

THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STATE STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY

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In increasingly complex geopolitical circumstances, defining state strategic commitments in an extremely dynamic international environment represents a great challenge, which is emphasized in the paper as a special problem, that is, the subject of the research which has been analysed on the basis of strategic documents. Bearing in mind the complexity of the subject of the research, the specifics of the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries in the region have been considered, with the possibility of considering already stated and potentially new state strategic commitments on the basis of the key positions stated in their strategic documents. By implementing the method of content analysis, with a focus on the comparative analysis of strategic documents, the research results have confirmed the set research hypotheses. Taking into account cognitive limitations, the results of the comparative analysis and content analysis of the highest strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region have been presented. The paper has concluded that there are no major deviations in the content of the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia in relation to the content of the strategic documents of the countries in the region, as well as that the views expressed in them are directly in the function of defining state strategic commitments.

Key strategic documents, comparison, security and defence, regional security, strategic commitments

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Introduction

The international position of the Republic of Serbia and the accomplishment of its national and defence interests are conditioned by the security situation at global and regional level. An important characteristic of the geopolitical position of the Republic of Serbia is its historic affiliation to an extremely sensitive area and the "Balkan geopolitical node", in which various strategic interests of Central Europe, Eurasia, the Atlantic and Islamic world are intertwined.

After the intervention of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the state national security systems raise the question of efficient and effective allocation of resources, and thus the question of the role and importance of strategic planning, and also the implementation of their strategic documents. In this regard, we have frequent expert discussions about whether strategic documents are just another bureaucratic tool that unnecessarily wastes resources, or whether, by analysing these documents, their real value can be considered, both internally and externally, in order to define certain directions of state policies.

The key research questions in the paper are related to the definition of the degree of deviation of the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia in relation to the countries of the region, as well as the definition of the way in which their content can be used to define state strategic commitments.

The main hypothesis, i.e. the starting point of the paper, is that by comparative analysis and content analysis of strategic documents in the field of security, with the use of a research sheet for data collection, it is possible to define state strategic commitments in the normative and strategic framework, and that their content is very similar and does not deviate largely from the content of strategic documents in the field of security of other selected countries.

Therefore, the objective of the paper is primarily aimed at defining the frequency of repetition of the selected categories, for the sake of insight into similarities and differences between the content of the highest strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region. After data processing, it will be possible to select key categories, which can indicate state strategic commitments. More precisely, during the research, the comparative analysis of the selected categories from the highest (main) strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and its neighbouring countries has been conducted, which, with the implementation of the method of content analysis, has defined their content, as well as the repetition frequency of the selected categories.

The existence of the so-called specific categories that differ from country to country is an extremely important indicator that can partially define state strategic commitment, while mere adoption of trends from other countries can indicate the neglect of strategic planning in the field of security and defence, as well as the absence of a clear direction of security policy of some country.

This situation arises due to the absence of a clear strategic framework of such a country, which directs its national security system towards solving specific security challenges, risks and threats.

The comparison of the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region

The comparative analysis has included a comparison of selected categories of the highest strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia (2019) and the countries of the region: Bosnia and Herzegovina (2006), the Republic of Croatia (2017), Hungary (2020), Romania (2020), the Republic of Bulgaria (2011), the Republic of North Macedonia (2020), Montenegro (2018) and the Republic of Albania (2014). In this way, using the method of content analysis, the mentioned documents have been comprehensively analysed.

In order to offer consistent implementation of comparative analysis and the method of content analysis, the subject of the comparison has been defined, that is, the categories that will be used for analysis. Additionally, for more efficient and systematised data collection, a research sheet has been created, which is a key instrument for data collection during the implementation of the content analysis method (Mitić et al., 2017: 194). This approach was necessary, because the content analysis of the strategic documents in the field of security is a rather complex process, bearing in mind a great number of possible categories of analysis.

In this regard, conducting detailed analyses for each category has not been possible, nor it would be effective, bearing in mind that the considered categories have included key positions identified in all strategic documents of the analysed countries. Furthermore, the analysis of the conceptual definition of security strategies has been a rather complex project, given that there is no single definition of this term. Accordingly, each country has its approach to these documents, as presented by many papers, which strive for a comprehensive definition, ignoring the necessary specificity of strategies (Forca & Nikač, 2020: 27).

