

**The genesis, theory, and practice
of Russian coercive migration engineering.
A contribution to the study of the migration crisis
on NATO's eastern flank**

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present the origins and assumptions of the Russian concept of coercive migration engineering and its practical application with particular emphasis on the role of special services in such activities. The engineering of coercive migration has become an unprecedented form of leverage through which the Russian Federation pursues its geopolitical interests. The country's use of this tool is a fact and not a conspiracy theory devoid of empirical evidence, as some analysts associated with European Union institutions believe. A comparison of the course of the exodus of Cubans from Mariel to Miami in 1980 and the Finnish-Russian migration crisis in 2015-2016 proves that at least since the Cold War, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and then the Russian Federation - on the basis of innovative approaches to security problems and conflict theory in military science - have developed effective means and methods of engineering coercive migration, making it a tool for destabilizing states and forcing political concessions favorable to themselves.

Keywords

migration, hybrid war, Russian Federation, special services, European Union.

Today we are living through the period of the greatest increase in the diversionary element in the history of Russia, a decaying influence on neighboring countries and counting on the disorganizing methods of the spoken and printed word¹.

Włodzimierz Bączkowski,
Uwagi o istocie siły rosyjskiej.

Who will be quicker to develop a model for the disintegration and chaoticization of societies other than their own, will be the winner in this complex game of construction of new international relations, new societies and a new philosophy of life. Chaos is a multipurpose weapon².

Aleksandr Dugin,
О новом мировом беспорядке.

The purpose of this article is to present the origins and assumptions of the Russian concept of coercive migration engineering and its practical application with particular emphasis on the role of special services in such activities. According to political scientist Kelly Greenhill, who is associated with the United States armed forces research institutions, *coercive engineered migration* should be understood as the cross-border movement of people that is inspired by one state and then manipulated in such a way as to induce political, military, economic, and other concessions from the target state or group of such states. The means used to initiate cross-border population movement can be many and varied³. Their analysis can be the basis for the following theses:

¹ Excerpt from an article by W. Bączkowski (1905-2000), a Polish sovietologist and publicist, see W. Bączkowski, *Uwagi o istocie siły rosyjskiej*, "Wschód-Orient. Kwartalnik poświęcony sprawom Wschodu" 1938, No. 4, p. 17.

² Excerpt from Aleksandr Dugin, Russian philosopher and geopolitician, see A. Дугин, *О новом мировом беспорядке*, <http://www.evrazia.tv/content/aleksandr-dugin-o-novom-mirovom-besporyadke> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

³ See K.M. Greenhill, *Strategic Engineered Migration as a Weapon of War*, „Civil Wars” 2008, No. 10, vol. 1, p. 6–21; *ibid.*, *Weapons of Mass Migration. Forced Displacement, Coercion, and Foreign Policy*, London 2010, p. 13; *ibid.*, *Weapons of Mass Migration: Forced Displacement as an Instrument of Coercion*, „Strategic Insights” 2010, nr 9, vol. 1, p. 116–159; *ibid.*, *Migration as a Weapon in Theory and in Practice*, „Military Review” 2016, No. 96, vol. 6, p. 23–36; *ibid.*, *Migration as a Coercive Weapon: New Evidence from the Middle East*, in: *Coercion: The Power to Hurt in International Politics*, K.M. Greenhill, P. Krause (ed.), Oxford 2018, p. 204–228; *ibid.*, *Asymmetric Advantage-Weaponizing People as Non-Military Instruments of Cross-Domain Coercion*, in: *Cross-Domain Deterrence: Strategy in an Era of Complexity*, E. Gartzke, J. Lindsay (ed.), Oxford 2019, p. 259–289.

1. Forced migration engineering in Russian terms is generally treated as a non-military means of warfare or one of the geopolitical technologies (described further below).
2. The course of the exodus of Cubans from Mariel to Miami in 1980 and the Finnish-Russian migration crisis of 2015-2016 indicates that since the Cold War, the USSR and then its successor, the Russian Federation, have developed effective means and methods to engineer coercive migration, using it as a tool to weaken individual states or to help force political concessions more favorable to themselves.
3. The preparation and execution of coercive migration engineering is handled by both Russian security organs and special services of countries in alliance with the Russian Federation.

To date, there has been no comprehensive study of Russia's use of mass migration as a weapon. Only scarce information can be found in the Western literature on the subject, not excluding extensive studies by the aforementioned Kelly Greenhil. Moreover, some analysts even deny the very fact of militarization of migration by the Russian Federation. Supporters of this thesis include Alex Schmid of the think-tank International Centre for Counter-Terrorism in The Hague. He argues that findings such as the use of the 2015-2016 migration crisis by the Russian Federation to destabilize EU member states is a conspiracy theory unsupported by any empirical evidence⁴. European Commission official Hans Schoemaker, on the other hand, does allow for the possibility that the Russian Federation may have partially caused the influx of migrants to Europe, but according to him, this was only a side effect of its actions and not a planned operation⁵.

The source basis for this article is documents produced by the U.S. Secret Service and other government agencies, as well as publications by universities, think tanks, and public interest organizations. Information contained in interviews, newspaper articles, audiovisual recordings, dissertations, and memoirs of former officers of the Russian special services are also valuable additions. Publications by Russian experts connected with the special services, the armed forces, and especially with their didactic and scientific background were also a source of knowledge. However, it should be remembered that scientific research on the special services has many limitations, which are due

⁴ A.P. Schmid, *Links between Terrorism and Migration: An Exploration*, <http://icct.nl/app/uploads/2016/05/Alex-P.-Schmid-Links-between-Terrorism-and-Migration-1.pdf>, p. 5 [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

⁵ H. Schoemaker, *Allegations of Russian Weaponized Migration Against the EU. With the Blackest Intention?*, „Militaire Spectator” 2019, No. 7–8, p. 361–364, 373.

to the covert nature of some of their activities or to deliberate disinformation ventures. The biggest limitation, especially in researching current secret service activities, is access to the source base. This makes the use of press materials, official service statements, and other scarce information, likely to lead to erroneous conclusions and assessments⁶. The associated risks can be partially mitigated by applying a historical perspective to the study of contemporary activities of Russian intelligence services and related entities, as this article has done. Through a historical perspective, continuities in the organizational structure and modes of operation of these services can be analyzed⁷. Knowing the history of the activities of Russian services, it is possible - at least partially - to define its contemporary directions, as well as the means and methods used to carry out specific projects.

The origins of the Russian concept of coercive migration engineering

The coercive migration engineering originated from the Soviet concept of so-called active intelligence or active measures (actions). These were special

⁶ K. Kraj, *Badania naukowe nad służbami specjalnymi*, „Studia Administracji i Bezpieczeństwa” 2020, No. 8, p. 178–179.

⁷ This opinion is confirmed, among others, by KGB Major General Oleg Kalugin, who oversaw the conduct of intelligence operations in the United States. In an interview under the telling title *KGB still does not change the rules*, which was published on June 20, 1990, he said that the methodology of operational work of state security bodies is the same as it was 50 years ago and is still based on the operational instructions of the Okhrana, i.e. the Russian Empire's political police, the Department for the Protection of State Order and Security, and the principles of the “old Stalinist school,” see O. Калугин, *Вид с Лубянки. „Дело” бывшего генерала КГБ. Месяц первый*, Москва 1990, p. 34–35. Cf. А.П. Фролов, *КГБ и контрразведывательное искусство: взгляд изнутри на теорию контрразведывательного искусства*, Москва 2003, p. 16–39. According to Colonel Sergei Mironenko (operational officer of the First General Directorate of the KGB and the Foreign Intelligence Service, PhD in history), the Russians certainly tribute to this historical and organizational continuity in the field of intelligence activities. Mironenko stresses that he gained basic skills in operational work from his senior colleagues who served in the Main Board of Counterintelligence “Smersh” of the People's Commissariat of Defense of the USSR. Therefore, according to Mironenko, modern officers of the Russian security organs are in a straight line the heirs of the Chekists. These, in turn, according to the Russian scholar, took over the principles of operational work from the Gendarme Corps and the Ochrana. Mironienko emphasizes that both the representatives of the tsarist political police and his contemporaries have a psychological type peculiar to Russians, which to a large extent determines the style and methods of operational work of Russian special services, see K. Kraj, *Rosyjska wspólnota organów bezpieczeństwa*, Kraków-Wrocław 2017, p. 127.

offensive undertakings consistent with the interests of the USSR and other countries of the communist bloc⁸, consisting in exerting influence, i.e. influencing various areas of political, economic and social life in democratic countries with the use of appropriately selected methods and means; unmasking the intentions of countries considered hostile and counteracting their political, economic and military plans; paralyzing and weakening anti-communist activity and counteracting the effects of psychological warfare; discrediting parties, allies, political groups and their leaders and activists whose activity was considered hostile; disinforming the enemy and carrying out diversion against specific individuals, groups and organizations associated with enemy centers; and performing other special activities commissioned by the leadership of the USSR⁹.

