NON-MILITARY ASPECTS OF STRATEGIC DETERRENCE

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The exposure to a wide range of threats that are not necessarily of a military character, and which endanger the security of state and its citizens, often called asymmetric and hybrid threats in modern vocabulary, require a systemic and strategic response from all subjects of society. Certain weaknesses of political system and political culture, the increasing economic stratification of population, corruption, social divisions on the basis of political, ethnic and religious orientation, which greatly disrupt the cohesion of society, open up room for the negative actions of various actors and the collapse of the overall security of state, which, in the end, may lead to its collapse and/or violent regime change. Precisely due to this, strategic deterrence should be viewed in a broader context than the classic one, based on the state military power. The main hypothesis of the paper is that the very change in the perception of security, as well as the increasingly diverse manners of endangering it, which, among other things, are also reflected in the theories of modern wars, impose on state the obligation to extend the concept of strategic deterrence to other spheres of social actions, in addition to the military one, which still remains crucially important. Therefore, the establishment of institutions and the development of a democratic and more just society in an economic sense, which strengthen the resistance of state and society to military and non-military threats to security are a key prerequisite for the effectiveness of strategic deterrence.

Key words: *strategic deterrence, institution establishment, state security, hybrid threats, violent regime change*

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Introduction

Strategic deterrence can be understood in the broadest sense as preventing the implementation of certain plans of a potential adversary, i.e. giving up the enemy's intention. Due to the state exposure to a wide range of security threats that are not necessarily of a military character, there is a need to expand the context of strategic deterrence.[1] This change is related to a modern understanding of security and its consideration through several sectors and levels.[2] Some researchers point to the problem of measuring the effectiveness of deterrence strategy, because it can be objectively evaluated by "events that have not happened", which is very difficult in practice, because it is not possible to reliably know whether the absence of conflict (war) is the result of the implementation of deterrence strategy, or some other circumstances.[3]

In the traditional, state-centric security approach, the only and exclusive reference security object is state, that is, its territory and sovereignty, and the instrument used to protect them is military power. Nowadays they are often invisible threats for the state-centric concept of security, a germ that grows into cruel armed conflicts.[4] The question arises whether military power, which represents the backbone of the classic theory of strategic deterrence, can adequately respond to modern warfare such as hybrid warfare, asymmetric warfare, network-centric warfare, etc. All of these types of warfare, which belong to the theories of the 21st century warfare, have an expanded spectrum of action, which leaves the purely physical dimension of warfare and therefore the framework of the effectiveness of military power.

Hybrid threats and hybrid warfare, which are increasingly being talked and written about,[5] represent a set of activities aimed at destroying national identity, social cohesion and economic well-being, the functionality of institutions and the overall state power, which in a comprehensive and systematic way, in combination with military component, threatens the state security.[6] Similarly, asymmetric warfare and asymmetric forms of

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[1] There is a difference between the concept of "extended deterrence", which refers to the deterrence of attacks on allies and the "extended context of strategic deterrence", which the authors use to denote the implementation of the concept of strategic deterrence to several sectors, not just the military one.

[2] Filip Ejdus, *Međunarodna bezbednost: Teorije, sektori i nivoi*, Službeni glasnik i BCBP, Beograd, 2012, pp. 207-275.

[3] Anastasia Filippidou, „Deterrence: Concepts and Approaches for Current and Emerging Threats", in *Deterrence: Concepts and Approaches for Current and Emerging Threats*, Springer, 2020, p. 7.

[4] Katarina Štrbac, Miloš Milenković, Milan S. Milutinović, „Transformation or Suppression of the State-centric Security Approach", *Compendium from the Security Forum Cracow 2012*, Kraków, 2013, p. 294.

[5] Hybrid threats are also recognized in: EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy – Shared Vision, Common Action – A Stronger Europe, 2016.
https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_hr_.pdf, 10/02/2022.

