



GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

Bilingual-monthly publication of political analysis

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

The messianic doctrines of the XXI century and the positionings towards Europe

Early elections in Turkey: why was Erdogan in a hurry

Eastern Mediterranean and the new oil war

On the Iranian front of the global war

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Recommended Reading:

Strategy.

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Geostrategic Pulse Board

(in alphabetical order)



Adrian CONSTANTINESCU

PhD in international economy and Master in public international law

Scientific researcher and head of department within the World Economy Institute, permanent deputy representative and chief negotiator of Romania to GATT/OMC, various other positions in diplomacy up to that of Ambassador in the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Macedonia.



Andrei KORTUNOV

Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)

Graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) and postgraduate studies at the Institute for US and Canadian Studies, USSR Academy of Sciences. Holds a Ph.D. degree in History.

Was Deputy Director of the Institute for US and Canadian Studies. Founder and first president of the Moscow Public Science Foundation.

Taught Russian foreign policy at the University Of Miami (USA), and at the Lewis & Clark College in Portland (University of California).

Author of over 120 publications dedicated to the analysis of Soviet/Russian-American relations, global security, and the foreign and domestic policy of the USSR and Russia.



Anton COSTESCU

Orientalist and specialist on economic international relations

Former Minister Counsellor (economic affairs) covering for more than 30 years the Middle East and North Africa. An experienced connoisseur of the Arab world.



Dieter FARWICK

Senior Vice-President World Security Network Foundation

Brigadier General (ret), former advisor to Manfred Wornier, former Force Commander and Chief of Operations at NATO HQ and Director of German Federal Armed Forces Intelligence Office. He is a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London. He is author of six books on geopolitics and security, and of numerous other articles and assessments.



Emilian M. DOBRESCU

Professor

Born in 1954, he is since 25 years the Scientific Secretary of the Romanian Academy with the Department of Economy, Legislation and Sociology. He is specialized in European integration, general management, social economy and sociology of management.



Iulian FOTA

Former Advisor on National Security of the Romanian President. Formerly deputy of the Romanian Secretary of State on defense policy with the Ministry of Defense, head of defense office with Romania's mission at NATO and WEU at NATO's Headquarters in Brussels. In 2005 he was appointed Director of Romania's National Defense College. He has a SNSPA's doctor's degree in political sciences and graduated NATO's Defense College in Rome and the National College of Defense in Romania. He is a member of the European Center's Council for Political analysis (CEPA) and of other numerous international foundations and institutions.



Adrian SEVERIN

Born in March, 1954, he had a remarkable political ascent after 1989. He was minister of Foreign Affairs in 1996-1997, deputy in the Romanian Parliament in 1990 and later between 1992-2007. As of the 1st of January, 2007, he was elected member of the European Parliament. He was UN's special rapporteur for human rights in Belarus and PACE member between 1993-2007.

A talented politician who probably did not find the best juncture in order to advance further on a national and European level.



Anis. H. BAJREKTAREVIĆ

Prof. (FH) Dr. Anis Bajrektarevic, Acting Deputy Director of Studies EXPORT EU-ASEAN-NAFTA Professor and Chairperson International Law and Global Political Studies University of Applied Sciences IMC-Krems AUSTRIA

Former MFA official and career diplomat (early '90) of BH, is a member of IFIMES International Institute, author of dozen presentations, speeches, seminars, research colloquiums as well a numerous public events (round tables, study trips, etc).



Dan DUNGACIU

PhD, Director - Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy

Master in Political Sciences, PhD in Sociology, with numerous training courses abroad at prestigious institutions in Great Britain, USA, Austria, Greece, Italy. Researcher at the Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy. Former counselor of Moldavian President. Author and coauthor of numerous articles, studies and books.



Dorian VLĂDEANU

1st degree senior researcher within the Romanian Academy. Associate university professor.

Degree in economics and automation and computers, Doctor of Economics, author of over 100 works in macroeconomics. He developed the first strategy on public services at a national level. Author, co-author and coordinator of the first generation of legislation made by the Romanian Government for public services (2002-2004).



