

# GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

Bilingual-bimonthly publication of political analysis

Motto: "Opinions are free, but not mandatory" I. L. Caragiale

2018: Who will be the "New Protectors"?

The New National Security Strategy of the US

Let's end the EU leadership farce

The dreams of the  
European Union defense were dispeled

Recep Teyyip Erdogan's thinking of Lausanne

"In a persian market", different reading 2018

Recommended Reading:

Ukraine's Military Intelligence at the Turn of the  
Second Millennium



# Special contributions (in alphabetical order)



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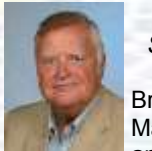
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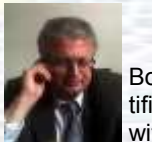
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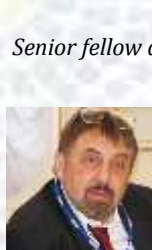
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Between the concern with the wellbeing of his neighbours (less that of the Kurds) and mobilizing the Muslim nation against Donald Trump, Turkey’s president, Recep Teyyip Erdogan, found time in December to pay a working visit to the Greek neighbours, the first paid by a Turkish president on Ellada’s soil during the last 65 years.



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The dreams of the European Union defense were dispeled even quicker than anticipated and even earlier than we feared. In one of his comments, the author underlined that an European Union defense without the United States, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain and Portugal is completely unrealistic ....

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### Open letter to our readers

*With a precision worthy of a Swiss clockwork, Geostrategic Pulse has been issued during more than 10 years, more precisely since March 20, 2007, on the 5th and the 20th of each month.*

*Ever since the first three issues were distributed free of charge to some potential beneficiaries, Geostrategic Pulse grew gradually as number of pages, as number of beneficiaries as well as as number of authors contributing to the achievement of this private publication of geopolitical analysis.*

*This way, Geostrategic Pulse has totaled up in its 250 already published issues more than 12,500 pages, i.e. all the issues, the Supplements, Special Issues, Comments etc. that are available to the subscribers on [www.ingepo.ro](http://www.ingepo.ro), and making up a valuable collection. Its value is given by the team who was preoccupied permanently of working out Geostrategic Pulse, a small team yet made up of distinguished professionals with outstanding experiences in diplomacy, intelligence, economics and other fields. They were gradually joined by an important number of authors both from Romania and from other countries on several continents who are more than 40 today.*

*Special issues and supplements dedicated to some countries such as Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Jordan, Qatar were worked out after exhaustive documentation locally; or important topics such as Al Qaida, the civil war in Syria a.s.o. INGEPO Consulting took part all along to more than 50 important events (conferences, symposiums, round tables, etc) in Romania and abroad (more than 20 trips) of which 8 were organized by ourselves.*

*In 2017 only, Geostrategic Pulse published 330 articles totalizing almost 1,200 pages.*

*Under the circumstances, Geostrategic Pulse's attractiveness increased gradually and the magazine acquired a well defined place in its field both in Romania and abroad. Currently, Geostrategic Pulse is accessed in almost 100 countries on all continents (less the Arctic and the Antarctic), while in Romania we are accessed in more than 40 towns.*

*The geopolitical developments of late determine us that, starting with the new year 2018 to change periodicity of Geostrategic Pulse from a bimonthly issue to a monthly issue. As from this issue, Geostrategic Pulse will have a monthly issue, on the 20th of each month, in the already known structure with an appropriate increase of number of pages so that we do not miss any geopolitical subject we consider important and having thus the major advantage of being able to thoroughly follow an on-going event or approach more conveniently certain topics. So, for instance, in every issue you will find the presentation of two books instead of one and the rest of the chapters will be substantially enriched.*

*We will keep on numbering two issues (251,252/20.01.2018; 253,254/20.02.2018...) until the expiration of the current subscription contracts. The subscriptions contracted after that will be, as so far, for one year period, 12 issues and the cost of subscription will be unchanged for both the printed and the electronic versions.*

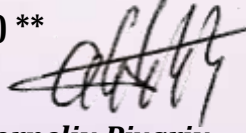
*We assure you that our main concern will further be of offering you valuable materials, objective and timely analysis while remaining open to any suggestions and propositions coming from yourselves.*

*With our highest consideration,*

**CHAIRMAN&CEO INGEPO Consulting**

**Director and Editor-in Chief of Geostrategic Pulse**

**Major-General (ret) \*\***



**Corneliu Pivariu**

**Motto: "Opinions are free, but not mandatory"—I.L.Caragiale**

## EDITORIAL

### Turkey and the Ottoman dream

**Corneliu PIVARIU**



President Tayyip Recep Erdogan declared once: *"Democracy is like a taxi. One gets off of it once the destination is reached."* It seems that after becoming the AKP leader, president Erdogan got off, he and the party, of the taxi before reaching the destination.

Nevertheless, no one can say that president Erdogan's achievements are not remarkable since he won the elections in November 2002, although he had to wait until March 2003 to assume the position of prime minister. Contrary to other parties that wanted to represent political Islam in Turkey, AKP showed interest in the evolution towards democratic values and human rights, backed the status of NATO member and joining the European Union, and all that allowed him to attract an increased number of votes and, although he got only a third of the votes, it was enough to secure two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. That was due also to increasing the electoral threshold to 10% (for preventing the Kurdish formations to join the parliament), a threshold other numerous parties were not to reach either.

In his 15 years in power, Erdogan and AKP succeeded in making substantial changes in Turkey. Firstly it is about the standard of living, from a society made up in its majority of poor people to a society with a strong middle class. It is likely that Erdogan's most important political achievement domestically was the gradual removal of the influence the military have had in politics.

As of 2013, important changes in domestic policy started to take place and Erdogan's leadership became more and more authoritarian with totalitarian elements; as Atatürk before him, Erdogan wishes to change the society yet in a different direction. He intends that women return to the traditional role and he told them even how many children they must have. Also, the religious schools outgrew the secular and universal school system devised by Atatürk. The number of the religious students increased from 60,000 in 2002 to around 1.5 million in 2016.

The so-called coup attempt of July, 2016 allowed president Erdogan to proceed with an extended purge of the army, the judiciary, public administration that went on until the end of 2017, when several hundreds of civil servants and military were discharged from office for strengthening the control of the presidency over important sectors. It remains to be seen how quickly valuable replacements for those arrested or discharged can be found, especially in the military field as there is no solution yet guaranteeing the same efficiency of the army corps. It is the reason we witness undertakings for increasing the role of gendarmerie outside the country, especially in coordination with other Euro-Asian police forces.

Turkish Gendarmerie had around 180,000 military at the end of November 2017 (60% of them professionals, officers included, and 40% conscripts). The Gendarmerie General Command has a close cooperation with similar bodies in Italy and France, training programs and joint equipping with Macedonia, Gambia and Somalia. Turkey is an active member of the Association of the European and Mediterranean Police Force and Gendarmeries with Military Status (FIEP), observer in the framework of the European Gendarmerie Force (EGF). In 2018 it is intended to reactivate the Organization of Law Enforcement Agencies with Military Status - TAKM (according to the names of the founding states - Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia) established in 2013 in Baku.

By the end of 2017, president Erdogan paid a visit to Africa and, in the Sudan he agreed with the Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir the lease of the Suakin island for building there a military base which will be added to those in Somalia (opened in September 2017) and Doha (100 military now, and the forces will increase to 3,000 in the end). Since 2005, the number of Turkish embassies in Africa increased from 12 to 38 now.

On December 24th, 2017, president Erdogan signed a decree stipulating the whole process of army's endowment is taken over by his direct authority.

**Will the developments in the economic field contribute to the achievement of the Ottoman dream? They do not exclusively depend on president Erdogan.**

## The Current Geostrategic World-wide Outlook

## 2018: Who will be the "New Protectors"?



**Cristian UNTEANU** *the regime of direct administration of the parent state, while the territory under protectorate keeps a certain form of autonomy, at least internally. It is about the new form of domination which, even if it keeps the structure of the local administration and government, allows a foreign power to exercise certain power and control colonial attributions. Internationally, the Protector State secures the diplomatic representation and the protection of the protectorate's citizens and commits itself to international responsibilities"* (source: UNIVERSALIS).

In my opinion, this will be the great topic of the geopolitical games in 2018. The tendency started last year and things seem to be moving from the underground confrontation area in the open, bringing new uncertainties and making the international relations more tense.

And that with the emergence of more and more states confronted with enough serious problems and which might be enframed in the classical definition of failed states or being already failing states and which are witnessing unpredictable and rapid domestic developments bringing them closer to bankruptcy. All in parallel with the revival of the neo-imperial ambitions of some former great powers now looking for lost glory, a perspective whereby they try – and sometimes succeed – to create (or recreate, as you wish) their own captive markets, often repeating geographically the former markets of direct influence of times past.

And as it is quite difficult to think that a new epoch of colonial adventures might follow, the almost forgotten principle of "protectorates" draws again the attention, reformulated, of course, in the language of political correctness of the XXI century, yet covering in fact the same reality proper of a time of a great crisis.

*"Protectorate is a regime resulting from an understanding between two states characterized in general by an unequal partition of the respective competences. It is possible to distinguish among several types of protectorates: the protectorate of human rights and the colonial protectorates. In the first case, two states belonging to the same civilization, of which one is big and powerful while the other has less population, could reach an agreement whereby the latter may place itself under the protectorate of the former. As far as the colonial protectorate is concerned, it differs to the extent to which the colonial territory is subject to*

More comfortable and convenient due to its inherent flexibility, the protectorate formula is interesting as for the Protector State it does not entail any of the obligations resulting from the colonial status (covering the administration, construction of strategic infrastructure, troops presence – police and army – and providing help in case of natural disasters etc.) yet it may add, without too much additional costs, a new "hunting ground" and, at any rate, the expansion of the direct influence space.

Except that applying as such this kind of reasoning to the current conditions proved impossible, see, for instance, Peters' project of the "Greater Middle East", hoped for by the Americans. And that due merely to the fact that military power, no matter of how overwhelming it was compared to those of a region or another, cannot be any longer the only criterium of the game. For which reason, the **neo-imperial dreams got currently a new and much more interesting formulation: after a very long time in history, each of those who want to be the New Protectors launched an appeal of coagulation generated (or motivated) by the confessional appurtenance.**

We witness now, more and more visibly and in



a more precisely formulated manner, a rebirth of the Russian neo-imperial dream based on the appeal of reuniting the peoples belonging to the Orthodox space. And, further on, of creating a Russia's image of savior and, why not, of natural protector of all the endangered and directly threatened Christians, mainly in the Near and Middle East. Is it the reality bringing the Kremlin on a direct collision course with Islam? Not at all, because, and this is the exceptional novelty of the game launched last year as - Putin and Erdogan suggest a much more intensive co-operation formula, namely between the worlds under the Orthodox and Muslim banners.

It is all too clear Turkey has its own neo-imperial dream, yet it tries not to formalize it by way of arms as was the case erstwhile, but by appealing to the same type of unity. Speaking for the whole of the Muslim world and self-proposing himself as a representative Muslim leader, Protector of the Palestinian cause and as a more and more radical exponent of the very old anti-Zionist and anti-American feelings in the area and by benefitting to the maximum from the context of the crisis created by Trump's declaration on transferring the US embassy to Jerusalem. Russia and Turkey are engaged in another interesting game with unpredictable developments in the future by adding Iran, the sui-generis ally, for solving the Syrian problem and that created already a new and ample power pole in the Near East which, in extremis, could bring the hope of a possible solution (or at least a long term truce) in the traditional intra-sectarian war between the Sunnis and the Shiites now united around the Palestinian issue and the fight against terrorist organizations. By drawing, even if laboriously and without too many clear guarantees, the extended framework within which this discussion about the New Protectors could involve also other countries from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Thus, one brings into this game of re-partitioning the spheres of influence firstly China, then India, Pakistan and also the states each of them already controls in Africa.

Why now? Because everyone wants to take advantage (the European Union included) of the

power vacuum left by the so far Great Protector, once the USA withdrew from south-east Asia, by the more and more antagonistic relation of the Americans with the main states of the EU, by the ever growing dispute with China, by the visible and unprecedented hostility of the Muslim world towards the Washington policies and by the re-emergence of Cold War climate in the USA -Russia relations.

What are the chances to succeed? It depends on many factors. And the most important will prove to be in 2018 the capacity of the USA of formulating new and interesting offers with immediate effect for the traditional partners, for the European states building now in an accelerated pace their new coherent projects, for the partners of the Islamic world such as Egypt or the Gulf states, eventually (if it is still possible) for Pakistan, India China. We have still to see how really coherent will be practically the feeling of certain countries of belonging to the Orthodox space and, respectively, to the Islamic one, making them gradually accept a subordination relation to the eventual New Protectors.

**Either we are preparing or not for that, either we are interested or not, we are already involved in this global game. Readjusting the combat alignments is under way together with the new alliances and the redefinition of the spaces of influence.**

*Article initially published by Adevărul, www.addevarul.ro and republished with the kind permission of the author.*







## Let's end the EU leadership farce

**Giles MERRITT**

Ever since the end of Jacques Delors' reign, Europeans have bemoaned the EU's lack of leadership. We will soon be heading into the murky period from which the next batch of leaders will emerge, so there's still time to make the whole process transparent and respectable. All it takes is political courage.

The first of the EU's leadership dominoes has just fallen, with Portuguese finance minister Mario Centeno's successful bid as the incoming Eurogroup president. There now follows a baffling and obscure game of three-dimensional chess in which nationality, gender and political affiliation score higher than talent or charisma.

Politicians in the EU's top posts are often justifiably blamed for the Union's waning popularity. If the quality of Commissioners were less patchy, then the EU executive might arguably enjoy greater prestige and authority. This is especially true of the European Commission's president.

You don't need to be a Brussels insider to know that Commission presidents are selected on the basis of three criteria – one hotly denied and the other two widely known. The unacknowledged criterion is that troublemakers need not apply; many EU governments still remember how uncomfortable their lives were made by Delors' gritty pursuit of closer integration.

The Spitzenkandidaten system doesn't address the EU's principal problem – that of finding leaders capable of wooing public opinion

After Delors, candidates needed to be a former prime minister. That's now looking passé because of the overriding third criterion added in 2013 when the European Parliament imposed its Spitzenkandidaten (top candidates) procedure. Bidders for the Commission presidency have to secure the backing of MEPs in their own parliamentary family, and the winning candidate

is therefore the one whose grouping secures the greatest number of seats in the European elections. Hence Jean-Claude Juncker's win as the candidate of the centre-right European People's Party (EPP).

The MEPs from across the political spectrum who advanced this innovation argued convincingly that it introduced a much-needed democratic dimension to what had previously been an inter-governmental exercise in horse-trading. But the Spitzenkandidaten system doesn't address the EU's principal problem – that of finding leaders capable of wooing public opinion.

On the contrary, it blocks candidates who may conceivably be able to do so. Looking forward to 2019, although it's still early days so dark horses may yet emerge from the ranks of national politicians, they are at present so thin on the ground as to be non-existent. That leaves four potential candidates from within the EU itself, all of whom look to be ruled out under the present system.

One of them ticks the ex-premier box, and another the preferred gender box. They all to some extent have crowd-appeal, but not charisma. What they will need to have in common is a willingness to restore the EU's momentum by defying obstructive EU member governments when necessary.

Denmark's Margrethe Vestager reportedly has French president Emmanuel Macron's backing, and in her current role of competition policy watchdog she's very much the "people's friend". Michel Barnier has raised his profile and gained respect for his handling of the thorny Brexit negotiations. The Commission's first vice-president Frans Timmermans is a Dutch polyglot whose firefighting abilities are proving invaluable, and then there's another of Juncker's VPs, the quietly competent Finnish ex-PM Jyrki Katainen.

None of them stands a chance unless the rules are altered. All hail from political parties electorally in retreat, and would most probably fall

at the first fence in the Spitzenkandidaten process. In Barnier's case, although he's an EPP member he would also need Macron's support, and the president's centrist party 'La République en Marche!' is so far uncommitted within the European Parliament.

You don't need to be a Brussels insider to know that Commission presidents are selected on the basis of three criteria

All in all, choosing the EU's leadership is a muddle that has everything to do with small time politics and little or no focus on selecting the right person for the job. Europe's governments must therefore be persuaded to re-think it in time for 2019. Two key reforms are vital.

The first is that candidates for senior EU positions should publish a personal manifesto indicating their goals and proposed work programme. In national politics no one would contemplate running for election without that. The same should go for individual Commissioners once nominated by their government. They should compete on the merits of their proposals for the most important portfolios, rather than rely on the whims of the incoming Commission president.

The second major reform has long been mooted – universal voting for the Commission president as part of the European Parliament elections. Unwieldy and complicated as it would surely be, forcing political parties in each of the parliamentary groupings to undertake grass-roots-level campaigns on behalf of their own Spitzenkandidat would address the 'faceless and un-elected' slur that so bedevils the EU.



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## Revisiting dictatorship: democracy is worst form of government, indeed



**Endy BAYUNI\***

**“Democracy is both: the procedure and the content. It is a periodically revisited, fine-calibrated**

**social contract** that ties all horizontal and vertical segments of society. Although sometimes slow, tedious and consuming, this is still a truly comprehensive, just and sustainable way to build on its past, live the presence and pursuit the future of a nation.” Following the known lines of professor Anis H. Bajrektarevic on ties that bind, hereby is the fresh take from one of the largest democracies of the world – that of Republic of Indonesia.

The late Soeharto has become something of a poster boy for leadership as the nation searches for a president who can effectively deliver the goods.

Photos of the smiling president, who ruled Indonesia between 1966-1998, appear everywhere, with the caption in Javanese “*piye kabare, isih penak jamanku, tho?*” (How are you, better in my era, wasn't it?), a reminder that for some, life was so much better then. The Soeharto posters and memes have been going viral since the 2014 election and are still circulating now.

Soeharto was a dictator, there is no doubt about it, though his supporters would claim that he was a noble one. But the point of the poster is that Indonesia had a leader who delivered the goods, something that no other president since then has been able to match, so his supporters claim.

Soeharto, who ruled with an iron fist, did deliver justice, security and welfare, but it is debatable whether his successors have fared better or worse. Ruling the country for 32 years, he was

\* The writer, editor-in-chief of The Jakarta Post, took part in the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum, organized by the Institute for Peace and Democracy and the Press Council, on Dec.5-6.



bound to have delivered something, while his successors have been subject to periodic democratic elections and limited to ruling for no more than two five-year terms.

The bigger question, and this was one of the topics discussed at the recent Bali Civil Society and Media Forum, is whether democracy can deliver justice, security and welfare to the people, all the people.

Indonesia, now a democracy for nearly 20 years, albeit a struggling one, makes a good case study to answer this question, by comparing the ability of the two political systems in bringing greater prosperity to the people.

The track record of Indonesia since 1998 has not been bad, although perhaps underappreciated.

The economy has improved significantly, in terms of overall GDP and per-capita-income growth, and the government today provides many services such as free health care, 12-year compulsory free education and cash assistance for the poor. Indonesia is today the 16th-largest economy in the world, and many predict that it will be in the top 10 by 2025 and top five by 2040.

We have a growing middle class, reflected by the number cellphones, cars and motorcycles, and a growing appetite for holidays, both at home or abroad.

And there is freedom, all kinds of freedom, something that distinguishes today's era from that of Soeharto's. Why then, do some people still feel that they miss Soeharto?

Perhaps they don't really miss him, but they miss the certainty, the swift way decisions were made and the security he provided. They miss the effectiveness and efficiency that an authoritarian regime can deliver.

Democracy, unfortunately, is almost anything but.

Decisions are made through an arduous and cumbersome process, and the government is often mired in stagnation. Every single major decision has to undergo the democratic processes,

meaning noisy public debates and endless deliberation by legislators.

We also have legislators who are good at grandstanding but ineffective in producing laws that reflect the aspirations of the people. In many ways, Soeharto's regime produced some better laws because they did not go through the lengthy debates we see today.

On security, Indonesia faces challenges in ensuring protection for people who are attacked or persecuted because of their faith, race, sexual orientation or even ideological leanings.

The attacks on the Shia and Ahmadiyya followers, the forced closures of places of worship, the recent attacks against people because of their leftist ideological leanings, and the return of anti-Chinese sentiments, reflect that freedom and the protection of freedom have been denied to some.

Soeharto would not have tolerated any of this, but then, he would not have tolerated a lot of other things, including dissent and differences of opinion.

Populism, the hallmark of democracy and one way of getting elected, also means leaders addressing only popular issues but avoiding more fundamental problems.

These failings of democracy in Indonesia may have revived our memory of the "good old days" of Soeharto (while forgetting the worse aspects of his regime), but they should not be used as a pretext for a return to authoritarianism.

Democracy in Indonesia is still a work in pro-



gress. We have been in this game for only 20 years, and it still has not been able to ensure justice, security and welfare for all.

Democracy, as the popular saying goes, is the worst form of government, except for all the others. The alternative, an authoritarian regime, may be swift and efficient. But if authoritarianism comes at the cost of our freedom, an absence of checks and balances and endemic corruption, then yes, give us democracy any time.

We just have to work harder, through the democratic process, to fix these problems. We have to have faith in democracy.

## Will Donbass live to see the UN peacekeepers?



**Andrey KORTUNOV**

It all began three months ago to the day, in the Chinese town of Xiamen. During a news conference following the BRICS Summit, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin

proposed the use of international peacekeepers under auspices of the United Nations in the east of Ukraine. The idea was not totally new either: it had been discussed, in a variety of formats, ever since the very first months of the military confrontation in Donbass. However, it was the first time that Russia had officially proposed a peacekeeping initiative at the highest level. The President of the Russian Federation suggested a fairly narrow mandate

for potential peacekeepers, yet his initiative took all the parties in the conflict by surprise.<sup>1</sup>

This is no surprise. On the eve of Putin's statement, official Russian representatives had resolutely rejected the very idea of involving international peacekeepers in the Ukrainian conflict. Moscow's usual argument was to cite the Minsk agreements, which do not envisage such a possibility. Kiev's intermittent calls for involving the United Nations or the European Union in the settlement process effectively indicated the desire of the Ukrainian authorities to divest itself of any responsibility for the implementation of these agreements.

The proposal of the President of the Russian Federation gave rise to numerous conjectures as to the Kremlin's possible motives and intentions.<sup>2</sup> Was Putin's statement merely a tactical ploy aimed at driving Kiev into a corner? Or had Russia's position on the Ukrainian changed dramatically? Should the parameters of a possible UN peacekeeping mission outlined by Putin be taken as Moscow's new red line? Or are they a bargaining chip for the future? Finally, who were



1. "First, I believe the presence of UN peacekeepers or, should I say, of those people who would ensure the security of the OSCE mission, to be fairly appropriate. I see nothing wrong in this; on the contrary, I believe this would help resolve the situation in the southeast of Ukraine. Of course, we are talking exclusively about ensuring the security of the OSCE officers. Second, these forces need to be stationed exclusively along the demarcation line and nowhere else. Third, the decision is to be made only after the sides have disengaged and withdrawn heavy equipment. No decision can be made without direct contact with the leaders of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk people's republics." (<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55535>).