[6] For a better understanding of the genesis and content of the concept of "hybrid warfare", see: Nebojša Vuković, "Prilog pojmovnom određenju sintagme 'hibridni rat'", in: *Hibridno ratovanje – dilema koncepta savremenih sukoba*, ISI, Beograd, 2018, pp. 11 - 27; Milovan R. Subotić, "Hibridni rat – novost ili istorija koja se ponavlja novim sredstvima", in: *ibid*, pp. 28-46; Milica Ćurčić, "Hibridni ratovi u savremenom bezbednosnom okruženju", in: *ibid*, pp. 47-62.

threats to security represent a wide range of actors and practical actions that threaten security, which do not necessarily have to be related to the engagement of the military, as an organized state armed force. In asymmetric warfare, state (its armed forces) is not faced with an adequate (symmetric) adversary represented by regular armed force of other state, but this kind of conflict is most often associated with insurgent, guerilla and terrorist activities.[7] Actors in this type of conflict are mostly (violent) non-state actors, and therefore one should be aware that there is still a great number of non-state conflicts, including those between states, in which struggle takes place through intermediaries, that is, through sponsored non-state actors.

Network-centric warfare, according to its concept, is postmodern warfare in which physical space and physical force lose the importance they have in the classic, Clausewitzian understanding of warfare. The conflict focus is in cognitive and social sphere and is aimed at controlling information space with the objective of establishing control over human minds and their emotions. Due to its characteristics, primarily the absence of armed struggle as the main feature of warfare, it is questionable whether network-centric warfare can be called warfare in the full sense. "In network-centric warfare, it is not necessary to directly occupy or annex territory, but it is enough to establish network-centric control over them. This means controlling the means of mass communication, financial flows, access to technology (limiting it), political and cultural elite, energy centres, youth activities."[8] According to the theorists of network-centric warfare, they are conducted not only against the enemy, but also against neutral and even friendly countries, because "everything needs to be controlled".

Strategic deterrence - who and what from?

To the question: who should be deterred, that is, who deterrent strategy should be implemented towards, a general answer could be towards states or alliances that threaten or can threaten state externally, as well as internal destabilising forces, which are necessarily supported externally in this context. Internal destabilising forces should be viewed as a means used by external actors to undermine state power and finally to achieve the ultimate political, economic or military interest through them (as via *proxy* forces). In each individual case, it has to be identified which countries and/or alliances are willing and capable of threatening the security of some country, which should not be a great problem with good and adequately organised diplomatic activity and the intelligence and security apparatus. What is very important in this context is to consider the ability of various foreign factors to influence internal state actors, which represents the object for expressing hostile intentions and actions. The danger of the action of an

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[7] See more in: Stanislav Stojanović, Milovan Subotić, Veljko Blagojević, Branislav Milosavljević i Miloš Milenković, *Asimetrične forme ugrožavanja bezbednosti na primeru Jugoistočne Evrope*, MC Odbrana, Beograd, 2019.

[8] Aleksandar Dugin, Leonid Savin, *Mrežni ratovi*, Avala pres, Beograd, 2018, p. 102.

internal destabilising factor can be explained by the fact that "it is incomparably easier to dismantle state internally, when contractors are in governmental structures, control mass media, represent various hubs of civil society and manipulate the processes of education, science and culture."[9]

The question: what to deter is somewhat more complex than the previous one, since it includes a wide range of threats that can endanger the security of state and its citizens. In addition to armed aggression, which strategic deterrence is primarily aimed at, the focus has to be on all other phenomena and activities that lead to the destabilisation of society, the collapse of institutions, some form of intrastate conflict and, finally, the collapse of state and/or violent regime change. In a general sense, we are talking about political and economic factors of instability.

Political (in)stability is most directly related to the issue of trust of citizens and social groups in the holders of political power and institutions. "Trust is the connective tissue of society, market, institutions. Without trust, nothing functions. Without trust, a social contract ceases to be relevant, people withdraw and become defensive individuals struggling to survive."[10] The lack of trust due to non-acceptance of the manner the government is run, unmet expectations or non-delivery of state goods and services to citizens, leads to the delegitimization of the government, which is, in fact, a prelude to its change. As academician Stanovčić says: "When a government experiences a crisis of its legitimacy, it easily collapses or disintegrates."[11] What kind of a change it will be, violent or non-violent, depends on a number of internal and external factors, as well as the interests of global and regional powers in a particular country or region. Thus, foreign intelligence services and their agents in a coup country become one of the actors of violent regime change, starting from the preparation phase, through the actual implementation, and all the way to the last phase - the consolidation phase in which, in fact, the success of the coup action is exploited.[12] The actions of violent regime change, primarily coup and the so-called colour revolution are recognized as a part of hybrid warfare, which are led by the most powerful actors on the international stage, or are capable of leading, against "recalcitrant regimes".[13] Regardless of the coup type, it is crucial that they are always preceded by some political or social crisis.

