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Улога вештачке интелигенције у војној неутралности Републике Србије: изазови и перспективе

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Апстракт: Политика војне неутралности представља један од темељних принципа савремене спољне и безбедносне политике Републике Србије. У епохи вештачке интелигенције, овај концепт добија нову димензију, технолошку неутралност као услов стратешке аутономије. Развој и примена вештачке интелигенције не само да утичу на војне способности, већ обликују односе моћи, економску зависност и когнитивну контролу унутар глобалног система. У таквом контексту, питање неутралности више се не односи искључиво на војно савезништво, већ на способност државе да управља сопственим дигиталним суверенитетом и одржи равнотежу између различитих технолошких сфера утицаја. Војно савезништво се може и треба разматрати у контексту неутралности, али не као чланство, већ као референтни оквир стратегијске оријентације и ограничења.

Рад полази од претпоставке да вештачка интелигенција постаје важан фактор у дефинисању нових облика стратешке зависности и отпорности. Србија, позиционирана између западних и источних технолошких система, суочава се са изазовом да своју неутралност прошири у домен алгоритамске политике и дигиталне инфраструктуре. Уместо блоковског сврставања, вештачка интелигенција може постати инструмент интелигентног балансирања, средство којим држава јача сопствене аналитичке, комуникационе и безбедносне капацитете, задржавајући контролу над подацима и процесима од националног значаја.

Закључно, у раду се предлаже концепт „интелигентне неутралности“, који подразумева интеграцију принципа дигиталног суверенитета, етичке одговорности и технолошке независности Србије. Тај модел може послужити као теоријска и практична основа за развој новог типа неутралности у дигиталној ери, неутралности која не почива на изолацији, већ на активnoj контроли алгоритамских токова моћи. Србија тиме добија прилику да постане пример адаптивне државе која не само одолева утицајима великих сила, већ обликује сопствени дигитални идентитет унутар мултиполарног поретка.

Кључне речи: интелигентна неутралност, војна неутралност, технолошка диверсификација

The role of artificial intelligence in the military neutrality of the Republic of Serbia: challenges and perspectives

Abstract: The policy of military neutrality is one of the fundamental principles of the contemporary foreign and security policy of the Republic of Serbia. In the era of artificial intelligence, this concept gains a new dimension, technological neutrality as a condition for strategic autonomy. The development and application of artificial intelligence not only affect military capabilities, but also shape power relations, economic dependence and cognitive control within the global system. In such a context, the issue of neutrality no longer refers exclusively to military alliances, but to the ability of a state to manage its own digital sovereignty and maintain a balance between different technological spheres of influence. Military alliances can and should be considered in the context of neutrality, but not as membership, but as a reference framework of strategic orientation and limitations. The paper starts from the assumption that artificial intelligence is becoming an important factor in defining new forms of strategic dependence and resilience. Serbia, positioned between Western and Eastern technological systems, faces the challenge of extending its neutrality into the domain of algorithmic policy and digital infrastructure. Instead of bloc alignment, artificial intelligence can become an instrument of intelligent balancing, a means by which the state strengthens its own analytical, communication and security capacities, while maintaining control over data and processes of national importance.

In conclusion, the paper proposes the concept of “intelligent neutrality”, which implies the integration of the principles of digital sovereignty, ethical responsibility and technological independence of Serbia. This model can serve as a theoretical and practical basis for the development of a new type of neutrality in the digital era, a neutrality that does not rest on isolation, but on the active control of algorithmic power flows. Serbia thus has the opportunity to become an example of an adaptive state that not only resists the influences of great powers, but also shapes its own digital identity within a multipolar order.

Keywords: intelligent neutrality, military neutrality, technological diversification.

1. Introduction

The Republic of Serbia, faced with great challenges after gaining independence in 2006, the separation of Montenegro, i.e. the disappearance of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, was for the first time since 1918 in a position to independently build its position in international relations. The complex geopolitical situation, the regional environment that was significantly unfavorable to the national interests of independent Serbia, the legacy of the post-Cold War period that was marked by the so-called disintegration of a large state, wars, economic crisis and transition, caused the army to orient itself in accordance with the security policy of the newly established state. Thus, in 2007, military neutrality was declared and the entire military apparatus was redefined and transformed in accordance with the requirements and ideas of the then state administration.