The term “active measures (activities)” was used to distinguish influence operations from espionage and counterintelligence. However, the meaning of the term was not limited to the intelligence services themselves. Soviet active measures (actions) included the activities of virtually every element of the Soviet Communist Party and state structures. Moreover, they were considered a valuable complement to traditional diplomacy¹⁰. This is confirmed by Maj. Gen. Oleg Kalugin, who served as an operations officer at the KGB’s New York residence (1960-1964) and then was the KGB’s deputy resident for political intelligence at the Washington residence (1965-1970) and a correspondent for Radio Moscow¹¹. In an interview published in January 1998 on the American news television channel CNN, Kalugin said, among other things:

(...) the main mission of intelligence, as directed by the Soviet leadership, was to warn the country’s leadership of an armed conflict. As is well

⁸ In the nomenclature of the intelligence of the People’s Republic of Poland, active measures were called “inspirational and disinformation undertakings”.

⁹ С.С. Турло, И.П. Залдат, *Шпионаж*, in: *Антология истории спецслужб. Россия 1905–1924*, Москва 2007, p. 422–423; Первое главное управление КГБ СССР, *Основные направления и объекты разведывательной работы за границей. Учебное пособие КГБ*, Москва 1970, p. 51–53; F. Musiał, *Podręcznik bezpieczeństwa. Teoria pracy operacyjnej Służby Bezpieczeństwa w świetle wydawnictw resortowych Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych PRL (1970–1989)*, Kraków 2015, p. 341.

¹⁰ S. Levchenko, *On the Wrong Side. My Life in the KGB*, Washington 1988, p. 236–237. Cf. United States Department of State, *Active Measures: A Report on the Substance and Process of Anti-U.S. Disinformation and Propaganda Campaigns*, Washington 1986, p. 14, 82–83.

¹¹ L. Pawlikowicz, *Pion kontrwywiadu zagranicznego I Zarządu Głównego Komitetu Bezpieczeństwa Państwowego (przy Radzie Ministrów) ZSRR w latach 1954–1991 – funkcje, struktury i kadry. Zarys problematyki*, „Przegląd Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego” 2012, No. 7, p. 206.

known, the Soviet leadership was obsessed with a potential Western attack on the Soviet Union. Because of this, intelligence was given everything it wanted to provide information about upcoming events. It must be emphasized that there was also a second, very important side to Soviet intelligence activity, which I would not hesitate to call the heart and soul of Soviet intelligence. It was subversive activity. Not intelligence gathering, but diversion: active measures to weaken the West, to drive wedges into all kinds of alliances of the Western community, especially NATO. This was done to sow discord among the allies, to weaken the U.S. in the eyes of the people of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, to make America more susceptible to the anger and distrust of other nations, and thus to prepare the ground in case war actually broke out. In conducting such activities, Soviet intelligence was second to none. The KGB operations, which consisted of inspiring all kinds of peace congresses, youth festivals, women's and trade union movements and campaigns against American missiles in Europe, neutron weapons, spreading all kinds of falsehoods and fabrications (e.g. that AIDS was invented by the CIA), targeted politicians, the academic community and the general public. This was truly a worldwide activity, often not only financed but run or controlled by the KGB. It was intended to weaken the West militarily, economically, and psychologically¹².

Confirmation of the opinion that the source of the theory and practice of modern Russian coercive migration engineering was Soviet active measures (actions) is the course of the operation to cause the migration of Soviet Jews to the United States in order to destabilize the prevailing social relations. In the 1970s, the USSR authorities, in order to limit the effects of the so-called Jackson-Vanik Amendment¹³, allowed 5250 Soviet Jews to migrate to the United States. As part of this operation, the most hardened criminals serving sentences in Soviet prisons and penal colonies were allowed to leave. Some of them, after their "conversion" to Judaism, settled in Brighton Beach, one of the neighborhoods in Brooklyn, New York, which became known as

¹² *Cold War Experience. Cold War Espionage. Inside the KGB. An Interview with Retired KGB Maj. Gen. Oleg Kalugin*, <http://www3.cnn.com/SPECIALS/cold.war/episodes/21/interviews/kalugin/> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

¹³ An amendment submitted by Democrats Henry Jackson and Charles Vanik to the 1974 U.S. Commercial Code, which conditioned the maintenance of normal trade relations by the U.S. with "nonmarket economies" on the governments of those countries respecting the right of their citizens to emigrate, see A. Mania, *Détente and U.S. Policy toward Eastern Europe January 1969-January 1981*, Kraków 2003, pp. 143-144; J. Mertus, *Bait and Switch: Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy*, London 2004, p. 29.

“Little Odessa”. Among the Soviet criminals sent to the United States was Yevsei Agron, a criminal from Leningrad. He arrived in New York City on October 8, 1975, and subsequently formed a large criminal organization in Brighton Beach engaged in racketeering of Russian-speaking expatriate businessmen, jewelry store robberies, and illegal diamond and gold transactions. Revenues from this criminal activity reached approximately \$100 million annually. As a result of the struggle over spheres of influence, Agron was gunned down on May 4, 1995, giving rise to Russian organized crime in the United States, which, according to FBI Director Louis J. Freeh, was this country’s greatest and longstanding national security threat¹⁴. The fact that even today the Russian security apparatus uses Russian organized crime groups as tools in its intelligence activities and for exerting political influence proves that this opinion is true. Their members are responsible for carrying out numerous cyber attacks, organizing the smuggling of people and goods, and even carrying out assassinations on the Kremlin’s political order. Criminal activity is also a source of “black cash”¹⁵.

Operation code-named “Bravo,” which involved initiating the migration of Cuban nationals to the United States to destabilize the situation on the East Coast, followed a similar course, though on a much larger scale. The operation, known as the exodus of Cubans from the port of Mariel to Miami (*Mariel Boatlift*), Spanish: *éxodo del Mariel*), lasted from April 1 to November 19, 1980 and was successfully carried out by the Cuban intelligence services at the behest of Fidel Castro, leader of the Socialist Republic of Cuba¹⁶. It cannot be ruled out that the operation code-named “Bravo” may have been carried out with the full consent of the Soviet political leadership and with the participation of its security apparatus. Its similarity to actions taken by the Soviets in the 1970s, especially in the aspect of using the criminal element to destabilize social life in

¹⁴ J.O. Finckenauer, E.J. Waring, *Russian Mafia in America: Immigration, Culture, and Crime*, Boston 1998, p. 72, 75–76; K. Laskowska, *Rosyjskojęzyczna przestępczość zorganizowana. Studium kryminologiczne*, Białystok 2006, p. 274–275.

¹⁵ *Putin’s Asymmetric Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security. A Minority Staff Report Prepared for the Use of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, One Hundred Fifteenth Congress, Second Session, January 10, 2018*, Washington 2018, p. 5, 54–56. For more on this subject, see M. Galeotti, *Gangster Geopolitics: The Kremlin’s Use of Criminals as Assets Abroad*, <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/gangster-geopolitics-kremlins-use-criminals-assets-abroad> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

¹⁶ United States Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism and Subversion. Intelligence Activities of the DGI. Hearings Before the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, February 26, March 4, 11, and 12, 1982*, Washington 1982, p. 162; A. Larzelere, *Castro’s Ploy-America’s Dilemma: The 1980 Cuban Boatlift*, Washington 1988, p. XXXI–XXXII.

a hostile state, is striking. Moreover, beginning in the 1970s, Cuban intelligence was under the complete supervision of the KGB, which meant that the conduct of such a major undertaking could not take place without the knowledge and approval of the Kremlin.

During the Cold War, the conduct of foreign policy and intelligence activities on behalf of socialist Cuba and the Communist Party in charge was the responsibility of five institutions:

1. General Department of International Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (Departamento General de Relaciones Exteriores del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, DGRE),
2. Department of American Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (Departamento América del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, DA),
3. Department of Middle Eastern and African Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba (Departamento de Medio Oriente y África del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de Cuba, DMOA),
4. Directorate of Intelligence Information of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba (Departamento de la Información de Inteligencia de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Cuba, DIIFAR),
5. General Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Interior (Dirección General de Inteligencia del Ministerio del Interior de Cuba, DGI)¹⁷.