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[9] Ibid, p. 49.

[10] Manuel Kastels, *Mreže revolta i nade: društveni pokreti u doba interneta*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2018, p. 21.

[11] Vojislav Stanovčić, *Moć i legitimnost*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2006, p. 14.

[12] Although it is easy to assume which intelligence services are behind the coup, in practice such involvement of a foreign factor is difficult to prove, because despite the obviousness of the motive, actual material evidence (directives, orders, instructions, plans, etc.) is almost non-existent. Miloš Milenković, Veljko Blagojević, "Obaveštajne službe kao akteri državnog udara", *Vojno delo*, Vol. 67, No. 5/2015, pp. 117-132.

[13] Miloš R. Milenković, "Nasilna promena režima kao sadržaj hibridnog rata", *Vojno delo*, Vol. 69, No. 6/2017, pp. 316-329 i Miloš R. Milenković, Miroslav Mitrović, "Obojene revolucije u paradigmi hibridnog rata", *Vojno delo*, Vol. 71, No. 6/2019, pp. 248-263.

What has become symptomatic is that, due to different types of manipulation, political system, democracy and state institutions are increasingly collapsing in the "ballot boxes". By influencing the executors of electoral process and the voters' minds, the desired "electoral will" is created, which can also be considered a way of manifestation of hybrid or network-centric warfare. Therefore Professor Marinković warns of an increasingly present phenomenon: "Democracies are no longer stifled by violence and coups, but by skillful abuse of elections, specifically - election theft, i.e. rigging election results on the very day of the election, even more skilfully, strategic manipulation of the entire electoral process, which turns the voter into a tool for fulfilling someone else's political will."[14] One of the indicators of political crisis is that citizens publicly express their doubt about the election processes organized by the government, which leads to even greater polarization of society and various types of protests. No matter how much the government tries to present the right of citizens to protest as an indicator of social democracy, the fact is that, as Ivan Krastev says, "protests ruin the international reputation of state and the internal legitimacy of those in power."[15] Such protests can easily be instrumentalized by interested foreign actors for the purpose of further polarization and destabilisation of society, thereby endangering the position of the current power holders. This also undermines the state ability to provide an adequate and timely response to various types of security threats.

In addition to political, economic instability, namely the one caused by economic inequality, rather than general poverty, is one of the causes of the crisis, which has the potential to develop into some kind of intrastate conflict that can threaten the security and survival of state, i.e. the social order and the holders of the state authorities. Statistics show that "all types of violent conflicts are directly related to economic inequality" and this is most obvious in the example of revolutions, as a specific form of violent regime change, because "the greater the inequalities are, the greater the possibility of a revolution is."[16] Of course, economic inequality never goes alone, but is accompanied by political, social, cultural and any other inequality, which can be considered to be the basis of rebellion.[17] Analysing the waves of rebellions in the 21st century, starting from Tunisia, which initiated the Arab Spring, through the rebellions in European countries, from Iceland onwards, Manuel Castells notices that the causes of the rebellions were not only poverty, economic crisis or the lack of democracy, but that "the cause of the rebellion was primarily the

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[14] Tanasije Marinković, *Rasprava o pravu na slobodne izbore*, Dosije studio, Beograd, 2019, p. 303.

[15] Ivan Krastev, *Ometena demokratija: Globalna politika protesta*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2017, p. 64.

[16] Nemanja Džuverović, *Ekonomski faktori oružanih sukoba: Povećanje ekonomskih nejednakosti kao uzrok sukoba unutar država*, Službeni glasnik, Jugoistok XXI, Beograd, 2013, p. 85.

[17] Some studies indicate that "economic inequalities are in most cases the cause of political and social inequality, and not the other way round." Nemanja Džuverović, *Ekonomski faktori oružanih sukoba: Povećanje ekonomskih nejednakosti kao uzrok sukoba unutar država*, gen. quote, p. 87.

humiliation caused by the cynicism and arrogance of those in power, in a financial, political or cultural sense."[18] Thus, inequality, disenfranchisement and humiliation, not poverty, are the main cause of rebellions.

