

Introduction to the Special Issue

The South America, South Europe International Conference *New Approaches to Defense and Security in South America and Southern Europe*, organised by the Department of International Security Studies of Ludovika – University of Public Service (UPS) and the Doctoral Student Association of UPS took place on 17 April 2021. More than 40 lectures, related to security studies, regional security, defence studies, military engineering and international studies were held online, organised in ten sessions in English, Spanish or Hungarian. Participants came from over ten countries, many from the studied regions, including Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Spain.

Such a conference of course had antecedents at the university. A series of joint conferences *Dialogue and Conflicts in the Mediterranean* organised by the University of Public Service and the Anna Lindh Foundation have been taking place since the middle of the 2010s, held at the university with the participation of Hungarian and foreign researchers, diplomats and NGO representatives. Various discussion and research results were summed up in the book *Az Európai Unió mediterrán térséggel összefüggő kapcsolata* [Connections of the European Union with the Mediterranean Region].¹ Currently UPS is leading a 3-year international project headed by Anna Molnár as scientific coordinator: ‘EUSecure Project: *An Interdisciplinary Training on EU Security, Resilience and Sustainability – A Simulation Supported Massive Open Online Course (SimMOOC)*, to be carried out in partnership with the Piraeus University of Greece, the University Fernando Pessoa in Porto, Portugal, the University of Salento in Lecce, Italy and Sapientia, the Hungarian University of Transylvania in Romania. Due to its participants and their approach, the project is to have a strong Mediterranean edge. As for Latin America, two scientific events took place in 2017, one on the cultural connections with Hungary (resulting in a bilingual Spanish–English 14-chapter book: *Latin America and Hungary – Cultural Ties*)² and a workshop on the current situation in South America (followed by the book *Dél-Amerika a 21. században – társadalmi, gazdasági és politikai konfliktusok* [South America in the 21st Century – Social, Economic and Political Conflicts]).³ The latter two publications were elaborated in the framework of the Ludovika research group ‘Latin America and Hungary – Intersections’ (2017–2018), formed by Zoltán Bács, Barbara Hegedűs, Béla Soltész and headed by Mónika Szente-Varga.

Ludovika – University of Public Service provides courses which are fully or partially related to either the Mediterranean or Latin America. For example, there are Introduction to Civilization Studies, Regional Studies, Regional Security courses, taught by various instructors both in Hungarian and in English, covering and teaching their own area of research, including the above-mentioned two regions. Elective courses include Mediterranean Region; Italian Foreign and Domestic Policy; Spanish History – Spanish

¹ Anna Molnár and Orsolya Komlósi (ed.), *Az Európai Unió mediterrán térséggel összefüggő kapcsolata* (Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2019).

² Mónika Szente-Varga (ed.), *Latin America and Hungary – Cultural Ties* (Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2020).

³ Zoltán György Bács, Barbara Hegedűs, Katalin Marianna Racs, Béla Soltész and Mónika Szente-Varga, *Dél-Amerika a 21. században – társadalmi, gazdasági és politikai konfliktusok* (Budapest: Dialóg Campus, 2019).

Culture; South America portraits – South America in the 21st century; Mexican and Central American Studies. These are mostly taught in Hungarian and are available for students studying international BA and MA programmes, such as International Public Management, International Relations, International Public Service Relations and International Defence and Security Policy. Further studies on issues related to regional and other fields of security are possible in the Doctoral School of Military Science of UPS.

Traditionally defined as the lack of being threatened or the ability to defend oneself, and attached to the military field, security is still a rather elusive concept, in which both real and perceived threats play an important role. Nonetheless, the idea and ideas attached to security did undergo important changes, due to the democratisation processes in Southern Europe in the 1970s (Portugal, Spain, Greece), in South America in the 1980s (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, etc.) followed by other states, and due to the end of bipolar rivalry. In the post-Cold War era there has been a growing convergence between national and international security⁴ and a broadening of the concept of security, leading to the “redefinition of the referent objects and sources of threat”.⁵ The latter might be grouped in distinguishable yet overlapping sectors, including military, political, economic, societal and environmental fields, as defined by the Copenhagen School at the beginning of the 21st century.⁶ Nowadays these tend to be complemented by new sectors, such as health security, energy security and cybersecurity. These threats affect states to different degrees, but will pose a challenge to all, and will need to be treated with the help of international cooperation, based on shared values and common approaches such as representative democracy, respect for human rights and values, respect for the rule of law, education, social justice and enhanced participation of women.⁷

Studying South Europe and South America in one event has various reasons. These two regions are connected by numerous historic, economic, cultural and migratory ties, yet occupy different positions in the current international system. South Europe, though considered less developed than the northern parts of the continent, is regarded a part of the Global North, whereas South America is seen as Global South. Yet security threats are increasingly multidimensional, cross-border and international. Thus, states tend to face challenges that are getting more similar. Therefore, studying how others cope with security threats can help tackling challenges in one’s own country/region, and lead to adopting good practices.