In order to have an adequate approach in the research, in which the subject of the comparison is the highest strategic documents in the field of security, three categories of comparison have been identified: 1) structure of strategic documents; 2) national interests; and 3) military and non-military challenges, risks and threats to state security.

The identified categories are relevant for two key reasons. The first reason represents the aspiration to define the level of deviation of the content of the given categories listed in the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia from the categories declared in the strategic documents of the countries of the region. In this regard, the fact that a country emphasizes certain chapters in relation to others can be an important indicator in terms of prioritising some categories, which is a significant indicator in terms of defining its final strategic commitments. Moreover, this approach aims to establish the degree of diversity in the content of strategic documents between the countries that are the subject of the analysis. The second reason results from the very importance of strategic documents, bearing in mind that

they provide a kind of direction, i.e. they represent one of the indicators in which direction the mentioned countries go, or plan to go in terms of security, and which challenges, risks and threats they consider the most important, and what their declared national interests are.

The paper indicates that great caution is necessary when using strategic documents to define the objective state of the state security situation. From a strictly formal point of view, security conditions within a country can be defined by analysing the content of traditional normative and legal documents, such as the constitution of a country, its laws, as well as strategic or doctrinal documents. However, this type of analysis has a number of shortcomings, including a strictly formalist approach to describing the security situation in a country, which is mainly based on presenting its normative, legal and strategic framework. This kind of analysis ignores many other factors, such as a political factor (the tendency of political actors to go beyond the framework of the constitution, laws, strategies and doctrines) or e.g. a dynamic international environment that often changes the strategic environment, which, in most cases, is the key reason for adopting new strategic documents in the field of security. Such analyses usually reflect a non-objective situation, bearing in mind that states can highlight an issue in documents, and do the opposite in practice, which further complicates the analysis of the security situation in the considered states.

Acknowledging the aforementioned shortcomings, the paper has exclusively considered the categories identified by the analysis of the highest strategic documents in the field of security, thus avoiding the usual analyses of defining the security conditions in the considered countries, because they would be incomplete having in mind that they are based only on normative and legal documents.

The analysis of the structure of the strategic documents of the countries of the region in the field of security

When analysing the structure of the state strategic documents, it is important to define the interconnection of their key concepts, as well as to clearly present the structure of the discussed documents (chapters), whereby special attention should be paid to the relevance of their order in a document, and then to answer the question whether the analysed categories have a relevant influence on the strategic commitment of a state.

The structure of strategic documents depends on several factors, but the most important are certainly the main starting points that serve as a basis for the work on the development of strategic documents, as well as the specificity of the strategic environment of the considered state. These starting points represent "a kind of political direction on which the work on developing documents should be based, that is, which should be operationalized in documents" (Stojković et al., 2018: 175). In essence, these are guidelines given by the state political factor, i.e. democratically

elected political officials who lead a country by pursuing some policy. This is very important to note, because state policies are variable, which means that national security policy is also variable and depends, inter alia, on the ideological and political direction of the political factor.

When considering the specifics of the state strategic environment, various political, economic, security, environmental, social, technological, energy, information and other factors that affect the security of a state and its geopolitical position are primarily considered. Starting from the rule that there is no universal analysis of the strategic environment of states, as well as from circumstances that influence the emergence of challenges, risks and threats at global, regional and national level, most states resort to the implementation of their models when making assessments of threats to their security. For example, the analysis in this paper will differ from country to country, so island countries or countries with access to the sea will pay much more attention to maritime security than landlocked countries, which will also affect the very structure of a strategic document.

By analysing the considered strategic documents of the countries of the region, it has been concluded that almost all documents have a similar or almost identical structure, as well as that key differences are mainly in the titles of chapters and their order. Furthermore, when considering chapters, a pattern of repetition of the most important parts of each strategic document has been noticed, where, in addition to introduction and conclusion, parts related to the analysis of the strategic environment (challenges, risks and threats to security), national interests, policy and goals of national security are also repeated, as well as in the manner of implementing these documents.