The Cuban Revolution, which lasted from July 26, 1953, to January 1, 1959, changed the approach of the USSR and the Eastern Bloc countries to Latin America. The Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the USSR quickly established economic, diplomatic, and military relations with the new regime headed by Fidel Castro. Actions were also taken to establish security cooperation. The close cooperation of the Cuban and Soviet secret services was first discussed during Raúl Castro's visit to Moscow in July 1960. Raúl Castro, who supervised the work of Cuban intelligence, highly valued the effectiveness of the KGB and the security services of the socialist bloc countries. He demanded that Moscow send intelligence and counterintelligence specialists to Havana to train executives of the Cuban security apparatus. Focusing on close cooperation with the countries

¹⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *Cuba's Foreign Policy Apparatus and How It Works*, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79B00457A000400010001-8.pdf>, p. 10 [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

of the socialist camp, which in agreement with the USSR secretly provided Cuba with aid in the form of weapons and military equipment, Fidel Castro personally oversaw the creation of security and intelligence services¹⁸. In the first period, the Czechoslovak Security Service (Státní bezpečnost, StB) played the leading role in building the structures of the Cuban intelligence services, which in time met with an unfavorable reaction from the KGB. After the failure of the U.S.-inspired Bay of Pigs invasion (April 17-19, 1961), during which the StB was not up to the task, the Czechs were deprived by the Soviets of their influence over the Cuban service¹⁹. Initially, confidential contacts between the Soviet and Cuban leadership took place through KGB intelligence officer Alexander Ivanovich Shitov (Alekseyev), who was in Cuba under the guise of a TASS correspondent and, after diplomatic relations between the two countries were established, as an advisor to the Soviet embassy in Cuba. From June 12, 1962 to January 15, 1968, Shitov served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USSR to Cuba. He received the position through the personal intercession of Fidel Castro. The Central Committee of the USSR approved a plan for cooperation with the Republic of Cuba developed by the leadership of friendly intelligence services. The plan included systematic consultations, sending the necessary number of advisers to Cuba, providing special equipment, and training Cuban intelligence officers at KGB facilities. During the first three years of cooperation, about 100 top Cuban officials-including José Abrahantes Fernández (Minister of the Interior from 1985 to 1989), Ramiro Valdés Menéndez (Vice President of the Council of State from December 20, 2009 to October 10, 2019), and Fabián Escalante (Director of the Central Political Board of the Interior Ministry from 1985 to 1989, among others) - were trained in the USSR in intelligence and counterintelligence theory and practice. The training was primarily concerned with knowledge of the forms and methods of operational work of the American secret services. Soviet intelligence officers who illegally spent more than 20 years in the United States were lecturers and instructors²⁰. According to a June 1964 CIA intelligence briefing, there were five Soviet advisors permanently housed at DGI headquarters whose presence was kept secret. They had direct contacts with the Director General of the DGI and officers serving in the Illegal Department (Departamento Ilegal), which was in charge of conducting agent

¹⁸ В. Величко, *От Лубянки до Кремля. Секретные миссии*, Москва 2013, p. 267.

¹⁹ J. Koura, R.A. Waters, *Africanos versus Africanitos: the Soviet-Czechoslovak Competition to Protect the Cuban Revolution*, „The International History Review” 2021, No. 43, p. 72–89.

²⁰ В. Величко, *От Лубянки до Кремля...*, p. 267–268; F. Escalante, *The Secret War: CIA Covert Operations Against Cuba 1959–1962*, Melbourne 1995.

intelligence activities from illegal positions. Their activities consisted of obtaining information and organizing diversionary and sabotage projects²¹. According to the Americans' findings, the DGI, then headed by Manuel Piñeiro Losada (1933-1998), was among the top five intelligence services in the world, after the KGB, CIA, Mossad, and MI6. Cuban intelligence was of particular value to the Soviets because of the great opportunities for operational work within the United States, since its officers, as accredited diplomats, had complete freedom of movement within the country, while emissaries of the USSR and other Soviet bloc countries were forbidden to move no further than a 40-mile radius around New York and Washington. In 1970, a team of KGB advisers led by General Viktor Semyonov was sent to Cuba to purge the DGI of officers and agents considered anti-Soviet by the KGB. Losada, increasingly disillusioned with the Soviets' selection of DGI employees, was removed as director and replaced by the pro-Soviet José Méndez Cominches. In this way, the DGI was subordinated to the KGB. Soviet officers had access to the DGI's agent network. The DGI leadership also had to consult with the KGB on operational plans, and Semyonov and his successors oversaw the Cuban intelligence budget, which was approved in Moscow²².

Illegal migration of Cuban citizens to the United States has been a major challenge for U.S. authorities since 1959. Cubans, using smugglers, have attempted to leave the island and enter the country by sea, usually on makeshift rafts. They also enjoyed direct flights to Miami²³. In the late 1970s, the Cuban economy, closely tied to the Comecon countries and dependent on aid from the USSR, began to be severely affected by Soviet involvement in the war in Afghanistan and the trade embargo imposed by the United States. This resulted in a significant increase in internal tension in the country and a series of spectacular Cuban escapes abroad²⁴. When on April 21, 1980, more than 10,000 Cubans seeking political asylum entered the embassy of the Republic of Peru in Havana, Castro ordered the temporary removal of Cuban

²¹ Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *Information Report. The Organization of the General Directorate of Intelligence (Dirección General de Inteligencia – DGI)*, <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/jfk/releases/104-10186-10321.pdf>, p. 4–5 [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

²² *Ibid.*, p. 24; J. Richelson, *Sword and Shield. The Soviet Intelligence and Security Apparatus*, Cambridge–Massachusetts 1986, p. 211; T.A. Latner, *Cuban Revolution in America: Havana and the Making of a United States Left, 1968–1992*, Chapel Hill 2018, p. 116.

²³ J. Duany, *Cuban Communities in the United States: Migration Waves, Settlement Patterns and Socioeconomic Diversity*, „Pouvoirs dans la Caraïbe Revue du Centre de recherche sur les pouvoirs locaux dans la Caraïbe” 1999, No. 11, p. 69–103.

²⁴ A. Larzelere, *Castro's Ploy-America's Dilemma...*, p. 213–233.

guards guarding the diplomatic mission and announced that he would issue exit visas to dissidents who entered the Peruvian embassy. In a report to the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Intelligence on January 31, 1980, the CIA's Cuban Analysis Center warned that the Castro regime's action could cause a mass emigration of Cubans to the United States, aimed at reducing their discontent resulting from the country's deteriorating economic situation. However, the CIA's warnings were ignored by the administration of President James Carter (1977-1981). Eventually, Latin American countries and the United States agreed to accept 10,000 refugees, and Costa Rican authorities arranged twice-daily flights from Havana to San Jose, from where the refugees could leave for other countries. In this way, 7,500 Cubans left the country. After two days, Castro suspended the flights and demanded that all refugees go on their own to the countries where they planned to settle. As a result, thousands of cruise boats from Miami entered the port of Mariel, Cuba, to pick up refugees and transport them to American shores. The Cubans involved were surprised by the well-organized action. The American boats were escorted by Cuban gunboats all the way to the port of Mariel itself. Among the crew members were also representatives of the Cuban diaspora in the United States. They handed Cuban government officials letters with the names of their relatives and friends who were to be taken from Cuba. But boat and ship crews were told that in exchange for each refugee they designated, they must take with them at least four people designated by the Castro administration. Thus, boats bound for U.S. shores carried especially dangerous criminals, mental institution patients, and retirees released from Cuban prisons. Shortly after the first Cuban emigrants landed in Florida, President James Carter stated that the United States would welcome them with "an open heart and open arms." But the euphoria among Washington officials and journalists was short-lived. What initially appeared to be a victory for the United States became a major problem. Many captains returning from Cuba reported that they could not find relatives and could not leave Cuba unless they took people selected by the regime administration. Between April 21 and September 26, 1980, when Cuba closed the port of Mariel, approximately 124,000 refugees arrived in Key West, Florida. None of them had documents to enter the United States, and 1/5 of them were people who had served prison sentences. Many people arrested in Cuba for common crimes have been detained by local police, who have threatened them with jail if they do not leave the country. After being inventoried at local checkpoints by security forces, they were taken to El Mosquito camp in Mariel. Another group that reached the United States were criminals who were serving time in Cuba for serious crimes. The sudden influx of refugees has forced American authorities

to take extraordinary measures. Florida Governor Bob Graham declared a state of emergency, and the federal government set up several camps where refugees underwent medical examinations. Each individual's data was thoroughly vetted by the migration service, the FBI, and the CIA. Those with criminal histories were placed at the Federal Correctional Institution in Talladega, Alabama, where they awaited deportation proceedings. In mid-May, the FBI arrested three people wanted for air piracy. On June 1, 1980, a group of over 300 Cubans broke out of a refugee relocation center at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. They vandalized stores and set fire to buildings and cars in the streets. When the military searched the facility where they had previously stayed, they confiscated a significant amount of homemade weapons. It was one of many confrontations between law enforcement officials and refugees protesting delays in resettlement. Violent riots also broke out at a refugee camp located at Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. There, in turn, a group of 200 Cubans threw bricks and stones at military police and broke the fence. After the fight, police captured 68 suspected rioters and placed them in a more secure facility. Although the White House announced that the riot instigators and hundreds of criminals would not be allowed to remain in the United States, officials unofficially acknowledged that Castro was unlikely to allow them to return to their homeland. If these individuals were forced to return to their homeland, they would have to show that they had a "well-founded fear of persecution" under the new refugee law passed just five weeks before the exodus.