It is worth keeping in mind the list of threats and challenges featuring in the *Declaration on Security in the Americas* “terrorism, transnational organized crime, the global drug problem, corruption, asset laundering, illicit trafficking in weapons, and the connections among them [...]; extreme poverty and social exclusion [...]; natural and man-made

⁴ Monica Herz, ‘Concepts of Security in South America’, *International Peacekeeping* 17, no 5 (2010), 603; Didier Bigo, ‘Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease’, *Alternatives* 27 (2002), 63.

⁵ Herz, ‘Security and Immigration’, 603.

⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

⁷ Organization of American States, *Declaration on Security in the Americas*. Mexico, 2003, OEA/Ser.K/XXXVIII, CES/DEC.1/03 rev. 1, 28 October 2003. Online: www.oas.org/en/sms/docs/declaration%20security%20americas%20rev%201%20-%2028%20oct%202003%20ce00339.pdf

disasters, [...] diseases [...]; trafficking in persons [...]; attacks to cyber security”⁸ closely correspond to areas examined in this special issue of AARMS, consisting of nine studies. All of these writings are based on lectures presented at the South America, South Europe International Conference in 2021. The paper of Zoltán György Bács (*Dynamic Asymmetry and Converging Threats*) focuses on the paradigm change in the methods of financing terrorism and studies money laundering and infiltration on behalf of terrorist organisations as well as the links and complementary activities they developed with narco-cartels. The rivalry of organised crime groups for resources and the resulting violence is studied by Ketiane Guerreiro in the paper *Criminality and Armed Groups in the International and Legal Amazon*, where she examines the struggle to control the extraction of gold, and by Gerardo Reyes Guzmán in the study *Guanajuato: A Struggle to Control Oil Theft*, in which the correlation between growing homicide rates and the rivalry of criminal groups for gasoline is demonstrated. The connections among violence, poverty, inequality and social exclusion are explored by Ágnes Deák via the case study of Colombia (*Violence as a Dimension of Poverty*). Economic and political crises, rampant corruption and profound disenchantment of the population in the political establishment as well as growing societal polarisation are investigated by Giovanna Borges Aguiar in order to explain the principal motives for rising political populism in Brazil (*Populism in Time of Crisis: The Brazilian Case of Bolsonaro*). The study of Attila Horváth (*Possible Applications of High Altitude Platform Systems for the Security of South America and South Europe*) takes us to neighbouring Venezuela, which features in his investigation on the capabilities and potential applications of High Altitude Platform Systems (HAPS) as an imaginary operational scenario. Iryna Leroy also examines military technology, in particular, the change in the direction of technology transfer. This transfer used to be from the military towards civilian fields (for example business) and has recently been shifting to include the applications of cyber technologies – already employed in business – in military conflicts (*Cyber Autonomy Toolbox – Project Management Digital Transformation*). Current trends and challenges also form the focus of the paper of Veronika Hornyák, but in her case it is not cybersecurity but health threats. She analyses the responses of the Spanish military for the Covid-19 epidemic in the course of the year 2020 (*The Role of the Spanish Armed Forces in the Fight against the Covid-19 Pandemic*). The paper of László Palotás (*How Britain’s and Colombia’s Privileged Partnerships with the United States Influenced Their Respective Journeys through the European Community and UNASUR*) completes the wide array of studies comprising this special issue, where he examines how the self-perception of Colombia in security–defence aspects (being a special partner of the USA) affected her behaviour with respect to UNASUR, originally set up as a kind of counter-organisation to the OAS, with plans to take over some of its tasks, including the resolution of regional conflicts.

Bringing scholars and PhD students together for a South America – South Europe conference also had, from the very beginning, the aim to share and compare investigations in the realm of security and contribute to common projects among researchers of South America and South Europe in the middle or long run. The 2021 conference was the first

⁸ Ibid. 4.

one, hopefully in a chain of scientific events that with the passing of time can turn into a tradition at Ludovika – UPS, but never a routine. The 2022 South America – South Europe conference is already being organised, this time in a hybrid form.

Last but not least, I would like to express my special thanks to the Faculty of Military Science and Officer Training and to the Doctoral Student Association of the University of Public Service, in particular to Anna Urbanovics, Gabriella Thomázy and Gyula Speck, as well as to my numerous colleagues, members of the Department of International Security Studies and scholars from other universities (University of Szeged, University of Pécs, University of Debrecen, Corvinus University of Budapest, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University). Their work and enthusiasm were indispensable for the organisation of the conference and the launching of this publication. We are all very grateful for the editors of AARMS, for supporting the idea of the special issue.

Mónika Szente-Varga

President of the Scientific Committee of the Conference