

RMS⁺



REVUE MILITAIRE SUISSE INTERNATIONALE : AFGHANISTAN



www.revuemilitairesuisse.ch

RMSINT+ May 2024



American soldiers in Afghanistan. The conflict brings to mind a veritable "war without end", sometimes interpreted as a heroic war of resistance, sometimes as a geopolitical game played by the great powers.

Editorial

"Today, who can still believe in peace?"

COL (GS) Dr. Alexandre J. Vautravers
Editor in Chief, RMS+

This sentence, taken from a recent discussion with a well known publisher on Lausanne's Rue de Bourg, gives food for thought... Half the viewer's menu is often made up of news of conflicts, armed or not, forgotten or likely to break out any week now. The euphemisms of war are legion: we now speak of competition and sanctions, economic, cyber and asymmetrical warfare, terrorism, war crimes, espionage, hybrid warfare, the arms race, ethnic cleansing, even genocide... Editorial offices are worried about "attrition". The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) counted 56 states in armed conflict in 2023, twice as many as in the 2000s and three times as many as in the 1990s - the "peace dividend" years. Never before has the world experienced so many wars simultaneously. Since 2022, the number of deaths linked to the direct effects of war has exceeded 200,000: this had been forgotten since the mid-1980s.

One country in four is directly affected by war; the others also arm themselves and are affected by the consequences of these wars: migration, diasporas, political activism, terrorism, arms supplies, etc.

Tomorrow's Conflicts Are Yesterday's Wars

More than two-thirds of today's armed conflicts are over thirty years old. While the number of peacekeepers has more than doubled in a generation, there are now around 70,000 of them working on 12 major peacekeeping operations. Afghans or Palestinians under the age of 50 - to take just two examples - have never known peace in their own country. How could they possibly imagine what peace means? Just as most Europeans have never known war. How can they imagine what the rest of the world is going through?

Europe's Growing Awareness?

After Eisenhower (Suez 1956), Nixon (gold standard 1971), Reagan (rearmament 1981) and Bush Jr. (9/11 2001), it is once again a Republican president who is creating an electroshock in Europe (2024) by suggesting that the USA might not come to the aid of a NATO member country that had not paid the 2% of GDP promised for common defense! Uncertainty over the continuation and level of US military support for Ukraine now confronts Europeans with their security and geopolitical responsibilities: the management of an arc of crises and conflicts stretching

Impressum

Editor in chief:

COL (GS) Dr. Alexandre Vautravers a.vautravers@revuemilitairesuisse.ch

Editors:

LTC (GS) Dr. Julien Grand
LT Christophe Tymowski
LT Katharina Hintermann
LT Philippe Lörtscher
LT Mireille Ryf
Spec Of Lena Rey
Spec Of Olivier Reymond

ARMS Committee:

President	MG Mathias Tüscher	mathias.tuescher@revuemilitairesuisse.ch
Vice-president	COL Christian Rey	info@reygroup.ch
AdministratOr	M. Hubert Varrin	administration@revuemilitairesuisse.ch
SMG	COL (GS) Denis Mastrogiacom	d.mastrogiacom@smg-ge.ch
SVO	COL (GS) Christophe Gerber	christophe.gerber@elca.ch
SNO	MAJ Sebastien Marti	info@ofne.ch
SOVR	CPT Tobias Meyer	tob.meyer@bluewin.ch
SFO	LTC (GS) Patrick Noger	patrick.noger@sfo-fog.ch
SJO	LCL (GS) Edouard Vifian	edouard.vifian@vtg.admin.ch
SCBO	COL Francesco M. Rappa	francesco@rappa.ch

Administration, subscription & advertising:

Association de la Revue militaire suisse (ARMS)
Avenue Général-Guisan 117, 1009 Pully, SWITZERLAND
Tel. +41 21 729 46 44
E-mail: info@revuemilitairesuisse.ch
IBAN: ARMS, 1009 Pully PostFinance CH84 0900 0000 1000 5209 7

Print: PCL Presses Centrales SA, chemin du Chêne 14, 1020 Renens, SWITZERLAND

ISSN 0035-368X

Revue Militaire Suisse (RMS+) is an official publication organ of the Swiss officers society. It belongs to the cantonal sections of Romandie and Berne. It is edited by the Association de la Revue militaire suisse (ARMS). The goal of RMS+ is, among others, to facilitate exchanges on military matters and develop the knowledge and general education of officers. The texts published reflect only the opinions of their authors. RMS+ is open to all contributors or those wishing to work constructively in order to improve Switzerland's security and defence.

MAJOR GENERAL Mathias Tüscher, President, ARMS

from Cadiz to Lapland. Russia embarked on major military and industrial reforms in 2007, with the aim of becoming war-capable within ten years. In Europe, where Russian speeches and reports were not to be believed, the aim is to increase the size of forces by 150% by 2030, and to be able to defend the continent against a possible attack by 2029.

So far, Europe has been willing to pay not to go to war. As long as it didn't prejudice the livelihood of its inhabitants. But tomorrow, who knows, security issues may well become top political and budgetary priorities.

What About Switzerland?

Switzerland is the European country that spends the least on defense as a percentage of GDP (0.8%). Since 1990, security policy reports have been warning of the convergence of crises and conflicts. Those who are so convinced by the European model and integration should therefore be the first to refurbish our security tools. In February 2022, the Groupement pour une Suisse sans Armée (GSsA) proposed that neutral Switzerland supply arms to the Ukraine. This says a lot about our strategic disorientation.

The Swiss army has been reducing its resources since the early 1990s. In the early 2000s, it was forced to focus on subsidiary commitments. From maintaining skills, we now need to recreate defense capabilities as quickly as possible. The window for this ramp-up is narrow. At present, all our neighbors are rearming, and it is (still) possible to invest in joint procurement programs and useful cooperative ventures. After 2030, Switzerland risks being isolated and unable to recreate the military and industrial foundations of its security. And acquisitions, which will then be both essential and overdue, will come at an even higher price than they do today.

A+V

This publication RMSINT+ is supported by the Swiss Officers Society :



Revue Militaire Suisse

RMS+ is an official publication of the Swiss Officer's Society and was founded as a private initiative in 1856. It is the second oldest publication with uninterrupted publication.

While our online PDF international edition (RMSINT+) is free, it is possible to donate on our webpage.

Our regular journal comes out six times a year with six regular and two thematic issues. Subscription is 60 CHF per year (postage in Switzerland) and 170 CHF worldwide. It is possible to subscribe or order specific issues via the following link :

www.revuemilitairesuisse.ch

Groupe des 200

It is also possible to become a member of the "200 Group" by paying a 200 CHF yearly subscription. This allows members to participate, once a year, in an exclusive visit or demonstration organized by RMS+ and the Swiss Armed Forces.

Youtube

Please visit our youtube channel, in order to listen to podcasts, exclusive interviews, as well as conferences organised by RMS with partners.

Facebook

A dedicated Facebook page is available with daily feeds and information. This feed can also be seen on the regular www.revuemilitairesuisse.ch website.

History

Historians and researchers may be interested in consulting older issues of RMS. This is now possible with the support of the ETHZ. All back-issues from 1856 until 2022 are available online in searchable PDF format, for free.

<https://www.e-periodica.ch/digbib/volumes?UID=rms-001>

