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## A Response: The Promises and Pitfalls of Developing Pre-Crisis Clandestine Underground Resistance Organisations - Lessons of the WWII Polish Underground State

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**Abstract:** Dr. Asta Maskaliūnaitė identified five concerns related to the promises and pitfalls of developing underground resistance organisations (URO) before a crisis in her excellent and timely 2021 Journal on Baltic Security article, ‘Exploring *Resistance Operating Concept*. Promises and pitfalls of (violent) underground resistance’. These pitfalls or areas of concern are: (1) Command and Control (C2), (2) Legitimacy, (3) Recruitment, (4) Potential Long-Term Problems, and (5) Strategic Communications. This study will address these five concerns from a non-military perspective, focusing on civilian control, political conditions, capabilities of the state, and legislated safeguards for each concern to accentuate promises and minimize risks. The study is based on a case study analysis of the Polish Underground State and highlights its legitimacy, enjoyed due to the legally organized, civilian-led URO and its shadow government leading the resistance in Poland and the Polish Government-in-Exile providing the legitimacy and organizing external support.

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## Introduction

In her 2021 Journal on Baltic Security article, ‘Exploring Resistance Operating Concept. Promises and pitfalls of (violent) underground resistance’, Dr. Asta Maskaliūnaitė rightly challenged the rigor of emerging doctrines and efforts to develop underground resistance organisations (URO) before a conflict in peacetime. She noted the two primary doctrinal references for these efforts: Special Operations Command Europe’s (SOCEUR) Resistance Operating Concept (ROC), developed with the support of several countries, and the NATO Special Headquarters’ (NSHQ) Comprehensive Defence Handbook (CDH), both published in 2020. While agreeing with the overall premise for pre-crisis, peacetime development of UROs, her article correctly pointed out the lack of rigour of analysis of the ROC and CDH, especially the ‘what could go wrong?’ issues—the unintended consequences. She focused on five areas of concern:

- The question of [command and control] of (violent) resistance organisation and operations;
- The issue of legitimacy and its role in organising the [URO]
- The question of recruitment criteria;
- The aspect of time and its impact on the development of the organisation;
- The question of messaging and its implications. (p. 28).

In 2021, these concepts were untested. Today, they are less theoretical due to the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. While tragic, this event displayed the effectiveness of a hastily organised resistance to invasion (RTI) which successfully combined crowd-sourced intelligence, social media, overt guerrilla tactics, and modern man-portable anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles to counterbalance the initial large Russian advantage in conventional military capabilities. While not a clandestine resistance to occupation (RTO), the overt RTI proved the general ROC and CDH doctrinal concepts. At the time of this writing, the overall success of RTI is unclear or whether RTO will be necessary. Ukraine’s special operations forces (SOF) were designated lead for RTO in the 2021 Ukrainian Law ‘On the Foundations of National Resistance’. It is uncertain whether they had the requisite

expertise and time to develop the RTO at scale before or since the start of the 2022 invasion.

Despite the Ukrainian RTI successes, there is a danger of countries learning the wrong lessons, specifically that RTI is easier and quicker to organise and should be the principal method of resistance over the more difficult RTO. However, this is a false dichotomy. They are two different options with different purposes, organisational models, operating concepts, and signatures. RTI is an overt resistance effort that relies on small teams conducting guerrilla warfare using physical terrain to mask their manoeuvres to disrupt an invasion. RTO, on the other hand, uses clandestine tradecraft to mask the organisation among the human terrain while it conducts armed and non-violent resistance at the time and place of its choosing to maximize its ambiguity and stay viable throughout the occupation (Jones, 2012, p. 37). Its goal is to disrupt, coerce, and defeat the occupier alone or in support of outside intervention. Using both options is best. However, trying to use the same personnel and organisations for both, such as having members move between RTI and RTO or vice versa, will lead to the exposure of the URO. The URO is the centre of gravity for protracted RTO if the RTI fails. URO takes the most time and effort to organize and develop securely to ensure its long-term viability (Jones, 2017, p. 4-5). Therefore, Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's concerns are still valid, and countries developing URO for RTO need to address these concerns.

This article adds to the discourse by providing options to mitigate the pitfalls and issues identified by Dr. Maskaliūnaitė. This work differs from previous and heavily military-influenced studies by focusing on civilian control, political considerations, capabilities of the state, and legislated safeguards to mitigate risks and pitfalls. Given that URO developed prior to a crisis is still untested, this article uses the case study method based on lessons learned from the largest URO in the modern era—the Polish Underground State—and its resistance to German and Soviet occupation in World War II (WWII). Although not developed before the crisis, it is the closest exemplar of the concept and successfully resisted brutal occupations.