It is assessed that states are increasingly sensitive to economic imbalances and that more serious economic recession can easily lead to the already accumulated contradictions escalating into a greater social crisis, even into conflicts. The extremism of a divided society into quite a few privileged, who control the levers of political, economic, even military power, and the majority of the underprivileged will take place according to defined ideological matrices, which will not lead to solving the problem but, as Professor Vuletić warns, to an even deeper division of society that tends towards conflict. "The historical experience, as well as the current events, witness that the underprivileged strata orient their strategy in accordance with outdated social projects. Precisely for this reason, they represent a mass base of neoconservative and potentially extreme political parties and movements. A real powder keg that can explode at any moment..."[19] In terms of strategic deterrence, the greatest problem is that such a "powder keg" can easily be ignited by a "match" in the hands of potential foreign enemies and their allies, which would make the entire concept of deterrence based on military power become unreliable and ineffective.

The perception of Serbia and its capacity for strategic deterrence

Bearing in mind that strategic deterrence is primarily a matter of perception,[20] it is important to consider Serbian position regarding some issues that can be related to the state resistance to various forms of security threats and its readiness and ability to adequately counter them. In order to obtain such information, some databases and reports can be used, which can make it possible to do a comparative analysis with other countries and monitor its trends. While accepting the fact that these international reports are not always objective, it is still important to have an idea of how others perceive Serbia and in which segments they recognize or assume its weaknesses.

Thus, for example, when it comes to the Fragile States Index, in relation to 179 countries (or territories) that have been ranked, Serbia is in 101st place and is

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[18] Manuel Kastels, *Mreže revolta i nade: društveni pokreti u doba interneta*, gen. quote, p. 22.

[19] Vladimir Vuletić, *Između nacionalne prošlosti i evropske budućnosti*, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2008, p. 29.

[20] That such deterrence is much more a matter of perception than real situation, which of course changes in the event of a conflict, was very convincingly and argumentatively presented by Mihajlo Kopanja in his paper "Deterrence is a matter of perception", which he presented at the scientific conference "Neutrality and strategic deterrence" held on October 28, 2021.

among the countries whose state is marked as warning.[21] Out of twelve indicators that serve as the basis for final rating, Serbia has the worst rating in the part related to social cohesion, according to the indicator called Factionalized Elites.[22] This indicator refers to the division (fragmentation) of society and state institutions on different grounds dominated by those of a political character. This division based on political, national, religious or some other characteristic of social elites is inevitably reflected in depth and calls into question the legitimacy and efficiency of state institutions. Furthermore, this indicator shows the level of political competition and the struggle for political power, as well as the credibility of the electoral process. The existence of stereotypes, extremist rhetoric, representativeness and the manner of choosing leadership and political representatives, the way of distributing managerial rights and the disposal of resources are just some of the elements that are used as the basis for the evaluation of this indicator and which have their importance in the overall perception of Serbia.[23]

According to the Global Peace Index, in 2021 Serbia was ranked 68th out of a total of 163 countries (or territories). It scored the worst in fields related to the access to weapons (the evaluation of the availability of small arms and light weapons), violent demonstration (the assessment of the likelihood of violent demonstrations within the country), violent crime (the evaluation of the level of violent crime in the country), political instability (the assessment of political instability, i.e. the assessment of the degree to which political institutions are stable enough to support the needs of their citizens, companies and foreign investors) and relations with neighbours (the qualitative assessment of relations with neighbouring countries).[24] Thus, it is noticeable here that political instability, which in a broader sense can also include other marked elements, is perceived as one of the important weaknesses of state.

One of the serious social problems that can have a very negative impact on the functioning of institutions, their efficiency and ability to act in crisis situations in accordance with their responsibility and in order to protect the rights of citizens, and also vital national interests, is corruption. Corruption is a global problem, and its consequences are certainly reflected in the sphere of security, although the focus is usually on those of a financial character. The existence of the possibility that someone can "paralyse" the functioning of the state apparatus by corrupt actions is a serious problem in itself. Corruption itself is difficult to prove and therefore measure,

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[21] According to the method of indexing, the weakest country is the first in the ranking and has the greatest number of points, while the most stable country has the lowest number of points and is the last in the ranking.

[22] *Fragile States Index: Annual Report 2021*, The Fund for Peace, Washington, 2021. https://fragilestatesindex.org/2021/05/20/fragile-states-index-2021-annual-report/, 01/02/2002.

[23] See about this indicator at: https://fragilestatesindex.org/indicators/c2/, 01/02/2022.