2. Ukraine's first official detailed response to Putin was Petro Poroshenko's address to the UN Security Council on September 20, 2017, which proposed a comprehensive UN peacekeeping operation across the entire territory of the DPR/LPR, including the stretch of the Ukraine-Russia border that is currently not controlled by Kiev (<https://www.unian.net/politics/2145861-poroshenko-obratilsya-k-sovbezu-oon-o-razvertyvivanii-mirotvortsev-na-donbasse-video.html>).



Moscow's proposals primarily addressed to: the Ukrainian leadership? The participants in the Normandy format? Or the Donald Trump administration?

Even now, three months on, the possible answers are being heatedly debated. All the more so as the public discussion of possible ways to resolve the conflict remains extremely emotional and not necessarily constructive. External observers who are not privy to the various informal consultations still know very little about them. Nevertheless, the statements, comments and interviews with the main actors that are available to us give us an approximate idea of the disagreements that have up to now stood in the way of implementing the peacekeeping discussion in practice, as well as an idea of what needs to be done by all stakeholders in order to overcome these differences.

### **Does Russia (and Ukraine) Want War?**

The following arguments are based on the assumption that both Kiev and Moscow want to find a political solution to the Donbass problem. Any political solution would imply that the parties are willing to compromise. If at least one of the parties lacks the desire and readiness required, and is looking at a violent resolution instead, one that would result in the opponent's unconditional surrender, then it would naturally be senseless to talk about the prospects for an international peacekeeping mission. At best, we might see certain tactical agreements designed to gain time, regroup, accumulate resources and resume political (if not military) pressure on the enemy at the appropriate moment. Another possibility is that the statements made by the parties to the effect that a political solution is the only viable solution are nothing more than propaganda. The presumption that the sides are prepared for a political compromise is certainly open to criticism, but if we do not allow for this possibility we are better off ending this discussion right here and now.

Other assumptions are that Kiev is not currently ready to let Donbass go, and that Moscow is not interested in absorbing the DPR and LPR or in securing the status of "unrecognized states"

for them. As is known, many people in Russia doubt the validity of the former solution, and many people in Ukraine question the legitimacy of the latter. It is unlikely that anyone, with the possible exception of the leaders of the two countries, knows for sure what ideas the Russian and Ukrainian governments are currently considering. Nevertheless, official statements from both sides allow us to treat the aforementioned assumptions as being justified and lawful.

The third important assumption is that the four years of conflict have taught both Moscow and Kiev to assess the current situation, and its perception by the opposing side, in a realistic manner. Back in late 2014, some people in Russia thought that Ukraine could disintegrate at any moment, that the mounting economic difficulties would undermine the socio-political foundation of Ukrainian nationalism, and that the West would be either unable or unwilling to keep Kiev's sinking "comprador" regime afloat. Now, in late 2017, no intelligent person can conceivably entertain such ideas any longer. On the other hand, a widespread idea in Ukraine was that the Russian economy would quickly collapse under the weight of the Western sanctions, that political support for Putin would crumble, and that Russia would soon be facing a new 1991. Today, such a scenario appears to be something taken from a parallel universe, completely unrelated to the actual state of affairs in Russia.

Looking back, we must admit that both Kiev and Moscow (or, rather, the Ukrainian and Russian people) have demonstrated the steadfastness, resilience and flexibility. And this has come as a surprise to many external observers. You can call this staunchness as stubbornness, or you can blame the insidious government propaganda. However, this does not change the essence of the matter: the Ukrainian and Russian people, with the exception of a handful of dissidents, are prepared to continue to bear the costs associated with the Donbass conflict.

This means that the hopes formerly held in Kiev and Moscow that the situation would resolve itself in quick time, that time was on "their side" and that victory was guaranteed because their

cause was just, stood no chance of persisting on either side of the conflict. Neither side is likely to achieve a decisive victory in the foreseeable future. And a protracted crisis will mean the accumulation of long-term problems for both Ukraine and Russia. In this conflict, time is working against both Kiev and Moscow, even though the people of both countries have somehow adapted to living in a situation that would have seemed totally inconceivable only four years ago.

### What are Kiev and the West Afraid of?

The three months that have passed since Putin made his proposal have been rich in commentaries, criticisms and counterproposals by the Ukrainian leadership, experts and analysts. The peacekeeping idea provoked an equally vivid reaction in the West. Parts of this reaction lacked a certain coherence and consistency, yet the response itself allows us to draw several conclusions as to what it is about the Russian proposal that does not suit Kiev and its Western partners.

**Donbass as a frozen conflict.** To begin with, the deployment of peacekeepers exclusively along the demarcation line between the opposing sides could turn Donbass into another “frozen conflict.”<sup>3</sup> This kind of deployment would recognize the status quo, which, as is illustrated by many conflict situations, including in the former USSR, often plays into the hands of separatists. Kiev cites the examples of Transnistria and Abkhazia, where delimiting the sides did nothing to resolve the respective conflicts but rather consolidated and accelerated the centrifugal processes. This means that a “dividing line” is capable of putting an end to the prospects of Donbass subsequently being integrated into the political, economic and social life of Ukraine.

### Legitimizing Russia’s military presence.

Kiev believes that if Russian troops are included in the peacekeeping contingent (a matter on

which the DPR and LPR authorities insist), Moscow will be able to secure a legitimate military presence in the east of Ukraine under the auspices of the United Nations. In addition, Russian peacekeepers cannot be a politically neutral force, given the current state of relations between Moscow and Kiev. In fact, the UN peacekeeping traditions preclude the participation of countries that border the areas where peacekeeping operations are being carried out.

### Recognition of the DPR and LPR authorities.

Throughout the conflict in the east of Ukraine, Kiev has demonstrated a continuing reluctance to have anything to do with the leadership of the unrecognized DPR and LPR as the second party to the peacekeeping talks, something that Russia has always insisted on in its proposals. Ukraine believes that any direct interaction with the current Donbass leadership on peacekeeping issues would effectively mean the recognition of that leadership as the legitimate representatives of the DPR and LPR population. This is politically unacceptable to Kiev. Kiev believes, therefore, that any peacekeeping talks should be conducted exclusively with Moscow, and that it is for Moscow to make sure that its “stooges” implement the agreements reached.

### Easing of Western pressure on Russia.

The decision to launch a peacekeeping operation in the east of Ukraine, in any format, could lead to the activation of forces in the West that have always promoted the restoration of cooperation with Moscow, including the lifting or mitigation of the sanctions against Russia. Such a scenario understandably worries the current Ukrainian leadership. In Kiev’s opinion, the very fact that Russia has made proposals on a peacekeeping mission indicates that the Western sanctions are having the desired effect. Therefore, in order to make progress in the resolution of the conflict, the pressure on Moscow needs to be maintained, or perhaps even intensified.

3. We can cite, for instance, the following statement by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin: “We have absolutely no use of a frozen conflict here, simply because this is something that Russia needs by definition. The entire logic of Russia’s actions boils down to attempting to influence us and destabilize us via the occupied Donbass, via this Russian colony in Donbass. This is why even this schizophrenic Russian proposal to protect the OSCE by means of peacekeepers (read: protect from Russia itself, because nobody else can influence them there) also contributes to nothing more than the freezing of the conflict. The same can be said of placing peacekeepers exclusively along the contact line, which is nothing more than the creation of a new frontier.” (<https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-politics/2312434-klimkin-nazvav-rosijsku-rezoluciu-po-mirotvorcem-sizofrenicnou.html>).



## What are Moscow and the DPR/LPR Afraid of?

The past three months have demonstrated Russia's unwillingness to make any fundamental concessions to Kiev and its Western partners. Moscow objects to Ukraine's version of international peacekeeping involvement (extending the peacekeeping area to cover all of the DPR and LPR and the state border with Russia; the refusal of Kiev to negotiate with the Donbass leadership; and the rejection of the idea of Russia's direct involvement in the peacekeeping operation, etc.).<sup>4</sup> The Kremlin's objections grow even more resolute and uncompromising when transmitted via the leaders of the unrecognized Donetsk and Lugansk republics.

**Donbass massacre scenario.** At the heart of Russia's objections lies the suspicion that an international peacekeeping contingent would not be able to provide sufficient security to the Donbass population, especially given the widespread radical nationalist and revanchist sentiments in Ukrainian society.<sup>5</sup> Moscow points out that the Ukrainian leadership remains incapable of controlling the numerous autonomous armed groups and paramilitary radical political movements that might terrorize the DPR/LPR territories, threaten their political opponents and contribute to the spread of crime in the region. It is possible that this could be followed by new waves of refugees and internally displaced persons from Donbass towards Russia.

**Peacekeepers as a pretext for revising the Minsk agreements.** The Ukrainian ver-

sion of a possible peacekeeping operation raises numerous questions in Moscow linked to the future of the Minsk agreements. Russia suspects Kiev of attempting to use the new settlement plan as a pretext for overhauling the Minsk agreements, or even abandoning them outright, particularly those provisions that concern political reform.<sup>6</sup> In addition, should the Ukrainian version be implemented, Moscow would lose all its current influence on the situation, effectively becoming an outside witness to Ukrainian nationalists engaging in a "mopping-up" operation in Donbass. As far as Moscow is concerned, the commitment of Western countries to the Minsk agreements is by no means a sure-fire guarantee that the agreements will be observed by Kiev.<sup>7</sup>

**Moscow's flexibility resulting in greater pressure on Russia.** Whereas the Ukrainian government fears the erosion of the West's anti-Russian consensus and the weakening of pressure on Moscow, the Russian government has reasons to believe that, should Moscow make any significant concessions with regard to the peacekeepers in Donbass, Kiev and the West (the United States at least) would perceive this as a sign of weakness on the part of Russia and might try to apply greater pressure on Moscow.<sup>8</sup> If Russia decides to give up Donbass, then Crimea might become the West's next target.

**Wrong time for concessions.** As far as we can tell, Moscow does not see Kiev's latest proposals, which have been supported by the West, as a compromise. Should Russia adopt these proposals, it will be difficult to present this as another foreign political victory (even a formal vic-

4. Following his meeting with U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Kurt Volker in Belgrade on November 13, 2017, Russian Presidential Aide Vladislav Surkov stated that, out of the 29 proposals made by the United States, Russia had only been able to concede to three, those which generally reiterated the inviolability of the Minsk agreements ([https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2017/11/14\\_a\\_10985108.shtml](https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2017/11/14_a_10985108.shtml)).

5. As Putin told the Valdai Club conference in October, "Closing the border between Russia and the unrecognized republics would result in a situation akin to Srebrenica. A massacre will follow there. We cannot, and never will, allow that." (<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55882>).

6. There are grounds for such concerns. Consider, for example, the recent statement made by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Arsen Avakov (<https://rian.com.ua/politics/20171128/1029853624.html>).

7. Moscow refers in particular to the events that took place in Kiev on February 21, 2014, when a number of European officials facilitated an agreement between President Viktor Yanukovich and the Ukrainian political opposition on a transition period that was subsequently breached by the opposition at the West's "connivance" (<http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/55882>).

8. When Jon Huntsman Jr., the new Ambassador of the United States to Russia, conditioned the lifting of the U.S. sanctions on progress in Donbass (<https://topspb.tv/programs/stories/466132/>), the general reaction from Russian politicians and experts was extremely sceptical. The overwhelming majority of commentators believed that the sanctions were there to stay and that, no matter what Moscow did, the decision of the United State Congress was irreversible, regardless of the Trump administration's desires.

tory) for the Kremlin to domestic and outside audiences. The presidential election campaign is under way in Russia, and the Kremlin is likely use the foreign policy victories it has earned in the past few years to bolster its chances of winning. This means that any “retreat” on the Ukrainian front would appear ill-timed, to say the least. It could even entail unnecessary political risks. On the other hand, the Kremlin points to the numerous uncertainties that remain in the West, including the domestic political crisis in the United States and German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s inability to form a coalition government. As far as Moscow is concerned, it would be better to postpone serious discussions on the Ukrainian issue until next summer or autumn.

### **Where is a Compromise to be Found?**

As is characteristic of any complex and multifaceted international crisis, the situation in the east of Ukraine represents a tangle of subjective and objective factors, external and internal circumstances, personal ambitions and long-term social trends, specific interests of individual political groups, and banal mistakes caused by the incompetence or incomplete awareness of the parties. This is why solutions to this problem – in the plural, as there is no single solution – should be sought at different levels and on different planes. Listed below are just the most obvious ingredients required for a successful peacekeeping mission in the east of Ukraine.

**Agreeing on the current priorities.** Even though the diverse tasks facing the peacekeeping mission are absolutely important, the most urgent and important objective is to put an end to the violence, stop the loss of life and ensure the implementation of the first three conditions of the Minsk agreements (a bilateral ceasefire, the withdrawal of heavy weapons and the implementation of monitoring activities). This objective should inform priorities with regard to both the territory where the peacekeeping are forces initially deployed (the demarcation line) and to the initial mandate of these forces (preventing possible violations of the ceasefire agreement, regardless of which side commits the transgression). For Russia, it would be worthwhile to

think about expanding the mandate it originally proposed to include not only the protection of Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observers, but also the provision of a stable truce. This mandate needs to be consistent with the number of peacekeepers, the weapons in their possession, and their right to use such weapons against those who violate the truce. For its part, Ukraine should not insist on giving the blue helmets any additional functions at this stage. As things progress, the peacekeeping force might be provided with a new, broader mandate.

**Overcoming phantom fears.** Some of the concerns of the two parties seem to be far-fetched. And that is putting it mildly. It is, for example, fairly difficult to believe that, under the current circumstances, any NATO member – no matter how much Kiev pleads – would be prepared to commit significant military contingents for a peacekeeping operation in Donbass, certainly not before they have obtained sufficient security guarantees from the DNR and LNR. Furthermore, the existing UN procedures for setting up and managing peacekeeping forces exclude even the theoretical possibility of a single country (including Russia and the United States) or group of countries (including NATO) unilaterally controlling the progress of a peacekeeping operation. There appears to be nothing preventing the peacekeeping force from comprising representatives of countries trusted both by Kiev and Moscow; everything would depend on the political will of the two sides and their readiness to make balanced compromises.

**Taking prior experience into account.** Existing peacekeeping experience does not support the idea that negotiating with unrecognized entities within a given territory serves as the first step towards the international recognition of those entities. For example, the United Nations has been coordinating its peacekeeping activities in Cyprus with the government of Northern Cyprus for decades, ever since Turkey invaded the island in the summer of 1974, even though the territorial entity is not recognized by anyone except Turkey. A similar situation arose in the course of numerous attempts by the Conference



on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), and then the OSCE, to mediate the Nagorno-Karabakh issue: the presence of Nagorno-Karabakh representatives at the negotiating table since 1992 has not, and will not, lead to the recognition of the territory as a legitimate subject of international law. There is no doubt that, should the sides agree on this and demonstrate a degree of flexibility and creativeness, a similar formula could be devised for Donbass.

**Sharing the responsibility for the peacekeeping mission.** Observing Ukraine's demands to the letter – that Russia take no part in the peacekeeping operation and that negotiations with the Donbass authorities do not take place – would raise the logical question of who is to act as the guarantor of uninterrupted peacekeeping work in Donbass. Is Kiev prepared to bear sole responsibility for inevitable incidents, outbreaks of violence and attacks on the peacekeepers? It appears that at this point in time, Ukraine's interests would best be served by the active involvement of both Moscow and the Donbass authorities in the settlement process. The particularities of such involvement, however, are quite a different matter. The existing experience of the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine should be carefully studied again, as should the experience of practical interaction between the OSCE monitoring mission and the Donbass authorities. As for Russia, its strategic role should be to define the mandate of the peacekeeping operation within the framework of the UN Security Council, as well as planning and monitoring that operation. Speaking of Russian peacekeepers in Donbass, some form of presence, however symbolic, would be an additional guarantee that all the parties to the conflict will fulfil the terms of the peacekeeping agreement.

**Considering the dynamic side to the agreement.** Many of the disagreements between Moscow and Kiev would appear less fundamental if the mandate, area of deployment and the timeframe of the possible peacekeeping mission were viewed as dynamic, rather than static, values. In other words, the mission should be perceived as a set of successive stages, with the objectives of each subsequent stage defined

by the preceding stage's achievements. For example, it would be correct to expect the peacekeeping mission's deployment area to expand gradually (all the way to the border between Russia and Ukraine), its potential to grow over time and its functions to gradually transition from the initial objectives (ensuring the cessation of hostilities) to more complex matters (including, for example, technical assistance with the organization of local elections). Both Kiev and the West fear that Moscow will retain the right to block the transition to the next stage if it is not satisfied with the current results of the peacekeeping mission. However, Russia would reserve such a right irrespective of how the UN peacekeepers are used. Also, peacekeeping missions eventually acquire their own dynamics and inertia; politically, it is always more difficult to block the continuation of a successful mission than prevent the launch of a new one.

**Synchronizing the peacekeeping mission with the implementation of the Minsk agreements.** There exists the opinion that, since the Normandy format has reached an impasse and the focus of the current Donbass settlement consultations has shifted to the "shuttle diplomacy" exercised by Kurt Volker's successor as the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine, the future UN peacekeeping mission should eventually replace the "outdated" mechanisms and procedures envisaged by the Minsk agreements. It appears that, rather than becoming an alternative to the Minsk agreements, the mission should represent an additional instrument for their implementation. Such an instrument is not provided for in the text of the Minsk agreements, but it does not contradict the spirit of the document in any way. Having assisted the parties to the conflict in the implementation of the first three clauses of the agreements, the peacekeeping mission could move on to deal with the other clauses, including the distribution of humanitarian assistance, the disarmament of illegal groups, the enforcement of law and order, etc. The timeline of the Minsk agreements would certainly need to be revised accordingly to reflect the progress of the peacekeeping mission.

**Keeping the pan-European perspective in**

**mind.** There is undoubtedly a bilateral causal link between the current crisis involving Ukraine and the more general problems related to European (or Euro-Atlantic) security. For as long as the Ukrainian crisis remains unresolved, the European security system cannot become indivisible; nor will it be possible to overcome the new east division of the continent. At the same time, the Ukrainian crisis cannot be resolved completely all efforts are focused on it alone, outside the context of solving broader European problems. Restoring peace in Donbass, normalizing Russia-Ukraine relations and finding new approaches to European security in general need to be viewed as parallel objectives, not consecutive ones. It will take many years, if not decades, to solve these problems. However, the launch of a UN peacekeeping operation in Donbass could become a pivotal event in European politics, one that would result in a negative trend being replaced by a positive one. We are left to hope that this shift will take place in 2018. The longer the current crisis lasts, the harder it will be to emerge from it.

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## Amazing declassified documents on NATO enlargement



**Cristian UNTEANU**

What researchers Svetlana Savranskaya and Tom Blanton of Washington University

National Security Archive published recently represents an access opened for the first time of such a level of complexity to documents so far classified as strictly confidential related to discussions held in the period that followed immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain among the highest level political officials in the USA, the USSR, the Federal Republic of Germany, GDR, Czechoslovakia, France on offering the USSR certain security guarantees in what concerned pos-



sible future NATO enlargement. The conclusion of the two American researchers is that during 1990-1991 "several of the western leaders rejected the idea that countries of Central and Eastern Europe join NATO", an assessment confirmed by the content of 30 of the documents integrally presented, some of them even in facsimile, involving the personalities of the time: Baker, Bush Sr., Gorbachev, Genscher, Kohl, Gates, Mitterand, Thatcher, Hurd, Havel, James Major, Shevarnadze, D. Hurd, Paul H. Nitze.

You will have the possibility of learning absolutely unknown details so far of the as tough and as precise negotiations concerning the future security status of the former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe and of the multiple assurances, "cascade type", the Soviet leaders of the time received in what concern NATO's future intentions. Given the absolutely explosive character of these documents, as well as their implications for understanding all the current tensions, (which started then and vanished for a while due to Russia's apparent acceptance of an inevitable process of NATO enlargement and coming back to our days once a new stage of the Cold War begun) I think the best and most correct solution is to have a direct access to the source, namely to the article with all supporting documents.

Did really the Soviet leaders receive official assurances that there was no plan and there was no intention of NATO enlargement and that the only subject on the table was the GDR's status and the future of the German reunification process?

The famous assurance given by the Secretary of State James Baker «not a single centimeter to the East» in what concerned NATO enlargement when he met Gorbachev on February 9, 1990 was part of a cascade of assurances regarding the USSR's security offered to Gorbachev and to other Soviet leaders by Western leaders in the framework of the process of Germany's reunification in 1990 and 1991... The first such concrete assurance given by the Western leaders came on the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, 1990 from Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany in a speech delivered at Tutzing, in Bavaria. The US embassy in Bonn informed that Genscher said very clearly that the «changes happened in Eastern Europe and the German process of reunification must not lead to problems regarding the Soviet security interests. Such being the case, NATO should exclude an eastward enlargement of its territory, i.e. to come closer to the Soviet borders».

In concrete terms, how did such a "security assurance" sound? Here it is the one uttered by Douglas Hurd, foreign secretary of Great Britain in a conversation with Genscher: "The Russians have to receive some kind of assurance such as, for instance, if the Polish government decides one day to leave the Warsaw Pact, they will not join NATO the next day". In the same spirit, in July 1991, Manfred Woerner, then NATO's General Secretary, said, during a high level meeting with the Soviet leaders that "We should not allow... the isolation of the USSR from the European Community", and the Russian memorandum presenting the said meeting specified that "Woerner underlined that he, as well as the NATO Council, are against the enlargement of the organization (13 out of the 16 members backed this standpoint)".

When did the western world's change of optics take place? It was immediately after the debut of the political dissolution of the USSR, followed by the separation from the system of some republics which became independent states. At that moment, the Western leaders assessed that a security vacuum would emerge that might turn very quickly, on an enormous territorial area,

into a source of direct threat to NATO. The respective phenomenon was perceived as such and correctly assessed by the leaders of the central and eastern European countries faced at the time with an immediate threat to their own security, a security which worked until then as a systemic one (the Warsaw Treaty) and which was abruptly annulled, thus placing them in a situation in which they were obliged to rely on their own armed forces only. From that moment on, their diplomatic action started by using all the available lobby tools for convincing NATO of the necessity of an enlargement to the mutual benefit.