In the United States, the vetting procedure was impractical because it involved strictly case-by-case review, which, with 124,000 immigrants, was very impractical. Identification was extremely difficult because the refugees who arrived in Miami did not have visas or other travel documents. It also found that 24,000 Cuban refugees had spent more than 15 days in prison, but unofficial figures suggested that up to 40,000 arrivals were affected. The culture shock and sense of isolation upon their arrival in the United States contributed to the chaos and increase in crime. For example, between July and September 1980, refugees who wanted to return home hijacked a passenger plane to Cuba almost every week. In response to these events, Castro announced on September 18, 1980, that he would extradite all Cuban hijackers to the United States. Cuban criminals committed murder, rape, and robbery in American cities where they settled. In the United States, they became known for their use of large caliber weapons, bravado and cruelty. In the 11 months following their arrival, 66 of them were arrested in Miami for manslaughter and 72 for murder. In fact,

the murder rate among refugees was five times higher than the rate among the general population of Miami²⁵.

The testimony of the refugees and the findings of the CIA and FBI have made it possible to partially reconstruct the backstory of the operation, which was planned, prepared, and carried out by Cuban intelligence dependent on Moscow. According to the Americans, the operation was led by Napoleón Vilaboa, a DGI officer who spread the word on Spanish-language radio broadcasts in Miami that the port of Mariel was open. On April 19, 1980, Vilaboa boarded the boat Ochún in Miami Beach and led the first flotilla of more than 40 ships to Cuba. He returned after picking up his daughter and aunt²⁶. Officers and agents affiliated with Havanatur Travel Agency were also involved in the operation. Since the early 1970s, the Cuban intelligence services (especially the DGI) have noticeably intensified their operations against emigrant communities in Florida, New York, and New Jersey. Many Cuban agents infiltrated various exile organizations and business groups as well as left-wing political organizations and think tanks. One of the entities used to gain agency among Cuban emigrants was the Havanatur Travel Agency, a Miami-based Panamanian company with a monopoly on making flights carrying Cuban emigrants from the United States back to Cuba. The office, headed by Col. Carlos Alfonso, identified by the U.S. State Department as a DGI officer, conducted operational screening of travelers to Cuba and informed Havana of those who merited further attention. The agency's activities were exposed and Havanatur Travel Agency was expelled from the United States on December 31, 1979. Also involved in preparing the exodus from Mariel to Miami were Cuban intelligence officers and agents: Col. Jorge De Bassa, Lt. Col. Fernando Fuentes Cova (American Airways Charter), Capt. Fernando Lastra, in charge of DGI active operations in the U.S. and the Caribbean, Col. Charles Romeu (American Airways Charter), Juan Carbonell (Cuban Interests Section of the Czechoslovak Embassy in the U.S.), Orestes Aleman (Cuban American Enterprises), Albor Ruiz (Antonio Maceo Brigade), and Jose Ignacio Marquez, Rafael Correa, Marcos Raul Correa, and Estevan Martin²⁷.

²⁵ In: L. Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation. A Insider's View*, Washington 1985, p. 163–166; K. Dupes Hawk i in., *Florida and the Mariel Boatlift of 1980: The First Twenty Days*, Tuscaloosa 2014, p. 3–9, 29–49 et seq.; J.B. Wolf, *Antiterrorist Initiatives*, New York 1989, p. 91–92.

²⁶ J.O. Tamayo, *Napoleón Vilaboa, „Father” of Mariel Boatlift, Speaks*, „The Miami Herald”, 15 V 2010, <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/espionage/vilaboa-2010.htm> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

²⁷ United States Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism...*, p. 32–33. For more on the subject of DGI's use of expatriates and tourists as agents and its contacts with Cuban emigration agencies,

U.S. security agencies have determined that the refugees included a group of individuals who were recruited by DGI as so-called disinformation agents. Their job was to disrupt the activities of the FBI and other U.S. services by passing on fake news about alleged “missions” being carried out on U.S. soil and the names of potential contacts. Another group arriving on the continent were DGI undercover collaborators. They were to be engaged in active measures of disintegrating Cuban exile organizations, demoralizing and terrorizing American society. The means to do so included drug distribution, provoking racial conflict among Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and African Americans, conducting sabotage and diversionary activities, and espionage activities involving *Soviet Disinformation* political and scientific and technical intelligence²⁸.

One of the agents who found his way to Miami with the inspiration of DGI was Mario Estebes Gonzales. He initially belonged to the Union of Young Communists (Unión de Jóvenes Comunistas), a youth organization of the Communist Party of Cuba, and later took a job with the Cuban Interior Ministry. After arriving in the United States in June 1980, it was not until November 1981 that he was arrested on drug trafficking charges. At the time of his arrest by the Coast Guard off the coast of Florida, he was carrying 2,500 pounds of marijuana by boat. During a hearing in Federal District Court in Miami, he testified that he was one of about 3,000 agents sent to the United States during the 1980 exodus, and said his first assignment was to join Alpha 66, a radical paramilitary group in opposition to the Castro regime that was initially funded and trained by the CIA. He spent 2.5 months in the organization and during that time sabotaged equipment and sank two boats worth thousands of dollars. Later, Mario Estebes Gonzales was ordered to become involved in drug trafficking. Until his arrest, he traveled frequently to Cuba, mostly by speedboat, and delivered \$2 million to \$3 million in drug proceeds to Cuban officials. The funds raised by the Cuban government in this way were mainly used to acquire the “hard currency” needed for the Cuban economy and to finance subversive leftist movements in Latin America²⁹.

see Central Intelligence Agency, Directorate of Intelligence, *Information Report. Selection and Training of Cuban Intelligence Agents Abroad*, <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/jfk/releases/104-10186-10312.pdf>, p. 4 [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

²⁸ United States Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism, *Role of Cuba in International Terrorism...*, p. 266; L. Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation...*, p. 167; J.B. Wolf, *Antiterrorist Initiatives...*, p. 93.

²⁹ Cuban American National Foundation, *Castro and the Narcotics Connection. Special Report*, Washington 1983, pp. 35-37, 41; L. Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation...*, p. 167; A. Larzelere, *Castro's Ploy-America's Dilemma...*, pp. 230-231. For more on Alpha 66 and its

What initially appeared to be a major mistake by the Castro regime turned out to be its great success in the long run. Through the use of coercive migration engineering, the Soviet and Cuban Communists achieved the following goals:

- at least a temporary easing of the internal tensions facing the Castro government, which was achieved after a group of the most disillusioned, bitter, and economically unproductive citizens left Cuba,
- causing serious problems in U.S. cities and effectively undermining the hitherto positive image of Cuban emigration established in American public opinion, as well as causing increased racial and ethnic tension - as a result of the expulsion of thousands of criminals from Cuba and their placement in the United States,
- burden on the U.S. budget as a result of the arrival of 124,000 refugees. The federal government spent more than \$600 million on resettlement, food vouchers, and medical assistance for refugees; the need to separate dangerous Cuban criminals from the rest of Cuban society by placing them in prisons further increased costs,
- gaining for the Cuban intelligence services the vast facilities necessary to carry out further espionage and diversionary operations in the United States, as well as gaining an important source of funding for their activities, the proceeds of drug trafficking,
- the involvement of U.S. intelligence agencies in neutralizing destabilization efforts undertaken by Castro, resulting in a weakening of U.S. activity on other lines of foreign policy aimed at containing the expansion of the Soviet Union³⁰.

The coercive migration engineering used by Castro resulted in incremental changes in U.S. migration policy. In 2014, there was a warming of relations between Washington and Havana. The following year, the American embassy in Cuba was opened and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry came to visit after an absence of 70 years. Changes in both countries' foreign policies and normalization of relations have resulted in increased migration of Cubans to the United States. This was due to an increase in the number of Cubans fearing that the United States would change its previous policy of privileging Cuban refugees. The U.S. administration was trying to avoid another exodus from

relationship with the CIA, see A. McPherson, *Caribbean Taliban: Cuban American Terrorism in the 1970s*, "Terrorism and Political Violence" 2018, No. 31, vol. 2, p. 390–409; K. McElrath, *Prosecution. Unsafe Haven: The United States, the IRA and Political Prisoners*, London 2015, p. 65-83.

³⁰ L. Bittman, *The KGB and Soviet Disinformation...*, p. 166.

the island, so it assured that there would be no changes in immigration policy. However, in January 2017, President Obama announced the withdrawal of the *wet foot, dry foot* policy, under which any Cuban detained at sea was returned to the island, and those who managed to touch the U.S. shore with their foot were granted residency in the United States³¹. The number of people categorized as inadmissible to enter the U.S. has also increased. It also included individuals whose medical conditions did not meet the criteria adopted by U.S. immigration law, or who had come into conflict with the law³².