[24] The ranking criterion is based on 23 quantitative and qualitative indicators, where each is weighted on a scale from 1 to 5 (from very low to very high). The lower the score is, the more peaceful the country is. According to the mentioned segments, Serbia was rated three. Source: https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/, 01/02/2022.

but there are certain methods used to measure the perception of corruption that undoubtedly indicate this problem. According to the latest Corruption Perception Report for 2021, made for the twenty-seventh year in a row at global level by Transparency International, Serbia ranks 96th out of 180 ranked countries (and territories). "With the current score of 38, Serbia is in the group of countries with widespread corruption (below 50). This score places us five points below the world average (43), 19 points below the average of our continent, and even 26 points behind the average of the part of Europe we would like to become a part of."[25] The reasons for such an infamous ranking of Serbia are numerous and various, and among them, of course, are the historical heritage and traditional forms of behaviour, and also the character of the political authority.[26]

A chronic problem of institutions in Serbia is that they are often in the shadow of political leaders, who Serbian society is prone to. As Professor Stojiljković points out: "According to their authoritarian political mentality and style, the majority of Serbian citizens have always wanted to be guided by the firm hand of a leader. The educated young people are not an exception in this regard."[27] The problem of weak institutions and strong leaders is complex and based in Serbian political culture.[28] The fact that this is also recognized as a problem in Serbia today can be seen in the Bertelsmann Transformation Index – BTI for 2020.[29] What makes this situation problematic in terms of considering the issue of strategic deterrence is that such countries are less resistant to external negative influences and various attempts at violent regime change. In personalized systems, it is necessary to act towards only one point - the "leader", while in countries where there are strong institutions, whose functioning does not necessarily depend on personal solutions, there is the necessary dispersion of political power, which increases resistance to various social shocks and security tensions.

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[25] Countries are scored on a scale of 100 (very clean) to 0 (very corrupt). Source: https://transparentnost.org.rs/images/dokumenti_uz_vesti/TS_saop%C5%A1tenje_-_CPI_2021_-_25.pdf и https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2021/index/srb, 02/02.2022.

[26] Aleksandar Sakač, "Faktori korupcije sa osvrtom na stanje u Republici Srbiji", *Bezbednost*, Vol. LXII, Number 3/2021, pp. 145-162.

[27] Zoran Stojiljković, *Srbija traži vođu*, Vukotić medija, Beograd, 2017, p. 155.

[28] The development of culture policy dominated by the cult of the leader has been influenced by many factors from Serbian recent and distant past, so the reasons for such a state should be sought in the Byzantine, Turkish and communist heritage. During the Middle Ages, in the Nemanjić Serbia, "the cult of the ruler...which was also supported by the Orthodox Church" was nurtured. In modern Serbia, "the rule of the Serbian princes, and later kings, largely took on the outlines and characteristics of the Ottoman tradition and arbitrary sultanist rule rather than the outlines of enlightened absolutism", and even in the period of the parliamentary monarchy, the authority of the Serbian kings exceeded any other political power. After the change of the system, the communist ideology systematically worked to establish the cult of the leader of the lifetime president. See more in: Zoran Stojiljković, *Srbija traži vođu*, gen. quote.

[29] BTI 2020 Country Report – Serbia, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Gütersloh, 2020, p. 15. https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2020_SRB.pdf, 02/02/2022.

Instead of a conclusion - how to deter?

For strategic deterrence to be effective, it must not be partial and has to encompass all domains of national power. This implies the engagement of all institutions and elements of society. According to a traditional understanding, the effectiveness of strategic deterrence is focused on the domain of military power, that is, on increasing and improving military potential and procedures. As Huntington says: "A state that wants peace must be well-armed to make such a desire strong. Weak states beckon to be attacked."[30] However, in order for the military to fulfill its professional role, it has to be depoliticised, in addition to being equipped with modern weapons and adequate recruitment and competence of military personnel.[31] Democratic civilian control of the military, which enables the professional development of a military organization in accordance with modern standards, is the only guarantee of its effectiveness in conducting constitutional tasks. Therefore, the burden of establishing a functional armed force, which represents a credible factor of strategic deterrence, is both on the holders of political power and the officer corps.