We know much too well how difficult this process was and what were the sacrifices it supposed. Nevertheless, by reading the available now documents, we may correctly reevaluate the circumstances in which the former communist countries evolved immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, in a not at all favorable climate dominated by the mistrust resulted from decades of ideological confrontation yet, as it may be seen, also from the West desire of the time of keeping a convenient security relation with the USSR. The collapse of the USSR, the partner to which the initial assurances were given, triggered a vast process of reevaluation in the western chanceries exactly when Boris Yeltsin's Russia seemed to sink in a as deep as unpredictable chaos as far as the security consequences are concerned.

And, we may realize the real value of our presence in the new joint NATO and EU security system by correctly evaluating the departure point. Yet, at the same time, being aware that if our mere presence is not an active one and strengthened by the elements of a complex and responsible participation that is not a guarantee per se and that nothing is irrevocable. And the expected contribution must be something coming from a predictable state with a consolidated democracy which secures its own national means of deterrence and defense. That was, in fact, the Westerners' fear at the beginning of the 1990s: the emergence in the game of some unpredictable states with odd evolutions and unprepared for the democratic exercise.



***And this is exactly, on other coordinates and in other terms, the stake of today's game when it seems that the geostrategic games in our region are being reset, concentrated on the "security fault" of the east of the UE and NATO. This is, in my opinion, the spirit in which the now declassified documents must be read and, even if they belong to history, represent a series of warnings worth being considered presently.***

*Article initially published by daily Adevărul, www.adevarul.ro and republished with the kind permission of the author.*

## RECEP TEYYIP ERDOGAN'S THINKING OF LAUSANNE

***Dinu COSTESCU***

Between the concern with the wellbeing of his neighbours (less that of the Kurds) and mobilizing the Muslim nation against Donald Trump, Turkey's president, Recep Teyyip Erdogan, found time in December to pay a working visit to the Greek neighbours, the first paid by a Turkish president on Ellada's soil during the last 65 years.

Even before leaving for Athens, the guest sent chilly waves to the Greeks through press statements whereby he unveiled his intention and desire that, during the talks with his counterparts at the Acropolis foothills, put on the table no more and no less than the possibility of revising in a "mutually beneficial" way the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, a document that established the borders between the two neighbouring states and which, at the same time, set up a juridical framework for possible exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey.

If the Turkish minority community in Thracia, north-east of Greece, waited for and welcomed Erdogan's "historical" visit, the officials in Athens instead, headed by prime minister Alexis Tsipras, clearly

warned before the beginning of the visit that: "no talks concerning the renegotiation of the Treaty of Lausanne will take place".

The history of bilateral relations between Ankara and Athens does not lack tense situations and thorny conflictual files from the situation of the Byzantine patrimony in Turkey's custody, to Cyprus' reunification, to the situation of Turkish minority's statute in northern Greece or the borders in the Aegean Sea and, more recently, Athens' refusal to expel some Turkish officers who took refuge in Greece after the failed coup attempt in the summer of 2016.

It was natural, under the circumstances, that Erdogan's referring to a desire of revising the frontiers sent a shock wave to Athens and an ice layer has set over the climate in which the two days of the presidential visit unfolded. It is not the first time during the last years when Recep Teyyip Erdogan refers to a possible (and necessary, from the Turkish standpoint) revision of the 1923 Treaty which established the realities of the political geography following the World War I, the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's moving, after the war, to a republican regime and to an emancipated way of life, "Europeanized" in particular. The fact that Erdogan did not say anything new when referring to the topic raised a quite important question: what reason made the Turkish leader come back to this subject on the background of the evolutions witnessed by the wars in Syria and Iraq, a context in which Recep Teyyip Erdogan spoke





not once of Turkey's "historical rights" on the Iraqi Mosul region and city and, to an equal extent, on certain areas in northern Syria. At the time, observers did not hesitate to circumscribe these references to the Turkish president's positions of late labeled as "neo-Ottoman orientation". In the same context, the leader in Ankara repeatedly asserted the idea that the Treaty of Lausanne did not represent a victory for Turkey, thus contradicting the "Turks' father" and founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal, for whom the Treaty of Lausanne, signed by 11 states, saved the country from the consequences of the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres that stipulated in several articles the establishment of a Kurdish state in south-east of the new Turkey as well as an Armenian state in the Turkish region known as "Western Armenia". Consequently, Erdogan's opinion, contrary to Kemal Atatürk's, is that through the provisions of the two treaties, Turkey was deprived of important territories it was entitled to.

The historical reality shows in fact that the period following the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne was dominated by three elements, not lacking importance. Firstly, it is about the signature, in 1926, of the Treaty between the United Kingdom, Iraq and Turkey, after the end of the British mandate, through which the Mosul region and city were returned to Iraq. Secondly, it is about the agreement signed in 1939 between the French mandate power and Turkey through

which the Syrian region Iskenderun (Alexandretta), a former Ottoman vilayet, was uprooted from Syria and annexed to Turkey. And finally, it is about several agreements and conventions between Turkey and Greece concerning solving disputes pertaining to the terrestrial frontiers and territorial waters of the two neighbouring states.

In spite of the multitude of tense problems in the overall bilateral relations, there were no Turkish officials who, during the 90 years passed since the signing of the

Treaty of Lausanne, explicitly demanded the renegotiation of this document and the first stances in this regard emerged once the Justice and Development Party came to power and especially after Erdogan took over the presidency, in 2014. Identifying and understanding the significances of Erdogan's coming back to this Syrian and regional context to the older dream of revising the Treaty of Lausanne cannot be attained without referring to a series of elements and evolutions preceding and explaining it:

1. The first revisionist declarations attributed to president Erdogan took place in a regional context in which the Syrian war developments created, at a certain moment, the conviction that Bashar Al-Assad regime's removal from power militarily became a possible perspective which faded away with the Russian military intervention in Syria, when the balance of forces on the front was overturned and materialized in reconquering Aleppo city by the national Syrian army backed by its close allies – the Russian Federation, Iran and the Shia'a Lebanese militias of the political-military formation Hezbollah. That strategic victory, which was repeated in Rakka, – the fiefdom and capital of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi's "Muslim caliphate" – then in Idleb and in the rural area west of the capital Damascus, were as many factors contributing to substantiating, in the Erdogan regime's political and military approaches, the idea – duplicated after the older model of northern Cyprus – of secur-

ing a permanent Turkish presence in northern Syria under the pretext of defending the national interests against the Kurdish minority's "terrorist and separatist threats";

2. Starting from the economic, industrial and military capacities and potential they are disposing of, the Turkish leadership, headed by president Recep Teyyip Erdogan, believe themselves entitled to act for reconfiguring the regional morphology and its future in which Turkey becomes a referential point and a pillar of the developments in this part of the world. So, in spite of the declared opposition of the federal government in Iraq, Turkey offered its direct participation to the military campaign of liberating the Mosul region and city and set up, and presently still keeps, the Baashiqa military base in the proximity of the Iraqi Kurdistan, all these actions intended as an expression of revising the Treaties of Lausanne and Sèvres, in the sense of modifying to its own benefit the Turkish frontiers established through the two treaties. The military bases Turkey set up more recently in Qatar and Somalia, as a territory of a special strategic value on the Horn of Africa and close to the Indian Ocean's waters, are circumscribed to the same framework;

3. The situation is quite different in what concern the relationship with Greece, characterized by a historical hostility and chronic disputes. Since the Ottomans under Mehmed II conquered Constantinople (former Byzantium) in 1453 and until the Greek-Turkish war and the disputes around the Cyprus issue and delineating the territorial waters, their entire history was marked by the failure of all conciliation initiatives and attempts for establishing normal bilateral relations, so that one may say that today these overall relations acquired the character of a "clash of civilizations" in the sense described by

Samuel Huntington, a character to which Erdogan made reference when he spoke of the segregation the Greek Christian-Orthodox majority subjects the Muslim minority in Thracia region;

4. On the background of these political and military realities, attention has been drawn by Erdogan's repeated appeals to the Turkish historians demanding them to rewrite the country's history after World War I and to a new reading of the treaties of Lausanne and Sèvres, with a view of giving Turkey a new image in the offing of 2023 when the country will celebrate a century of republican regime.

There is no doubt that Recep Teyyip Erdogan is aware of the fact that unilaterally revising and international treaty and redrawing state borders is a demarche exceeding Turkey's powers and contravenes not only to the Greek people's will but also to the new international rule of law, not to speak that such revisionist aspirations would be opposed by the reaction of great powers – the United States, Russian Federation, the European Union but also of Iran and the community of the Arab world. So it may be stated that Erdogan's discourse of "rewriting history" is rather enframed to an ambition of reconfiguring Turkey's domestic stage in accordance with the ideological fundamentals of the Justice and Development Party. Under such regional and international conjectures, thinking of Lausanne will remain a mere thought of an restless and ambitious president.





**CONSIDERATION****The United Arab Emirates modernizes its intelligence services*****Corneliu PIVARIU***

The developments in the Middle East at the beginning of the third millenium and especially after the so-called Arab spring brought to the attention of the countries of the Middle East and predominantly the Gulf ones the necessity of modernizing the intelligence services for meeting the current conditions of political, economic, social and technological developments.

The civil war in Syria and the involvement of a large spectrum of interests in this country underlined once more the necessity of improving the intelligence services of the Middle East and of the Gulf area countries that wanted to play a more significant role in this conflict. The specificity of the area determined the great powers outside the region to turn to the Arab allies there in order to expand the cooperation with the counterpart intelligence services for accomplishing certain missions the latter have right from the outset a better approach (from commanding the language, familiarity with the customs, coping with local conditions, connections,...). Moreover, the Arab leaders understood better that information is a power multiplier and assessed it more thoroughly, closer to its real value, without betting exclusively on the economic and financial strength the Gulf states enjoy.

One of the Gulf countries which started to carry out intense actions to this purpose and turned to the services rendered by professionals who were once part of the Western intelligence services is the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Employing private contractors for training national intelligence structures is a relatively new phenomenon yet all those working in the field agree with or there are no certain reservations from both the country these experts are coming from and from the receiving country.

If by the end of Novmber 2017 the UAE media published articles stressing that the country achieved the utmost that has been done globally in the field of civil constructions and mentioned the possibility of starting the design works for building a city on Planet Mars, the situation of the intelligence services is quite different. The UAE's intelligence component has two well divided parts. One of them, which may be called the traditional side, works within the police and the army, with components able to collect information in the fields of security, criminality and drug trafficking in each of the emirates. Besides the two parts, the two main Emirates, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, have each its own structures for investigating, arresting and prosecuting the suspects. A particular mention should be made of the Abu Dhabi police that benefits of state-of-the-art equipment and technologies and cooperates with numerous specialized national and international organizations. In December 2013, the National College of Defense was set up under the command of Major General Rashad Al Sa'ad. John R. Ballard, a former officer of the US Marines Corps, was appointed dean of the College.

The second component of the UAE intelligence services, of strategic intelligence, the IT and other electronic fields included operates undercover. By the end of February, 2017, the UAE signed a contract worth 189 million dollar with Haris Corporation for a management system of the operational capabilities of the UAE's Armed Forces. At about 60 km from Abu Dhabi confines, close to Port Zayed, a modern compound for training intelligence officers, where training starts from basic notions, surveillance techniques to special operations, according to CIA model has been built. The central figure seems to be the former American intelligence officer Larry Sanchez – an intimate of the ruling family of the UAE and chairman of the intelligence consultancy CAGN Global Ltd having its headquarters in Baltimore. Other private companies are ALUAALLC - headed by a former intelligence officer of the Royal Air Force and DarkMatter that works for the UAE government on intelligence Cyber security. In 2010, Eric Prince – known mainly as owner of the famous Blackwater, set up in Abu Dhaby Reflex Response (R2) company with 51% Emirati participation specialized in intelligence, security, counter-terrorism and revolts quelling operations.

Considering today's developments in the Gulf and in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the UAE seeks to acquire an important role in intelligence as well, and does not spare the funds for this purpose.

## The Main Factors of the Middle East Situation

# THE "DEAL OF THE CENTURY": THE PALESTINIAN STATE IN... SINAI

**Munir SALAMEH, Ramallah**

At the end of November 2017, the Egyptian capital hosted the works of an international symposium organized by the European Union and the government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on supporting the social role of woman. Ms Gila Gamliel, minister for Social Equality in the Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, was among the participants who took the floor on the occasion. After she expedited in a few sentences the subject matter of the symposium, Ms minister stirred up perplexity reactions and official protests of the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Arab and Palestinian circles attending the conference and moved, completely outside the issue discussed, to politics and referred punctually to the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and to the most adequate ways of solving it peacefully. Elaborating on the subject, she closed her speech by returning to an older and very dear idea circulated in the discourses of the Israeli governments succeeding each other and the concluding idea minister Gila Gamliel serenely presented was that under current circumstances "an alternative Palestinian state could be created in the Egyptian Peninsula Sinai".

Coincidence or not, some time later, B.B.C. radio station broadcasted a series of comments "based on documents" according to which, three decades ago, after a meeting on the other side of the Atlantic with the American president Ronald Reagan and during a stop-over in London on his way back home, the former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak would have met the British prime minister Margaret Thatcher and during the meeting the "rais" in Cairo would have accepted a proposal of settling the Palestinians in the Sinai Peninsula on condition that the great western powers guarantee circumscribing this swap to a wider framework of globally settlement of the historical Arab-Israeli conflict. Later on, a statement of the presidency in Cairo flatly

denied such allegations and reiterated Egypt's position of refusing ceding any patch of the national Egyptian territory in favor of the regional political games of the time.

As a reaction to the above-mentioned speech of Israeli minister Gila Gamliel and to the allegations of the Londonese B.B.C. journalists, the written and audio-visual press in Egypt and other Arab states launched a short yet dense media campaign focused on bringing back to the public opinion's attention of "Israel's old interest" of "plucking" a few hundreds square kilometers from the Sinai Peninsula, a territory slated for creating "an alternative homeland" for the Palestinian people and ending, in such a way, the long and complex file called the Palestinian "issue" or "cause".

According to Arab-speaking analysts and commentators, the concerns of the political circles in Israel on the subject witnessed a sudden change after Donald Trump's coming to the White House accompanied, in the framework of the developments in the Middle East, by the offensive discourse concerning a so-called "deal of the century", namely the United States' intention to mobilise towards a "regionally solving" of the Palestinian file – an initiative president Donald Trump was to launch and back officially during an international conference to take place in Washington sometime in the summer of 2018.

The discourse on the "Sinai option" as a possible substitute "homeland" for the Palestinians is not new, yet it acquires new significations and interpretations when related to the geopolitical developments which, after the "Arab spring" and the political and military evolutions the Middle East witnessed and continues to go through now, moments characterized mostly by the euphorical expectation of successfully closing the international campaign against the terrorist-fundamentalist phenomenon and on the background of the race for reconfiguring a new national, political and territorial morphology of

this part of the global map.

The emotions and the polemics aroused by an issue taken out from the drawers of the post-war history have, in all appearances, as a cause an erroneous and non-differentiated approach of at least three fundamental dimensions of the Arab-Israeli dispute in general, and of the dispute between the Palestinians, on the one hand, and the Jewish state in particular on the other.

Firstly, it is about the older initiatives and "plans" advanced by the Israeli political circles that raised the subject of different variants of solving the Palestinian state issue outside the "promised land" – from settling the Palestinians in the Arab neighbouring states, to the confederation with Jordan, to bringing the Gaza Strip under Egyptian administration for being devoted to the establishment of a Palestinian entity and to the alternative of "territories exchange" accompanied by an "economic peace" that is backed even by the current government in Tel Aviv. The situation is liable to confuse when the analysis cannot find a trenchant answer to the following question: are all these really doctrinary Israeli projects or are they mere ideas, analyses and theoretical pursuits or their authors' points of view and, therefore, lacking official political and programmatic legitimization. There were such situations and mention should be made for instance of the famous "Allon plan" drawn up by the Israeli politician Iygal Allon in order to offer a thinking platform concerning the future of Arab territories occupied during June 1967 war. Among other, Iygal Allon proposed that the Egyptian Peninsula Sinai be retroceded to Egypt and then offered to Jordan or to a possible Jordanian-Palestinian entity to be established in the West Bank and Gaza. The plan was neither endorsed as a political plan of the Israeli government nor publicly presented in an official or authorized form. Another project was known as "Menachem Begin plan" (after his author's name, a politician and former Israeli prime minister and negotiator of the Camp David Peace Agreements with Egypt's Anwar El-Sadat). The "plan", worked out in 1977, promoted the idea of Israeli's withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank and setting up in these territories of a Pal-

estinian entity with limited competences (culture, social problems, construction, trade etc.), while the security, sovereignty and defense issues remained under Israel's control. As all these were considered an attempt to evade the idea of an "independent Palestinian state", Begin's ideas were rejected by the Arab and international community.

Secondly, it is about clarifying the extent in which the Israeli ideas were embodied in official or semi-official documents and if these were ever included or presented as agenda topics of some negotiations that had or would take place or we are just in front of certain trials or feelers meant to probe the reactions of the Arab-Palestinian side and of the international community in case the respective ideas would be included in the Israeli government's programs.

Thirdly, it is about the punctual idea of "settling" the Palestinians in Sinai and Egypt's reaction and the extent the regime in Cairo would be willing to accept such an alternative.

The fact that finding a variant of setting the Palestinians outside historical Palestine was constantly and more or less explicit under the scrutiny of the political elites and even of the public opinion in the Israeli society is undeniable. In case Israel would maintain its settlement policy in the Palestinian autonomous territories and in Eastern Jerusalem when the "two-state" idea seems less and less attractive, including for the American administration, when Oslo Agreements became obsolete and repudiated, due to different reasons, by both the Palestinians and the Israelis and when Israel (or more exactly the right-wing Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu), insists on recognizing the "Jewish character" of the State of Israel as a precondition for accepting the resumption of the negotiations process it does not seem so surprising that Israel pays a permanent attention to any path leading to finding a "substitute homeland" for the Palestinian people – and the "Sinai alternative" is but one among several approachable ones. It is circumscribed to the Israeli theory of "territories exchange" and in case of Sinai it would be about an area of around 600-720 sq.km., between Ra-



fah and Arish, an area Egypt would give up. In exchange, Israel's point of view goes, the Jewish state would give up an area of 150-200 sq.km. in the Negev desert, a contiguous zone to the current Palestinian autonomous territory Gaza. An alternative to the territorial option would be the payment in Egypt's favor of \$100- \$150 bil. "for this country's overcoming the economic crisis it is confronted with" after the "Arab spring".

No analyst or politician contemplating such "solutions" approached a series of queries which significance is at least as complex and as sensitive as the territorial issue: what will happen with the statute of Jerusalem? What "compensation" the Palestinians and, with them, the Arab and Islamic world, would accept to give up the symbolic embodied in the Al-Aqsa Mosque? And what fate is in store for the Palestinian refugees who, since 1948 on, do not cease to claim their right of return to their homes?

The freedom of thought and expression is one of the fundamental human rights. Even when thought goes beyond the confines of reality and feasible, towards imagination. As it is the case with the "Palestinian state in Sinai".

NOTE: The issue of 17th of December 2017 of the German daily "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" published, under the signature of the editor-in-chief for the Arab world and the Middle East, Reiner Hermann, an ample article analysing - mere coincidence? - exactly this "deal" the United States, Israel and some Arab states take into account for a "just and durable settlement of the Palestinian problem". Maybe that once the new year starts, we will learn more on the subject. If not from Donald Trump, then at least from his young son-in-law-cum-adviser Jared Kushner.



## JERUSALEM : BETWEEN DONALD TRUMP'S LAW AND INTERNATIONAL LAW



*Ambassador prof. Dumitru  
CHICAN*

### 1. Between "pax americana" and international law

Wednesday, the 6th of December, president Donald Trump announced officially the recognition by the United States of America of Jerusalem as capital of the State of Israel as well as the decision of moving, from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem, the American embassy, a process that will be finalized not earlier than two years from now. Donald Trump's decision, preceded by numerous warnings from the Palestinian officials, from numerous Arab capitals (including from the Saudi ally, King Salman, who considers such a decision as "blamable, reprehensible and representing a defiance for the feelings of the entire Arab-Islamic world") ended a long period of over twenty years during which all the American administrations succeeding each other at the White House adopted and maintained a cautious and non-offensive position not only in what concerns recognizing Jerusalem (an occupied and annexed city by the Jewish state) as capital of Israel but also in what concerns the transfer of the American diplomatic mission from Tel-Aviv to the "holy city" where, since the foundation of Israel, no state having diplomatic relations with Israel has opened its embassy, Donald Trump's America offered, from this stand point, too, an absolute opening.

In his speech announcing the White House's decision, Donald Trump expressed his satisfaction of having fulfilled, by the decision adopted, "the promise made during the electoral campaign", leaving thus room for the rhetoric question and for the commentators: to whom made the presidential candidate such a promise given that in general the common American voter is not too interested in what happens outside America and, so much the less the developments in the Middle

East, known to him at most by the wars waged or under way with the involvement of the American treasury and army? Or is this “fulfillment of a promise” the asset the president expects the reward from the direct interested electorate in the perspective of a second mandate in the Oval Office?

At the time these lines are written, the reactions to Donald Trump’s decisions did not reach the expected political amplitude except for the Turkish president Recep Teyyip Erdogan who warned that recognizing the new official statute of Jerusalem will lead to breaking the diplomatic relations between Ankara and Washington while there are not a few analysts predicting the possibility of a third Palestinian intifada.

It is obvious that by this decision the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people cannot be either affected, interpreted or abolished yet the 6th of December will certainly inaugurate a new period of hurdles, controversies, conflicts and deferral of the demarches meant to agreeing upon a just solution for the Palestinians.

A no less important aspect, at least in the moral and juridical register is taken into consideration by these lines, namely that the “law” on which behalf Donald Trump decided is in blatant contradiction with the fundamental principles of international law – treaties, resolutions and commitments devolving from their practice and which history is as old as it is rich but serenely ignored and violated by Donald Trump Administration’s decision. Let us glance cursorily at the pages of this history as briefly as the space allotted allows us.

Mention should be made that, from the above set forth standpoint, Donald Trump’s decision contradicts all pertinent resolutions of the UN General Assembly and of the Security Council as it contradicts the Oslo Agreements of September 1993 between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the State of Israel. The observations and the findings of the following lines devolve from all these.