Coercive migration engineering as a geopolitical technology in Russian foreign policy in the 21st century

Despite the disintegration of the USSR, the Russian Federation's policy towards the West can still be described as a Cold War, in which conflict factors prevail over elements of consensus. According to Vladislav Surkov, a longtime advisor to President Vladimir Putin and the founder of the "sovereign democracy" doctrine, the Russian Federation can only survive by continually expanding its own borders. By pursuing an expansionist foreign policy, it can also effectively reduce any social tensions caused by domestic difficulties. According to Surkov, the Russian Federation does this by "projecting chaos" to neighboring states, which allows it to take actions to consolidate its own society and create divisions among outsiders. Surkov points to the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula as an example of the implementation of the assumptions of such a foreign policy. The integration of Russian society has succeeded by causing chaos in its neighboring country, Ukraine. Surkov also stresses that the negative reaction of the European Union and the United States to Moscow's intervention in Ukraine is meant to prove that the West is aware that the Russian state has not lost its imperial inclinations³³.

Assessments of Russian foreign policy formulated in NATO institutions fully confirm this opinion. In a report entitled *NATO 2030. United for a New Era*, November 25, 2020, prepared by a group of experts commissioned by NATO

³¹ A. Bartnik, *Koniec przywilejów. Nowa fala emigracji kubańskiej do Stanów Zjednoczonych*, „Ameryka Łacińska. Kwartalnik analityczno-informacyjny” 2017, No. 2, p. 57.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 67.

³³ B. Сурков, *Куда делся хаос? Распаковка стабильности*, <https://actualcomment.ru/kuda-delsya-khaos-raspakovka-stabilnosti-2111201336.html> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

The article was written before February 24, 2022 and the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian troops (editor's note).

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, a statement was included that the main challenge to international security at the dawn of the third decade of the 21st century is the intensification of geopolitical rivalry among powers, which manifests itself in escalating disputes over territory, resources, and values. According to the authors of the report, whose aim is to define the direction of a new security strategy (NATO Strategic Concept) to replace the outdated 2010 document, the main military threat to NATO in the perspective at least until 2030 will be the Russian Federation. NATO's post-Cold War attempts to build a constructive partnership with the country have been rebuffed, according to NATO experts. Beginning in the second half of the 1990s, the Russian Federation developed conventional military forces and expanded its nuclear arsenal. This has served her to take steps to regain control of the states that emerged from the disintegration of the USSR by undermining their sovereignty and violating their territorial integrity. The revisionist policy of the Russian Federation has led to a sharp deterioration in relations with NATO and has negatively affected the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. The consequences of this policy were: the initiation of the war in South Ossetia by the Russian Federation, the invasion of Georgia (August 6-16, 2008), the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula (February 20-March 26, 2014), and the seizure of Donbass, which occurred as a result of the war that broke out in April 2014. The aforementioned report emphasized that the purpose of these military operations conducted by the Russian Federation in areas in the immediate vicinity of NATO member states was to create a dependent system of satellite states and frozen conflict zones, which are potential sources of destabilization of NATO's eastern flank. At the same time, the Russian Federation has taken steps to increase its military activity in the Eastern Mediterranean (launching a military intervention in Syria on September 30, 2015), the Barents Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the High North. It has gained capabilities there that allow it to counteract access or deny access to areas critical to the security of NATO countries. The authors of the report also state that the Russian Federation regularly violates airspace and freedom of navigation in the Atlantic. It also made attempts to gain footholds in Africa (Libya, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Sudan, Central African Republic) through private military companies operating there³⁴. The report also points out that in addition to military activity, the Russian Federation has developed and already used unconventional means that threaten both

³⁴ NATO 2030. *United for a New Era. Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf, p. 25 [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

the security of individual NATO members and the stability and cohesion of NATO as a whole, and thus undermine confidence in its democratic institutions. According to NATO experts, the Russian Federation is constantly perfecting hybrid warfare, which puts the field of conflict outside the boundaries of peace and war, in the so-called gray zone. A state attacked in this way faces difficulties in obtaining a decision-making consensus in international security organizations (among other things, it prevents the application of the Hague Conventions of 18 October 1907 or Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 4 April 1949³⁵).

As understood by NATO experts, hybrid methods of warfare take the form of kinetic (lethal) and non-kinetic (non-lethal) actions, such as subversive and terrorist activities, means of conducting operations in cyberspace, carrying out state-sanctioned assassinations with the use of chemical weapons, the use of political coercion, economic coercion, and the massive use of disinformation, propaganda and other tools to violate the sovereignty of NATO member countries and to weaken them from within. These are modified active measures, which the Russian Federation not only did not discontinue, but significantly improved them, which was associated with the development of modern information technologies and the revival of geopolitics, which is the scientific and ideological basis for such actions³⁶.

One of these unconventional measures is the coercive migration engineering. Consideration of its use appeared in overtly published Russian military writing in the second decade of the twenty-first century. As in the USSR, so in modern Russia, “military science” is a systematized body of knowledge about war, the preparation of the armed forces and society for war, and the means of waging it. Military science also includes the laws governing armed combat. These laws reflect the dependence of the course and outcome of war and armed struggle on the economic, moral and political, scientific and

³⁵ *North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington on April 4, 1949.* (Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 87, item 970) - (editor's note).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17. The literature on Russian actions viewed through the lens of the U.S. concept of *hybrid warfare* is extensive; see for example: *Terrorism: Commentary on Security Documents*, vol. 141: *Hybrid Warfare and the Gray Zone Threat*, D.C. Lovelace (ed.), Oxford 2016; *Terrorism: Commentary on Security Documents*, vol. 141: *Russia's Resurgence*, D.C. Lovelace (ed.), Oxford 2017; O. Fridman, *Russian "Hybrid Warfare": Resurgence and Politicization*, Oxford 2018; M. Galeotti, *Russian Political War: Moving Beyond the Hybrid*, London 2019; *Hybrid Conflicts And Information Warfare: New Labels, Old Politics*, O. Fridman, V. Kabernik, J.C. Pearce (ed.), Boulder 2019; B. Najžer, *The Hybrid Age: International Security in the Era of Hybrid Warfare*, London 2020; S. Jasper, *Russian Cyber Operations: Coding the Boundaries of Conflict*, Washington 2020.

technical relationships as well as military potentials of the warring parties³⁷. Russian analysts and military commanders unanimously emphasize that the center of gravity of modern conflicts has shifted toward the integrated use of so-called non-military means used in support of the armed forces³⁸. Non-military means (Russian: *невоенные меры*) are the totality of specific measures used by the state in a situation where it is necessary to supplement or replace armed struggle, aimed at achieving a specific goal. The use of non-military means is within the competence of all institutions and bodies carrying out tasks in the field of internal and external state policy. Non-military measures take the form of actions of a political, diplomatic, economic, legal, informational-psychological, informational-technical, humanitarian and spiritual nature. They serve to achieve political goals with minimal military influence on the enemy, by neutralizing its military and economic potential through information influence and psychological pressure, with active support of the internal opposition, and by using sabotage and guerrilla warfare. In this case, mass, planned influence on the consciousness of citizens of the state - the object of aggression - via the Internet becomes of great importance. Information resources have become one of the most effective weapons, and their widespread use can destabilize a country's internal situation within days³⁹.

A reading of available studies by Russian experts indicates that the integrated use of non-military means occurs within the framework of geopolitical technologies (Russian: *геополитические технологии*). It is a complex system of direct or indirect, integrated, combinatorial application of various non-military means (both "soft" and "hard") by state and non-state actors to control and manage a state, a group of states, or politico-military alliances to achieve long-term geopolitical objectives at the state, interstate, regional, and global levels at low political, economic, and moral cost. As Russian military officials point out, geopolitical technologies such as controlled chaos strategy, terrorism, color revolutions, coups, and "humanitarian interventions" are substitutes for direct military expansion. These are more flexible, adaptive techniques of aggression

³⁷ А.П. Горкин, *Военный энциклопедический словарь*, vol. 1, Москва 2001, p. 296–300; А.Э Сердюков, *Военный энциклопедический словарь*, Москва 2007, p. 135.

³⁸ В. Герасимов, *Ценность науки в предвидении*, "Военно-промышленный курьер" 2013, No. 8, p. 1–3; М.А. Гареев, Н.И. Турко, *Война: современное толкование теории и реалии практики*, "Вестник Академии военных наук" 2017, No. 1, p. 4–10.

³⁹ *Военная мысль в терминах и определениях*, vol. 1: *Вооруженные силы Российской Федерации*, Н.Н. Тютюнников (ed.), Москва 2018, p. 123.

that enable a given geopolitical objective to be realized when “soft” instruments and methods of influence do not produce the desired result⁴⁰.