In addition to the development of military power, the answer to the question of how to deter includes all those elements that increase the overall state capacity, measured through main internal indicators, and also through strengthening its international position through cooperation with others. Active membership of a state in various international organizations, accession to the European Union or some regional initiatives, which are not primarily of a military character, certainly represent one of the deterrent factors. A good example of this is Serbian accession to the Open Balkan Initiative, which is not only an economic, but also a political and peace project that reduces the historical tension between two Balkan nations that still have not fully resolved their national issue. In addition, there is a possible contribution to strategic deterrence through the attraction of foreign investment because it is difficult to expect that whoever invests money in other country is ready to endanger the invested capital by disturbing peace.

A key condition for the credibility of strategic deterrence is political stability and the functioning of institutions. Having in mind the expansion of the context of strategic deterrence, important institutions in this regard are, in addition to the military, police, intelligence and security services, certainly also the judiciary, financial institutions, educational and health system, cultural and information institutions. Building trust in them, through the fight against corruption, their depoliticisation and professionalisation, are a condition for their proper functioning,

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[30] Samjuel P. Hantington, *Vojnik i država: teorija i politika civilno-vojnih odnosa*, Prometej, Centar za studije J. Evrope, Fakultet političkih nauka, Diplomatska akademija, Beograd, 2004, p. 77.
[31] Srđan Starčević, Srđan Blagojević, "Autonomija vojne profesije kao uslov civilne demokratske kontrole vojske i ostvarivanja osnovne društvene uloge vojske", *Vojno delo*, number 3/2021, year LXXIII, pp. 121-133.

and there is no strategic deterrence without it. This is, of course, closely related to the development of political culture that fosters tolerance and a culture of dialogue, especially in the domain of public communication. The issue of social cohesion and the relationship of social elites towards vital national interests is the crucial national issue. For a country that has not managed to ensure the minimum of unity within its society for strategic decisions, or at least the absence of extreme polarisation, as well as the proper functioning of the state apparatus and other social institutions, there are not armed forces that could defend it. Such a state will not be attacked externally by potential enemies, but internally because it is cheaper and less uncertain. Precisely due to this, it is important to know that without establishing institutions and a democratic society, there is no successful deterrence.

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S u m m a r y

Nowadays state and its citizens are exposed to a wide range of threats that are not necessarily of a military character, which requires a systemic and strategic response. The main hypothesis of the paper is that the very change in the perception of security, as well as the increasingly diverse manners of endangering it, which are also reflected in the theories of modern wars, impose on state the obligation to expand the concept of strategic deterrence to other spheres of social activities, in addition to the military, which still remains crucially important.

In order to better understand the concept of strategic deterrence, the authors try to provide answers to the questions: who should be deterred and what from? In

addition to armed aggression, which strategic deterrence is primarily aimed at, the paper indicates that the focus has to also be on all other phenomena and activities that lead to the destabilisation of society, the collapse of institutions, some form of intrastate conflict and, ultimately, the collapse of state and/or violent regime change.

Having in mind that deterrence is, in essence, a matter of perception, a special part of the paper is devoted to the analysis of the situation in Serbia, that is, the perception of its internal weaknesses that affect the ability of strategic deterrence. For the purpose of this analysis, in the paper the authors use some databases and reports by international organizations, which make it possible to do a comparative analysis with other countries and monitor its trends.

Theoretical assumptions and analysed data are used as a basis for answering the question: how to deter? For strategic deterrence to be effective, first of all it must not be partial and has to encompass all domains of national power. In this sense, it is pointed out that military power is important, but not sufficient. Moreover, in the context of strategic deterrence, the importance of strengthening the international position of state through cooperation with others, as well as attracting foreign investment, is emphasized.

Finally, as a key condition for the credibility of strategic deterrence, the authors emphasize political stability and the functioning of institutions. Bearing in mind the expansion of the context of strategic deterrence, important institutions in this regard are, in addition to the military, police, intelligence and security services, certainly also the judiciary, financial institutions, educational and health system, cultural and information institutions, etc.

For a country that has not managed to ensure the minimum of unity within its society for strategic decisions, or at least the absence of extreme polarisation, as well as the proper functioning of the state apparatus and other segments of society, there are not armed forces that could defend it. Such a state will not be externally attacked by potential enemies, but internally. Precisely due to this, the authors conclude that without a comprehensive and systemic approach, without strong and efficient institutions, without establishing a functional and democratic society, there is no successful deterrence.

Key words: *strategic deterrence, institution establishment, state security, hybrid threats, violent regime change*