1. The said resolution means a recognition by Washington of the Israeli laws pre-emption in relation to international law principles concern-

ing occupied territories or territories annexed by force in international relations as long as, in accordance with the Israeli jurisdiction, Jerusalem, with both its parts, to an equal extent, is declared, ad libitum, “the unified and eternal capital of the Jewish people”;

2. The American recognition contravenes the Partition Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the UN on the 29th of November, 1947 - which was never abolished - through which Palestine was divided in two states - a Jewish and an Arab one - while Jerusalem acquired a special status and was placed under the UN international trusteeship;

3. The decision adopted by Donald Trump contravenes obviously to all the resolutions of the UN’s Security Council and General Assembly concerning the status of Jerusalem which consider null and void the steps Israel will adopt for modifying the demographic and juridical situation and configuration of Jerusalem such as, for instance:

- The resolution No. 2253/1967 of the UN General Assembly demanding Israel to annul all the steps adopted in order to modify the statute and realities of Jerusalem;

- The resolution of 25th of September, 1971 through which the UN Security Council states in the simplest and clearest way that “all juridical steps adopted by Israel for modifying the city’s configuration (Jerusalem), including forced expropriations, populations transfers, measures aimed at Israel’s annexation of the occupied part of Jerusalem are null and void and cannot affect the city’s statute”;

- The General Assembly’s Resolution 22/50 of December 4th, 1995, which “disapproves of the transfer of diplomatic (foreign) missions to Jerusalem and reaffirms the adherence to the Geneva and the Hague Treaties”;

4. The resolutions contravenes the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice that reaffirms the “application of the Fourth Geneva Protocol on the occupied Palestinian territories, East Jerusalem included”;

5. The American decision means the recogni-

tion of Jerusalem's annexation (in 1980) based on a law adopted by the Knesset, a step that was not recognized by the international community;

6. Transferring the American embassy to Jerusalem legitimizes juridically the process of Jewish settlements in Eastern Jerusalem;

7. The American decision is contrary to the international law principle requesting all states to abstain from recognizing any regional situations contravening the principles of international law or, in other words, is translated by the states' obligation of not recognizing acquiring, through illegal means, of regional and territorial advantages. This principle is to be found in the 1970 UN General Assembly resolution on the friendship and co-operation relations among states stipulating that "any territorial gains acquired by resorting to force cannot be recognized as being legitimate".

For the commentators, the decision made by Donald Trump Administration is backed especially by a logic of the factual history. Even in 1949, a year after Israel was founded, Jerusalem was declared by a Basic Law as capital of the new state. In 1980, by a law adopted by the parliament (Israeli Knesset), the entire city was annexed and passed under Israeli sovereignty. Today, the government and parliament headquarters are in Jerusalem. From this point of view, it would be normal that the compounds of the diplomatic missions be in Jerusalem, too. Yet, this logic does not stand always. In this case, one omits that international law is above Donald Trump's and Israel's law when it concerns issues coming under its jurisdiction.

There are many an epithets Donald Trump's critics described his decision of recognizing Jerusalem as capital of the State of Israel: "the Middle East earth-quake", "foolish decision", "a new American-style Balfour Declaration" etc. etc. One reproaches Donald Trump, to the same extent, with the blatant contradiction between his insistence of advocating "two-state solution" in the process of solving the Palestinian file, on the one hand, and deliberately ignoring the truism that working out the final status of Jerusalem is one of the essential issues on the agenda of any Is-

raeli-Palestinian negotiations and which disregard makes the idea of and the negotiation process senseless.

It is in the field of evidence that the American president and his advisors ignored the reactions this "tempest around Jerusalem" will trigger in the Arab-Islamic world and, maybe, in other international political and political-diplomatic fora. Such reactions will mean more or less violent protest manifestations and demonstrations, urgent meetings of the Arab League and of the Islamic Cooperation Organization, condemning draft resolutions presented for adoption to the Security Council etc. And thereafter? What predicted explosions could take place in an Arab and Islamic world already blown up and what arguments can be brought on the table on "hindering the peace process" in a region in which this process is frozen since a long time? The regional "earth-quake" will have after-shocks which will calm down in time, the "Middle East tempest" will slow down as any tempest, the Arab world will return to its own problems and the international community will do the same engulfed by its own worries.

Donald Trump will answer all, sooner or later, in his defining and unpredictable maner.

Yet he and in general the nations, the governments and political elites will have the duty to answer another question, no less difficult: to what extent one may speak at the beginning of the third millenium of the necessity, of the efficiency and of the unfailing of the international law principles?

## **2. Arabs of the East Jerusalem. The juridical status**

After more than 50 years since the occupation, in June 1967, of the eastern part of Jerusalem and 37 years since the annexation by Israel, in 1980, of the "three times holy city", the Arab population of the city continues to live in ever aggravating precarious conditions circumscribed to a non-declared but obvious policy of the Israeli government and municipality aimed at diminishing as much as possible the Palestini-



an presence in the eastern part of the city. If in 2014 the Palestinians represented 39% of the entire city's population, today in the 14 Jewish settlements in Eastern Jerusalem live around 201,000 settlers representing around 44% of the population of the eastern part of the city only (from a few hundreds in 1967). The Palestinians owe 13% only of the land of Eastern Jerusalem while the rest of 87% are areas controlled by the Jewish state or by private Israelis. The situation got worse when the "separation barrier" was finalized which made that between 6,000 and 7,000 Palestinian live isolated and encircled by Jewish settlements and the network of access roads. Besides the practice of confiscating lands, the restrictions applied to the construction permits for the Arab inhabitants add to the latter either difficulties in securing living space either oblige them to illegally build houses which are in their great majority later demolished by the municipality.

What is, under these circumstances, the juridical status of the Palestinians of Eastern Jerusalem?

They are not considered citizens of the city and have instead the status of "residents" and mention should be made that the residence permit can be cancelled if its owner leaves the city for more than six years, even if his absence is an yearly leave and of a short duration (a departure abroad or to Betlehem only, at 15 km distance of Jerusalem, is considered an absence and is added to the total of 6 years and sufficient for losing the residence permit). Moreover, children of non-residents are not registered and that deprives them of the right of social security and of registering in any form of education. Unfavorable differentiations are applied to the Arab inhabitants in the municipality field: although the Arab inhabitants pay municipal taxes of 6-11%, much too little of the funds collected are devoted to urban projects and services for the east of the city.

All these are but a glimpse of what the day-to-day reality in Eastern Jerusalem means. And it is difficult to believe that such a reality is unknown in Washington and in the rest of the western

"free world".

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Beyond the emotionality the discourse on Yerushalaim / Urushlim-Al-Quds generates in the collective mind and in the Jewish and Arab-Muslim historical and religious conscience, the status of the "holy citadel", claimed with equal insistence by Jews and by Arabs as the capital of their state materializes the very essence of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as it has been agreed upon – at least until the negotiations between the conflicting sides were discontinued – that addressing the "final status" of the city will have to fall within and solved in the framework of "final negotiations" and that any unilateral measure generating changes to the existing status-quo is to be considered null and void. Or, at the moment the discussion on the "final solution" is concentrated – and president Donald Trump himself affirmed that - on the "two-state" formula, which the tenant of the White House pledged to follow up and advocate, the decision adopted by the United States doesn't do anything but takes practically Jerusalem's file out of the content and the substance of the political negotiations, that meaning, in other words, to radically reverse the order of the existing terms, to question the credibility of the two-state formula, namely to place in a damaging way the horse before the cart. That brings to attention even more acutely the older question: how can be the city declared the capital of a single state when 40% of its inhabitants are not citizens of this state but residents devoid of civil and electoral rights something that would be taken for granted in a state self-proclaimed as having the oldest and most consolidated democracy in the Middle East?

### 3. The other opinion

For the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, 6th of December represents "a historical" and a "bright day", and the head of the executive in Tel Aviv gave assurances that the United State's decision will not change anything as far as the holy places and symbols of the three great monotheistic religions are concerned. Prime

minister Netanyahu addressed the other states the invitation to follow the American example by recognizing Jerusalem as capital of Israel and by transferring their diplomatic missions from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. On 10th of December, in Brussels, where he had a meeting with the head of the European diplomacy, Federica Mogherini, Netanyahu declared "Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and nobody can deny. This makes peace possible as recognizing reality is the very substance of that peace".

On the other side of the Atlantic, the American Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, estimated that president Trump's decision "offers a good opportunity for achieving peace between Palestinians and Israelis and the president, together with his team, work firmly towards this purpose".

If in the religious circles in Israel Donald Trump's decision represents "a great step towards building the third Temple and the beginning of the Messianic era on earth", in Tel-Aviv, the prestigious "Begin-Sadat Institute for Strategic Studies (BESA)", organized, even before the official announcement of the decision concerning Jerusalem, an ample debate with the participation of prominent personalities – Israelis and American Jews – where the speakers analyzed the significance and the consequences of the 6th of December American announcement. We reproduce extracts of the participants' speeches at the seminar (#BESAonlinedebates #Jerusalem, 2 December).

**1. Elliot Abrams**, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, former deputy of the head of the presidential advisors and Special Assistant on National Security to President George W. Bush:

"Jerusalem is Israel's capital and has this statute since the end, in 1949, of the Independence War. Refusal of accepting this reality is but a piece of the long campaign of denial of the permanence of the State of Israel and of its legitimacy. Were the 2004 George Bush's declarations, according to which there will never exist a right of return (of the Palestinian refugees – o.n.) and that, whatever solution will be reached, Israel

will maintain its sovereignty over settlements, prevented further continuation of the negotiations process? To both questions the answer is no and no. Ignoring realities and facts will never lead to peace (...) Preaching violence means a threat to Trump and he has the right of defending himself and to ask those resorting to violence not to resist the American policy. If Palestinians want peace they will have to negotiate this peace, no matter where the embassy of the United States is".

**2. Max Singer**, Senior Fellow, co-founder and trustee of Hudson Institute, Washington, and Senior Fellow at Begin -Sadat Institute for Strategic Studies, Jerusalem:

"For Israel and for the United States' long-lasting peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians, president Donald Trump's decision is a good one. Unfortunately, the advantage of this decision was, to a certain extent, diminished by the existing lack of respect for president Trump and of wide-spread opposition against whatever he does (...) yet a good decision of a disrespected president is preferable to a bad decision of a very respectable president. Those in the United States or elsewhere who want to learn from experience will begin to change their opinions in what concern the central place of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East policies (...). The United State's decision of recognizing the reality that Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel will prove its importance only to the extent it will mark the beginning of a new American policy promoting peace by discovering and proclaiming the truth about the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israelis and not by the false theory that ignoring or minimising it will bring peace (...). One of the main hurdles in front of this peace is to be found in the manner the Europeans and the Americans encouraged the Palestinian illusion that a Jewish and democratic state can be annihilated in the region by "democratically" denying the realities.

**3. Eytan Gilbos**, Director and Associate Fellow at the Center for International Communica-

tion with Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv:

“The United States’ decision does not change at all the existing reality. It does not refer in any way to the future frontiers of the city or the way the sovereignty over it will be distributed. The Palestinian claims on Jerusalem are debatable. Since 3,000 years Jerusalem has been the capital of the Jewish people, the Palestinians never had Jerusalem in their possession (...). The decision is an American, not an Israeli one and no action against Israel is justified. A violent reaction of the Palestinians could have as a result the immediate suspension of the \$500.000 yearly assistance for the Palestinians and the closure of the P.L.O. office in Washington (...) America will remain the sole broker as there is no one except the United States able to simultaneously exert pressures on the Israelis and the Palestinians”.

**4. Hillel Frisch**, Profesor of Political Studies and Middle East Research, Bar-Ilan University, Tel Aviv:

“For Israel, this is a major accomplishment. Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish Kingdom under kings David and Solomon and since 1948 capital of the Jewish people, as their descendants. It was time that a single country such as the United States accepts the unicity of the rebirth of the Jewish state with Jerusalem as capital”.

#### **4. “We will find a solution to this problem”**

“We will find a solution to this problem... I would like to be the one making peace between Israel and the Palestinians. That would be a magnificent success”. These are Donald Trump’s words uttered on 23rd November 2016 during his campaign for the American presidency (cf. *L’Orient Le Jour*, <http://www.lorientlejour.com/...trump>).

During the protest, violence, denial, criticism, reservations and blame

reactions that animated not only the Arab-Islamic world but also not a few of the chanceries of the rest of the world, several assessments marked by acute pessimism concerning the future of the peace process between the Palestinian and the Jewish state were heard. “The (American) decision will open the gates of hell in the Middle East”, “Donald Trump buried the peace in Palestine”, “America lost its credibility as a sponsor of peace in the region” were but a few appreciations marking the flagship event of the end of 2017.

In such a complicated and passions generating issue as the one concerning the Israeli-Palestinian peace and the weight an unilateral decision might have in this context, it is risky to devise scenarios addressing the reality from a schematic white and black prism. It should not be forgotten, from this standpoint, that in his greeting speech of Donald Trump’s decision, prime minister Netanyahu, followed by other high ranking Israeli officials, expressed – an extremely rare fact – the “gratitude” Israel and the Jewish people have for the virtual *peace-maker* and strategic ally of the grateful Israel. And how could such a gratitude be more concretely expressed other than by compromises liable to pave Trump’s way towards the “magnificent success” he was talking about?





Starting with taming the Jewish settlement policy in the Palestinian autonomous territories, passing through concessions regarding the very negotiating process with the Palestinians and up to even partially renouncing the reserves Israel has in what concern resuming the negotiations process. Yet, this “Middle East earthquake” could wake up from its somnolence the international community, be it the European Union and other important players of the international life or seriously coming back to the idea of an international peace conference or – why not? – a Vladimir Putin who announced already his victory in Syria and the withdrawal of a great part of the military presence on the Levant front and who, for instance, in cooperation with Egypt, Jordan and the Arab monarchies in the Gulf compete Donald Trump for the peace-maker statute of the Middle East.

The Palestinian file remains open.

## ON YEMEN, AGAIN:

### ALI ABDALLAH SALEH'S LAST INTIFADA

*Reza SHAHRESTANI*

In its latest issue of the last year, “Geostrategic Pulse” inserted in the section dedicated to Middle East developments an article devoted to the Yemeni war, emphasizing particularly the dramatic dimensions of the humanitarian, social and national crisis this country of the southernmost part of the Arab Peninsula has been going over since almost three years (see our article “The Yemeni crisis: between politics and moral”, Geostrategic Pulse No. 250, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017). Outlining some possible conclusions, we said at the end of the article that “Yemenis themselves, before others – from the current puppet president (Abd Rabboh Mansur Hadi) to the former “enlightened dictator” (ex-president Ali Abdallah Saleh), and the shaykhs and the Zaidis preachers and local warlords – should turn to the rich traditions of national dignity and pride of their people (...) for not accepting any longer that others’ interests and mercantilism decide their destinies on behalf of ideologies and doc-

trines having nothing to do with their identity and existence”.

Almost simultaneously, in the first days of December, mass-media announced prime-time an event which, far from being determined by an abrupt re-awakening of the national conscience was considered a possible “beginning of the end” of the war in Yemen: the former president Ali Abdallah Saleh and his ideological army announced, on 2nd of December, in Sana’a, breaking off with the houthis rebels and the announcement was followed by violent armed confrontations in the capital Sana’a that resulted in “hundreds of killed and wounded”.

Two days later, on 4th of December, Ali Abdallah Saleh was assassinated by a Houthis militias commando in an ambush south-east of the capital Sana’a. Alongside the ex-president, there were killed in a real carnage two of his sons, the general secretary of the General Popular Congress, a party founded and led by Saleh, several high ranking officials and bodyguards whose corpses were desecrated in a manner resembling the last sequences of the life of former Libyan leader Moammer El-Gaddhafi, fallen prisoner in the “revolutionaries” hands. The Houthi leader Abdel Malek Al-Houthi declared the date as a historical day with an exceptional symbolic value for the Yemeni people. Both the rebels and president Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi ordered the deployment in the capital of massive fighting reinforcements – troops and heavy weapons – on the background of a possible decisive confrontation for Sana’a’s control.



The news of Abdallah Saleh's death was followed by intense bombardments of the coalition against rebels positions in the capital and violent exchange of fire between the rebel militias, on the one hand, and the Republican Guards and tribal units and units of the General Popular Congress, Saleh's supporters, on the other. Iran's embassy in Sana'a was set on fire during the Saudi bombardments, according to some sources, or by the fighters loyal to the ex-president, according to other sources.

If, since the launching by the "Arab coalition" led by Saudi Arabia of the Operation "Decisive Storm", the alliance between Ali Abdallah Saleh and the Shi'a clan of Al-Houthi backed by Iran were the main resistance force against the Saudi intervention, its disintegration and the call to "intifada" addressed by Ali Abdallah Saleh to the "Yemeni people" represents a lesser expected turning point, liable to fundamentally change the tactical situation on the ground and to create the prerequisites of end this destructive war of wear – a development the regimes in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi welcomed enthusiastically from its very first moments and called by the journalists a "putsch against the putschists", a "popular revolt" or a "revolution for the new Yemeni republic".

More important than the names given to this turning point occurred in the ensemble of the Yemeni internal conflict, the observers noticed the fact that Ali Abdullah Saleh's leaving the "footlights" should nevertheless be looked at with wariness as far as the amplitude of the changes on the Yemeni front are concerned.

Yet, one may suppose that the Houthis rebellion will lose its energy having doubtful chances of gaining a decisive victory at the national level under the circumstances when it is expected the offensive launched by the Saudi-led "coalition" intensifies.

Given the circumstances at the international level, the tensions between the United States and its European allies, on the one hand, and the Iranian re-

gime increased since Donald Trump's inauguration and continues to deteriorate, while the international community expresses its opposition against the Houthis rebellion and the dramatic situation the Yemeni state and society is in as a result, it is difficult to say trenchantly if the decision of the former president Ali Abdallah Saleh mirrored a realistic responsibility concerning changes aimed at ending the war as soon as possible or it was a sheer opportunistic calculation as it is known that a military victory of the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen will have meant the endgame of the political career or even of the freedom and life of the former "comrade in arms" of the rebels.

Looked at from the rebels' trenches, Ali Abdallah Saleh's decision is seen as a betrayal gesture and of "kneeling" in front of the Saudis' ambitions in the context of the latter conflict with the Iranian regime. By turning the weapons against his allies, ex-president Saleh committed – the rebel camp considers – a putsch against the "revolution of the Yemeni people" something Saleh would have accepted in the framework of a deal with the Saudis from whom he received the guarantee that, in exchange of breaking with the rebels, he will have not only his safety and personal interests secured but also an active and profitable place on the post-conflict Yemeni chessboard.

The rupture between Ali Saleh and the rebels, which was the direct cause of his assassination, did not represent per se a new element and nei-



ther an aspect about which one may say, as do the Arab-speaking mass-media, that was “an important step towards Yemen’s pacification”. During his presidential mandate (1990-2012), no less than six wars took place between the government in Sana’a and the Houthi movement of Abdel Malik Al-Houthi and this divorce has been announced ever since August last year by intense tensions, mutual accusations and exchange of fire that resulted in human losses in both camps. The very alliance between Ali Saleh and Abdel Malek Al-Houthi was circumstantial for chasing from power in 2014 the new Yemeni government produced by the Arab spring and led by the former vice-president Abd Rabboh Mansour Hadi, reinstated in the presidential armchair by the intervention of the military coalition led by Saudi Arabia.

Ali Abdallah Saleh’s demise will certainly have direct repercussions reflected in political and military re-evaluations, in the power and influence balance among the big tribal camps dividing the Yemeni society but also at the level of the proxies confrontation between the Arab Gulf monarchies and Iran and entering the new year might be marked either by a degeneration of the domestic conflict among the Yemeni factions on the battle front or by an intensification of the Saudi-Iranian conflict in order to settle manu militari the conflict in this country. Having in mind that in all likelihood the Houthi rebels will not accept too soon a cease fire, one may estimate that the Yemeni battle front will witness new surges of violence with unpredictable consequences.violences.

In the 1990s, the former president was asked by a journalist if ruling Yemen was a difficult task and he replied that “ruling Yemen is like dancing among snakes”. Two years later, answering the same question the same journalist asked him, Saleh replied: “Nothing changed in Yemen except the snakes turned into venomous vipers”.

Built on a basis of a long chain of surprises and situations turned upside down, the Yemeni domestic conflict and its vipers did not exhaust their capacity of further surprising.

## POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AS INSTRUMENTS OF PERPETUATING THE COMPETITION FOR SYRIA

*Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN*

During almost seven years of the Syrian internal war, each stage of its unfolding was declaratively accompanied by proclaiming the principle and the imperative of solving the conflict through negotiations which, according to the invoked arguments, could never be solved militarily due to the complexity of the battle fronts and the multitude of the internal, regional and international belligerents involved. Since the launching of the so-called “Geneva process”, that reached its eighth round without any certain prospect of success, passing through the “Astana process”, to the project of “de-escalation zones”, to the “congress of national conciliation” – a kind of Afghan Loya Jirga – to the initiative of “Sochi Syrian peace conference” – with a Russian paternity – the leitmotiv of “political dialogue” was appreciated in unison as the “only legitimate way” towards peace in Syria. But reality proved, mainly in the second half of 2017, that a situation has been reached where a common sense argument such as the peaceful dialogue and “legality” turned paradoxically into a blocking element of the so much invoked very “legality”. In other words, we witness a situation where everybody speaks of “legality” according to international law, yet each of the two existing camps – the West led by America on the one side and the Russian Federation, alongside the regime in Damascus and its allies, on the other, proclaims its own approach of the “legality” concept according to the criterium: “legality, yes, but the one serving my own plans and projects”.

On the current general background based on the realities, the developments and the changes occurred both on the Syrian front as well as in the regional and international context, one cannot deny that the negotiation instrument in case of the Syrian conflict is beneficial to the extent the belligerent sides can accept reasonable compromises on the fundamental divergencies existing



in connection with the thorny issues such as the transition period, Syria's new fundamental law, the configuration and the morphology of the future political system, de-centralizing the authority, setting up "local administrations" and the content of the new social contract between the future state and the Syrian society. Yet, at the same time, the factual reality proves that the negotiation process as it is scheduled, irrespective of its further taking place in Geneva, Astana, or Sochi, is rather an instrument conceived by the main regional and international players in a competitive manner and, not a few times, in a conflictual manner, as an instrument of furthering the competition for acquiring influence and control over Syria or, in its most convenient alternative, as a leverage of managing the conflict as long as it will not extinguish by itself as a result of the erosion of the players' fighting potential.



Starting from the above-defined considerations, one may assert that the future "rounds" of the so-called political and diplomatic negotiations in Geneva, Astana or Sochi will not bring too soon new significant contributions to paving the way towards peace in Syria but they will be used primarily for delaying reaching this finality when each camp involved in the Syrian crisis still considers it did not secured yet a sufficient safe and comfortable position on the Syrian chessboard and, *mutatis mutandis*, in the equation of the future evolutions on the Middle East arena.