As already mentioned, one of the geopolitical technologies is the engineering of coercive migration, the use of which has been extensively characterized by the chairman of the College of Military Experts⁴¹ Maj. Gen. Alexander Vladimirov, in his monograph *Fundamentals of General Theory of War*, published in 2012, in the chapter *Geopolitical Technologies as New Operational Means of War*⁴². It is worth recalling that in 2012 Vladimirov’s work was recommended by Maj. Gen. Pavel Kriazhev, an expert at the Russian Council on International Affairs, as a textbook for students of military colleges and other universities and executives of government institutions of the Russian Federation. According to Kriazhev, the study contains a description of new concepts emerging in Russian military thought and instructions for their practical application⁴³. In Vladimirov’s view, war is the main process concerning human existence, in which armed struggle is only one of the tools. The goal of war is peace, that is, a system of world governance in which the winning side has the opportunity to perpetually and completely exploit the strategic effects of its victory, including the uncontrolled use of all the resources of its defeated opponent. According to Gen. Vladimirov, one of the tools in such an understanding of war are also population migrations, which he describes as “streams” or “human flows” (Russian: *антропопотоки*). ‘They represent one of the greatest challenges to the internal security of European countries. According to Vladimirov, several reasons contributed to this:

⁴⁰ А.К. Шарапов, *Характеристика отдельных геополитических технологий, применяемых в современном геополитическом процессе*, „Вестник Забайкальского государственного университета” 2015, No. 4, p. 103–104, 109.

⁴¹ The College of Military Experts (Коллегия военных экспертов) is a non-governmental scientific research organization established in 1997. It is related to the Russian Council for International Affairs. It is engaged in conducting scientific research in the field of military, strategy and security policy of the Russian Federation, organizing international and national conferences, seminars and round tables on international, regional and national security issues, preparing projects, concepts and doctrines, organizing courses and trainings for military personnel, preparing operational analyses and scientific papers on significant political and social events, preparing recommendations and opinions for state authorities and the armed forces of the Russian Federation, see Коллегия военных экспертов, <http://ir.russiancouncil.ru/organisations/kollegiya-voennykh-ekspertov/> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

⁴² А.И. Владимиров, *Основы общей теории войны. Часть I: Основы теории войны*, Москва 2012, p. 494 et seq.

⁴³ П.Н. Кряжев, *Рецензия на монографию Владимирова А.И. «Основы общей теории войны»*, „Арсенал Отечества” 2012, No. 1, p. 84.

1. The policy of multiculturalism, contrary to the expectations of officials of Western European countries, failed, as it turned out that immigrants and refugees, despite attempts to assimilate with the indigenous population, create new communities that develop their own culture, different from the European one. These communities began to absorb the territories of Western states. Moreover, official state policies of tolerance in France, Germany, England, and Italy have led to the erasure of Christian Western civilization in Europe, the cradle of its development, by foreign ethnic groups. This is the beginning of a global and geopolitical catastrophe, the consequences of which will negatively affect the future history of humanity.
2. Migration to Europe took the form of aggression, which put the indigenous people in the position of having to fight for survival. As Gen. Vladimirov points out, the invasion of foreign ethnic groups will undoubtedly cause a sharp escalation of nationalist sentiment in Europe among the indigenous population, which in turn will lead to the dismantling of all liberal institutions and the return of fascism.
3. As a mass phenomenon, population migration is unstoppable. Directing a wave of emigrants to any country through the use of manipulation results in the complete destabilization and even destruction of the state and nation. Therefore, inspiring and controlling the movement of large numbers of people is a kind of modern asymmetric warfare and the most powerful strategic weapon of our time.

The use of this “weapon” enables:

- the tearing down of political borders, and in the long run, economic and cultural borders,
- the breakdown of the territorial integrity of the nation-state, leading to the loss of its previous geopolitical and regional status,
- the destruction of a nation’s culture, values, and way of life, and ultimately, its erasure from history.

Gen. Vladimirov also believes that the successful application of coercive migration engineering is contingent on the implementation of a number of projects, including:

- creating the conditions for the influx and settlement of a small but very active minority or ethnic group on the territory of a hostile state,
- preparing a beachhead that would then allow the main wave of migration to dislocate in enemy territory,

- increasing the stream of emigrants and intensifying their activities by creating conditions in their home country that make a stable existence impossible.

Gen. Vladimirov also stresses that victory in an asymmetric war using coercive migration engineering is only possible if the following cultural and psychological factors are exploited:

- simple humanity syndrome,
- the mercy of the strong on the weak,
- hatred of the weak against the strong⁴⁴.

Referring to these factors, the Russian military officer suggests that an integral part of coercive migration engineering is humanitarianism. Very often, mass migrations of people turn into humanitarian crises, so people who have been forced to relocate under conditions of conflict, natural disasters or for other reasons are among the groups most in need of humanitarian aid. The fundamental humanitarian values of humanity, dignity, fairness, solidarity, independence and respect for international law are the basis of official EU policy. It includes three components: emergency assistance, food aid, and assistance provided to migrants, refugees and displaced persons. According to the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, humanitarianism is one of the four basic principles of humanitarian aid, which means that human suffering must be met with a response in all circumstances, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the community⁴⁵.

In Russian military studies, the term “humanitarianism” has been presented as a means of information warfare. The methods of its use were characterized by Alexander Sharapov, a graduate of the Lenin Military Political Academy in Moscow who served in the Russian army from 1967 to 1995 (he is now a researcher at Zabaykal State University)⁴⁶. According to him, militarization of humanitarianism has been done under the pretext of providing humanitarian aid. This caused humanitarianism to evolve into:

⁴⁴ А.И. Владимиров, *Основы общей теории войны...*, p. 500–503; *ibid.*, *Новая Орда. Цель организованного мировым правительством переселения народов – «защитка» Европы*, „Военно-промышленный курьер” 2015, No. 45, p. 8.

⁴⁵ F. Kaczmarek, *The European Union towards the World Humanitarian Summit*, “Yearbook of European Integration” 2016, No. 10, p. 415; K. Kot-Majewska, *Działania humanitarne na rzecz uchodźców i osób wewnątrznie przesiedlonych – kwestie prawno-instytucjonalne oraz praktyka*, in: *Pomoc humanitarna w świetle prawa i praktyki*, P. Grzebyk, E. Mikos-Skuza (ed.), Warszawa 2016, p. 205–226.

⁴⁶ Шарпов Александр Константинович, <http://m.zabgu.ru/php/person.php?id=704> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

- instrument of armed interventions in the affairs of sovereign states, carried out by important geopolitical players to pursue strategic interests, such as: the creation of their own military-political, economic and information-ideological infrastructure in the territory of influence,
- a type of geopolitical technology that primarily involves providing active information support to an ongoing action in order to make it legitimate. This is done under the pretext of “protecting human rights”, “humanitarian values” or “preventing disaster” in areas of religious, ethnic, social and international conflict⁴⁷. In the second decade of the 21st century, the terms “humanitarian technologies” and “humanitarian actions” appeared in Russian information warfare theory and practice, replacing the term “soft power.” According to the authors of a report by the Estonian Police Security Office (Kaitsepolitseiamet, KAPO), this effort is intended to lead to a change in the perception of the actions taken by the Russian Federation in the West as a threat⁴⁸. The terms “humanitarian technology” and “humanitarian action” refer to activities aimed at influencing individuals and societies through the use of techniques of rational persuasion and psychological manipulation. In addition to outreach, the use of the following means is included in the scope of these concepts: neuro-linguistic or psychosomatic programming, pharmacological control, other technical tools. Humanitarian technologies build on the achievements of such sciences as psychology, social anthropology, linguistics, ethnography, religious studies, among others⁴⁹.

After analyzing the studies prepared by the Russian military, it can be concluded that coercive migration engineering can be used not only as a means of physical aggression against a state in order to destabilize it, but also as a subject of information warfare aimed at long-term destruction of the image and international position of a given country or group of countries. Considerations on this topic are contained in a study entitled *Modern scenarios of information warfare and their results*, authored by Lt. Col. Sergei Golubchikov and Col. Vladimir Novikov of the Peter the Great Military Academy of Strategic Missile Forces in the city of Balashicha near Moscow. By the term “information warfare

⁴⁷ А.К. Шарапов, *Характеристика отдельных геополитических технологий...*, p. 105–106.

⁴⁸ “Estonian Internal Security Service. Annual Review 2020–2021” 2021, p. 8.