In terms of the structure and content of a document, there are no great differences between the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and the strategic documents in the field of security of the countries in the region. Namely, differences in the titles of chapters are minimal, but the content itself is largely similar, which indicates that the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region have a similar vision when it comes to structural issues of strategic planning, and there is neither specific emphasis on some part of strategy, nor relevance of a given category, which may indicate a specific strategic commitment.

In this regard, debates are often opened about the order of chapters (e.g. whether it is necessary for a chapter that mentions national interests to be before the strategic environment or not, etc.). However, such dilemmas are of a formal character, because in the very case national interests are defined in relation to the strategic environment and the assessment of challenges, risks and threats to the state security. The analysis of the mentioned category, i.e. the structure of the considered strategic documents, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – The structure of the highest strategic documents in the field of security

State Structure	Republic of Serbia	BiH	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
Introduction	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Security environment, challenges, risks and threats	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Security policy, community	x				x	x	x	x		55%
Principles of security policy (<i>directions, premises, approach</i>)	x	x			x	x				44%
National values, interests and goals	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Elements of security policy		x						x		22%
Basics of strategy, measures, response to challenges, risks and threats	x		x	x	x	x		x		66%
Security concept			x		x				x	33%
Priorities		x				x			x	33%
Strategic focus, goals and interests			x	x				x	x	44%
Vision			x	x						22%
System (structure)	x	x	x		x	x		x		66%
Management	x	x	x			x		x	x	66%
Resources, finances						x		x		22%
Strategy implementation	x	x	x		x		x	x	x	78%
Crisis management				x	x		x	x		44%
Critical infrastructure, cyber security				x	x				x	33%
Defence policy					x					11%
Conclusion, final provisions	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%

The analysis of the structure of the strategic documents of the considered countries has shown that the repetition frequency of their structural elements ranges from 22% to 100%. The greatest similarities have been noticed when defining the security environment, challenges, risks and threats, as well as when defining national values, interests and goals, while the greatest differences have been noticed when defining the elements of security policy, as well as when defining vision and necessary resources and finances for the state defence.

The aforementioned similarities indicate a high degree of conformity among the strategic documents of these countries, especially those that are in the collective security system, such as NATO members. In relation to the noticed similarities, the differences in the strategic documents of these countries show that each country individually strives to accomplish its national interests through the expression of common and generally accepted strategic commitments based on the collective security system (e.g. NATO members), and also the expression of the vision and priorities of the development of the defence system.

National interests

Defining the state national interests has always been a very complex and demanding undertaking. One of the reasons for such complexity is the lack of a common point of view on the theoretical and substantive definition of the concept of nation and interests, as well as its subjects. Thus, the debate about the correctness of the term "national interest" has lasted for centuries, and many authors propose an alternative to the given term in the form of social or state interest (Simić, 2002: 31). In order to provide a unique approach when considering strategic documents of states, the paper has used the term specified in the 2019 National Security Strategy of the Republic of Serbia.

Regardless of terminological confusion, there is a generally accepted view that the people and the state without clearly defined national and state interests and goals, which have been accepted by all relevant factors, have no chance to survive or prosper in increasingly complex time of sudden geopolitical changes (Kovač & Stojković, 2009: 194). When it comes to the state national interests, we mean national interests that are specific for some country and universal national interests that are usually defined by most countries in the world. As defined by the "Oxford Reference" (2022), these are the interests of the state defined at a certain moment by its government, which can be used by politicians as an instrument for seeking support for some course of action, and also as a tool for analysing foreign (or other, *remark by author*) policy.

The specificity of the national interests of some state arises from several factors, such as the strategic environment, historic heritage and political factor. Regardless of the type, national interests also help define the types and amounts of national power used as a means to implement a particular policy or strategy (Stolberg, 2012: 10). Consequently, countries like the Republic of Serbia, which have a security threat in the form of partially or fully manifested separatism in a part of its territory, can state the preservation of such a territory within the state as a national interest.

On the other hand, island states, which constantly face specific types of challenges, risks and security threats, such as piracy activities or natural disasters, adapt their national interests to the given circumstances. Moreover, from a strictly formal point of view, it is difficult to define universal national interests, because it is impossible to define national interests that are common to all states.