The policy of military neutrality is still one of the basic postulates on which the Republic of Serbia builds its security policy. After major organizational changes, a complete strategic-doctrinal transformation and the establishment of a system that is complementary to the challenges, risks and threats to security, the Serbian Armed Forces were created in their current form. Projections of potential instability on European soil, after the changes in Ukraine in 2014 and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation were a signal that the military instrument of power must be improved even in militarily neutral states. The policy of not joining military alliances, which is a legacy of military neutrality, contributed to the fact that the Republic of Serbia had to significantly strengthen its military potential both by developing its own military industry, but also by equipping it with modern weapons and military equipment purchased from abroad. In addition to changes in organization, doctrine and other segments, the segment of applying the most modern technologies stood out in particular. The technological aspect of military power has come to the fore in particular following the launch of the Russian Federation's special military operation in Ukraine in 2022. Modern technologies have contributed to the conflict having a special technological character, in addition to its hybrid, special and conventional character, as the most modern achievements in the field of technology have also been applied in the context of intelligence gathering, command, and the conduct of conventional operations. One of the technologies is artificial intelligence, the use of which has significantly transformed the use of military forces in modern military operations (Pavić, Beriša, & Jonev Ćiraković, 2024).

In the context of geopolitical instability, technological progress and global competition, classic models of state security are undergoing a fundamental transformation. For states that seek to maintain a policy of military neutrality, the issue is no longer simply one of avoiding agreements and alliances, but of the ability to strengthen their strategic autonomy in all dimensions, including the digital one. This paper argues that the advent of the age of artificial intelligence creates a new framework in which neutrality can be reinterpreted as “intelligent neutrality”: A model in which a state not only does not enter into military alliances, but purposefully builds its own capacities in the field of artificial intelligence, maintains control over data, infrastructure and algorithms, and thus ensures digital sovereignty and strategic independence.

This change in the nature of neutrality is not only technological; it has profound implications for positioning in international relations, the distribution of power, economic dependence and security policy. By viewing the state as an entity that must manage its own digital identity and algorithmic flows, the paper explores whether “smart neutrality” will constitute a sustainable and meaningful model for states such as the Republic of Serbia in a multipolar, technologically shaped world. The aim of the paper is twofold, on the one hand, to theoretically define and conceptualize “smart neutrality”, and on the other, to offer an assessment of the challenges and opportunities that artificial intelligence brings as part of modern military neutrality through an analysis of Serbia’s position.

Methodologically, the paper will combine theoretical analysis of works from public sources related to the literature on international relations, law, sovereignty theory and military doctrine, conceptual synthesis and empirical, comparative analysis, as well as an assessment of contemporary international trends in the development of artificial intelligence and digital sovereignty.

2. Theoretical framework

Historically, military neutrality represented a clearly defined legal status of a state that refrained from participating in armed conflicts and did not join military alliances. The traditional model, which developed from the Congress of Vienna to the Hague Conventions, was based on three fundamental principles: non-aggression, non-cooperation, and non-prejudice. Neutrality was then primarily a legal concept, and only secondarily a political one. However, after the Cold War and the disintegration of strict bloc divisions, the classical legal definition was no longer sufficient to explain the place of states that sought to avoid structural alignments, but at the same time actively participated in international missions, economic integration, or political partnerships. Researchers such as Gardener and Karsh indicate that contemporary neutrality has transformed from a static status into a dynamic risk management strategy, in which the state balances between multiple centers of power, but without formal membership in alliances (Gärtner, 2020; Karsh, 2011). In the 21st century, especially after 2014 and the conflict in Ukraine, neutrality enters a postmodern phase in which technological, informational and cognitive factors play a key role, and not only military ones. Artificial intelligence, cyberspace and digital infrastructure become new terrains of alignment, which leads to the emergence of a new concept of technological neutrality as a prerequisite for strategic autonomy.

Consideration of the theoretical framework of military neutrality cannot be separated from a traditional approach that includes normative legal foundations, case studies of military neutrality that are internationally recognized and accepted, consideration of digital sovereignty as an inseparable part of the existence of a modern state, and consideration of the possibilities of artificial intelligence in this concept.

2.1. Military neutrality between traditional and modern

Military neutrality (hereinafter: neutrality) in theoretical frameworks can be studied from the standpoint of classical and contemporary theories. Therefore, if we look at classical theories, the first aspect of the theoretical framework is a legal category. Traditionally understood, military neutrality is the institutionalized status of a state that does not participate in armed conflicts and does not join military-political alliances. This model is based on the Hague Conventions of 1907, which guarantee neutral states certain rights, but also impose obligations such as the prohibition of ceding territory to warring parties or participating in military operations. However, the Hague framework was created in the era of territorial wars and is limited to the physical dimension of conflict, while modern forms of power such as cyber operations, information warfare, artificial intelligence, go beyond the traditional understanding of neutrality.