⁴⁹ А.В. Рудаков, С.В. Устинкин, *Гуманитарные технологии как инструмент разрушения идентичности граждан в современной информационной войне*, „Вестник Академии военных наук” 2017, No. 4, p. 33–37.

scenario” the authors mean a brief and coherent description of the forms and modes of action and the forces and means of information influence, taking into account the place, time and space, both in preparation for information warfare and during it, according to the prevailing situation. Among six such scenarios discussed by the authors is the “locust invasion scenario,” which assumes that

(...) the creation of a revolutionary situation and the direct use of armed force against the “victim state” is not necessary. In this case, the plan is to create a massive, controlled influx of migrants from different parts of the world into the “victim state”. To do this, controlled chaos must be caused in several states, resulting in continued internal conflicts and large numbers of civilian casualties. In this way, tremendous pressure is placed on the populations of these countries, causing people to migrate *en masse* to another country singled out as a “victim.” In order to steer the flow of migrants in the “victim state”, well-funded organizational structures are set up, and numerous intermediaries and guides are engaged, who conduct operations under the constant guidance of the secret services. A reams of migrants that are controlled block the normal functioning of the “victim state.” Migrants demand social benefits, occupy train stations, streets and parks, block roads, start conflicts with local people and police, distribute drugs on a massive scale, etc. Along with the many migrants, fraudsters, criminals, and terrorists are infiltrating the “victim state.” As a result, the “victim state” falls out of both regional and world foreign policy for a long time, its economic situation deteriorates rapidly. The state leadership is forced to deal only with domestic issues. In addition, there is a “creeping takeover of the victim state,” especially its economy, by the helper state⁵⁰.

An analysis of the Russian Federation’s activities undertaken by this country in the international space starting from the second decade of the 21st century indicates that the engineering of coercive migration is becoming one of the increasingly used means to realize the Kremlin’s geopolitical interests. It can take the form of both direct military aggression and active measures carried out by special services.

⁵⁰ В.К. Новиков, С.В. Голубчиков, *Современные сценарии ведения информационных войн и их итоги*, „Вестник Академии военных наук” 2017, No. 2, p. 66.

Direct military intervention as a tool for engineering coercive migration - the example of Syria

During a meeting of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on March 1, 2016, Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, Commander-in-Chief of NATO's Combined Armed Forces in Europe (he served in that capacity from May 13, 2013, to May 4, 2016), reviewed the hybrid warfare methods used by Russia. In the analysis, he considered the causes, course, and consequences of the migration crisis affecting the European Union, including those caused by the Russian military intervention in Syria in 2015. He pointed out that the Russian Federation has developed another unconventional way to fight the EU and NATO through the *weaponizing of migration*. He stressed that the Russian Federation, in conjunction with the regime of Bashar al-Assad, has used expatriates as weapons to "cripple European institutions."⁵¹ Gen. Breedlove justified his opinion as follows: *I used the term "militarization of migration" because I cannot find any other reason why Bashar al-Assad would launch a campaign against his own people*⁵². According to the American general, in order to terrorize civilians and force them to emigrate, al-Assad's troops and Russian forces in Syria have used imprecise weapons of mass destruction in the form of barrel bombs⁵³. Gen. Breedlove's point of view was also shared by experts and politicians in Ankara and Washington. They believed that Russia's intervention was the main reason for the displacement of more than half a million Syrians. Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu stressed that the Russian Federation (...) *behaves like a terrorist organization and forces civilians to flee by carrying out airstrikes (...) without any distinction between civilians and soldiers, children and the elderly*⁵⁴.

⁵¹ *Statement of General Philip M. Breedlove, USAF, Commander, U.S. European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe*, in: *United States Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Hearing to Receive Testimony of United States European Command, Tuesday, March 1, 2016, Washington 2016*, p. 13–14.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵³ *Ibid.* A barrel bomb is an improvised explosive device made of a large, barrel-shaped metal container filled with explosives, shrapnel, oil, or chemicals that is dropped from a helicopter or aircraft. Due to their high explosive content (up to 1,000 kilograms) and low accuracy, barrel bombs are mainly used to hit large concentrations of civilians, such as refugee camps, see G.D. Koblentz, *Chemical-Weapon Use in Syria: Atrocities, Attribution, and Accountability*, „The Nonproliferation Review” 2020, No. 1, p. 1–24.

⁵⁴ R. Synovitz, *Is Russia 'Weaponizing Refugees' To Advance Its Geopolitical Goals?*, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-weaponizing-syrian-refugees-geopolitical-goals/27562604.html> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

He was echoed by U.S. Senator John McCain, who said that President Putin (...) *wants to exacerbate the refugee crisis and use it as a weapon to divide the transatlantic alliance and undermine the project [.] that is the European Union*⁵⁵. Fabrice Balanche, an expert on Syria at Lyon University and a member of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, accused Russia and al-Assad's forces of cooperating in a "deliberate strategy of ethnic cleansing" against Sunni Arab tribes and other groups that oppose the Syrian regime. He believes that hospitals were a priority target for al-Assad's forces and that some Russian airstrikes deliberately destroyed them to force civilians to move. Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for the president of the Russian Federation, denied the accusations. He stated that no hospitals were attacked by Russian forces. Meanwhile, activists of the humanitarian NGO Doctors Without Borders have identified Russian warplanes that have bombed 14 hospitals since early 2016 in Idlib and Aleppo provinces. Most of the refugees leaving Syria were Sunnis who feared persecution due to their affiliation with tribes opposed to the al-Assad regime. Millions of people have remained in Turkey or other nearby countries in the hope that the Syrian dictator's government will fall, which would allow them to return to their abandoned homes. After the victory of the anti-regime opposition in spring 2015, some of the displaced population returned to the country. However, in September, the Russian Federation began indiscriminate bombing to support al-Assad. The situation has changed to the disadvantage of the opposition, which in turn has accelerated the migration of Syrian refugees. Despite strict controls by Turkish authorities, hundreds of thousands of people who have already made it out of Syria have given up hope of returning and headed to Europe primarily Germany. Russian combat airstrikes have also intensified the aspirations of the Syrian Kurds. Their goal was to link an area they dominate that stretches along Turkey's southern border with a Kurdish enclave in northwestern Syria and with territory in northeastern Turkey that is controlled by Kurdish groups. The Russian Federation supports the Syrian Kurds because, in the opinion of Russian experts, Kurdish national liberation aspirations can cause a change in the borders in the Middle East, which in the long run will lead to the weakening of Turkey. In this way, the application of the engineering of coercive migration resulting from the creation of conditions that cause mass movement of people in the Middle East, the Russian Federation has strengthened its position as a major power in this region of the world⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid. Cf. N. Steger, *The Weaponization of Migration: Examining Migration as a 21st Century Tool of Political Warfare*, Monterey 2014, p. 41; В. Лепехин, *Возможности влияния России*

Forced migration engineering as an influence operation with the participation of secret services - the example of Finland

According to the Swedish Military and Security Intelligence Service (Militära underrättelse-och säkerhetstjänsten, MUST), influence operations are coordinated and unofficial activities that are initiated by a state actor in order to influence the perceptions of events, persons and situations, decision-making and behavior of politicians, party leaders, society as a whole or specific target groups, e.g. experts, journalists, activists of various organizations and political circles. Influence operations are carried out to make the security policy of the state using them a reality, mainly through the dissemination of disinformation, often supplemented by other activities tailored to the implementation of a given endeavor. The aim of an influence operation is also to gradually destabilize another state, i.e. to cause irreparable damage to its public order through the use of ideologically and politically subversive propaganda means and the creation, financing and directing of the activities of various types of organizations and illegal opposition groups⁵⁷. Between September 1, 2015 and March 16, 2016, Finland became the target of a Russian influence operation conducted through coercive migration engineering. The course of the operation exhausts the signs of practical application of the concept described by General Vladimirov and other Russian military⁵⁸. According to a report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, published on April 29, 2016, it was as follows:

The Finnish – Soviet/Russian border regime had functioned unchallenged since the late 1950s. To the great surprise of Norway and Finland, in the fall of 2015 Russia suddenly allowed third-country nationals to cross the border with Norway without proper visas, and from December 2015 the border with Finland, which was done at two northern border crossings, while exacerbating the refugee problem. Sudden attempts to

с курдами против Турции?, <https://ria.ru/20151228/1350594925.html> [accessed: 1 XII 2021]. For more on Kurdish national liberation aspirations, see M. El Ghamari, *Prawo do samostanowienia a kurdyjskie ruchy narodowościowe i ich status na arenie międzynarodowej*, „Przegląd Politologiczny” 2016, No. 4, p. 59–76.

⁵⁷ P. Shuker, L. Topor, *Russian Influence Campaigns Against NATO in the Baltic Region: Spread of Chaos and Divide et Impera*, in: *The Russian Federation in Global Knowledge Warfare. Influence Operations in Europe and Its Neighbourhood*, London 2021, p. 296; A.B. Борхсениус, *Операции информационной войны. Новая классификация*, „Информационные войны” 2016, No. 3, p. 7–8.

⁵⁸ K. Alenius, *Asylum Seekers From Russia to Finland: A Hybrid Operation by Chance?*, in: *Proceeding of the 20th European Conference on Cyber Warfare and Security*, T. Eze, L. Speakman, C. Owubiko (ed.), Chester 2021, p. 11–18.

disrupt the border regime looked like another hybrid tool to destabilize order. These subsided as abruptly as they began, in late February 2016. A Russian-Finnish bilateral agreement was reached on March 22, 2016. As a temporary solution, restrictions on the use of the two border checkpoints in the north were introduced for all except Finnish and Russian/Belarusian citizens⁵⁹.