The haste with which the great regional and international players act for finding new formulas – bilateral, triangular or international – proves their preoccupation for identifying new pretexts, opposition reasons and obstacles in front of what should be a normal carrying out of negotiation process. An example, among the most recent ones is telling in this respect. After the "unifying meeting" of the Syrian opposition that took place on 22nd November in the Saudi capital (a meeting that did nothing but "unify" that part of the opposition backed, influenced and financed by the Saudi monarchy), it an-

nounced the so-called "new approach" of the pending issues – an approach which, leaving aside it reiterates the old precondition of Bashar Al-Assad's leaving power, requested as part of the "Riyadh platform" that the agenda of Geneva negotiations include solving the secessionist-independentists claims of the Syrian Kurdish minority. It goes without saying that such a condition was promptly rejected by the government in Damascus that cancelled its participation to negotiations and was vetoed by the United States and Turkey so that the eighth round of the "Geneva process" was postponed before it actually began. On the other hand, at the begin-

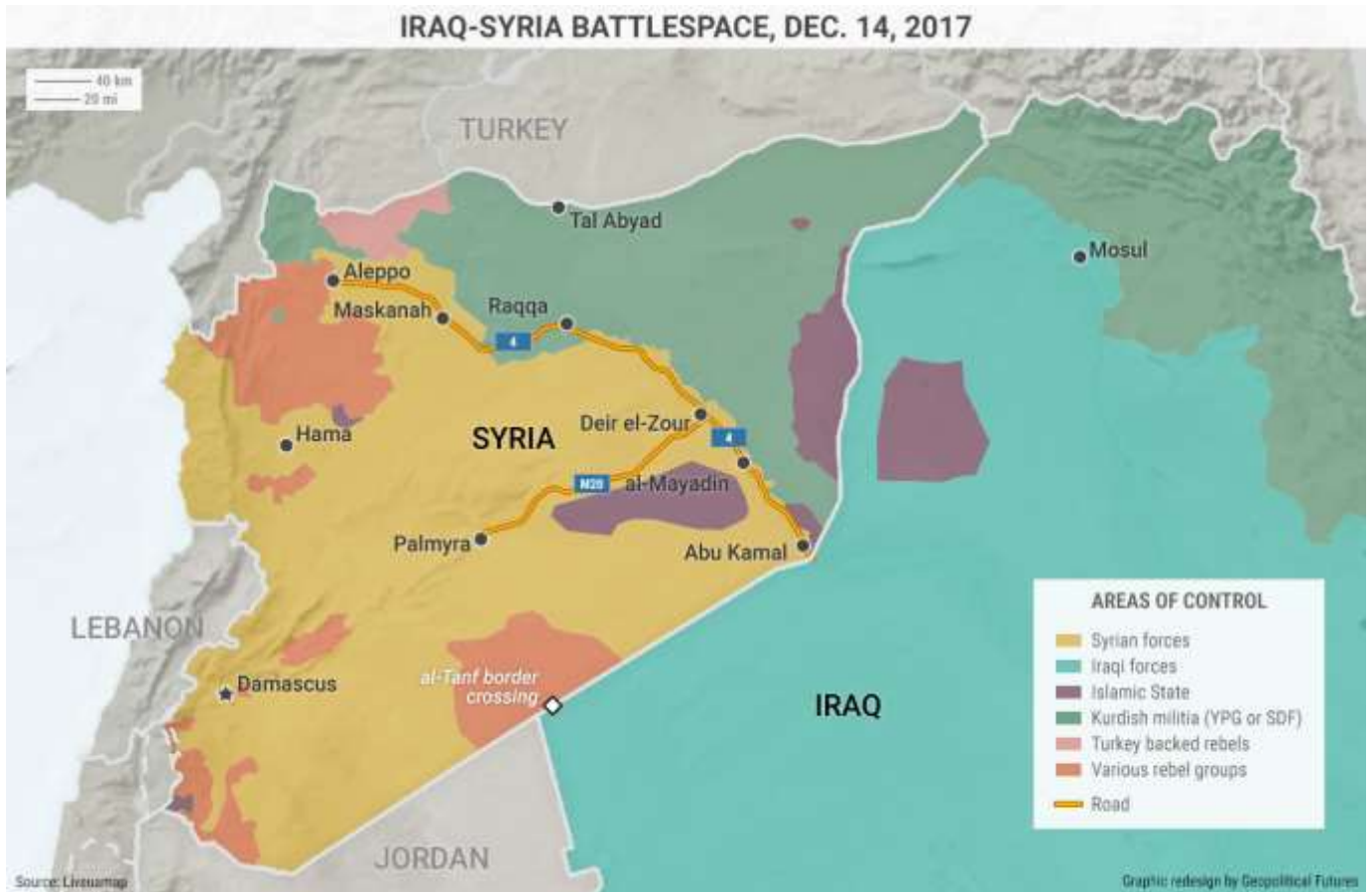
ning of December, the UN mediator Staffan De Mistura presented, on behalf of the "Western camp" a new list of proposals through which he advanced a series of original "ideas" such as: the new constitution provides for the "Syria's secular character" and

the change of the country's official name from the "Syrian Arab Republic" to "Syria", proposals that were not agreed upon by the Russian Federation which, under the circumstances, asked for postponing for February the "conference for dialogue for national conciliation" which is to be held in Sochi. On this background, the combat operations on the front witness successive periods of intensification, including through terrestrial and bombardment raids carried out by the Russian army, the Syrian army and the Iranian militias, on the one hand, and by the American troops, on the other, meant to secure each belligerent camp as many powerful assets as possible in the offing of effectively resuming the "face-to-face" negotiations between the Syrian regime and its opponents. On another plane, for the regional and international players directly involved in the campaign of uprooting the jihadist-terrorist organization Islamic state, it is the Russian Federation that controls the Syrian air space and the United States that have a weighty say in the terrestrial front and its future configuration while Iran remains prisoner of its obsession of creating the "Shia corridor" connecting Iran to the Lebanese seashore on the

Mediterranean passing through Irak and Syria as well as Turkey concerned of “cleaning” the Syrian north of the activism of the Syrian Kurds – the expansion of their own presence on the Syrian front in order to secure an as consistent part as possible on the future morphology of the territory after the end of the anti-terrorist war and the disappearance on the ground of Islamic State/ Daish became a priority. On behalf of peace, all those involved try to consolidate their advantages on the front speaking stubbornly, at the same time, of the “legitimity of negotiations” yet fiercely disputing the juridical framework the negotiations must be carried out: for the United States and its western allies, it should be ensured by Geneva, as flag bearer of the UN, while the Russian Federation and its allies opt for transferring the political process to Sochi where to solve, à la russe, the Syrian file which is to be later on presented to the UN for being legitimized and receive the international juridical umbrella.

It results from all the above that currently the problem of peace negotiations is not – as the

programatic propaganda of the Syrian regime insist – an issue concerning exclusively the way of relating between the regime and the Syrian opposition or, according to the same discourse, represent a topic whereby the decisive say rests with the “sovereign will of the Syrian Arab people”. The lack of realism of such assertions is confirmed by the live reality of facts showing that beyond the usual hypocrisy in such conjectures the real decision-makers in the Syrian equation are in fact the Russian Federation and the United States of America backed up by regional or extra-regional players allied with one or other of the decision poles. When it comes to their interests and projects, the players’ discourse – of all involved players – about parliamentary and presidential elections, constitution, political and administrative organization, national unity, reconstruction and other such sintagms with a strong politicianist and populist charge remain in the year we just entered a kind of pipe dream which turning into palpable reality depends, as it was the case so far, on foreign wills.



## ISTANBUL: ISLAMIC COOPERATION WITH...ABSENTEES



*Ambassador prof. Dumitru  
CHICAN*

On the background of international reactions following the decision president Donald Trump announced on December 6<sup>th</sup> on behalf of the United States of America of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital as well as the decision of transferring of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the "holy city", an extraordinary summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation was convened on December 13<sup>th</sup> in Istanbul upon the initiative of the Turkish president Recep Teyyip Erdogan, as acting president of the pan-Islamic organization. The summit's agenda had one topic only, namely drawing up and adopting an unified position of rejecting the Trump Administration's unilateral decision and taking collective or individual measures of critical dissociation from the American president's decision and of backing more intensely and insistently the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The participant's speeches as well as the final declaration of the summit were circumscribed to this theme.

"As an Islamic country, we will never abandon the idea of a sovereign and independent Palestine (!) with Jerusalem its capital", president Erdogan said, inviting the governments of the Islamic states having relations with Israel to break them off and to recognize Jerusalem as capital of the occupied Palestinian state, and considered that "Donald Trump's decision concerning the status of Jerusalem is a reward bestowed upon Israel for the terrorist acts" of the Jewish state. (The nuance between Recep Teyyip Erdogan's speech where he spoke of "Jerusalem as Israel's capital" and the final declaration of the summit that used the sintagm "Palestinian state with its capital in Eastern Jerusalem"!)

As of the Chairman of the Palestinian National



Authority, he had a speech easily enframable in the spirit and the form of the reactions the Palestinian leader expressed since the December 6<sup>th</sup> decision and which the mass-media presented in extenso in due time.

The final declaration of the summit requested the "recognition, by the Islamic community, of Jerusalem's occupied eastern side as capital of the State of Palestine" and considers that "the United States cannot be any longer a mediator and sponsor of the peace between the Palestinians and the Jewish state".

At the end of the summit and after the official launching of the "Istanbul declaration", the acting president of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and host of the summit, La încheierea reuniunii la nivel înalt și după lansarea oficială a "declarației de la Istanbul", Recep Teyyip Erdogan, invited the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to a joint press conference that gave the Turkish president the opportunity of delivering a speech dotted with tough adjectives and epithets wich in tense situations particularizes the style of the leader at the Golden Horn. "America's president, Erdogan said, has a mentality in which the evengelist and Zionist thinking are to be found" and that irreversibly deprives Donald Trump of the position of a honest broker in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Under the circumstances, the speaker addressed the Muslim leaders the appeal to find, together, a new sponsor of peace, including under the ceiling of the United Nations. "In front of a state of occupation and terrorism such as Israel, the issue of Jerusalem must be considered (by the global Muslim community) as a "red line" nobody has the right to cross it".



If the Jordanian King Abdallah II rejected all the attempts of changing the status of Jerusalem as a “foundation and not a substitute for the initiatives of solving the dispute between the Jews and Palestinians”, the Iranian president Hassan Rohani blamed the United States’ and president Donald Trump’s total alignment to the State of Israel’s positions and called all the Muslim states adopt “unity and solidarity in confronting Israel”.

From the perspective of expressing positions, the representatives and the analysts attending the summit were almost unanimous in underlining the routine, pathetic and redundant character accompanied by a total absence of the pragmatic line of the discursive paradigms, a fact due to several objective factors and causes: the haste with which Recep Tayyip Erdogan decided convening the Islamic summit in a moment whereby many of the member states and governments of the Islamic Cooperation did not have the necessary time for outlining their own positions and evaluations concerning Donald Trump’s decision and its possible consequences. To an equal extent, mention should be made that the very attendance at the Istanbul summit was rather modest, as of the total of 57 member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 48 states only were represented and only 16 of them had the participation at the highest level, the rest of 41 heads of state were absent and represented at minimal levels – ministers or under-secretaries. (Saudi Arabia, that claims of being leader of the global Islamic community was represented by the minister for Religious Affairs). Not to speak of lack of preliminary coordination preparations and consultations to ensure a common language for the entire community of the Islamic world. Secondly, it is about the specific conditions in which each of the Muslim states are approaching, through the prism of their more or less “confidential” position, the state relations with Israel, on the one hand, and of each one’s interests of promoting or at least encouraging the relating attitude towards the United States of America, on the other. It was expected, from this standpoint, that the acidity or the moderation of the national Islamic reac-

tion be determined to a great extent by such considerations pertaining to the policies of each Islamic state, less converging with the positioning of the Islamic community as “*umma*”, as “Islamic nation” – which is itself affected by schisms, vainglory and competitive conflicts. Thirdly, it would be about the not-at-all comfortable general situation of the Arab-Islamic world that has just emerged from an “Arab spring” and is moving toward a long cloudy season. All these elements may justify the British daily “The Independent” assesment that “The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation is no longer a force on the world stage”.

The overhasty manner in which this summit of the Islamic world was organized, making it marked by absenteeism and overwhelmed by slogans and catchphrases which did not add anything new, allows the assesment that it was rather a “summit for Erdogan” for whom the recognition by the United State of Jerusalem as Israeli “eternal and unified” represented an opportunity for the leader in Ankara to talkatively plead in favor of the “Turkish model” and of his own vision on the great issues of the Middle East and of the contemporary world. The widespread popular demonstrations overflowing the streets of the Turkish towns upon Erdogan’s call and encouragement suggested rather the Turkish president’s burning desire to use the Muslim background in order to add some extra veneer on his own erstwhile image already bleached and fading away by his Syrian and regional policy. There are not a few analysts, Turks included, who saw in Istanbul summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation an Erdogan’s “demonstration of strength” against president Trump whereby the Turkish leader insisted on his country’s capacity as a new ascending leader of the Islamic world and its mobilising capacity in crisis situations. The Turkish president’s initiative of organizing the special summit was intended, to an equal extent, to be addressed to the other “competitors” for the leadership of the Muslim community – particularly to Saudi King Salman and the Egyptian leader Abdel Fattah El-Sissi – to whom in this context a message was sent that neither of them have enough assets to

claim the leadership of the Sunni Muslim world. And, in a nutshell, the essence of Erdogan's messages was: "In the Islamic world, Erdogan and Turkey are as powerful as Trump and America are in the context of the Christian western world".

Affected by the massive absenteeism of the Islamic leaders and prisoner of its own paradigms of the discourse, the Islamic nation (*umma*) can return to its problems with the satisfaction to have fulfilled yet another protocol duty.

NOTE: By affirming he is the most unquestionable Muslim leader as far as the Trump Administration and its 6th December decision are concerned, on 15th December Recep Teyyip Erdogan went further – something the observers saw as having an overbidding populist character – and continued his series of antic tragedy type warnings and said in Istanbul: "If we lose Jerusalem, we are not able to defend Medina and then we can not defend Mekka, and if Mekka falls, then we lose Kaa'ab (the sacred temple of the great mosque in Mekka, considered a *centrum mundi* for the entire Islamic world). "Jerusalem embodies the dignity of the entire world and, therefore, we will do whatever possible in order to guard and fulfil Allah's behests and the refuge of our ancestors (another epithet for Jerusalem)" the Turkish president further said.

## THE ISLAMIC TERRORISM: FROM THE MIDDLE EAST TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA

**Dinu COSTESCU**

On December 9th, 2017, the head of the executive in Baghdad, Heydar Abbadi, announced that the "war against the terrorist group Islamic State ended" after the recovery, by the Iraqi army, of the last jihadist pockets that were still controlling areas dispersed in the Iraqi desert from the extreme-eastern district of the country to Anbar Governorate at the western frontier between Iraq and Syria. At the same time, resuming, even under difficult conditions, of the rounds of political and military peace negotiations on Syria and the continuous diminishing of the fighting potential and of the territory controlled by Da'ish there, present real reasons of optimism as far as the collapse of the presence of the jihadist terrorism in the Middle East area is concerned (the headquarters of the Russian troops operating in Syria already announced, at the beginning of December, the end of the mission of the Russian Federation's troops in this country). The natural euphoria and enthusiasm for the prospect of eradicating this scourge which, since more than three years, has tainted with blood the world of the Arab-Islamic Middle East and, to an equal extent, the societies of the international community area do not hide an as obsessing as justified question, starting from the estimations of the experts of the anti-terrorist fight that the military defeat of the ideological Islamist killers does not mean necessarily the disappearance of the doctrinary reasons and the culture of violence that gave and will further perpetuate the substance and motivation for jihadism to survive in a form or another in new temporal and spatial dimensions. After the Arab Mashreq of the Middle East, what are the new geographical coordinates the jihadist-salafist phenomenon may turn to in order to continue the "jihad onto God's path" and the reconstruction of the great Muslim caliphate which beginning was fore-



shadowed, but not finalized by the “caliph” Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi? The most frequent answer given to such a question directs, at least in the light of the existing situation and signals of the last summer, towards South-East Asia area as a possible future seed-bed for germinating and breeding the Phoenix marked by “Allahu Akbar” logo.

There were not a few clues which, on the background of the blows received by the terrorists of Islamic State, showed that numerous fighters, commanders and ideologues of this criminal entity direct themselves feverishly towards transferring the arms, baggages and funds to states of the south-east area of the Asian continent. Of course, this ascertainment does not grant South-East Asia the exclusiveness as future target for the radical terrorist phenomenon and does not preclude the possibility that other coordinates of the planetary geography, too, be taken into consideration for repositioning in order that the said phenomenon be reorganized. What looms closer to certitude is that the African continent slides on a second place as a priority for the terrorist activities and also for the recruitment of new candidates for jihad by both the ideology of Islamic State/Da'ish and by the other active structure of the Islamic fundamentalism, Al-Qaida network. Yet, due to various reasons of topography, demography (where Indonesia is on a leading place with its population of 260 million people) or the conflictual potential, the Asian south-east area remains a preferable alternative for compensating the losses incurred in the Arab Mashreq and Maghreb. From the perspective of the topographical characteristics and relief – an area with an ample and dense insular configuration – as well as from the perspective of a quasi-inexistent security and anti-terrorist collaboration and coordination among regional governments, all these are as many arguments making from this space an attractive and exploitable destination from the point of view of the activities of clandestine terrorist Islamist type. No less important from this point of view, the multifaceted poverty factor, ethnical, sectarian and social segregation affecting mainly the Muslim young generation are elements making them an

easy prey to indoctrination, brain washing and recruitment for “redeeming” actions on behalf and behind the black banner of the fanatic terrorist structures. Indonesia, Malaysia or the Philippines are but some telling examples in this respect.

The commentators' references to this part of the Asian continent as a possible destination for the terrorist groups registered under the banner of Islam gained a notable dimension after the Philippino minister of Defense announced, on October 16th, 2017 the liquidation of Isnlon Hapilon, the “emir of the South-East Asia Islamic emirate”, a former leader of Abu Sayaf group, a Da'ish affiliate, during the fights for liberating Marawi town, south of the country, which was under temporarily control of the Philippino branch of Islamic State, a town destined, in Agence France Presse commentators' opinion, to be proclaimed as capital of the archipelago according to the model offered by the precedents of Mosul in Iraq and Rakka in Syria. The analysts are wondering how the infiltration of Da'ish group was possible in the Philippines, a country which, contrary to other south-east Asian regions, where movements of the radical Islam are witnessed, the majority of the society is made up of Catholics?

According to an analysis of the American platform “Stratfor”, the idea of setting up in the region of a germ of the world Muslim caliphate was adopted by Abu Sayyaf's leader as early as 2014, when Da'ish ruled large Iraqi and Syrian swathes of land, something that brought about, under the leadership of Isnlon Hapilon, the Philippino Abu Sayyaf group's oath of allegiance to Islamic State.

At the same time, another focal point of the interest manifested by the radical Salafist ideology for the south-eastern extremity of the Asian continent is Mindanao Island which holds, from the tactical perspective of the Islamic “holy war”, a very important strategic position along the maritime frontiers among the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia which offers a refuge and an easily accessible shelter for the jihadists followed by the security institutions of the three states.



The said situation does not apply to the Filipino area and its neighborhood only.

At the beginning of October, the chairman of the committee for fighting the terrorist phenomenon of the Russian Federation's Security Council, Kheytrat Ammarov, warned that, according to existing information, the Iraqi and Syrian Islamic State fighters look for other deployment areas mostly in the south and east of the Asian continent. A situation characterized by the Russian high official as "dangerous", when an increasing interest and even an increasing presence of the Jihadist-terrorist elements of the Afghan territory either as a settling point or a transit corridor to the south-east Asian area is noticed.

Researchers and analysts of the radical Islamist phenomenon underlined lately the causal link that might exist between the reorientation of the groups of Islamic State descendancy, on the one hand, and the blood tainted turbulences in Myanmar (Burma), where the Muslim minority of the ethnic Rohingya, subject to severe vexations and prohibitions from the Buddhist authorities, represents an easily penetrable community by the active proselytism of the terrorist-Islamist groups.

South-East Asia, which was never circumvented by the radicalism of the Islamic fundamentalism, has all the chances of becoming a new fiefdom of the jihadist-terrorist action and the post-Da'ish jihadist structures, that benefit supposedly of the experience gained on the fronts of the Middle East and enjoy mobility, adaptability and organizational flexibility, have the capacity of making from the south-east of the Asian conti-

ment a bridgehead of the radical-Islamist and terrorist ideology as long as the governments and the planning, decision-making and anti-terrorist actions institutions will not preventively harness the rich and varied experience they gained in their turn during the last almost two decades of active engagement in preventing, containing and uprooting this chronic illness of contemporaneity.

## SOCHI: SESAM OF PEACE IN SYRIA?

*Dinu COSTESCU*

The "struggle" for pacifying Syria and the competition among the great regional and international players involved in this process is unfolding since a longer time and have intensified during the last months of 2017 on three main directions which, at least apparently, are balanced as far as the objectives and the necessity of reaching them are concerned. It is about the Geneva process whereby, based on resolution No. 2254, the United Nations emerges as guarantor of the Syrian peace and of the agreements that could be reached to that purpose. Secondly it is about the "Astana process", placed under a triple guarantee of the Russian Federation, Turkey and Iran with an international involvement. The third path is represented by the "Sochi process" for dialogue and national reconciliation in Syria initiated by Moscow and for which preparation the Russian side carried out an intense diplomatic campaign for attracting the support and auspices of the international community.

In this context, the demarches of the international mediator Staffan De Mistura for convening, on 21st of January, of a new round – the ninth – of Geneva process moved temporarily on a secondary place as the attention of public opinion and of the international chanceries was attracted by the "Sochi event" with an estimated attendance of around 1,500 people. There was less talk of who they are and, especially, with a critical accent, according to what criteria they were selected, given that from the principled list of participants the representatives of an im-





portant component of the Syrian opposition were excluded, namely those of the Kurdish minority reunited under the organizational banner of the "People's Protection Units" and of the "Syrian Democratic Forces" (QASD) who control around 25% of the Syrian national territory.

At the end of December 2017 and the beginning of 2018, there were not a few analysts who were trying, according to the tradition, to review the panorama of the most important events marking the regional and international stage, the Middle East, or the foreseeable ones for 2018, who estimated that the nine rounds of the Geneva and Astana processes and particularly the initiative of the Sochi conference for national conciliation, on the Russian shore of the Black Sea, marks, for Syria, the beginning of the real end of the civil war and moving to the pacification and reconstruction stage of a country destroyed during the seven years of war.

What does the Russian Federation want when organizing this Sochi dialogue?"

On 27th of December, after talks held in Moscow with the representatives of the Syrian opposition of the "Moscow platform", the head of the Russian diplomacy, Serghei Lavrov, warned on the consequences the attempts of temporizing or of preventing the "congress of Syrian national conciliation" foreseen for 29-30 January 2018 in Sochi might have. Sergei Lavrov's warning comes after some 40 formations of the armed resistance of the Syrian political opposition announced earlier they will not attend the congress for dialogue in Sochi arguing that Moscow wants to turn this event into an opportunity of obtaining the legitimization "by all Syrians" of

the status-quo created in Syria by the Russian Federation's instituting a military presence and permanence in this country. In this context, Serghei Lavrov specified that the fundamental objective of the Sochi dialogue is represented by the establishment of a wide representative base for starting off of an ample process of constitutional reforms all the Syrian sides involved in the internal conflict agree upon.