The changes that are an integral part of international relations have not bypassed the states that have proclaimed neutrality as a framework for the realization of their interests. Modern views on the status of neutrality speak in favor of the fact that previously neutral states can always and often must discriminate against a state that is waging an illegal war (Haque, 2022). An example is military aid to Ukraine. Namely, some authors believe that in this way the obligations of neutrality towards Russia are not violated, that is, that they do not exist and have never existed because the classical law of neutrality assumes the legal equality of warring states. A neutral state could abandon its "obligation" of impartiality between the warring parties at any time, simply by using its discretionary right to declare war on any party (Haque, 2022). The above examples are supported by the fact that the classical law of neutrality was abolished, first by the Pact of Paris, and later by the Charter of the United Nations, i.e. the prohibition of aggression was accepted and recognized by the international community of states as a whole as an imperative norm of general international law.

On the other hand, the authors Kolb and Meret in their analysis present how in contemporary conflicts the concept of neutrality is increasingly being broken down into different statuses that are not clearly defined in classical international law. The authors show that the traditional neutrality from the Hague Conventions, which refers to a strictly impartial and restrained position, is today often inadequate for complex situations such as the conflict in Ukraine. In response to the new changes in the interpretation of international frameworks, new forms of neutrality are emerging in practice, such as differential neutrality, which is aligned with the UN collective security system. Then there is qualified neutrality, where states claim to be neutral but support one side, which essentially destroys the classical concept. Finally, non-belligerence as a central position. Nominally, a state does not participate in hostilities, but can support one side, although this status is legally insufficiently defined (Kolb & Meret, 2025). The fact is that changes in the understanding of the concept of neutrality lead to the expansion of vague categories that can completely blur the distinction between neutrality and actual participation in the conflict.

If we consider military neutrality as a strategic orientation, we gain a new dimension in the application of this concept. Contemporary literature indicates that neutrality today is primarily a strategic practice, not just a legal status. It can encompass selective participation in various peacekeeping missions, political balancing, maintaining maneuvering space, avoiding long-term commitments that would limit state autonomy (Lottaz & Reginbogin, 2018; Radoman, 2021). This perspective opens up space for a more dynamic interpretation of neutrality, which is important for understanding the position of Serbia, which defines its neutrality politically, rather than formally and legally.

As an example of good practice, Ireland's policy of military neutrality is a long-standing and deeply rooted element of its foreign policy, based on non-membership in military alliances and avoidance of mutual defense obligations. This position allows Ireland to maintain an active and credible role in peace support operations, crisis management and peace diplomacy, as well as to promote human rights, development and global disarmament (European Commission, 2025). Neutrality expands the scope of its foreign policy effectiveness, particularly within the UN and the EU, while its special status within European integration is formally recognized and guaranteed by the Protocol to the Lisbon Treaty.

In addition to the previously mentioned facts and positions related to neutrality, it is important to take into account the strategy that a state resorts to in order to achieve its interests in complex international relations without violating the status of military neutrality. Thus, we can single out several approaches that are completely relevant from the point of view of Serbia. Small states try to balance powerful actors by balancing in relations with other international actors, without directly aligning. On the other hand, they try to align themselves with a more powerful side for the sake of benefit and protection, the so-called bandwagoning concept. Of particular interest is the concept of *hedging*, i.e. the strategy of simultaneous limitation and engagement, i.e. avoiding choices while maintaining *relations* with multiple actors, which is recognized as part of Serbia's strategic pragmatism (Pavić & Beriša, 2025). The hedging concept is particularly relevant to this work because it more closely describes the position of a state that faces two technological blocs, on the one hand the USA/EU and on the other hand the People's Republic of China/Russian Federation, and wants to maintain autonomy in the choice of technologies.

2.2. Intelligent neutrality as a concept

If we look at military neutrality from the perspective of contemporary threats, which are multidimensional, non-transparent and technologically advanced, we can consider the same concept through non-traditional frameworks. Thus, Čaloud points out that military neutrality in the 21st century is seriously challenged by hybrid threats, cyberattacks and wars that no longer respect classical legal frameworks. The author emphasizes that neutrality is not protection in itself, but requires a clear strategy, defense capacities and political determination to preserve it. A comparison of different models, especially with the example of Switzerland, shows that successful neutrality implies active and well-funded defense, and not just a declarative stance (Čaloud, 2025). It can be concluded that neutrality can be an advantage, but only if it is realistically designed and aligned with modern security threats.