In January 2016, Finnish news agencies STT and Yle reported that the influx of Middle Eastern migrants to the Finnish border was organized by the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation and its formation, the Border Service of the Federal Security Service, with the cooperation of the administration of the region where the city of Kandalaksha is located. According to the findings of Finnish agencies, Russian services were directing traffic. They decided which car should leave at a given time and how it could reach the border. Priority of travel was given primarily to families with young children. A photographer for the STT news agency who was on the Russian side of the border in the town of Salla said he saw asylum seekers. They were waiting in their cars in the Russian town of Alakurtti (Russian Federation naval air base), which is about 70 km from the border. Dozens of cars with asylum seekers were there, cordoned off with barriers to allow families with children to pass. The activities carried out by Russian services and state administration bodies have been confirmed by the Finnish authorities. According to MEPs Jussi Hall-aho and Petri Sarvamaa, the Russian Federation is using the migration crisis to gain influence over Finland's foreign policy. Foreign Minister Timo Soini met with officials at border

⁵⁹ Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, *The Effects of Finland's Possible NATO Membership. An Assessment*, Helsinki 2016, pp. 15–16. According to the Center for Eastern Studies, between 2014 and 2015, Finland increased the number of refugees admitted under UNHCR quotas from 750 to 1,050 per year. However, it was not prepared for the unprecedented increase in the number of asylum seekers in 2015, when asylum applications rose to 32,500 (a 9-fold increase over 2014). Of this group, 63 percent are nationals of Iraq, 16 percent of Afghanistan, 6 percent of Somalia, 3 percent of Syria. Of these, 700 asylum applications were made at the Finnish-Russian border in the Lapland region (Salla and Raja-Jooseppi crossings) in 2015 and another 1,000 in January-February 2016 (mainly from Afghanistan; other large groups were citizens of India, Syria and Bangladesh). To reduce the number of asylum seekers, Finland has announced a reduction in benefits, stepped up efforts to return migrants from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan to their countries of origin under bilateral agreements. At the same time, however, it pledged to accept 3200 refugees from Greece and Italy and 600 from Turkey, which was in line with the European Commission's proposals, see P. Szymański, P. Żochowski, W. Rodkiewicz, *Wymuszanie współpracy: fińsko-rosyjski kryzys migracyjny*, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/analizy/2016-04-06/wymuszanie-wspolpracy-finsko-rosyjski-kryzys-migracyjny> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

posts in Lapland. During the visit, he confirmed his suspicions that the flow of asylum seekers is organized by Russian entities⁶⁰.

The use of coercive migration engineering by the Russian Federation has polarized public opinion and created a problem for Finnish policymakers. Its solution, in exchange for concessions, could only be offered by Moscow. In response to the thousands of migrants arriving in Finland during the European migration crisis, a group called Soldiers of Odin (Odininsotilaat) was formed in the city of Kemi in October 2015. Its founder was Mika Ranta, a Finnish National Socialist. The organization's goal was to defend the public, especially women at risk of sexual assault by Muslim immigrants. The Soldiers of Odin were part of a protest movement that opposed the admission of immigrants. The response to the influx of refugees was to organize mass demonstrations, with participants demanding that the borders be closed. There have been violent attacks with Molotov cocktails on migrant reception centers. The increase in the number of arrivals has also increased the terrorist threat from Islamic fundamentalists in Finland (according to estimates by the Finnish Interior Ministry); several hundred Middle Eastern combatants, including those who committed war crimes in Iraq, have been staying in reception centers). Soldiers of Odin found the police force insufficient to provide order and security. Therefore, they organized street patrols after dark to provide protection for the residents of Finnish cities⁶¹. It is worth noting that the Soldiers of Odin movement was supported from the very beginning by MV-Lehti, a very popular alternative news portal in Finland. Ranta claimed to be part of a secret group of supporters of the site, which guarantees the Soldiers of Odin as much publicity as it takes. Its creator and owner was pro-Russian activist Ilya Janitskin, linked to Janus Putkonen, who was the editor of the Doni News English-language news site in Donetsk (Putkonen was involved in recruiting Finnish fighters to fight in Donbass on the separatist side⁶²). The increased activity of far-right groups was met with a reaction from the far-left side of the Finnish political scene, which led to an even greater radicalization of sentiments. In January, a coalition

⁶⁰ *Russian Border Guard to STT: Russian Security Service Behind Northeast Asylum Traffic*, Yleisradio Oy, <https://yle.fi/news/3-8620174> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

⁶¹ T. Kotonen, *The Soldiers of Odin Finland. From a Local Movement to an International Franchise*, in: *Vigilantism against Migrants and Minorities*, T. Bjørgo, M. Mareš (ed.), London 2019, p. 242–243.

⁶² *Soldiers of Odin's Secret Facebook Group: Weapons, Nazi Symbols and Links to MV Lehti*, Yleisradio Oy, <https://yle.fi/news/3-8749308> [accessed: 1 XII 2021]; T. Palmén, *Janus Putkonentarjoaturvapaikkaa MV-lehden Ilja Janitskinille*, <https://www.iltalehti.fi/uutiset/a/2016092822385546> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

of youth organizations and student groups called the Socialist-Democratic Students (Sosialidemokraattiset Opiskelijat, SONK) and other left-wing parties organized a campaign to stop the financing of the MV-Lehti and Uber Uutiset portals by large companies. They were requested not to place ads on these portals. According to activists of these organizations, the fake news posted on the mentioned sites in the form of publications fueled hatred against national minorities, refugees and other ethnic groups.⁶³

As experts from the Center for Eastern Studies noted, Moscow's opening of the Arctic migration route leading through Russia to Finland and the organization of the migration of people from the Middle East was a deliberate action by the Russian government to make Helsinki activate its efforts to normalize relations between the European Union and Russia and to exercise restraint in developing cooperation with NATO and other countries in the region. On 22 March 2016, during Finnish President Sauli Niinistö's visit to Moscow and meeting with Russian President Putin, inter-ministerial agreements were signed to limit the influx of immigrants from the territory of the Russian Federation to Finland. A large increase in the number of refugees seeking asylum on the northern section of the Finnish-Russian border (from September 2015 to February 2016) forced Finland to enter into talks with the Russian Federation. Finnish authorities feared that Russian Federation, through coercive migration engineering, could attempt to deepen the country's largest migration crisis in postwar history. The result of the talks was a sudden halt in the flow of migrants to Finland in March 2016. The price of the migration agreement was Finland's abandonment of the policy of limiting bilateral contacts adopted as a reaction to the Russian intervention in Ukraine⁶⁴.

Summary

The engineering of coercive migration has become an unprecedented form of leverage through which the Russian Federation pursues its geopolitical interests. Russia's use of this tool is a fact and not a conspiracy theory devoid of empirical evidence, as some analysts associated with European Union institutions believe. A comparison of the course of the exodus of Cubans from

⁶³ *Political Youth Wings Launch Campaign Against Anti-immigrant Websites*, Yleisradio Oy, <https://yle.fi/news/3-8589632> [accessed: 1 XII 2021].

⁶⁴ Compiled from: P. Szymański, P. Żochowski, W. Rodkiewicz, *Wymuszanie współpracy: fińsko-rosyjski kryzys...*

Mariel to Miami in 1980 and the Finnish-Russian migration crisis in 2015-2016 proves that at least since the Cold War, the Russian Federation has been using a novel approach to security problems and conflict theory in military science, in which it has developed effective means and methods of engineering coercive migration as tools for destabilizing states and forcing political concessions favorable to itself.

Beginning in July 2020, the Baltic States and then Poland faced an unprecedented application of coercive migration engineering by the Republic of Belarus dependent on the Russian Federation. In addition to activities related to destabilizing the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border, a systematic information warfare against Poland is being conducted by closely cooperating Russian and Belarusian entities, with a special focus on the so-called humanitarian factor. More and more information confirms the indirect or even direct involvement of Belarusian and Russian special services in these activities. Even a cursory analysis of the situation indicates that this is a variant of coercive migration engineering, described by the Russian military as a means of physical aggression against a state in order to destabilize it, as well as a tool of information warfare aimed at long-term damage to the image and international position of Poland and the Baltic group of states.

The outline of Russian coercive migration engineering theory and practice presented in this article may prove helpful in conducting research on the causes, course, and consequences of the Belarusian-Russian operation against states located on NATO's eastern flank, as well as on the potential directions of these operations and their consequences.

Given the course of such operations conducted by Russia or its dependent entities to date and their theoretical basis, it seems reasonable to undertake research on:

- activities and means to inspire the flow of migrants and methods to control it,
- the characteristics of “soft” and “hard” measures used and the scope of their application in the developed phase of operations in the border area with NATO and the EU,
- the characteristics of psychological operations and accompanying activities, their effectiveness and the target groups covered, the reaction of particular social groups, etc.
- development of means and methods of neutralization of this type of threats by non-military means.

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