The apprehensions manifested by the leaders of the Syrian opposition are based on the suspicion that speaking of a dialogue all the ethnical, confesional, tribal, provincial and social components participate at - as in fact provides for the resolution No. 2254 adopted at the first "Geneva round" of the negotiation process, the Russian counterparts spoke all the while of the necessity of continuing the fight until uprooting "Djabhat Al-Nusra" formation - the Syrian branch of Al-Qaida network after President Putin announced the "end of the war" against Islamic State/ Da'ish. Or, that is considered in the opposition circles as a blackmailing signal meaning that in case the opposition does not join the Sochi process, Russia has the necessary capacity and potential for obliging the opposition forces to conform to the requirements of the peace process as they are formulated and sponsored by Moscow.

The Sochi dialogue is overshadowed by the fact that the Russian Federation did not present yet for debate a clear project concerning the post-conflict reconstruction. Although some big Russian and Chinese companies already manifested their interest to committ themselves to such a program, the opposition believes that the Arab Gulf monarchies - considered to have main investment funds - will not be ready to participate to such a project that Vladimir Putin called "Marshall-2" as long as an Iranian presence and influence will be maintained in Syria and as long as the United States and the European Union did not send too encouraging signals concerning their involvement in the reconstruction of the Syrian economy and society.

A reason invoked by the opposition for not attending the national dialogue in Sochi is the Syrian regime's refusal to accept to sign at the Asta-



the international community, in general, and by the United States, in particular, of Russia's role as a great power pole of the global order and as a weight factor in the management of the great active conflictual problems on the world stage and among them, not the least, one finds the Crimea issue, the North-Korean race towards the "nuclear club" or the existing disputes between the American Administration and the theocratic regime in Tehran.

Seen as such, the Sochi reunion of 29-30 of January is, in a first place, a positive one, as its declared objective is ceasing the war and moving towards edifying the peace in Syria

na negotiations an agreement on releasing some hundreds of thousands of Syrian detainees in Bashar Al-Assad's prisons, a refusal encouraged by the insufficient efficacy of the pressure exerted to this end by the Russian side.

After all, what does the Russian Federation want and expect from the "Sochi process"? And why, during the last months, the subject never missed practically from any of Vladimir Putin's official discursive position? It is difficult indeed to think out a pertinent answer to this interrogation without knowing the backstage of the motivations they are based on. Nevertheless, what is certain is the fact that Vladimir Putin wants that a political solution be reached in Syria which, before any other considerations, is in accordance with Moscow's strategic interests in this country and in the Middle East region. Two years since the Russian military intervention in the Syrian civil war, any political finality of the war that could be called "peace" which does not correspond with priority to the Russian interests would mean the annihilation of all the political, strategic and military efforts and investments Moscow made in Syria's crisis file. Yet the final consecration of the Russian "victory" in the management of the developments in Syria could not be attained except to the extent that all the military terrestrial, aerial and maritime operations on the Syrian conflict battle grounds cease in a durable and complete manner. And this "consecration" will have to mean, from Vladimir Putin's point of view, the acknowledgement, by

and is positive also, in a second place, as it is meant to achieve what it has not been possible during all the political, diplomatic and military rounds of Geneva and Astana, namely the face-to-face meeting practically for the first time of the negotiators representing Bashar Al-Assad's regime and of the political and military opposition. Nevertheless, under the circumstances of the existing obstacles and suspicions, the regime's inflexibility and its opponents' rigidity and lack of coherence, the multiple auspices the "Sochi stage" is under – Russia's, Turkey's, Iran's – whose positions and approaches are not necessarily convergent either among them or with the positions of all the Syrian belligerents, it would be risky to believe that all the suitable keys to open the gates and the road to peace will be found in Sochi. A road that further remains arduous, long and spread with barriers difficult to remove in one single round of negotiations.







## "IN A PERSIAN MARKET", DIFFERENT READING 2018

**Ambassador prof. Dumitru  
CHICAN**

Once upon a time, sixty years ago, at the countryside house from where I started towards the world, I grew up having above my head, hanging on the wall, a crude radio set, a kind of black telephone of Bakelite having instead of handset two pairs of claws keeping between them and bound by a rotating button a piece of mineral called galena in which the telluric black was made iridescent by silvery luster.

That galena, helped by around 300 m of wire cable fastened at one end on the top of an acacia guarding the front hill and at the other on the top of a walnut tree next to the fence of our "household" and linked to the "galena" from where, by will of the "national" radio of the time I started the day listening to the then famous broadcasts "Good morning, children" or "Let's learn Russian singing". Sometimes, on Sundays it seemed, the "galena" brought to my life and to my education the late professor Mihai Florea and his broadcast "He who knows wins". Of course the win was insignificant in material terms but was enriching through the information broadcast to a rural people concerned by the collectivization of the 1950s. If I speak now of things happened sixty years ago is for saying that then, on the galena, I heard, without being too moved, but looking into the remembrance archive of senescence, the musical jewel "In a Persian Market" written in 1920 by the British composer Albert W. Ketelbey. A persian bazaar: dupes, silk waivers, mountebanks, carpet merchants, pistachio and brocade, caravans and attendants, pretty girls, princesses on palanquins and the caliph of course, good or evil according to his mood.

It happened that during the days between 2017 and 2018 I heard the tumult of the "Persian market" described in Ketelbey's souds yet upset by the news of what is going on in Iran

starting with December 28th and the great mass protest movements breaking out in the town of Mashhad.

In 1979, under the mantle of the great ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni, the Iranians, united in their thoughts and feelings, rebelled and removed from power the Imperial Pahlavi dictatorship and replaced it by the dictatorship of a political God for whom democracy is the bastard of the apostate West and which, according to the sayings of the sovereign mullahs, the "revolution" was to become a model and guide for the evolution in time of the Islamic nation.

The social uprisings Iran witnessed as the last year passed are not a first. In 2009, the Iranian state and society witnessed a similar situation which the western mass-media called "green revolution" and which the force institutions of the theocratic regime state quickly repressed. Then, on the background of a presidential electoral campaign, the demonstrators descended in the public space for exposing the electoral frauds attributed to the former president Ahmadinejad, who was competing for a second presidential mandate. Then, the popular manifestations had from the very beginning a political character, determined by the Iranians' refusal, for the first time, of the political class and its representatives attempts of imposing their clan, party and individual interests in contempt of the voices of 81 million people making up the Iranian demography.

In 2009, the popular uprisings were limited to big cities and particularly to the capital Tehran while at the end of 2017 they bursted out on the outskirts of the towns and localities which are the most dramatically affected .by major social problems such as the steep deterioration of the living standard, inflation, rapid consumption of the purchasing power and, in general, the population's feeling that the mullahs making up the ruling class are nonchalantly getting rich in a sovereign ignorance of the sufferings of many.

In 2009, the popular uprisings benefitted from

the active presence of some reformist leaders and guides such as Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mahdi Karoubi or Mohamed Khatami – who were to fall victims to the repressive measures applied by the ruling clerical clique. In December 2017, the “Iranian intifada” does not present either symbolic leaders, coherent organizational structures or a program of demands exceeding the chaotic limits of the destructive violence generated by poverty and hunger.



The causes leading to the explosion of December 2017 protest movements are as many as they are difficult to solve by spontaneous manifestations in the public space: chronic corruption affecting the power and state institutional structures segments, increased population poverty in a country among the top most important holders of conventional energy reserves at the world level; the disappointment resulted from signing the “nuclear agreement” with the western community which, far from bringing an improvement of the standard of living, led to its more emphatic deterioration as the funds made available by this document were used particularly for sponsoring the policies of regional expansion and of fostering regional conflicts by proxies as it is the case with Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Libya or Lebanon. President Donald Trump’s coming to the White House meant stiffening of the international sanctions imposed on Iran which impacted directly in a negative way the standard of living of the Iranian society.

Yet, attention has been drawn by the fact that, although the initial causalities of the uprisings and manifestations were exclusively linked to economic and social demands, they quickly and surprisingly turned to (remembering the “Arab springs” in Maghreb and Syria) the political sphere, so that a society which, since 1979 and until today, chanted usually “Death to America!”, moved rapidly to domestic concerns slogans – “Death to Rohani!”, “Death to dictator!” (meaning in subtext the supreme guide Ali Khamenei), “We do not want Lebanon, do not want Gaza and Syria, we want Iran”, “Stop interfering in other neighbouring states”, “Think of us, not of Syria and Iraq!” etc. It is about, in other

words, of the political reverse side of the revolts which front side was initially eminently social.

It is hazardous to speak in all this ensemble of events of an outside interference in triggering the Iranian social unrests even if president Donald Trump and the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu were amongst the first foreign officials welcoming the “Iranian intifada” and offering to support it and even addressed the international community the appeal of backing the revolts. For the theocratic regime in Tehran, this foreign dimension may be of course worrying yet it has, at the same time, from the same perspective of Khameney-Rohani regime, a favourable side, too, to the extent in which the score of the intervention of the “enemies of the Iranian people” may offer, in extreme cases, an unvaluable propagandistic instrument for repressing the revolts and for justifying the anti-demonstrators measures as long as they are portrayed by the official propaganda as “agents” and “anti-national tools” serving foreign powers, namely, ad nomine, the United States, Israel, Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. As such, General Ali Shamkhani, personal representative of the supreme guide in the Supreme Council of the National Security was as explicit as possible in his accusations brought especially to the monarchic regime in Riyadh which had “already set up an anti-Iranian intervention and subversion unit made up of fighters of “Mujahedin e- Khalq”. “Iran, General Ali Shankhany said, will firmly respond Saudi Arabia where it expects the least”.





Beyond the emotional reactions, it is normal that the possible domestic developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran stir and foster the concern and worries of the international community if one takes into account that any evolution towards instability and internal conflicts in the country could have the most direct and negative repercussions on the regional status-quo and balance of forces and security. And such concerns are the more well-founded as the social unrests in Iran are not the result of a provisional conjectural situation but derive from a long series of accumulations reflecting, in their turn, the existence of a real crisis situation in the segment of what might be called the “deep Iran”, a crisis

which, questioning the identity dimensions of the religious “Persianism” will request, sooner or later, an equally deep approach in the reformist direction or at least a corrective approach of such discontents which, extended to the macro-social level, have the potential of generating changes difficult to predict and estimate at the moment. What can be assessed without fear of making mistakes is that an “Iranian spring” as it was presented by the recent history of the Arab world cannot be foreseen. The theocratic regime in Tehran has at its disposal an extremely dangerous weapon that will not hesitate to use when things will reach a critical moment: The Revolutionary Guard and the religious dogma that gives the very reason of this regime’s existence.

NOTE: On Wednesday, 3rd of January, General Mohammed Ali Jaafari, commander of the “Revolutionary Guard” announced that the protest movements ended, a week after their beginning. “The security actions and citizens’ vigilance led to the enemies’ defeat” General Jaafari added. He did not mention that 22 deaths were registered among the “enemies”. And that does not mean the end of popular discontent.

“In a Persian Market” and in the Iranian bazaar, any extremum is possible.





The Secret Services of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Security Issues

## BE QUIET: PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IS SPEAKING NOW! THE NEW NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE US

**Mihai MĂRGĂRIȚ**

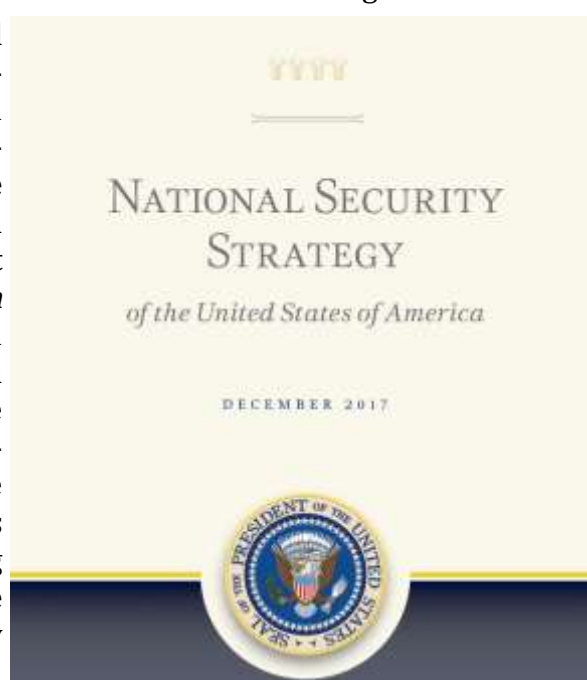
Paraphrasing George Beahm - the US editor of the inspiring book **Trump Talk: Donald Trump in His Own Words**, representing “an unbiased collection of the most important statements, reports, excerpts of interviews or opinions” that have marked a real “war of words in the candidacy for the White House” – and after a year of leadership in which he acquired new attitudes, official procedures and decisions, President Donald Trump personally invited us on December 2017 to listen to his words when he launched the **National Security Strategy of the United States**.

No one was surprised that a new National Security Strategy of the US appeared, although less than two years before the end of his term (in February 2015), President Barack Obama had issued a National Security Strategy and for about one year the current President Trump has not made any hint that would be changed. Who could rely on the President’s unpredictability?

The new National Security Strategy of Donald Trump has been anticipated by Lieutenant General McMaster, domestic security advisor at the White House, who participated in early December last year at the fifth **Annual Reagan Forum on Security** held in Simi Valley (California). In his presentation on the main issues of international security, he said that the strategic patience has come to an end, revealing the imminent appearance of a new National Security

Strategy (NSS). In this context, he said that President Trump’s intention is not to adopt national security measures starting from a “rigid ideology”, but from defending “the quintessential national interests”.

Considering the development of the entire contents of the NSS and the place where the first public signal on its release was given – the Annual Reagan Forum on Security – it could be said that Donald Trump apparently draws on some conceptual aspects of the Reagan Administration, obviously adapting them to the domestic social conditions and the current international geopolitics. However, I must mention that I do not refer to the **Reagan Doctrine**, which is extremely complex and has proven its usefulness and undisputed practical efficiency in the benefit of the whole world. The conclusion of the two terms of the Reagan Administration included extraordinary results both at a domestic and international level, in the context of the Cold War, whose end has been skillfully prepared by Reagan. Therefore, a comparison of everything done until today by President Trump and the Reagan Doctrine would have been totally inappropriate and unbalanced, considering the greatness of President Reagan’s personality. He has been unanimously appreciated by the democratic world because it has restored trust and power to the American people, acting like a mirror that reflected the American values. Moreover, the comparison would have been premature because the current US President, also a Republican, is only one year of his first term and has only shortly exceeded the



statements' phase. But, as compared to his predecessors – the Democratic opponents - his talks are more pragmatic and he prioritizes the citizens' interests and the sovereign rights as a nation, also aiming to restore the confidence and power of the American people. When and how? It depends on how he manages to preserve time. However, President Trump has found the right time to launch again and praise the old slogan **"America First"**, explaining it in a coherent manner, even if only in terms of foreign policy and national security for the time being.

In my opinion, the essence of the National Security Strategy of President Trump falls within an original ideology of national isolationism in a global context, punctuated by inflamed populist statements made both during numerous earlier moments along the election campaign and after gaining the current position of President at the White House.

The originality of the isolationism promoted by the current US president has a side contained in *"the quintessential national interests"* of the US, as stated by the national security adviser at the *Reagan Annual Forum*. This side is to be identified in a brief overview of the strategic objectives in the introduction of the new Strategy, with a handwritten signature of President Trump, addressing people with the phrase "My fellow Americans", stating what the quintessential national interests refer to: *"The American people have elected me to make America great again. I promised that my Administration would do so, placing safety, interests and welfare of our citizens first. We promised to revitalize the American economy, we will rebuild our army, we will defend our borders, we will protect our sovereignty and we will promote values"*.

Another side is to be recognized from the electoral campaign. Considered by the editor George Beahm to be *an American phenomenon* as a businessman and *a controversial person in the art of negotiations*, currently an important political figure, the current US President continues to appear in the headlines around the world, even if not all politicians and analysts from the local and foreign media share his political views or if

others deny him by means of widespread public protests in some major cities in the country. In such a difficult context for the government and after a year in office, "the daring" (Editor George Beahm's note) President developed the National Security Strategy (NSS) and seems to give everyone a first document as an official response to a series of questions that have not been completely answered.

In terms of concepts, this Strategy is focused on the clear protection of the citizen, his interests, the country and the American lifestyle. It is considered that the Americans have long recognized the benefices of the being inter-connected with the world, where information and trade have been at a low level. It explains the fact that this does mean that the United States gives up its rights and responsibilities as a sovereign state and it would not compromise its security. Nevertheless, the opening towards the world has its price because the opponents take advantage of the systems of the liberal and democratic countries and that damages the United States.

In fact, ever since his term, it has been openly said that the election of Donald Trump as President represents a warning that the American government would significantly reduce its role and efforts in the process of stabilizing the entire world, by shifting the emphasis on the interests and needs of the American nation – *America First!* Consequently, the opening address was not understood as an optimistic interpretation at a global level.

Donald Trump's National Security Strategy is not very convincing in the *de facto* acceptance of the *isolationist principle* in favor of the security and prosperity of the American citizen. If justi-



fied, the annulment of several important laws has not yet displayed its effects. This *isolation* of the US, frequently mentioned in statements, attitudes and decisions in relation with traditional partners and allies, as it was the case of the EU (the support of the Brexit, the relation with Germany), the exit from UNESCO, the UN (the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on climate change and the issue of Jerusalem) and even NATO (warning concerning the GDP ratio of each member country) seem to be rather *an umbrella to cover the achievement at any cost of the America First objective*. It is an umbrella that allows changes in the rules of the game during the game – *the fight for power*. Thus, by ignoring the consequences of this isolationism in the regional and global security, imbalances occur in the system, allowing the domination of the world. But, as Mr. Trump tells us, in order to lead the world, the US can no longer be alone outside its borders, both in terms of the relations with its partners and with its opponents.

Meanwhile, President Trump remains consistent in the same position of confrontation, risking even to contradict his own statements. Developing the NSS, he wanted it to be totally different from the one of his predecessor Barak Obama. But, in my opinion, it seems to be different only in form. That is, it has a different structure and it is more voluminous. But the content is not that different, even if the current US President is waving *the slogan of isolation as a principle of government*.

In fact, former President Barak Obama stated in his last National Security Strategy: *“In order to provide the safety of the American people and advance our national security interests, any successful strategy must begin with an indisputable truth - America must lead. The strong and sustained American leadership is essential to an international order based on rules that promote global security and prosperity and the dignity and human rights of all peoples. **The question is never whether America should lead, but how we should lead (our emphasis)**”*.

In general, how to lead involves communication, dialogue, persuasion, negotiation, the re-

spect of the partner, the respect for the majority opinion, openness to the press etc. The NSS of Mr. Trump includes this modality only in the chapter ***The Preservation of Peace by Force***, detailed in the subsections *Advantages of Renewing the Competitive America; The Renewal of Capabilities; Diplomacy and the State*, whose approach contradicts *isolation*.

Thus, the development of the concept *The Preservation of Peace by Force* is based on the recognition that *the competition for power* has always been a permanent focal point in history. The present time is no different. In the NSS, *the competition for power* refers to three “*main sets of challenges: the revisionist powers of China and Russia; the dishonest states of Iran and North Korea; the transnational threatening organizations, especially jihadist terrorist groups*” - considered to be “*in an active competition with the United States and its allies and partners*”. And although differ in the nature and magnitude of their power, the NSS also states that “*these rivals compete in terms of politics, economic and military technologies, as well as information to accelerate the competition in order to transfer regional balances power in their favor. These are the political foundations between those who favor repressive systems and those who favor free societies*”. But in this text, we note the word **challenges**, referring to all those competing for power, among which North Korea, Iran and the terrorist jihadist groups - all included in the “*list of evil*”. Is it about a paradigm shift, including the word **challenge** with all forms of the word **enemy**? Or is it a new perception of President Trump on all political actors competing for world power in that the policy of isolation “**America First**” includes it into a “**providential state of America’s infallibility!**”

We should also note the approach of the chapter *Diplomacy and the State*, structurally and conceptually subordinated to the same chapter *The Preservation of Peace by Force*. According to the US President and his military advisers “*diplomacy is essential to identify and implement solutions to the clashes in unstable regions of the world that have no military involvement. It helps to boost allies to act and establish collective re-*



*sources of nations and similar organizations in solving common problems”.*

The subchapter *Diplomacy and the State* is approached on three different topics: Competitive Diplomacy; The Instruments of Economic Diplomacy; State Intelligence.

At the competitive level, it is mentioned that *“the American diplomats represent the political capacity to deploy, promote and protect the American interests abroad. Diplomacy catalyzes the political, economic and social interests that achieve the sustainable alignment of America and builds positive relationships with the partners. At the same time, it encourages dialogue and the areas for cooperation with competitors. On the other hand, it reduces the risk of communication when considered expensive and inappropriate”.* In this situation, it is estimated that *“the authorities of the respective countries want to replace the United States where they have withdrawn diplomats and closed embassies”.*

In the American understanding, *The Instruments of Economic Diplomacy* maintain the central role of America in international financial forums, increase security and prosperity by expanding the community of free market economies, defend against the threats of economies led by the state and protect the US and the international economy from the abuses exerted by illegal players.

According to the concept of the new Strategy *“the US creates wealth for US citizens and for its partners and allies. Thus, prosperous states become stronger security partners that can share the burden of confronting a common threat”.* Emphasis is laid on organizing mutual fairs and commercial exchanges, investments and exchanges of know-how, on account that they strengthen American alliances and partnerships. *“They are necessary in order to succeed in today's competitive geopolitical environment”.* The promotion of trade and export, the use of specific assistance to foreigners and the modernization of the funding instruments for development can promote stability, prosperity and political reform, building new partnerships based on the principle of reciprocity. *“Economic instruments,*

*including sanctions, money laundering, the fight against corruption and enforcement actions can be important parts of a broader strategy of deterrence, coercion, and coercion of the opponents”.* It is concluded that: *!We will work just the same with our partners in order to build a support of the economic diplomacy instruments against common threats. The multilateral economic pressure is often more effective because it limits the ability of the concerned countries to circumvent the measures and submit unified solutions”.*

Considering those mentioned here, we can ask the following question: *could the relationship that was mentioned above mean a unilateral US involvement, exclusively on its own interests, under the umbrella of rhetorical isolation?* The answer is to be found in the real purpose of the development of this *National Security Strategy of the United States*. The answer can be only one: Yes, it could. Why? Maybe because President Trump thinks about a decisive action in relation to North Korea and he wants such an initiative to bear the personal touch of a new legal basis of which he has full responsibility.