The threats previously identified as a framework that diverges from the classical approach of military neutrality imply that this paper introduces a theoretical model of "intelligent neutrality". This model is based on both traditional and contemporary postulates. First, military Neutrality must exist in the classical sense, i.e. the principle of non-alignment with military alliances must be respected. The second postulate is reflected in digital independence, i.e. that the state must have control over the infrastructure and data, which it should provide algorithmic autonomy and cognitive security. The response to technologically advanced threats leads us to the third postulate, which is technological pluralism, which is reflected in the diversification of partners in the technological domain.

The previous chapter explained the theoretical concept of military neutrality, where it is evident that despite changes in the international system, traditional sources of military neutrality must still be relevant, primarily due to the normative and legal foundation of the concept. Another separate postulate of intelligent neutrality is reflected in digital sovereignty. Digital sovereignty, according to Baldoni and Di Luna, implies the ability of the state to control data generated on its territory, ensure independence from critical digital infrastructures, manage technological dependencies that can threaten political autonomy (Baldoni & Di Luna, 2025). This expansion of sovereignty becomes fundamental in a world where algorithms, models and data become the new points of power. In addition to digital sovereignty, a necessary condition must be the control of algorithmic sovereignty. Algorithmic sovereignty is a narrower and more specific concept that refers to the control over key models of artificial intelligence, software supply chains, critical decision-making algorithms, the possibility of modifying and revising model structures (Martin, 2023). If a state does not control the algorithms that govern its security or

economic sectors, it loses autonomy, even if it formally maintains military neutrality. If we implement artificial intelligence into the system, such systems are inherently dependent on data, computer infrastructure, model, but also human resources. These dependencies are becoming a new form of strategic pressure, which puts countries like Serbia in a position where they must carefully manage their technological partnerships, that is, diversify their technological partners.

3. Artificial intelligence as a transformer of military neutrality

The position of neutral states in the modern security environment increasingly depends on their ability to understand, control and integrate artificial intelligence into their own defense and security architecture. It is increasingly accepted that artificial intelligence is becoming a key instrument of power, a means of strategic influence and a source of new geopolitical dependence, thereby changing the traditional meaning of neutrality as the absence of military alliances. Instead of the classic dilemma of “alliance or independence”, states are faced with the question of technological dependence or digital autonomy. For this reason, artificial intelligence is increasingly becoming an instrument for the implementation of defined strategies and as such can be a factor that defines the real limits of military neutrality. In this chapter, artificial intelligence will be considered in the context of the necessity of diversifying technological sources from multiple sides, as well as the transformative power of artificial intelligence in military forces, which is a fundamental factor in the achievement of military neutrality.

If we imagine that instead of the previous bloc divisions from the time of cold war, we can today promote technological ecosystems as new security blocs, then surely a state or alliance that has a more developed application of artificial intelligence can hope for supremacy. If we take, for example, today's situation where in the Eurasian region, instead of the classic division into NATO, opposing and non-aligned states are forming technological blocs (Winkler, 2025). The Western system consisting of the USA and EU members, the Chinese model of digital infrastructure and the partially independent systems of India, Israel and South Korea are becoming new centers of strategic influence. Neutral states are not exempt from these processes. Although they are not formally in alliances, their digital sovereignty directly depends on whose technology they use, especially in the areas of information and telecommunications technologies, which are of vital importance for the development of artificial intelligence. Control over technological architecture means control over defense, information flows, and national security. For states that strive for neutrality, it is no longer crucial that they do not belong to a military alliance, but rather that they do not become dependent on a single technological bloc. It is precisely the diversification of a neutral state's technological dependence on a single source that is one of the most important factors of strategic resilience. The fact is that no neutral state that has no alternatives in vital areas, such as energy, technology, and weapons and military equipment, can formally ensure its neutrality.

Artificial intelligence generates new forms of power ranging from surveillance, data analysis and predictive intelligence analytics to cyber offensive capabilities and cognitive influence. Depending on who controls critical systems, artificial intelligence can strengthen state autonomy or become a tool for political pressure (Schneier & Sanders, 2025). For neutral states, which do not have guarantees of collective defense, this dilemma is particularly pronounced because the choice of technological partners can enhance security independence or permanently undermine it.

