence, primarily in strengthening the operational capabilities of the Serbian Armed Forces. At the same time, we should not neglect the important functions of the Military Intelligence Agency, especially the network of defence attache offices, as well as the functions of strategic defence planning and the organization and preparation of the territory of Serbia for defence needs.<sup>15</sup>

Fortunately, in terms of competence there are no major problems and uncertainties when it comes to the defence system and the function of military deterrence. There are greater problems related to the development of by-law norms and the implementation of the concept of total defence. It is being worked on, and results are expected in near future. Nevertheless, it can be said that the legal regulation of competence in military deterrence is functional and can serve as a model for other fields of social life.

The national security system certainly represents the most important pillar that the entire deterrence has to rely on, and the success of deterrence on political, diplomatic, military, economic, cultural and any other basis depends to a great extent on its efficiency and reliability. The national security system is the “eyes, brain and nervous system” of state, which should indicate the following key factors of strategic deterrence: potential dangers from strategic environment, as well as internal risks and the inadequacy of the state defence mechanisms. Furthermore, it should timely and objectively assess the overall national capacities for deterrence, define in a timely manner target groups that should be acted upon for the purpose of deterrence, as well as means and instruments for deterrence, assess credibility and effectiveness of deterrence, etc.

In terms of competence, the Security Information Agency is, of course, a very important state body in the organisation and implementation of strategic deterrence because it has both a defensive and offensive component, i.e. bodies in the country and abroad. Moreover, it is adequately positioned in the political system because it is

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opponent (rival) has to be well-known, especially the key support and sources as the basis of their power. These factors essentially represent the centre of gravity and, if victory is desired, the centre of gravity of the opponent has to be affected and thereby create conditions to reduce the opponent's will for conflict, as well as their power. See: Dragomir Đurić, Sreten Eregić, “Pojmovno određenje centra gravitacije”, *Vojno delo*, 1/2012, pp. 228-252.

<sup>14</sup> Veljko Blagojević, “Strateška kultura i nacionalna bezbednost”, *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke*, 2/2019, Novi Sad, pp. 163–178; Vangel Milkovski, „Organizaciona kultura u Vojsci Srbije”, *Nacionalni interes*, 3/2020, pp. 59-88.

<sup>15</sup> Veljko Blagojević, *Srbija i izazovi odbrambene diplomatije*, Medija centar “Odbrana”, Beograd, 2017.

directly related to the Government, whose competence is the implementation of all policies and strategic commitments<sup>16</sup>.

The Military Intelligence and Military Security Agency exert their competences in the key segment of deterrence, which is related to military factor. Their competences are legally regulated and specified and represent a good basis for the implementation of deterrence and, unlike the Security Information Agency, they are specialized agencies that deal with defence and military issues.<sup>17</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has great competences in the field of strategic deterrence, although this state body that implements foreign policy is often neglected in our country<sup>18</sup>. This institution should create conditions for credible deterrence and monitoring of effects of efforts made in this field. Furthermore, it should define key target groups that should be acted upon, as well as means and instruments. Their competence in the field of informing foreign public about Serbia's politics, as well as monitoring the activities of foreign media related to Serbia, is also important. When we add the function of assistance to preserve and develop the spiritual, national and cultural identity of Serbs out of Serbia, it can be said that effective deterrence cannot be imagined without this institution.

The effectiveness of the Ministry of Interior is a main and reliable basis for deterrence, because, among other things, all foreigners who come to Serbia meet their members. The very efficiency of the police and its image to foreigners and local population will also define the perception of whether our state border will be treated as "soft" or "hard". This issue is also related to the fight against organized crime, drug and human trafficking, which foreign intelligence services very often instrumentalize. Moreover, the effectiveness in terms of countering illegal migration and abuse of the right to asylum, indicates its great importance for the stability and reliability of strategic deterrence. The competences of this institution in the circulation and transportation of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other dangerous substances, which are directly calculated by potential aggressors in assessing the profitability of engagement, should also be emphasized. This indicates that any affair, in which members and officials of this institution are mentioned as actors, negatively affects the image of Serbia and reduces the potential of deterrence. That this claim is not exaggerated is proved by one of the basic principles of effective deterrence - comprehensiveness.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Law on the Foundations for the Regulation of Security Services of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of RS no. 116/2007 and 72/2012; Law on the Security Information Agency, Official Gazette of RS no. 19/2002

<sup>17</sup> Law on the Military Security and Military Intelligence Agency, Official Gazette of RS no. 88/2009, 55/2012 - CC decision and 17/2013.

<sup>18</sup> Veljko Blagojević, *Srbija i izazovi odbrambene diplomatije*, Medija centar "Odbrana", Beograd, 2017, pp. 103-115.

<sup>19</sup> Law on Police, Official Gazette of RS no. 6/2016, 24/2018 and 87/2018.