## 1. The WWII Polish Underground State

The Polish Underground State [Polskie Państwo Podziemne or PPP]...had been built in complete secrecy during the joint occupation of Poland by Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany....Nowhere in occupied Europe was there an equally complex and well-working organisation, that came complete with its own administration, judiciary system, educational facilities and, most importantly, a well organised army. The most important task...was, alongside the organisation of underground activity, to provide the flawless functionality of the Polish state – the maintenance of the pre-occupation national institutions as well as making all necessary preparation for the power takeover after the end of war. (Utracka, 2019, para. 1.)

The 1939 invasion and occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union lit a fire in the Polish population that led to the establishment of the Polskie Państwo Podziemne or Polish Underground State (PPP). This URO included the in-country shadow government (SG) leading the day-to-day resistance in Poland under control and legitimized by the Rząd na Uchodźstwie or Polish Government-in-exile (GIE). The GIE focused on garnering international support and maintaining the Polish sovereign government in hopes of returning to Poland at the war's end. The large-scale PPP consisted of hundreds of thousands of members, clandestine underground civilian and military wings, a representative committee that included every political party ensuring the continuation of democratic principles, and every government and societal institution—media, education, art, and industry. This article focuses on the civilian wing of the organisation, which began with only the structure of the political parties (Korbonski, 2004, p. 29-31). The lack of pre-crisis development of the civilian wing was opposite that of the military wing—Armia Krajowa (A.K.) or the Home Army—which quickly reached capacity due to its pre-crisis military organisation (Bór-Komorowski, 2011, p. 142-143). Additionally, the case shows the incredible resilience of the population under brutal occupation. As Werner Ring (1982) observed, 'Under these circumstances, organized resistance seemed the sole alternative to national extinction' (p. 67).

The case study proves the potential of large-scale URO legitimized in law and under complete government control. The success of the PPP is unquestionable — it resisted long-term occupation to execute a coordinated and large-scale uprising. The one thing they lacked that would have assured their ultimate victory and freedom was external support from the Western Allies. Instead, Poland became a pawn in a

geopolitical game focused solely on the defeat of Germany, where the West allowed Poland to fall within the Soviet sphere of influence. It would take Poland five more decades to become a free and open democracy.

## **2. Addressing the Promises and Pitfalls**

This preparation, however, brings forth a great number of challenges, which have to be seriously considered when discussing further development of the [URO] concept. Indeed, the developers have to be conscious of the potential unintended consequences of this approach and think very seriously whether the potential benefits truly outweigh the potential negative effects of this approach. (Maskaliūnaitė, 2021, p. 32).

The following sections address Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's concerns directly to substantively add to the discourse and provide policymakers with a better understanding of the promises and pitfalls of these programs and inform their national security and domestic policies. This study refers to Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's five concerns using the following terms: Command and Control (C2), Legitimacy, Recruitment, Potential Long-Term Problems, and Strategic Communications.

### **2.1 Command and Control (C2)**

Despite the constant threat, the Poles had quickly undertaken actions aimed at fighting the occupational forces. These were not random and uncoordinated actions, but instead were planned and run by the [PPP].... The PPP always acted with consent and in direct contact between itself and the legitimate Polish Government, that due to the Soviet and Nazi aggression was forced into exile and operated alongside Polish allies in the West....It was from there...[the] Polish [GOI] was able to control both the civil and military administration on the Polish territory. (Utracka, 2019, para. 4.)

Dr. Maskaliūnaitė focuses on three C2 sub-concerns: risks due to loss of control and unethical behaviors of resistance members, how the resistance members will be held accountable for their actions, and the potential negative impact of these actions on civilians. Dr. Maskaliūnaitė is correct that effective ‘leadership and government oversight’ is vital to reduce the chances of the resistance organisation losing control and the likelihood of members behaving unethically (p. 32). However, to be effective, leadership and oversight must be supported by legislation to provide the legal foundations for what actions are permissible and what are not, and the punishments for violations. The legal frameworks or classified addendums should address continuity of governance, mission, organisation, manning, resourcing, and authorities. Effective leadership, oversight, and legislation establish conditions that dissuade resistance members from conducting negative actions and allow for rapid prosecution if members violate the laws. The legal framework becomes the foundation for the code of conduct for the resistance and the oath taken by every resistance member (Korbonski, 2004, 117-119; Bór-Komorowski, 2011, 28-29). Codes of conduct, ethics, and laws of armed conflict (LOAC) should be part of every resistance members’ training as well as a public education campaign. This includes what the population should expect of their government’s URO efforts and what will be expected of the population. Together, these efforts build an understanding of and confidence in these irregular institutions before and during a conflict. Are these efforts guaranteed to stop all issues? No, there are no perfect solutions when dealing with human nature, but the above, plus effective recruiting practices discussed below, will go a long way to mitigate and provide a legal means of responding to these issues.