In addition to the importance of technological diversification in the concept of artificial intelligence-related technologies, another factor that stands out is its impact on military forces, or rather on defense capabilities. Artificial intelligence represents the greatest revolution in military capabilities since nuclear weapons, reshaping the domains of command and control, intelligence and reconnaissance systems, cyber defense, logistics, autonomous platforms, and communications. (Bin Rashid et al, 2023)The militaries of major states and alliances are integrating artificial intelligence into multi-domain doctrines and concepts such as “mosaic warfare” (Clark, Patt, & Schramm, 2020), which changes the rules of modern operations and strategic action. In such an environment, artificial intelligence ceases to be exclusively technological, but becomes a geopolitical issue. The choice of a technological partner becomes the choice of a strategic support, which is especially pronounced in states that strive for military neutrality (Taddeo & Floridi, 2018).

Artificial intelligence also enables the development of situational awareness that was previously available mainly to members of large defense alliances, thanks to the ability to analyze large amounts of data, early detection of threats, and predictive risk assessment. Balmforth illustrates in his article how dependence on foreign allies can limit the strategic autonomy of a state in conflict. The US threat to suspend intelligence support and arms deliveries if Ukraine does not accept the US peace plan shows that military support can become an instrument of political and strategic pressure (Balmforth, 2025). For states seeking to maintain military neutrality, this example highlights

a key challenge: even formally, independent states can become dependent on the capabilities provided by major patrons, which affects their ability to make independent decisions on security and defense issues. In this sense, the situation in Ukraine serves as a warning that true neutrality implies the development of domestic and diversified capabilities, including technology and intelligence resources, in order to minimize external dependence and preserve strategic independence. For states that do not rely on allied intelligence infrastructure, these capabilities can partially compensate for structural resource gaps and raise the level of independent strategic assessment. Such models allow neutral states to develop their own risk assessment and security analysis mechanisms, which directly strengthens their autonomy in defense decision-making.

Although autonomous systems significantly improve operational capabilities, their value depends on software architecture, cloud infrastructure, cryptography and algorithms, which are often owned by foreign actors. Such dependence can generate serious security risks, including the possibility of surveillance, manipulation or political pressure (Timmers, 2019). In addition, due to the limited resources for the development of new high-tech systems, most small and militarily neutral states have to purchase them on a turnkey basis, often leaving them without control over critical parts of the technology, thus creating a new form of strategic dependence on larger states. Therefore, it is crucial to establish hybrid, partially sovereign artificial intelligence systems that combine domestic capabilities with carefully controlled external partnerships, in order to minimize dependence in critical segments.

Finally, the application of artificial intelligence in the defense structures of militarily neutral states raises complex ethical, normative and political issues related to accountability, privacy, transparency, control of algorithms and compliance with international law (Cath et al, 2018). Militarily neutral states must be particularly cautious because they do not have the protection of alliance mechanisms and institutions that could cushion the consequences of possible mistakes or disputes. For Serbia, which seeks to preserve both security autonomy and political credibility, it is crucial to develop a normatively aligned, transparent and ethically oriented strategy for the application of artificial intelligence that will ensure that technological development serves to strengthen, rather than erode, national independence.

4. Artificial intelligence and strengthening Serbia's military neutrality

In the modern multipolar system, the concept of military neutrality is undergoing a significant transformation under the influence of digital technologies, and in particular artificial intelligence. The traditional meaning of neutrality as the absence of formal alliances is no longer sufficient, as states, striving for independence must simultaneously manage technological dependencies, digital sovereignty, and algorithmic power flows. Artificial intelligence provides opportunities for increasing independent security capacities, reducing dependence on great powers, building digital sovereignty, and improving negotiating positions, but at the same time carries the risks of undermining neutrality through dependence on a single technological partner, data control by foreign actors, and integration into other people's algorithmic systems. Analyzing the possibilities of artificial intelligence for militarily neutral states in the context of Serbia, it is concluded that it can act in two directions, namely to be stronger, but also to be a factor undermining military neutrality. Therefore, artificial intelligence for Serbia's military neutrality becomes a platform of strategic choice. Whether technological development will increase or decrease the degree of neutrality depends on the model of implementation, partnership, and control.