In my opinion, Mr. Trump's NSS has, in terms of concepts, an unnecessary tint of electoral confrontation, since it has already won the Oval Office at the White House. Without any speculative interpretations or bad faith, such a strategy could be included in the arsenal of public criticism against the Obama Administration, criticism that still happens as often as possible. Therefore, in the confrontation at all costs, the Strategy may lose its value as a programmatic official government document. The President cannot be in this way more credible in promoting his vital objectives to the prosperity of the American people. The American people live in the present and in the future. And, the Obama Administration has turned into history in just one year.

Therefore, like it or not, the realities are very clear. As indicated in the accounts of a large part of the American press and in other Western countries, in this first year of his term, Donald Trump has been argued in the US, despised in Europe, subtly blackmailed by Putin in a suspi-

cious scenario about the alleged Russian interference into the presidential electoral process, which has still remained unclear for the US state authorities. At the same time, Donald Trump engaged into a war of bellicose statements with the leader of North Korea, which has got to the limit of a nuclear military conflict. In a New Year message in 2018, Kim Jong-un has warned the international community, especially the US, that "the nuclear button" is on his desk. According to France Presse, the US President immediately ridiculed his North Korean counterpart, saying that he has a nuclear button "bigger and stronger" than Kim Jong-un's. There are other previous examples of this kind of public dialogue of Mr. Donald Trump, but they are not to be presented here. Personally, I think that engaging in such an exchange of words, be it only political, with such a strange character is beneath the dignity of the American presidential office. The attitude towards this character must be exclusively pragmatic, based on principles and not on public scandal.

Such a general unfavorable framework to the image of Donald Trump has been built every day especially by all those who have constantly kept him under scrutiny, though he himself offered great help. They have made a public review of his activity at the White House and presented it publicly every month, including various scandals at the White House. For example, at the beginning of 2018, AFP reported that Donald Trump publicly accused his former adviser Steve Bannon that he "lost his mind". The advisor predicted the moment and shortly before the presentation of his book said that the US President's son, Donald Trump Jr., committed "treason" by meeting a Russian lawyer who offered information discrediting Hillary Clinton. Thus, from the point of view of the broad and diverse range of accusations made in the first year in office of Donald Trump, his first term is generally considered to be unfavorable for the US, both internally and externally.

However, as characterized by the author of the book mentioned above, being "frank and with the constant attitude of a winner" Donald Trump expresses in the new National Security Strategy

of the United States his gratitude for the work carried out in his first term and he is even very optimistic about the future. He said: "During my first term, you witnessed my US foreign policy in action. We prioritized the interests of our citizens and protected our rights as a sovereign nation. America leads again on the world stage. We are not afraid of the challenges ahead. We deal with them face to face and we pursue opportunities to promote the security and prosperity of all Americans. The United States is facing an extraordinarily dangerous world, marked by a wide range of threats that have intensified in the recent years".

In fact, in the development of the content of the NSS, we find explicit details in the introductory chapters, which can be considered intentions for concrete action: "An America that is safe is also prosperous and free within its borders, it is an America with strength, confidence and the will to lead abroad. It is an America that can maintain peace, support freedom and create sustainable advantages for the American citizens. Putting America first is the duty of our government and the fundamentals needed for the US to lead the world".

With his characteristic sincerity and the typical rhetoric when facing his political enemies, President Trump starts in the text with his handwritten signature from the consideration that: "the Americans have lost confidence in our government, faith in our future and trust in our values". And, in order to justify this statement he used a brief presentation of a disastrous situation in which the US had been at the beginning of his term at the White House. With his well-known ability, he even presents serious vulnerabilities of the state that could be accepted only on the electoral agenda and just as political statements, but not in a fundamental and systematic official document as important as the **National Security Strategy of the United States**. Any Presidential Administration in the world releases to the public only official documents that remain as written pages in the history of a state, in our case, the US. At the same time, it is a fact that the democratic world believes in the US, so this is why it should remain a landmark, even if it has been unacceptably divided from the first day in

office of the new President. This has happened because much of the electorate was not convinced and was even totally disappointed with the performance of the *candidate Donald Trump*. Then, the mistrust and opposition to *President Trump* were amplified due to the almost endless instability - for various reasons - of the new team of the Administration, the unpredictability of political, social, economic and even military management often unexpected at the White House and the atypical personal image induced in the world, even among the traditional partners of the US. All this occurred while the international geopolitics has become very fluid in the fierce battle to secure a comfortable place in the hierarchy of future world powers. Perhaps Mr. Trump publicly denies everything made good by his predecessors due to the belief that he could convince the American people and the traditional partners of a possible providential historical role that he takes in demonstration at any cost and on any occasion.

Here are a few excerpts on his perception about the US situation existing at his arrival at the White House, presented in the NSS: *"When I came to office, dishonest regimes were developing nuclear weapons and missiles to threaten the entire planet. The radical Islamic terrorist groups were flourishing. The terrorists had taken control of a vast territory in the Middle East. Rival powers were aggressively undermining US interests worldwide. In our country there were easily penetrable borders and breaches in the immigration laws, creating a lot of vulnerabilities. Criminal cartels have brought drugs and dangers in our communities. Illicit trade practices have weakened our economy and we have exported jobs abroad. There was an unequal distribution of responsibility with our allies and the inadequate investments in our defense were invitations for danger addressed to our opponents"*.

On the other hand, President Trump seems however to be optimistic about the future of the US under his mandate. His NSS appreciates that there will be serious international security challenges and it states that: *"a new important and diversified plan will be developed to approach them"*. In this sense it is planned: *"a grouping of*

*the world against the dishonest regime in North Korea and in order to deal with the danger represented by the dictatorship in Iran, neglected by those who have decided to pursue a flawed nuclear deal. We have renewed friendships in the Middle East and have worked with regional leaders to support the elimination of terrorists and extremists, to cut their funding and discredit their evil ideology. We have crushed the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on the battlefields in Syria and Iraq and we will continue to pursue its members until they will be destroyed"*.

Indeed, in terms of achievements - briefly mentioned in the NSS - he managed to persuade some US allies on their obligation to *"contribute more to NATO common defense, strengthening even the strongest alliances"*. It is also important to note the insistence to continue *"to clarify that the United States will not tolerate unfair trade practices or economic aggression"*, probably considering the tense relations with the EU in this field. It is interesting to monitor the evolution and the outcome of the clarification process.

Therefore, importance is given to *"US border and territorial security, the consolidation of border and immigration control that must be at the center of concerns in national security, economic prosperity and the legal system"*.

At the end of this analysis, from the perspective of the US national security at a global level, we note that the American state must prepare itself for that type of competition that I have briefly detailed above. In this new context presented in the Strategy, it is stated that Russia, China and other state and non-state actors often recognize the United States, seeing the world in **"binary terms"** with states being either **"at peace"** or **"at war"**, when in fact **"there is an arena of continuous competition"**. Because we are talking about a security strategy, we could say that the collocation has a seemingly peaceful meaning, introduced, with or without a particular intention, into the military terminology and war games. But perhaps the authors introduced it into the current US security strategy with the intention of getting to a new terminology, specific to the **hybrid war**. Clearly, such an approach



makes it likely to have, in a not too distant future, a ***different formulation of the national security strategy*** of the developed countries in terms of economy, finance and military. It is known that they have large and multiple security vulnerabilities that makes them subject to threats ***other than the conventional military or nuclear ones***. We called them asymmetric, cyber, information, psychotropic, biotechnology and pandemics threats and so on. In my opinion, they can be included in one typology - ***hybrid threats***, because life has shown that they can manifest in the most unexpected combinations, with authors that are at best difficult to identify in ***"another space"*** and that require ***"another action"***. It represents ***"another kind of confrontation"*** in ***"an arena of continuous competition"*** that covers all areas of society and which is nothing but a ***"traditional arena of war"***. I consider that the current National Security Strategy of the USA - the most powerful economic and military state in the world - uses the term ***"arena of continuous competition"*** and terms like ***"war"*** and ***"peace"*** no longer correspond to the current reality and the probable manifestation of the power struggle in the long term. This is how we could understand these statements made in the NSS: ***"We will increase the competitive game to face all challenges, to protect the American interests and promote our values. Our diplomatic services, the intelligence, military and economic agencies have not kept pace with the changes in the nature of competition. The US military must be ready to operate in a full spectrum of confluence, in several areas simultaneously. To meet these challenges, we must also update our political and economic instruments to operate in these environments"***.

The comments I made at the end of this analysis are not mere assumptions. They are also the result of "reading between the lines" of the US National Security Strategy. And, most likely, it has been issued by mainly military experts coordinated by President Donald Trump, who is now unpredictable at the White House, but a winner in the future, just as he has always been in business.

## The dreams of the European Union defense were dispeled



**BrigGen (ret) Dieter FARWICK,  
publicist**

The dreams of the European Union defense were dispeled even quicker than anticipated and even earlier than we feared. In one of his comments, the author underlined that an European Union defense without the United States, Canada, Denmark, Great Britain and Portugal is completely unrealistic (see [www.conservo.wordpress.com](http://www.conservo.wordpress.com) of 20 November 2017) and it has nothing to do with the reality of the European security policy. The author predicted as well the burial of all unsuccessful defense initiatives.

In support of such initiative, the German minister of Defense stressed that the impossibility to rely on the United States' activating Art. 5 of the NATO Treaty would be the main reason for Europe to independently assume this responsibility. Civilian scientists and experts in security policies the author discussed with expressed serious doubts on such an assesment. The USA committment as such to NATO would not be enough at all for proceeding to undertake European independent defense efforts separated from NATO. The European states may attract the USA closer to NATO if the USA'a contribution to NATO decreases by 20% yearly and the Europeans increase their own defense budgets.

For the specialists, the American president and the security political climate he created clearly showed that the USA will fulfill the commitments provided in the Art. 5 of the NATO Treaty, namely defending the territories of NATO alliance. This guarantee does not apply in case of possible independent political and military operations of the European or Asian partners to the alliance. It is obvious that the USA are not ready any longer to act as "global gendarme" in case the vital American interests are not affected. An understandable American posi-

tion even if for Europe it should trigger an alarm signal. Nevertheless, the USA is ready to put its strategic assets alongside the European ones.

Europe get used since decades to sit comfortably under the American protecting umbrella. All American demands that the Europeans increase their defense expenditures were not heard. The fact that the Americans bore 72% of NATO's defense expenditure was accepted as if it came from God. The atmosphere changed dramatically. Europe is no longer a hot point for the USA; the hot point has been, for years, Asia-Pacific where two-thirds of the world's population live, namely two-thirds of global consumers. China exerted huge efforts for gaining its top position and for becoming a serious competitor in that region.



### What does this evolution means for the European defense policy?

The Munich Security Conference commissioned a study on the topic. We are grateful to "Der Spiegel" magazine no. 48/2017 for its article "The Fog of War" through which an important part of the study was brought to the conscience of the public opinion. "Der Spiegel" magazine no. 47/2017 let itself contaminated by the euphoria of certain Europeans and praised the initiative in the leading article "The Sleeping Beauty" world military as being a road opener. The one who marched on the front's first line was the German minister of Defense, Mrs Ursula von der Leyen, who used this initiative as almost an application for a job in the next legislature for the position of minister of Defence. With her proverbial modesty, she wanted to clarify for everybody that this major project of the European Union can be put together in Germany only by herself. Why not, even from a position in the European Union?

The study commissioned by the Munich Security Conference reached a devastating conclusion with regard to the European military assets which are an expression of the European fighting and defense capacity. Mourir pour Tal-

lin? There is no vote majority or interest for such a thing in Germany.

Some excerpts from the study published by Der Spiegel 48/2017- one week after the leading article "The Sleeping Beauty":

- ◆ "The European armed forces are exhausted, inefficient and unable to manage the new crises threatening the continent" ...

- ◆ "The fact that the majority of the European armies are in an inferior position as compared to Germany's armed forces is no consolation" ...

- ◆ "Overstretched, obsolete and unavailable... The significant reduction and to the largest extent possible of the defense budgets speeded up the decline. The armed forces fight with diminished and obsolete equipment and with barely trained personnel" ...

- ◆ "The outcome is an as depressing as possible image" ...

- ◆ "We are almost 500 million people and our defense and the diplomatic initiatives that are decisive for the European security depend to a large extent on 330 million Americans", the Chairman of the Munich Security Conference Wolfgang Ischinger declared, and added: "We cannot go on this way." (*There is no natural law stating that 500 million Europeans, with strong economies, "be afraid" of Russia with its maximum 140 million inhabitants, with a weak econo-*

my and a negative demographic rate. On a medium and long run, China, as world power, will become ever more embarrassing for Europe – author's note).

♦ "Europe looks like being surrounded by a 'fire ring', the former Swedish prime minister Carl Bildt said".

♦ "The challenges for Europe are coming at an inconvenient time. Starting with 1995, the military capacities of the continent have been diminishing massively and many of the weapons systems are outdated. The budgetary cuts accompanied by multiple operations on foreign theaters weakened the European strength"...

♦ "Until now, NATO demanded that at least 20% of the defense expenditures be directed to (military) investments. The authors of the Munich report consider this contribution should increase to 30%"... (*In Germany, this contribution is since many years under 20% – author's note*).

♦ "The report asserts that an unique opportunity for laying the foundation of a better European security policy may exist. He who lets this chance pass by without capitalizing on it and continues to proceed as we did in the past could perpetuate the present disastrous situation of the European defense for the coming decades".

Political officials and military leaders who might have foreseen such disastrous developments yet did nothing to prevent them are to be blamed for the present situation. There have always been warning signals that vanished in the drawer of the Cold War.



### Which way now?

♦ This article should not be discussed or dismantled in organisations or working groups and should be taken instead as a base.

♦ We have finally to say goodbye to a predominantly independent European defense. Who may seriously imagine building, in a foreseeable time, an independent and enjoying a plausible deterrence force European Union defense when all it has at its disposal for creating such a defense is made up of European armies in distress? Not a single euro must be invested in such dreams. The European states must concentrate their increased defense efforts **within** NATO. "NATO first" must become again the absolute motto.

♦ Having Denmark, Great Britain, Canada and Portugal as NATO partners, it is possible that the previous quality be reached again if the other European states will finally deliver on their obligations.

♦ The European NATO members can and must cover intermediate compulsory steps: how and when the 2% of GDP will be assigned and, from it, the 20% for investments?

♦ NATO and NATO member states should not panic and burden their future with quick and insufficiently assessed decisions.

♦ The decisive question which must find an answer is: what missions must NATO armed forces accomplish in the next 20-30 years? A vision fascinating the peoples of the member states must be devised.

♦ What influence the Artificial Intelligence, Cyber warfare, Information warfare, the robots, the drones, etc. have on the way of waging a war that will be modern by then?

♦ In all member states, the engagement and defense capabilities must be consolidated again and this is an essential condition for the moral and fighting power of the military. "To want to fight and to be able to fight for not needing to fight" should become again the basic motto.



◆ Priority in all endeavours must be granted to Poland and to the Baltic States which are the most exposed geopolitically. The "catch cable" must become thicker and stronger.

◆ In NATO headquarters and in the member countries general staff generals and officers who still have personal experiences in joint warfare and in combined arms operations must be appointed to command positions. The necessary relocation of efforts for territorial defense under the alliance circumstances as well as the country's defense underline a change of paradigm: from assisting and protecting to fighting, killing and winning.

◆ This necessary adjustment as well as an appropriate equipping and arming should be subject to firing test repeatedly in military drills on the ground in order to identify and prevent the weak points.

◆ NATO drills such as "Wintex" and "Cimex" must be resumed for exercising the cooperation between the political/administrative branch and the army in all fields.

◆ Territorial defense under the alliance circumstances need more trained active personnel and trained reservists. Only the armed forces made up in a balanced way of professional military and reservists as well as of trained personnel of the military service will succeed.

Resuming the compulsory military service for young, women and men would bring the German armed forces a new generation of qualified personnel and could create the chance of covering the shortcomings of the medical services which are on the rise.

It would give the young people a chance of serving the state and the society to which they should be thankful for so many things.



## The European Union defense - a nightmare



**BrigGen (ret) Dieter FARWICK,  
publicist**

In his book "Wunschdenken" (Wishful Thinking), Thilo Sarrazin specified that "self-overrating" and "wishful thinking" are the main causes for wrong political decisions as it is the case within a team, too.

In the "European Union defense PESCO" (Permanent Structured Cooperation), the proudly announced "cooperation" does not mean in fact "common fighting strength" or "common credible prevention based on a visible common defense strength". It means only "collaboration", an unclear term which has no unique semantically clear definition or a clear outcome.

Mrs von der Leyen ascertained: Since you cannot rely with enough certitude on the fact that the United States under Donald Trump leadership will come to assist the Europeans with military troops when needed, the Europeans must determine their own defense for securing Europe's independent defense.

### Some facts

◆ The United States covers since decades 72% of NATO's defense budget. The 27 European states cover the difference of 28%.

◆ During all NATO conferences that took place so far, the United States demanded the Europeans to increase their defense contribution. All these demands were completely ignored.

◆ In the 1990s, France pushed the lack of confidence in the United States. It requested a separation of NATO headquarters in two main separate headquarters. The main European headquarters was to take over, without the United States' help, the activation of the "crisis management actions", while the United States was to take over the unpleasant task (and, at the time, a



less probable and unpopular one, but costly) of territorial and structural defense.

NATO officials found a solution. They described the headquarters as “separable, but not separated”. In other words, NATO should have constituted from its headquarters for “foreign actions” a special one called “Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters”. The responsible headquarters was to set up the core group for this action force – with material and personnel assistance from other NATO headquarters and including from states participating to the program “Partnership for Peace”. The author was then under the command of the respectable German General Helge Hansen, who was mainly responsible for the yearly drills where up to fifty general staff officers and generals participated (from non-NATO states) in command positions at the headquarters. After several drills of such type, the concept was tested and proved with a mobile armed force with up to 400 PC.

# In a context of mistrust (in the ascendancy in the case of the French) towards the United States, NATO Council set up in 1996 the so-called “Berlin plus Agreement” whereby the United States pledged to put at the Europeans’ disposal “strategic assets”, in other words strategic communications, strategic clearance and strategic transportation in case the latter did not want or cannot participate to the planned action.

# Donald Trump portrayed NATO in his electoral campaign as “obsolete”. In the meantime, he changed his position on the subject. Moreover, in what concern Russia, he considers now NATO as extremely important. He is surrounded by competent and NATO advocates political advisors.

# In 2014, NATO states unanimously decided to exert efforts so that by 2024 their defense budgets increase to 2% of the national GDP. Nevertheless, no action was taken during the last three years.

Presently, three states only reached this level: Estonia, 2.2%, Greece, afraid of the Turks, 2.4% and the United States, 3.8%.

Germany’s defense budget is 1.2% of the GDP. There is no sign that this rich country will exert any effort to rectify this shameful level.

Now, even the SDP (Social Democratic Party) ministers, who agreed on that with the Foreign Affairs minister Steinmeier, consider that the two percent would be, in fact, “worship of numbers” or a “ring on the defense spiral”. Self-style defense experts consider the army could not distribute these additional amounts.

◆ The military officer in the Bundestag, a SPD parliamentary member, drew a disheartening conclusion concerning the army and its troops in his 2016 report: they are, in personnel and material terms completely down.

◆ “Der Spiegel 45/2017” magazine quotes from a confidential NATO report and offers a summary: NATO is in a limited way only “ready for defense”.

◆ The author is aware of no offer of the Europeans during the last 50 years to the the United States in which they increase their defense budgets for diminishing the United States’ burden and for securing their just distribution.

◆ NATO as an alliance did not participate to the international operations in Libya. It was a “coalition of the willing” to which Germany did not participate actively.

France and Great Britain “convinced” president Obama, who was very reluctant, to take part at the operation. He finally agreed on condition the United States was not placed in the “driver’s seat”.

The beginning of the operation went smoothly. After 14 days, France and Great Britain, two strong military states, announced they already exhausted their “precision” ammunition in skirmishes with a weak ennemy.

### **What should the military capacity of the 23 state be in 20-30 years?**

The available information is not satisfactory enough for answering this question.

Before planning the buiding of a construction,

we must know for what it is designed and what the cost will be.

It is advisable that the 23 states find clear answers to the following questions:

- ◆ What do the states want to reach in the defense field? What is the level of ambition?

- ◆ What are the targets of political and military architecture for the 23? Constant headquarters processing and implementing political and military plans with regional headquarters and one main headquarters?

- ◆ Are the 23 in a position of filling the positions of these headquarters with competent generals/admirals and general staff officers? Is employing career military in these headquarters attractive?

- ◆ What navy forces will be available in North Atlantic without the United States, Portugal, and Great Britain?

- ◆ How many drills and operations are planned in each of the 23 countries as far as personnel and material are concerned?

- ◆ What troops will be firmly planned for drills and operations? Is it about officers and troops foreseen so far for NATO drills and operations? Who has priority? The 23 or NATO?

- ◆ What strategic capabilities should exist for communications, reconnaissance and transport?

- ◆ Are there enough assessment capabilities?

- ◆ What information would the secret services be allowed to distribute from those classified so far as "NATO secret"?

- ◆ Are the 23 aware that that in what NATO is concerned the territorial and alliance defense becomes important again and that much efforts must be exerted in order to provide a credible deterrence against possible aggressors?

- ◆ When should the political and military structure be "ready for action"? In 10 years time?

- ◆ Last but not least: who should pay for the construction and the maintenance of the necessary NATO facilities during several years? A re-

flexion point: NATO's **present** infrastructure costs yearly around 30 bil. euro. So far, the 28 NATO member states are paying only 28% of the expenses. Yet, they agreed to increase their defense budgets to 2% of the GDP.

- ◆ Are the 23 countries willing and able to bring to the billions allotted to the NATO budgets additional funding at the disposal of the European Union defense without reducing or ceasing payments to NATO?

- ◆ What security policy direction will follow a future German government?

The results of the opinion polls so far do not leave room for optimism.

Before one single euro being invested, a detailed feasibility study must answer these questions.

### **Projections concerning the future of the European Union defense**

The author has had the chance of following many European initiatives during his 39 years of professional career, out of which four and a half years as chief of operations at the NATO headquarters for Central Europe (at the time in Brunssum, Holland) and during all that time until now he has remained a critical observer. These initiatives had the same fate. All of them passed away and were buried without too much noise.

A defense union without the number 1 world military power, the United States, without Great Britain, with its global experience, and without Portugal, with its naval experience in North Atlantic has no chance of surviving.

With one difference compared to the previous initiatives:

- ◆ When the United States under Donald Trump's leadership will have the impression Europe does not need it any longer or that it is not welcome any longer, it could accept the invitation to disengagement in Europe and could dedicate with much more effort to the Asia-Pacific space that became more important for it than



fense strength. Increased budgets could lead to diminishing the US' burden *in and for* Europe.