Regardless of such attitudes, there are certain interests that are predominantly defined in most countries, such as the preservation of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and there are also some national interests that are mainly characteristic, for example, for democratic states, such as the preservation of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The analysis of the "national interests" category is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 –National interests

State Nat. interests	Republic of Serbia	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
Preservation of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Preservation of internal stability and security	x		x		x		x		50%
Protection of the native people	x	x	x						38%
Protection of national minorities	x		x					x	38%
Preservation of peace and stability in the region and the world	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	88%
European integration and membership, cooperation within the EU	x			x	x	x	x	x	75%
Welfare, prosperity and protection of life and property of citizens		x		x	x	x	x	x	75%
NATO membership, cooperation within the Alliance, collective security			x	x	x	x	x	x	75%
National identity	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%

State Nat. interests	Republic of Serbia	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
Economic development, market economy development and overall prosperity	x		x	x	x	x	x		75%
Preservation of the environment and resources, energy security	x		x		x	x	x		63%
International reputation and influence		x		x					25%
Protection of democracy, human rights, welfare state, rule of law			x	x	x	x	x	x	75%
Development of a multi-ethnic society, interreligious harmony						x		x	25%
Development of security culture						x			13%
Education, educational system				x					13%
Protection of critical infrastructure, cyber security					x				13%
Demographic development					x				13%

In the tabular overview, it can be seen that there are certain differences in the definition of national interests among the considered countries. The national interests that are common to all analysed states are related to the preservation of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as those related to the preservation of national identity. The greatest deviations of the countries of the region in relation to the Republic of Serbia are related to NATO membership, as well as some specific national interests, such as demographic development or the development of security culture. Furthermore, it can be noticed that there are certain differences when it comes to the order of declared national interests. By analysing the national interests of the countries of the region, it can be concluded that their order, among other things, indicates the priorities of these countries, both from security and political aspect.

However, in a formal sense, in the process of strategic planning, the order of national interests does not have any special importance, because states rarely

decide to define in a strategic document which national interests are "more valuable" than others, unless they are decisively declared by the policy of such a state (e.g. Montenegro). On the contrary, many states use the order of national interests to very clearly indicate important national issues for them, and sometimes this is a very important message sent to the international community (e.g. EU integration as a national interest of states that strive to become members of the European Union).

The analysis of the strategic documents of the countries of the region according to the category "national interests" shows that the states define national interests mainly in accordance with the trends of other states, with only a few specific interests, and that the considered category cannot particularly contribute to the definition of their strategic commitments, except in special cases of specific indication of national interests and their order.

However, the relevance of the category "national interests" is at a much higher level compared to the first considered category, which refers to the structure of strategic documents, because it has greater opportunities to emphasize certain specifics that contribute to defining the state strategic commitments.

Challenges, risks and threats to the security of states

Identifying military and non-military challenges, risks and threats to the state security is a very important starting point for considering the needs, planning and undertaking activities aimed at the constant improvement of the national security system and the defence system of the Republic of Serbia, for the sake of preventive action, and, in case of need, a decisive and effective response.

The conducted analyses, according to the previously described categories, show that the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region predominantly develop strategic documents and define national interests in a similar and general way, focusing less on their specific needs.

The analysis of the mentioned categories has identified a number of limitations that indicate little chance of defining the state strategic commitments, bearing in mind that the considered categories in the indicated documents are defined at general level, that is, with a small amount of specificity.

However, the research has found that this is not the case when it comes to military and non-military challenges, risks and threats to the security of states. In this regard, security challenges are potential dangers, and security threats are existing dangers, and under certain conditions can threaten the national and defence interests of the Republic of Serbia, while risks represent dangers with the possibility of resulting in negative effects on its national security system.

The comparative analysis and content analysis of military and non-military challenges, risks and threats of the Republic of Serbia and neighbouring countries, with indirectly declared greatest challenges, risks and threats (marked in green), is shown in Table 3.