Dr. Maskaliūnaitė also highlights historical examples that demonstrate insurgent organisations’ propensity for targeting populations to force compliance or delegitimise the government and security forces and rightly worries about similar happenings with URO (p. 37). However, the idea that a URO sponsored by a democratic government, shadow or in exile, would intentionally target their citizens to delegitimize the occupier is unlikely since this would be self-defeating. This concern highlights the confusion between insurgency and resistance — insurgency against a constituted government and resistance against an occupier. Terrorism — the indiscriminate or politically-motivated extrajudicial targeting of civilians to

achieve a political end — is a tactic of insurgency. The legal foundations established prior to a conflict, plus leadership and civilian oversight, provide the checks and balances against the use of terrorism.

Actions against collaborators could be misinterpreted as terrorism. The PPP effectively carried out justice under occupation against collaborators, criminals, and illegal activities that hurt the population, not the occupier, and minimized misperceptions by using a sanctioned justice system, public punishment, and media outlets to inform the public of these actions (Korbonski, 2004, p. 136-142). The underground courts conducted trials of accused collaborators or criminals in absentia, but they were represented by an appointed defence attorney. If the individual was found guilty, the court would determine the appropriate sentence, and then a specialized unit would carry out the sentence as publicly as possible — execution or humiliation (Korbonski, 2004, p. 136-142). Such operations were fully sanctioned and legally based on the legislative foundations outlining the expected conduct of the resistance and the general population under occupation. To ensure the actions against the guilty were not misinterpreted as terrorism against the citizenry, the Polish Underground announced the legal justifications and sentences via underground papers and radio (Korbonski, 2004, p. 206). This system provided not only legitimacy but also dissuaded others.

Additionally, a shadow government-controlled justice system against collaborators also protects perceived collaborators who conduct underground-sanctioned collaboration for intelligence collection, subversion, sabotage, or assassination. The casual observer would be inclined to act out against the individual without legal constraints which could have catastrophic repercussions. This only works if the resistance is organized, legal frameworks are understood, and the population is informed of the underground justice system and dissuaded from vigilantism and extrajudicial actions. At the same time, a clandestine reporting mechanism is needed to allow the population to report violations of conduct by any member of the society, not to the occupier, but to the underground, like the population capturing and reporting unethical behaviors and war crimes of the occupier (Korbonski, 2004, p. 118). The process for reporting is more complicated in a clandestine environment

where a tip line or 911 is not practical, but clandestine reporting systems can be set up that protect the underground and still provide a means for the population to report, such as whisper campaigns — tell enough people, and it will get back to the underground. This reporting concept serves three purposes — it gives the population the ability to report suspected violators without exposing underground members, helps to find potential unsanctioned resistance organisations or individuals, and allows the underground to investigate and serve justice as a message to the population that they take any negative actions of their members or unsanctioned organisation seriously which also helps to maintain the underground's legitimacy.

In peacetime, the concern is mission creep and the misuse of the URO for political purposes per Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's Operation Gladio example (p. 35). First, and where we disagree with the ROC and CDH, the peacetime-developed URO should not be used operationally to counter adversary grey-zone operations, unless they result in occupation, due to the risks of exposing the URO. This would negatively impact deterrence and operational effectiveness. Second, legislative frameworks would define any URO missions in peacetime, just as in war, mitigating misuse and mission creep. Short of occupation, the only exception would likely be passive intelligence collection and early warning of threats, such as adversary grey-zone operations, using the nationwide clandestine intelligence network. In this case, the networks would remain undetected but would report their observations via their established clandestine reporting procedures. Additionally, misuse or misappropriation would be exposed quickly due to the constant counterintelligence monitoring of URO members.