Such a commitment could turn again the USA under Donald Trump leadership into an alliance's reliable partner. The main reason for NATO's central and South-East Partners to join NATO was the important nuclear guarantee offered by the USA.

A final remark:

Europe.

Nevertheless: there is no Plan B for Europe's safety if the European Union defense fails without Portugal, Great Britain – still a NATO member – and the United States.

The dream of the 23 states that the defense Union would be ready and would have the capability of supporting serious additional financial burdens for being independent of the United States will end in disaster. To Putin's and his heirs' joy. A competition between NATO and the European Union defense on limited budgets and personal resources seems unavoidable.

The separation contradicts the intelligent remark of Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State of the time, who asked for three "no" from NATO and the EU: "no" to discrimination, "no" to duplication and "no" to uncoupling.

### The alternative

The European states should prove their credibility and fiability towards the USA by establishing the contractual steps making possible to come closer to the 2% level for improving visibly and clearly the de-

◆ If the dreams of the European Union defense ever come true, Donald Trump will no longer be in the official position he is in now for four or eight years, yet the USA will further be the world's number one military power, something nobody expects from Europe.

◆ Germany and Europe need a strong partner against superpower China which will dominate on a medium and long run due to its economic, financial and military power and on which Europe is more and more dependent economically. The "One road, one belt" strategy has global geostrategic ambitions up to Europe.





## Military Technology and Equipments, New Weapon Devices

### HAROP Drones

#### (IAI - Israel Aerospace Industries)

Very few military-related fields are advancing as quickly as unmanned systems - Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) typically referred in mass media as "drones". Dedicated attack forms have also emerged under the Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) classifica-

tion and now Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) has showcased a disposable attack UCAV with inherent surveillance features as part of its general design - the IAI "Harop" ("Harpy").

The **IAI Harop** (or **IAI Harpy 2**) is a loitering munition and an anti-radiation drone that can autonomously home in on radio emissions. Rather than holding a separate high-explosive warhead, the drone itself is the main munition. This SEAD-optimised loitering munition is designed to loiter the battlefield and attack targets by self-destructing into them. The drone can either operate fully autonomously, using its anti-radar homing system, or it can take a Human-in-the-loop mode. If a target is not engaged, the drone will return and land itself back at base.

It has been designed to minimize its radar-signature through stealth (low-observability). This anti-radiation drone is designed to target enemy air-defense systems in a first line of attack, as the small drone (with its small Radar Cross Section) can evade SAMs and radar detection systems which are designed to target much larger aircraft or to intercept fixed-trajectory missiles.

The Harop is a part-UAV, part-missile development in which the entire aircraft becomes an attack weapon upon spotting a target of opportunity. It is, in essence, a hunting missile driven by a ground-based pilot representative. In this fashion, the Harop is a complete "hunter-killer" UCAV system that can loiter in a given area, sur-



vey enemy movements, and hunt for critical targets.

The Harop is designed with an abort feature that will quickly allow the aircraft to break its engagement diving envelope if need be and return to its scouting role in short order. It is also not restricted to over-land attacks of stationary targets for it can be equally unleashed on moving, ocean-going targets over-water.

Externally, the Harop appears as a sort of science fiction fighter aircraft. Its bulbous nose assembly houses the warhead as well as the optics set under the chin. Canard foreplanes are also featured along the nose section. The fuselage is blended into the wing structure with swept leading edges seen on the primary wing sections. Wing extensions are fitted outboard of the twin vertical tail fins and these appear to sport a near-forward-swept look. A single, conventional engine is seated at the extreme rear-center of the design driving a two-bladed engine in a "pusher" configuration. The aircraft is launched from a prepared container and extends its outboard wing sections upon launch.

Characteristics include a length of 8 feet, 2 inches and wingspan of 9 feet, 10 inches. Range is said to be in the 1,000 kilometer range or up to six hours of flight time, providing a good reach or loitering window for the operator.

To date, the Harop has been exported to a handful of Asian countries though a Ukrainian sale was abandoned due to political pressure from Russia during its war with its neighbor and former Soviet client state.

AI developed a smaller version of the Harop for smaller applications, and unveiled it in 2015. The smaller Harop was one-fifth the size, had a lighter 3-4 kg (6.6-8.8 lb) warhead, was cheaper and had a shorter endurance of 2-3 hours to be used tactically against time-critical targets or ones that hide and re-appear.

*Presented by Cornel VAIDA*

# French tactical drones



Drones have been increasing in number and price, as they become more relevant in securing a state or a group of people, be them civilians or from the military, by air surveillance. To carry out their mission, drones must transmit the best -quality images, to have safe and fast telecom connections, to be resistant and sturdy, to be able to operate in any terrain, day and night.

Starting 2012, the French Ministry of Defense and DELAIR company have started to develop solutions for the air surveillance systems able to ensure people recognition up to 1500 meters, day and night. They can be satellite activated, can detect objects or targets on the move on EU or IR video, they can also be fitted with laser illumination devices. These systems have been used in the theaters of operations in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

UX5 weighs 2.500 kg, has 50 minute autonomous flight endurance, and maximum flying range of 60 km.

UX5 HP weighs 2.900 kg, has 35 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 60 km.

UX5 AG weighs 2.500 kg, 45 minute autonomous flight endurance, maximum flying range of 60 km,

DT18 HD weighs 2 kg, 120 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 100 km.

DT18 PPK weighs 2 kg, 105 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 100 km.

DT18 AG weighs 2 kg, 120 minute autonomous flight endurance and can perform surveillance covering 1,150 hectares.

DT26 LIDAR weighs 18 kg, 80 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 30 km.

DT26 X weighs 15 kg, has 135 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 30 km.

DT26 M weighs 15 kg, has 135 minute autonomous flight endurance and maximum flying range of 50 km.

DT26 M is specially used in military operations, has a 3.30 m wing and is 1.60 m long. It is made of glass fibre, carbon, kevlar 9 and EPP (Expanded Polypropylene). The EPP foam is very light, easy to shape for air vehicles, as the wings can be made of a sole chunk and so the photography or video cameras, as well as the flight stabiliser and the autopilot, they can all be incorporated in full safety.



The cruise speed is between 31 and 57 km/h, it is silent (not detectable at night time) has no radar print and can be launched in 8 minutes on any type of terrain.

**Presented by Cornel VAIDA**

## Leading Articles, Studies and New Analyses

## Review of the launching of the "CAROUSEL" Fraud – 07.12.2017

Author: Ovidiu Ioan ȘANTA, PhD

The **editorial product** the "CAROUSEL" Fraud, with its two components "Financier of terrorism" and the Invisible "Terrorist" of the national critical infrastructure, by **Ovidiu Ioan ȘANTA, PhD**, is a valuable specialty scientific work that completes this field and enriches the quest for the study of the phenomenon of tax evasion of large proportions, also highlighting the many adverse effects on the financial, economic, social, political and stability level at state, European and world level.

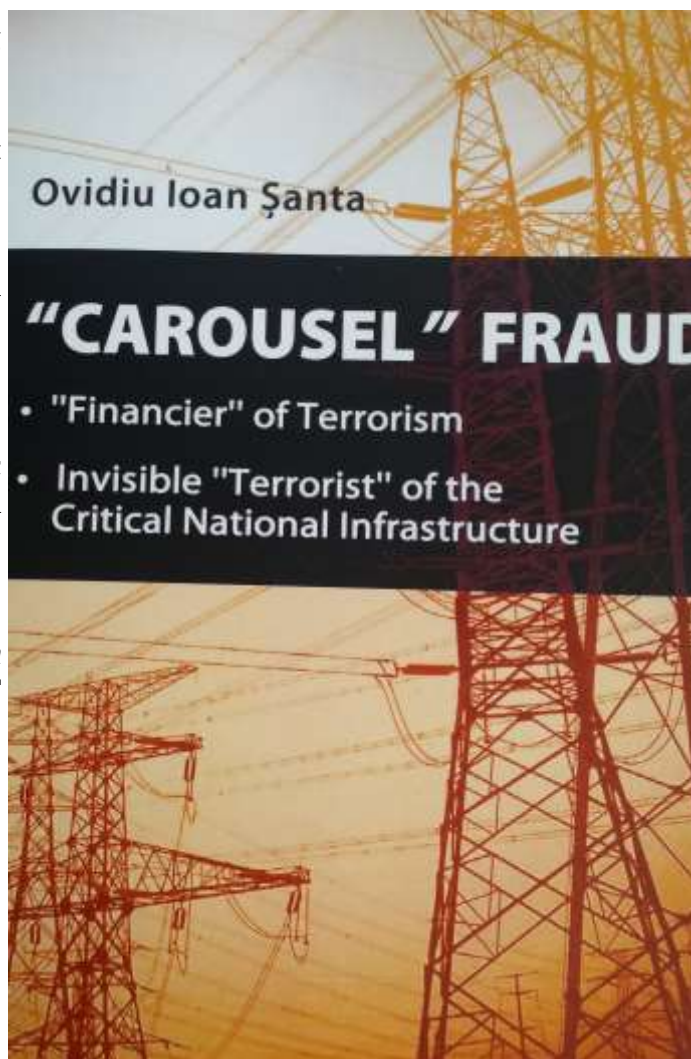
In the courageous and sensitive scientific approach (enhanced by the complexity of the phenomenon), the author starts from defining and describing Carousel frauds (tax evasion and money laundering), phenomena that substantially affect the state budget, as well as that of the European Union, underlining that at the base the financing of the most disastrous scourge of the contemporary world, **terrorism**, there are huge sums of unregistered money and difficult to reveal and fight.

Enhanced by the accession of Romania to the EU in 2007, the Missing Trader Intra-Community Fraud (MTIC) follows three basic steps: **buying without VAT, selling with VAT and disappearing before paying VAT to the general consolidated state budget**. The aim pursued by persons involved in such frauds can be divided into two main categories: **VAT evasion in the country of destination** ("financing" VAT collected from other economic transactions) and **obtaining unlawful VAT reimbursements**. Both categories of fraud have as a common element the use of "shell" and "buffer" companies to hinder and prevent the detection of the "CAROUSEL" fraud.

Referring to the TAX EVASION-TERRORISM pair (a potential modern-day bomb), the author presents numerous cases related to **orga-**

**nized crime**, such as illicit trafficking in narcotics, weapons, ammunition, explosives and radioactive materials, trafficking in human beings and works art, fraudulent bankruptcy crimes, **and last but not least, the substantial income from economic and financial macro-crime**, starting with banking crime and ending with the huge profits generated by the CAROUSEL fraud. Besides the concrete ways of committing these extremely harmful and dangerous deeds, given their results, the author brings to the reader both the perpetrators, the entities involved in the prevention and fight against the phenomenon, as well as the specific legislative framework.

The strength of the work, a true *CASE STUDY*, is the **CAROUSEL Fraud: the invisible "terrorist"**





**of the national critical infrastructure.**

Analyzing the effects of the '**CAROUSEL**' Fraud on an important area of the national/European critical infrastructure, represented by Compania Națională de Transport a Energiei Electrice Transelectrica S.A., Mr. Ovidiu Ioan ȘANTA, PhD concludes the following: by not replacing and/or replacing with delay the **morally, and mostly technically outdated** equipment, because of the lack of financial resources "stolen" through this ingenious and complex mode of operation, **the electricity transport network, part of the national critical infrastructure, could be "rendered incapable of operation" producing, like a terrorist attack, next to material damage, the loss of human lives by interrupting the power supply of medical equipment that monitors patients in hospital operating rooms without their own power resources**, exemplifying the tragic event of May 10, 1977, when, for 4-5 hours, the national energy system did not function as a result of a series of exceptional events (starting from a short circuit to a 110 kV separator from the Tismana power station), resulting from inappropriate automation operations in the Porțile de Fier system, the primary and secondary electrical installation staff, and equipment failures, causing **loss of about \$ 8 billion** (4 times higher than those produced by the March 1977 earthquake), as well as the **loss of human lives**.

As one involved in the study of National Critical Infrastructures and from the Euro-Atlantic area, I can extrapolate and invite our distinguished friends to an imaginative exercise. **What consequences do you think would there be, due to the lack of an inadequate energy supply or the disruption/destruction of the critical information infrastructure of a large airport? But of a nuclear power plant? But of the banking system, etc., etc.?** And because it comes to the financial-banking system, I will ask the question and everyone can give an answer: Why is it not included among the officially designated fields of critical infrastructure??? The financial-banking infrastructure is not a critical one or do its holders and operators think of it as unimportant, although it is the operating system of

the worldwide economy? Whether we are talking about real money (currency) or talking about virtual money (bitcoin, etherium, litecoin, ripple etc.), the information infrastructure must be outstandingly protected.

The distinguished futurist Alwin TOFFLER said about 40 years ago that **power tools** include **strength, money** (or financial strength), and **information**. In a book I published 54 years ago, I added, based on my own observations, the **energy** tool. Back then, when I launched my book, some did not agree with my completion but, reading the work of Mr. Ovidiu Ioan ȘANTA, PhD, I am glad that he gives solid arguments to support the importance of energy as critical infrastructure of utmost importance.

Obviously, the "CAROUSEL Fraud" is a true course about an important phenomenon of tax evasion and fraud, useful both to *decision-makers*, **those involved in its prevention and combat**, and a **warning to those who commit such acts**. As the **reverse of the medal**, the work is also a **true alphabet for potential criminals**, adepts of the @CAROUSEL@method.

More than 2,500 years ago, the great Chinese philosopher, educator and thinker, Confucius, claimed the need to "**educate people**". I believe that such scientific papers also have the role of making them **more responsible**.

**For the efforts made, the perseverance, the courage to approach the topic, but especially for the result achieved through the publication of this guidebook, I sincerely congratulate my younger peer, Mr. Ovidiu Ioan ȘANTA, PhD, and those who guided and supported him in this scientific approach and wish him to enjoy a brilliant career.**

**Col(r). Prof. Eng. Marian RIZEA, PhD**

**Ecological University of Bucharest**

**Associate Professor of UPG Ploiesti**

**Member of the DIS-CRIFST – Romanian Academy**

## About Military Intelligence — Objectively, Without Embellishing

### The presentation of Victor Hvozd's book "Ukraine's Military Intelligence at the Turn of the Second Millennium"

*December 4, at the "Ukrinform" agency, was the presentation of President of the Independent Center for Geopolitical Studies "Borysfen Intel" Victor Hvozd's book "Ukraine's Military Intelligence at the Turn of the Second Millennium".*

The author **Victor Hvozd** presented his book "Ukraine's Military Intelligence at the Turn of the Second Millennium", which has just appeared in print, on the eve of the next anniversary of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, having invited to the event his colleagues and like-minded people, with whom he used to serve in important public posts. Among them were military intelligence officers, diplomats, high-ranking military and civil servants, Members of Parliament, media representatives, that is, those who not by hearsay know of the military intelligence's important role for the state, especially when Ukraine is in a tense armed struggle with the aggressor. It is clear that this in one way or another sounded in the speeches of the present at the event.

— I did not set myself the task to tell about some specific tasks that the military intelligence agents had to fulfill, or to disclose the true nature of some actions that had so-called social, especially negative resonance, — said the author of the book in his opening speech, — because I think that now we have to tell the society about the condi-

tions in which our Military Intelligence was created, about the people who understood its true task and worked hard on its creation, about the events that accompanied that process. It is equally important to inform the public that our Military Intelligence has its own interesting history, which Ukrainians were created, for example, a century ago, during the UPR or WUPR. That is, the Military Intelligence is an important state element or structure, the significance of which today, unfortunately, is understood not by all. Including at high state levels. And this is unacceptable.

The book you are holding in your hands is no memoirs, it is sooner a retrospective study of the processes of the creation, formation, coming into being, development and functioning of the Military Intelligence for the first 26 years of Ukraine's independence. It is an attempt to show the Military Intelligence's place and role in building a modern Ukrainian state against the background of the geopolitical challenges at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Victor Hvozd was supported by the retired Lieutenant-General **Oleksandr Skipalskyi**, who had an honorable and important mission togeth-





er with few like-minded people to create the Military Intelligence from the moment of Ukraine's declaration of its independence and to be it's the first chief.

— At that time, there were “patriots” that denied the necessity of our structure, — said Oleksandr Skipalskyi to those present, — believing that all information would be provided by the Russian GRU. But we, who had military experience, were well aware: we had to be prepared to Russia's encroaches on our freedom, as it would not easily agree to Ukraine's statehood. They therefore insisted on the creation of a strategic component of our Military Intelligence, on the training of our national professionals — intelligence officers. At this, we took into consideration the national question, did not give preference to representatives of this or that nation, emphasizing the loyalty of the servicemen to the young Ukrainian state, and, as life shows, that

approach was very correct.

**Yuriy Yekhanurov**, looking through the pages of the book, recalled how he, being the Head of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, would receive official reports from the Head of the Military Intelligence Victor Hvozd. Particularly important was the moment when a war began against Georgia and it was necessary for Ukraine to take precautionary measures in our southern regions, in particular, in the Crimea. According to the former Defense Minister, our intelligence officers then acted very well, confirming their professionalism.

Adding to his former colleague in the government speech, **Volodymyr Ohryzko** (Foreign Minister in 2007–2009) pointed out that the jobs of a diplomat and of an intelligence officer have common features, as they submit objective information to the state leadership for the state decision-making. It

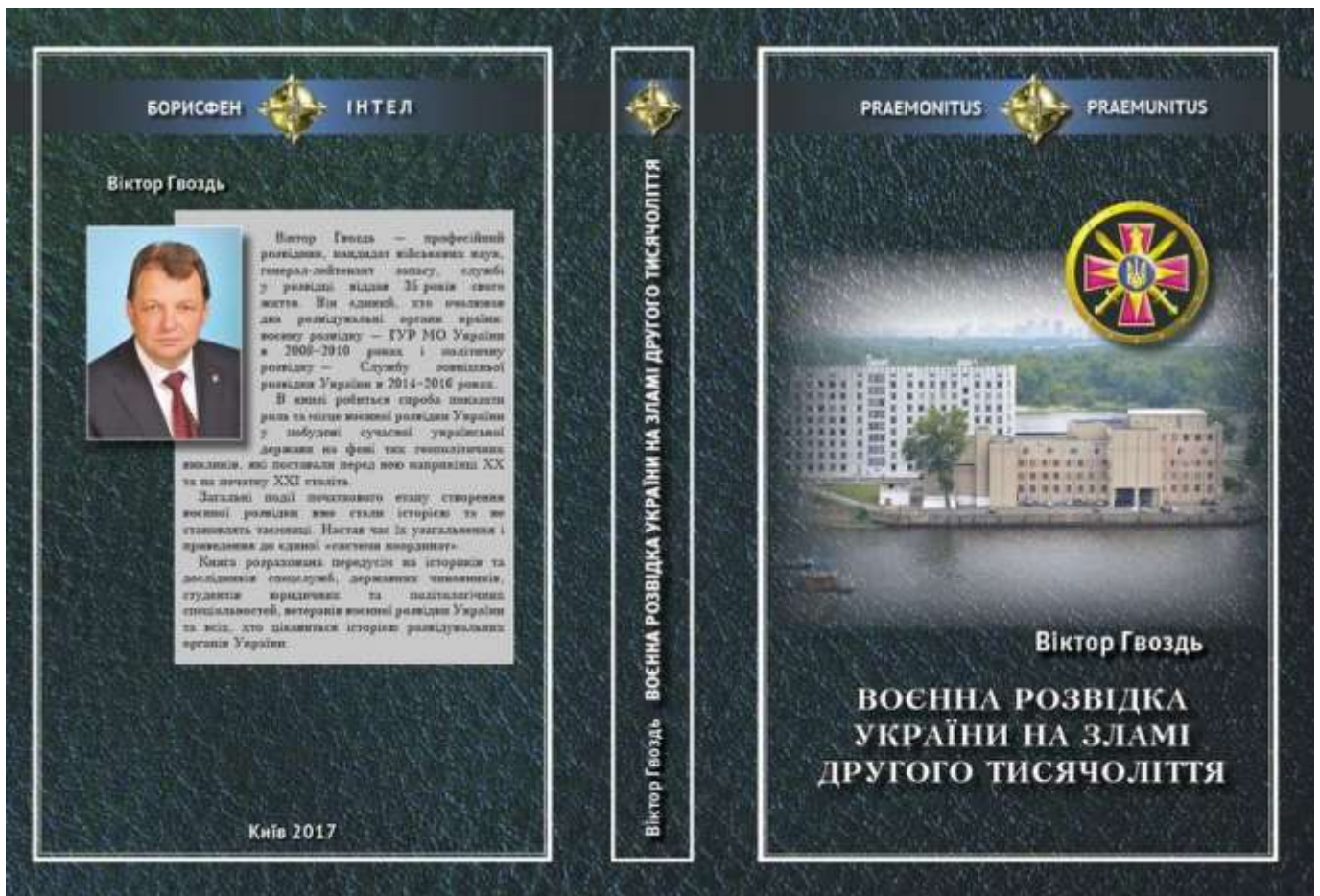




The present at the event the first Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Colonel-General (retired) **Anatoly Lopata**, veterans of the Military Intelligence Lieutenant-Generals (retired) **Vasyl Kushchov** and **Volodymyr Lehominov** also agreed with him. They are also directly related to the creation of the Military Intelligence, to the diligent professional training of its officers, as described by Victor Hvozd on many pages of his book. And it is worth mentioning that Volodymyr Lehominov, as Head of the Union of Veterans of the Intelligence of Ukraine, handed him the honor-

will be interesting to read about this particular aspect in the book. He also thanked the author of the book, which in this way reminds us of those of our true patriots who stood at the origins of the creation of our state.

ary award of this public organization and expressed the wish that this book be the first in a number of many which will tell about the military intelligence officers' true service for the benefit of our country.





**Corneliu PIVARIU** - Director and Editor-in-Chief of the *Geostrategic Pulse*  
President-General Director of INGEPO Consulting

Author of books on strategic intelligence, terrorism and the situation in Iraq, of other studies and articles on the strategic information and the current geopolitical developments. Training on regional security at Harvard University-Kennedy School of Government. Member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies—London.



**Dumitru CHICAN**

Ambassador, University Professor,  
Director for the Middle East at the *Geostrategic Pulse*

An entire active career in the Romanian diplomacy, with permanent missions in numerous Arab countries. Other special missions abroad, such as Envoy of the Romanian Chief of State. One of the Romanian best experts in the Arabic language, the Arab culture and world. Author of several works and translations in and from Arabic, published in Romania and abroad. One of his latest books appeared in the UAE and was declared the best editorial issue at the International Book Fair in Sharjah and the best book



**Dr. Octavian DUMITRESCU**

Director for the Black Sea Wider Area at the *Geostrategic Pulse*.



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