The competences of the Ministry of Justice are in a direct functional relation with police affairs, and their effectiveness can send a strong message to potential organizers of subversive activities towards Serbia. This Ministry, among other things, prepares regulations in the field of fighting corruption, provides international legal assistance in criminal matters and supervises the implementation of regulations on the protection of secret data, whose quality serves as a deterrent.<sup>20</sup>

The Ministry of Finance has great competences in the distribution of budget funds and is responsible for providing the conditions for the implementation of deterrence strategy because it creates the conditions to exert functional competences.<sup>21</sup> The current crisis, caused by the war in Ukraine and the Western sanctions against Russia, has emphasized the importance of the competence of this Ministry in the field of international macroeconomic and financial trends and the importance of the Serbian economic potential. This crisis also highlights the importance of the Ministry of Economy, which develops the policies and strategies of economic development and, what is particularly important for the security and defence sector, takes care of the effectiveness of encouraging more even regional development. The war in Ukraine has additionally actualized the competences of the Ministry in charge of agriculture, forestry and water management in the context of strategic deterrence.<sup>22</sup> This Ministry proposes and implements strategies and policies for the development of agriculture and food industry; the balance of agricultural and food products and the system of commodity reserves, and it is also important for rural development, which is a prerequisite for settlement in particularly sensitive border areas. The local population has always been the support to the security control of the territory and defence of Serbia, and the depopulation of border territories is considered a security risk.

The competences of the Ministry of Culture and Information, although it seems that they are not related to the topic of strategic deterrence, represent a significant segment of it, especially in the fields of the protection of the cultural heritage of Serbs, as a pledge for the preservation of national identity.<sup>23</sup> However, perhaps more important for strategic deterrence is the authority to monitor the activities of foreign information institutions and media. This function seems to be neglected a lot, not only to an external factor, but also in an internal perspective. The activities of this sector are mainly related to digital and media literacy and the like, while the essence related to the organized informing of national and foreign public is neglected. To confirm this position, it is enough to visit the website of this Ministry and analyse the engagement of the Information and Media Sector. There we should look for answers to the questions: why Serbia rarely systematically counters the attempts to revise history and the obvious propaganda activities of its neighbours and Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija. Instead, answers often come from governmental officials, rather than from experts and scientists.

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<sup>20</sup> Law on Ministries, Official Gazette of RS no. 128/2020, Article 10.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, Article 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, Article 5.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Article 22.

The Ministry in charge of labour, employment, veteran and social affairs has great competences for strategic deterrence in terms of effective veteran and disabled protection, nurturing traditions of the Serbian liberation wars, protection of monuments of liberation wars in the country and abroad, as well as support to veteran and disabled organizations.<sup>24</sup> The attitude towards those who have sacrificed themselves for Serbia is a significant indicator for potential aggressors, as well as for the readiness to defend the country. It is similar with the competences of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is very important, because through its actions towards the youth, great capabilities of the wider population can be developed, which are important for defence and security.<sup>25</sup> A good example is neutral Austria, which has the unified ministry of youth and defence that functionally merges defence and training and education of young people.<sup>26</sup>

The competences of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, seemingly paradoxically, have key functions of strategic deterrence.<sup>27</sup> The issue of legitimacy and the establishment of social cohesion in matters of national security are the basis for forming a security system.<sup>28</sup> It is particularly important to provide the greatest possible legitimacy of the government, which is of vital importance for at least two reasons: 1) the readiness to defend state and contribute to its security, which is based on conscious and voluntary engagement in accordance with the Serbian tradition, and 2) the broad scope of legitimacy that includes national minorities and various groups of citizens with special characteristics. Therefore, it is important to obey the human and minority rights of all citizens, which should not be understood as an obligation in the process of the European integration, but as an immanent issue of national security. At the same time, the possibilities for the subversive actions of an external factor to motivate civil disobedience and the feeling of not belonging to society are reduced. Perhaps the key competence of this Ministry is in the domain of social dialogue because defence and security issues are primary for reaching a compromise between political actors. The compromise on these issues is one of the prerequisites for establishing a reliable, efficient and comprehensive security and defence system. The absence of consensus on the issue of security, in a strategic sense, means a kind of invitation to a foreign factor to plan engagement for the purpose of exploiting political instability, and its absence undermines efforts for comprehensive deterrence.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, Article 19.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Article 21.

<sup>26</sup> Veljko Blagojević, "Komparativna analiza odbrambenih diplomatija evropskih neutralnih država", *Kultura polisa*, 31/2016, pp. 317-329.

<sup>27</sup> Law on Ministries, Official Gazette of RS no. 128/2020, Article 12.

<sup>28</sup> Vojislav Stanovčić, *Politička teorija I*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008, pp. 15-21; Neđo Danilović, "Savremeni odnosi između državne vlasti i vojske iz ugla nauke o politici", *Vojno delo*, 3/2021, p.

<sup>29</sup> On other factors, see: Nebojša Nikolić, "Obstacles in Inter-Organizational Cooperation and Hybrid Threats", *Information & Security: An International Journal*, Vol. 39, 2018, pp. 29-41.



## The management of strategic deterrence

Although the analysis of the competences of state bodies in deterrence is not exhausted by this, it is important to make an initial effort to establish functional relations that provide a higher degree of reliability of deterrence. The answer to the previous question - who is assigned the authority to manage strategic deterrence is of key importance for effective deterrence.