Dr. Maskaliūnaitė also exposes the fundamental issue of the cadre concept where vetting and recruitment is the cell leader's responsibility, which is a challenge in the best conditions, and extremely difficult under occupation (p. 33). For countries using the cadre concept, she is correct in her assertion that leaders and their recruited cell members should be held responsible if the recruited cell member's actions result in ethical or legal issues. However, without clear legal frameworks, the accountability of individuals and their leaders is difficult. However, the cadre model would be better than starting from scratch like the PPP, which took years of clandestine growth to reach its final scale in 1944. Alternatively, these issues



are negated when the URO is organized before a conflict and all the resources of the state can be used to assess, select, and monitor personnel. Additionally, the same URO can provide counterintelligence support to recruiting under occupation to replace losses due to attrition.

Lastly, without the support of the state, including vetting systems, legal frameworks, and clandestine justice systems to enforce the laws, the cell leader is on their own. If they inadvertently recruit an unethical or criminal cell member, the leader has no suitable options. If the problematic member is fired, they could turn on the cell or commit other illegal activities against the population. If they stay, they are a risk. Thus, the leader could be forced to be the judge and executioner, both figuratively and literally.

## 2.2 Legitimacy

The Polish [GIE] was widely recognised by the international community and was established in full accordance with the Polish pre-war Constitution – thus guaranteeing the continuity of all state institutions. This was important as it was these institutions that had the major impact on the legal functioning of the PPP, giving it the full, lawful legitimacy – something unheard of amongst other European resistance movements. (Utracka, 2019, para. 4.)

The earlier section began to lay out the critical aspect of legitimacy, and the legal frameworks for the URO. As Dr. Maskaliūnaitė explains, the nation's government must be the URO sponsor because 'only its authorization by the established authority can lend credibility and distinguish it from other unruly elements' (p. 33). She named three specific concerns with legitimacy: wartime mission creep to target collaborators over the occupier, violence by the occupier in retaliation for armed resistance, and the potential peacetime activities against the nation's democratic processes or institutions (p. 33-34).

Her first concern is the delegitimation of the URO if it follows historical trends and spends 'more energy trying to intimidate 'collaborators' than...fighting...the

occupier' (p. 33). While historically accurate, the PPP is illustrative as an example where legal process and precision actions 'to pass sentences on oppressors [occupiers], traitors [collaborators], spies and agents provocateurs [emphasis in original]' were just one PPP line of effort and not the primary (Korbonski, 2004, p. 124). Second, armed resistance actions against the occupier can cause occupier reprisal against the population which may negatively affect the URO's legitimacy. While this is always a risk of armed resistance, giving up this means may not stop actions against civilians. Stopping armed actions may cause the population to question the legitimacy of the resistance. From the occupier's perspective, the URO ending armed resistance for fear of reprisals is a win. If the occupier achieves this success, this positive reinforcement may lead to more reprisals against civilians. The PPP learned the occupier would be brutal regardless of the activities of the resistance (Korbonski, 2004, p. 293). However, large-scale military activities by the Polish resistance army were discouraged due to equally large-scale retributions (Fuegner, 2014, 82). While non-violent resistance can be effective, the capacity for armed resistance should never be given up. The URO modulates the employment of both based on desired goals, means and methods available, and on the occupier's actions and responses.

The last concern is that political leanings lead the URO to attempt to counter the nation's democratic processes in peacetime. For example, Dr. Maskaliūnaitė posits that the URO could react negatively to a political party taking power that shows policy deference to Russia or decides to disband the URO for political reasons (p. 34). For legitimacy's sake, the same laws that regulated the establishment of the organisation should supply the legal pathway to adapt or disband the URO due to changes in policy to mitigate these concerns (Korbonski, 2004, p. 451-453). Legal frameworks provide similar safeguards if a political party tries extrajudicial efforts to use the organisation for political purposes or disband it. In either case, if policy changes and decisions are legal, URO members as government professionals follow the law, resign, or face legal repercussions individually or collectively. Further, the legal framework provides the means for prosecuting violations. Ultimately, well-thought-out legislation is the best safeguard and ensures legitimacy.