Table 3 – Military and non-military challenges, risks and threats to security (CRT)

State CRT	Republic of Serbia	BiH	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
Armed aggression, military threats	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	78%
Separatism	x									11%
Armed rebellion	x									11%
JPH Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija	x									11%
Terrorism, international terrorism	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Weapons of mass destruction, proliferation	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	89%
Climate changes, natural disasters, technical-technological accidents	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Ethnic extremism	x	x					x	x	x	55%
Religious extremism	x	x					x	x	x	55%
Intelligence activities	x		x				x	x	x	55%
Organised crime, endangering public security	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	100%
Drug addiction, distribution and production of narcotics	x	x							x	33%
Migration, unsuccessful integration of migrants into society	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		78%
Economic development, transition, economic security, economic interdependence, crisis	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	89%
Demographic development	x		x	x					x	44%
Epidemics and pandemics of infectious diseases, health security	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	78%
Energy security, resources	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	89%
Demarcation, unresolved interstate disputes	x		x						x	22%

State CRT	Republic of Serbia	BiH	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
	Cyber attacks, high-tech crime, critical infrastructure	x		x	x		x	x	x	
Political, ideological activities		x	x				x		x	44%
Fan extremism			x							11%
Corruption, abuse of public authority, problems of political transition	x	x	x			x	x		x	67%
Leftover weapons, ammunition, explosive devices, uncontrolled sale of weapons		x	x							22%
Abuse of new technologies, scientific achievements	x			x						22%
Genetic, medical, meteorological engineering	x									11%
Endangerment of the native people out of state borders				x						11%
Destabilisation of the region or the international order, regional conflicts, crisis areas, the phenomenon of failed states in the region		x		x	x	x			x	55%
Traffic accidents						x				11%
Industrial accidents and disasters				x						11%
Water shortage				x		x				22%
Pirate activities (attacks on merchant ships, kidnapping)						x				11%
Security services, failed reform, abuse						x			x	22%
Emigration, brain drain									x	11%
Hybrid threats (as a separate CRT)			x					x		22%

State CRT	Republic of Serbia	BiH	Republic of Croatia	Hungary	Romania	Republic of Bulgaria	Republic of North Macedonia	Montenegro	Republic of Albania	Repetition frequency in %
Security of the sea, subsea and seabed								x		11%
Unemployment		x								11%
Incomplete implementation of the Dayton Agreement		x								11%
Problems of managing (administratively, etc.) a part of the territory									x	11%

States very rarely directly define in their strategic documents the subjects (organisations, neighbouring countries, military alliances, etc.) that represent the greatest challenges, risks and threats to their security. An example of exception is Poland, which very clearly emphasizes the Russian Federation as the greatest threat to peace (Council of Ministers, 2020: 6). The subject category is usually indirectly defined through linguistic formulation, grouping by fields, as well as through a number of repetitions in the strategic document itself (example of the Republic of Albania).

After the content analysis and comparative analysis of the state strategic documents, it has been concluded that the category of military and non-military challenges, risks and threats has a greater influence on the definition of their strategic commitments than the two originally considered categories. Accordingly, the states pay the most attention to this category, because its analysis can lead to concrete conclusions in a timely manner that will enable the identification of the hidden strategic commitments of the states.

This starting point does not mean that in the state strategic documents there are general places (positions) for defining challenges, risks and threats to their security, nor that a (certain) challenge, risk or threat to security (e.g. terrorism) is less important than the other one (e.g. unemployment problem), just because it is characterised as a "global trend". After all, the essence of strategic documents is the direction (action) of measures and activities towards the achievement of general goals, and not a specific action that is mentioned to the most detailed level in the action plans of some strategy, so some amount of generality is unavoidable.

The analysis of challenges, risks and security threats of the considered states has shown that the repetition frequency of their structural elements ranges from 11% to 100%. The greatest similarities have been noticed when defining terrorism, climate challenges and organised crime, as the most prevalent challenges, risks and threats to the state security, while the greatest differences have been noticed when

defining specific challenges, risks and threats to the state security, such as genetic, medical and meteorological engineering.

Inter alia, like in the domain of the consideration of the first category, that is, the analysis of the content and structure of strategic documents, a high degree of conformity has been noticed among the strategic documents of the countries that are in the collective security system, such as NATO members. Moreover, the noticed differences in the strategic documents of these countries show that there is no predefined template by which countries define specific challenges, risks and threats to security, which gives additional importance to the category "challenges, risks and threats to the security of states" when defining their strategic commitments.