Serbia formally defined a policy of military neutrality in 2007, but its essence is being built through three parallel processes, the historical experience of non-alignment and resistance to large alliances, on the line of contact between East and West, and the need to preserve strategic flexibility in conditions of multiple levels of pressure. Instead of formal neutrality modeled after Austria or Switzerland, Serbia is developing a pragmatic and geopolitically adaptive neutrality. Through the application of the concept of strategic pragmatism, Serbia is trying to achieve its national interests in a rational and long-term sustainable manner. This approach is in line with the geopolitical reality of Serbia as a small state at the crossroads of global interests (Pavić & Beriša, 2025). Instead of formal and static neutrality, Serbia is developing a multidimensional, adaptive strategy that includes military cooperation with NATO through the Partnership for Peace, strategic reliance on the Russian Federation in the field of energy and defense technology, economic integration with the EU, and technological partnership with the People's Republic of China. This structural multi-vectored allows Serbia to use artificial intelligence as a platform for strategic choice, where maintaining a balance between different global technological systems is crucial.

A particular challenge for Serbia is its positioning between the Western and Eastern technological systems (Mulvihill, 2025). In the modern digital environment, neutrality is no longer a matter of military power alone, but also of control over information flows, algorithms and critical infrastructure. Artificial intelligence enables advanced detection of cyber-attacks, automated response, management of cognitive space and prevention of

disinformation, which is especially important for states that cannot count on allied support in the information and cyber spheres (Brundage et al, 2018). For Serbia, which is exposed to the influence of various technological and political actors, maintaining digital sovereignty becomes a prerequisite for functional military neutrality. Strategic autonomy in this context implies control of critical data, infrastructure, algorithms and integration with global systems in a way that does not threaten national independence.

The strategic model that Serbia can implement is based on algorithmic neutrality, which involves diversifying technological partners, developing domestic AI-based systems for critical functions, and integrating cognitive and ethical resilience. This allows minimizing the risk of technological dependence and preserving room for maneuver in the conditions of competition between great powers from the East and the West. Digital sovereignty and controlled algorithmic flows allow the state to manage its own strategic position and make neutrality an active, rather than a passive, political choice.

Establishing intelligent neutrality in Serbia requires a combination of technological, institutional and cognitive capacities. This primarily involves the development of domestic solutions for intelligence analytics, cyber defense and protection of critical infrastructure. The secondary segment involves the implementation of mixed architectures with foreign partners with control of critical components. The tertiary segment is viewed through compliance with EU regulations without loss of autonomy; strategic communications for the prevention of disinformation and the formation of an expert base for artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. Intelligent neutrality can enable Serbia to preserve strategic autonomy, reduce dependence, strengthen national capacities and prevent cognitive and information threats, representing a model of adaptive, flexible policy in a multipolar and digitally transformed world.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis shows that the age of artificial intelligence fundamentally changes the nature of military neutrality, expanding it from a legal-doctrinal framework to a technological, algorithmic and cognitive dimension. Classical military neutrality is no longer sufficient to ensure the strategic autonomy of a state in the conditions of global technological competition, where the control of power is determined not only by armed capabilities, but also by data, infrastructure, algorithms and digital information flows. In such an environment, the need for the concept of “intelligent neutrality” arises, which integrates the traditional principles of aversion to military alliances with the new demands of digital sovereignty, algorithmic control and technological diversification.

Serbia, as a country between major geopolitical and technological systems, is in a particularly sensitive position. Artificial intelligence depending on the implementation model can become an instrument for strengthening its neutrality or a factor in its undermining. If developed through strategic diversification of partners, control of critical data, building domestic capacities, and an ethically and legally harmonized normative framework, artificial intelligence becomes a mechanism for strengthening strategic autonomy and reducing dependence on great powers. In contrast, uncritical or one-sided technological dependence, especially in the areas of cybersecurity, intelligence analytics, and infrastructure, can lead to the erosion of neutrality and the transfer of part of the state's decision-making capacity to external actors.

Achieving intelligent neutrality requires a multi-layered approach. The development of domestic intelligence and analytical platforms based on artificial intelligence; control and a hybrid management model for critical digital infrastructure; building a human resource base in the field of artificial intelligence and cybersecurity; alignment with minimum European and international ethical and legal standards; and strategic communications aimed at increasing the cognitive resilience of society. As a result, neutrality ceases to be a static legal status and becomes a dynamic risk management strategy in a multipolar digital order.

The key implication of this paper is that Serbia has a real opportunity to transform the existing model of military neutrality into the concept of intelligent, algorithmically anchored neutrality, based on digital sovereignty, technological diversification and institutional adaptability. If this strategy is consistently developed, Serbia can become an example of a state that in the era of artificial intelligence not only preserves neutrality, but also turns it into a source of strategic strength and resilience.

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