Two strategic options can arise here. The first one is harmonised with the newly emerging practice of forming new state bodies, which are assigned newly established competences. Having in mind the principle of minimal changes to the existing legal order, we believe that this solution is dysfunctional, primarily from organizational aspects. Namely, new bodies do not have an organizational culture, and the time factor is of key importance for the implementation of any strategy. Years must not be allowed to pass for this body to gain organizational experience.

The other option is to give the existing state bodies the authority to systematically monitor and guide deterrence. Since this is a complex and multi-sector field, it is necessary for such a body to be highly positioned in the political system of Serbia. The Government or one of the bodies that it has a direct organizational relation, such as the National Security Council or the Security Information Agency, can be considered as rational solutions. In further elaboration, arguments for and against different solutions can certainly be found. Thus, for example, it can be said for the Government that it has already been greatly burdened with various competences and that it should not be burdened additionally. On the other hand, the National Security Council, according to the existing competences, is perhaps the most suitable for the function of managing comprehensive deterrence. The third option is to assign the management of strategic deterrence to the Security Information Agency, which has its justification, and also hidden pitfalls that are reflected in the organizational culture. Namely, it is questionable how this Agency will manage to cope with the challenges of coordination with predominantly strategic, and essentially military issues.<sup>30</sup> Such a solution, therefore, involves a certain risk that could occur in the communication between "civilians and soldiers", which would occur due to different organizational cultures.

It seems most acceptable for the National Security Council to take over the competences for the implementation of strategic deterrence, with the necessary organizational and functional strengthening and minor changes in terms of its permanent composition. First of all, it is about the fact that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance have to be engaged as permanent members of the Council.<sup>31</sup> This body would make recommendations, which would be verified at the sessions of the Government of Serbia and thereby gain executive power. The competences of the Council should be monitoring and strengthening deterrence potential, selection of means, methods and

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<sup>30</sup> Miroslav Stevanović i Slobodan Isakov, Komentar Zakona o osnovama uređenja službi bezbednosti Republike Srbije, Građanski institut za demokratiju i bezbednost PARALAKS, Beograd, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Law on the Foundations for the Regulation of Security Services of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of RS no. 116/2007 and 72/2012, Articles 5-13.

coordination of comprehensive deterrence. Thus, essentially, the Prime Minister would retain the authority to manage the executive power in full capacity, and the competences of the President of the Republic would also be retained, because according to his function, he is a member of the National Security Council. This would, with minimal changes in competences, create conditions for the implementation of deterrence, which would have the conditions for smooth, long-term and efficient functioning.

## Conclusion

The implementation of solutions imposed by modern deterrence studies definitely represents a great challenge for every society, and the way in which the competences of state bodies are regulated for the implementation of strategic deterrence is particularly important. Two challenges can be singled out here that have to be solved in a coordinated and functional manner. The first is, of course, in what way and to what extent to carry out the distribution of competences of state bodies in the implementation of deterrence. We believe that this paper has offered quite enough arguments that speak in favour of the necessity to legally regulate this field, in a way that changes the main assumptions of the competences of state bodies to the least possible extent. It is clear that this is a conceptual model that requires further elaboration and concretization, but it can serve as a starting point for further research.

The other challenge is the decision-making on the state body to be assigned the management of strategic deterrence. Although some solutions have been mentioned, we believe that the National Security Council is the body that meets most of the principles, and would undergo the least changes in order to be capable of implementing this strategic and doctrinal commitment. The development of action plans for the implementation of strategic commitments should have these guidelines, in order to ensure greater reliability, efficiency and economy. Legal regulation is only the first step towards the systematic and effective implementation of strategic commitments, so the results of the research mentioned in this paper should be considered in the context of efforts to establish comprehensive strategic deterrence.

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## Summary

In the post-Cold War period, contemporary studies of strategic deterrence have expanded from traditional ones to contents that are much broader in terms of content and topics. It can be said that today this is the comprehensive activity that should engage the entire society, proclaiming the concept of the whole power. Providing the systematic implementation of the principle of comprehensiveness, together with the principle of knowledge-worthiness and timeliness, certainly represents a key prerequisite for effective deterrence in modern conditions.

Military power certainly represents a fundamental capability for deterrence in the context of support to foreign policy, diplomatic efforts and economic cooperation with foreign countries, as well as in terms of psychological and informational resistance. Another great problem is which state authority to entrust with the implementation of strategic deterrence. It seems most acceptable for the National Security Council to assume the responsibility for the implementation of strategic deterrence, with the necessary organizational and functional changes in terms of recruiting personnel for the Council.

The paper deals with the problem how to distribute the competences of state authorities in the implementation of deterrence. We believe that this paper has offered quite enough arguments that it is necessary to legally regulate this field in a manner that it changes the basic assumptions of the competences of state authorities to the least possible extent. It is clear that this is a conceptual model that requires further elaboration and concretization, but it can serve as a starting point for further research.

*Key words: strategic deterrence, national security system, competences of institutions, preventive action*

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