Conclusion

After considering the selected categories in the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region, i.e. by analysing the structure of national interests and military and non-military challenges, risks and threats, it has been concluded that the most effective category for identifying the state strategic commitments is *challenges, risks and threats to the security of states*, while other categories are potentially relevant only in specific situations. Moreover, it has been concluded that there are no major deviations in the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries in the region, and that in rare situations, countries define specific categories that are unique to their interests, and rather copy the trends of other countries, which may indicate the neglect of strategic planning in the field of security and defence, as well as the absence of a clear direction for the security policy of such countries.

By analysing challenges, risks and threats to the state security, the similarities and differences that can indicate the direction of the state strategic commitments have been mainly considered. Similar results can be obtained by analysing other categories in strategic documents, primarily in countries that very clearly define a specific structure or national interests (e.g. the Republic of Albania clearly defines European integration as its most important strategic goal).

During the analysis of the state strategic documents, the need for caution has been noticed in the field of selection and use of adequate instruments, tools and techniques of strategic planning, and in order to identify indicators that will enable drawing reliable conclusions about their partially manifested or hidden strategic commitments. In this regard, the documents discussed in the paper in most cases do not provide any new information that other states (mainly great powers) have not already stated in their strategic documents. This means that many countries, and above all those that are included in the collective security systems, take over the expressed strategic commitments of the leading members and adapt them to their national interests.

When considering the state strategic commitments, it should always be borne in mind that their strategic documents in the field of security and defence are most often changed with the change of the strategic (security) environment, primarily in

the case of states that are within certain collective security systems (e.g. NATO members), which generally does not apply to militarily neutral and other politically and economically independent states.

Thus, the current intervention of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, along with a combination of many other factors (migrant crisis, corona virus pandemic, continuous violation of international law, selective implementation of the right to self-determination, intensification of negotiations by the European Union on the status of the southern Serbian province, etc.), greatly affects the change in the strategic environment of the Republic of Serbia. This does not necessarily mean that there is a need to change its highest strategic documents, because strategies of this type are comprehensive and general enough, so they have to be changed only in conditions of a radical change in the state strategic environment.

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Summary

Bearing in mind the complexity of the research subject, the specifics of the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries in the region have been considered, with the possibility of considering already stated and potentially new state strategic commitments on the basis of the key positions expressed in their strategic documents. By implementing the method of content analysis, with a focus on the comparative analysis of strategic documents, the results of the research have confirmed the set research hypotheses that by comparative analysis and analysis of the content of the strategic documents in the field of security, with the implementation of a research sheet for data collection, it is possible to define the state strategic commitments in the normative and strategic

framework, and that their content is very similar and does not deviate to a great extent from the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of other countries.

After considering the selected categories in the strategic documents of the Republic of Serbia and the countries of the region, i.e. by analysing structure, national interests and military and non-military challenges, risks and threats, it has been concluded that the most effective category for identifying the state strategic commitments is challenges, risks and threats to the state security, while the other categories are potentially relevant only in specific situations. Furthermore, it has been concluded that there are no major deviations in the content of the strategic documents in the field of security of the Republic of Serbia and the countries in the region. In rare situations, states define specific categories characteristic of their interests, and rather copy the trends of other states, which may indicate the neglect of strategic planning in the field of security and defence, as well as the absence of a clear direction for the security policy of such states.

In this regard, the documents discussed in the paper generally do not provide new information, which other states have not already stated in their strategic documents. This means that many countries, and above all those that are included in the collective security systems, take over the expressed strategic commitments of the leading members and adapt them to their national interests.

When considering the state strategic commitments, it should always be borne in mind that their strategic documents in the field of security and defence are most often changed with the change in the strategic (security) environment, primarily in the case of states that are within certain collective security systems (e.g. NATO members), which generally does not apply to militarily neutral and other politically and economically independent states. Thus, the current intervention of the Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine, along with a combination of many other factors, greatly affects the change in the strategic environment of the Republic of Serbia. This does not necessarily mean that there is a need to change its highest strategic documents, because strategies of this type are comprehensive and general enough, so they have to be changed only in the conditions of a radical change in the state strategic environment.

The constant change of strategic documents to every non-radical change in the strategic environment would lead to chaos in the strategic and doctrinal framework of the state, which would have negative consequences for the national security system.

Key words: strategic documents, comparison, security and defence, regional security, strategic commitments

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