## 2.3 Recruitment

We discussed the structure of the [underground] organization to be set up, and...agreed on the personalities who were to be invited to join...the only criterion...applied was their suitability for underground activities. (Korbonski, 2004, p. 13)

Concerning recruiting, Dr. Maskaliūnaitė identifies three issues with the ROC and CDH: who is 'undesirable' and how to protect against recruiting them, the implications for recruiting from established defence-related social networks, and how not to recruit 'the loudest 'patriots' but the dedicated adherents to the civil society' (p. 35). The obvious undesirables include fringe members of society, radicals, criminals, and those with behavioral health issues. Although easy to categorise, it is much harder to identify these individuals as part of standard recruiting efforts if they conceal these aspects of their lives. However, the added benefit of developing and recruiting for a highly-secret organisation is the ability for the government to do enhanced vetting of all aspects of a recruit's life, lifestyle, and associations to expose these issues. Despite the example of the involvement of former service members in the US events of 6 January, there are currently no known cases involving individuals from US Government organisations that use enhanced vetting and monitoring protocols — a potential indicator of their efficacy. Additionally, as an added safeguard for UROs, recruits can be required to sign documents stating the individual cannot be part of groups deemed undesirable. While not a prevention measure, a false statement provides the legal basis for removal.

Undesirables in URO are more expansive than those mentioned above, such as those not cut out for a clandestine lifestyle. Life as an underground member constantly under the pressure of being detected, hunted, and killed or captured requires individuals with extraordinary strength and endurance. The secondary and tertiary risk of the potential death or capture of close associates and even family members increases the stress for these individuals. Therefore, the underground members must be mentally and physically prepared for the hardships of the clandestine lifestyle. Additionally, undesirables for recruitment would include anyone considered a known threat to an occupier resulting in them being hunted

from the outset and putting the URO at risk. These include current and former military and national security-related government personnel, politicians, scientists, technical professionals, and members of their social networks. This is a common tactic of occupiers and was used against Poland by both the Germans and Soviets. Based on recent reports, Russia is using similar tactics in Ukraine in 2022 (Corera, 2022), although it should be noted that western counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations use similar target lists, such as the 'deck of cards' used in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Countries relying on former military members for the URO to inadvertently induce risk into their clandestine structure since they will be one of the first groups to be sought by the occupier trying to minimize armed resistance. This risk also runs counter to Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's assertion that 'recruitment into clandestine functions tends to be concentrated in social networks that are already linked to the defence effort' (p. 34). Recruiting individuals with no national security or military-related experience and then training them in specialized skills for armed and non-violent resistance, or other underground functions would deny the occupier the ability to identify individuals of interest prior to a conflict, keeping the organisation safer. For example, the Polish Home Army had a wide variety of members without military backgrounds. As Fuegner notes, 'People from all walks of life took part. Clerks, railway workers, artisans, factory workers, and students all took up arms against the Germans' (2014, p. 81). However, if an individual has the specific background, expertise, or standing required by the underground, the government can provide them with a new identity, a common practice in the PPP, although complicated today by technology and 'big data' (Bór-Komorowski, 2011, P. 143-144).

Finally, individuals chosen for clandestine roles will inherently want to maintain low profiles for their safety, and the safety of their family, organisation, and nation. Their inherent ascetic makes choosing patriots dedicated to 'civil society' and not merely the 'loudest patriots' easy to achieve. These are 'quiet professionals' that serve in every secretive government organisation. They do not want public recognition or need social affirmation, and they are content being part of an exceptional team. Individuals seeking recognition and social networks do poorly in clandestine organisations. Studies of both the WWII British Special Operations Executive and the American Office of Strategic Services assessments and selection

efforts found this undesired trait (Faunce, 2016, p. 15-16). These assessment and selection concepts are still used today by their successor organisations. Each organisation modified its assessment and selection courses based on its unique requirements. For example, today special operations place more emphasis on the ability of individuals to work in teams while intelligence officers are likely to be assessed more on their individual capabilities due to the clandestine nature of their work. It is this mindset, the quiet professionals who shy away from recognition and social affirmation that separates the world's best-in-class special operations and intelligence organisations from others. The same concept would apply to clandestine underground resistance organisations. Thus, the concept of patriotism in URO takes on a whole new meaning—one of unrecognized, selfless service to the nation.

## 2.4 Potential Problems in the Long-Term

The most important task of the [PPP] was, alongside the organisation of underground activity, to provide the flawless functionality of the Polish state – the maintenance of the pre-occupation national institutions as well as making all necessary preparation for the power takeover after the end of war. (Utracka, 2019, para. 1.)

As Dr. Maskaliūnaitė notes, the ROC and CDH do not detail how a URO ends in peacetime or after occupation. Disbanding the URO in peacetime was discussed in paragraph 2.2. This section focuses on URO's disposition after an occupation. As the quote above notes, the goal of the resistance is to defeat the occupier and re-establish the government. After the occupation, the URO is either demobilized or reconstituted. Disbanding can be in total if no national security threats exist in the future. Alternatively, only portions of the URO can be disbanded based on future threats, lessons from the occupation, or policy changes. Reconstitution would focus on applying lessons learned to make the 'next generation' URO more capable. The biggest obstacle to reconstitution is how long and complex the RTO lasted—months, years, or decades, and the trauma of the events faced under occupation. Thus, reconstitution could mean replacing a few members if the RTO lasted a few

months or all members for long-term resistance efforts. Lastly, the scale of reconstitution depends on the availability of resources to rebuild and reset the organisation. From a legal perspective, prosecuting members of the resistance or population for unethical or illegal actions based upon national resistance frameworks should happen immediately after the occupation, creating an opportunity for closure and national reconciliation.

## 2.5 Strategic Communications

The Polish people had their eyes fixed on the [GIE]; they gave their unstinted obedience to the [PPP], of whose existence the Germans were well aware; and they would have rejected any suggestion of compromise. (Korbonski, 2004, p. 30)

Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's final area of concern is strategic communications related to three issues — unintended consequences of messaging the intent to develop URO in peacetime; use of these announcements by the adversary for misinformation or disinformation to discredit the URO or justify pre-emptive action; and consequences on the population in a conflict.

When messaging the URO establishment, three target audiences should be taken into account — domestic, international, and potential adversaries. For domestic audiences, legitimacy requires clear messaging of political intent and legal frameworks to establish a URO in peacetime and mitigate all issues discussed above to set the stage for domestic acceptance. Holistic messaging also informs the international community, including partners and allies, of the decision of the nation to resist, providing these partners with the legal foundations to build external support, both in peacetime and in conflict. Lastly, announcing the establishment of the URO plays an important deterrence role for potential adversaries. While governments should carefully consider the timing and scope of their strategic communication about establishing the URO, they should not shy away from public messaging about the URO in fear of a possible pre-emptive invasion by their adversary given its defensive nature. However, if this was a concern, nations could develop URO in secret and only publicly announce its existence after it was established, although this would impact the legitimacy of the URO with the domestic audience. Given the importance of legitimacy, the optimal approach is to

establish the URO's legal foundations openly and focusing the messaging on its defensive deterrence nature, while developing the organisation secretly to protect its classified details such as the structure, personnel, doctrine, locations, scale, capabilities, plans, and resourcing. Choosing this strategy can also diminish adversary efforts using URO for misinformation or disinformation, including labeling the URO a terrorist organisation or using it to justify pre-emptive actions.

Lastly, the potential impact of these pre-crisis efforts on the population must be acknowledged. First, legislation and national security documents must reflect URO's established purpose, roles, and structure and the expectations of the non-participating population to frame LOAC protections for URO armed members, non-violent participants, and the population. Additionally, strategic messaging must articulate that URO will follow the LOAC, and the success of this communication depends on the occupier following LOAC in tandem. If they do, these efforts will help minimise indiscriminate targeting of the population. If they do not, then the messaging and URO's adherence to the LOAC sets the stage for international condemnation and legal challenges. Lastly, messaging and legal foundations allow friendly nations to determine their support for the URO. Legal foundations are critical to legitimizing the effort in the eyes of domestic audiences and international stakeholders while ideally dissuading the adversary.

## Conclusions

For us...the road to freedom leads through the torture chambers of the [German] Gestapo...through prisons and concentration camps, through mass deportations and mass executions.... The hour of decision will arrive for Poland when the Polish people themselves grapple with the invader. With stubborn patience we must wait for that hour to come.... Arms must be amassed and our fighters made ready....In this period of dire oppression, without precedent...arouse your spirit of combat and perseverance. (Davies, 2005, p. 181).

The PPP, the Polish GIE, and the Polish people resisted with honour against not one, but two occupiers in WWII. Although the resistance effort ultimately failed, it provides many lessons for countries developing a large-scale URO to resist occupation prior to a crisis. While still largely theoretical in a modern context, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has again demonstrated the applicability of RTO, with the URO as its center of gravity, and the importance of Dr. Maskaliūnaitė's five concerns. This study complements and builds upon the five concerns: (1) Command and Control, (2) Legitimacy, (3) Recruitment, (4) Potential Long-Term Problems, and (5) Strategic Communications using the Polish underground case study to explore modern solutions. Additionally, it adds to the discourse on the topic and provides policymakers and civilian leaders in countries developing these capabilities with a greater understanding of the possibilities and risk-mitigating measures to consider for success.

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