Hrant KOSTANYAN

Dr. Hrant Kostanyan is a Researcher at CEPS 'Europe in the World' unit, a Senior Key Expert at the College of Europe Natolin and an Adjunct Professor at Vesalius College. His research focuses on EU institutions and decision-making, primarily on the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the EU's relations with Eastern Neighbours and Russia



Liliana POPESCU

Liliana Popescu is Associate Professor at the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) Bucharest – presently Vice-Rector. She was adviser to the minister and Director of the Policy Planning Unit within the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998 – 1999). Liliana Popescu holds a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, Department of Government (1996).

Publications. Books: *The Construction of the European Union*. Bucharest: Ed.C.H.Beck, 2009. *Gender Politics*. Bucharest: Ed. Maiko, 2004. *Individual Freedom and Political Manipulation*. Bucharest: Politeia-SNSPA, 2003. Founder and Editor-in-Chief of the *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics* (since 2001).

Geostrategic Pulse Board

(in alphabetical order)



Maksym BUGRIY

Visiting Fellow at Jamestown Foundation in Washington D.C. He has a wide experience as a researcher and analyst with the most important think-tanks in Ukraine, the National Institute for Strategic Studies included.



Mihaiu MĂRGĂRIT

Political-military analyst, Project Director at EURISC Foundation- The European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication Management

Refined political-military analyst, author of several studies and articles published in the specialized and civilian media concerning the military, the strategic research, the national security strategy, the secret services and democracy, NATO Integration, etc.



Murray HUNTER

Associate Professor at University Malaysia Perlis

Entrepreneur, consultant, professor and researcher involved in the Asia - Pacific business for the last 30 years. He is an editorial member to nine international academic journals and member of the advisory council of "Diplomatic Insight", "4th Media" as well as of "Addelton Academic Publishers" in New York.



Sergiu MEDAR

Presidential Advisor for National Security at the Romanian Presidency (2006-2008), university professor, author of numerous studies and articles on issues of national security, of the book "Defense Diplomacy" and coordinator of "Military Intelligence within the Current Security Context" volume - 2006. He is now dealing with aspects of "Corporate Security Management"

Vladimir SOCOR

Senior fellow at The Jamestown Foundation and Eurasia Daily Monitor



Political analyst on East-European affairs, especially of the former Soviet republics and the CIS, specialized in political issues, ethnic conflicts and energy resources. Senior fellow at the Institute for Advanced Strategic and Political Studies in Washington, author of numerous articles and works published in Wall Street Journal, and other prestigious publications. He is frequently a guest lecturer at Harvard University - National Security program at Kennedy School of Government and a member of the Euro-Atlantic Security Study Group.



Marian RIZEA

Counter-intelligence officer on economics (Reserve Colonel), is Professor, Ph.D, Eng., at the Ecological University of Bucharest and Fellow Professor at the Oil and Gas University of Ploiesti, member of DIS-CRIFST of the Romanian Academy, expert in the security of classified intelligence, critical energy infrastructure and environment protection, risk analyses and geopolitical studies. He is the author/co-author of 17 books and more than 250 articles published in the national and international specialized magazines.



Mihnea CONSTANTINESCU

A fost Șef al Cabinetului Primului Ministru și Consilier de Stat în cinci guverne, Șef de Cabinet și Consilier al ministrului român de externe, Purtător de cuvânt al Guvernului României și Sub-Secretar de Stat pentru Informații Publice. Doctor în inginerie nucleară, bursă în management la Universitatea Tennessee și trei tipuri de cursuri la Kennedy School of Government de la Universitatea Harvard. Membru fondator al Institutului Aspen - România și al Asociației "Casa NATO". A îndeplinit diferite misiuni internaționale la Bagdad, OSCE și în Georgia.



Paul SĂNDULESCU

A businessman and investor in speculative financial instruments. Master in international trade, having an extensive experience in import-export activities, trade, tourism and financial speculation. Passionate for investment and geostrategic analysis.



Simion COSTEA

PhD, Senior Lecturer - Deputy Dean of "Petru Maior" State University in Târgu Mureș

Doctor in History, "Jean Monnet Professor" of European Integration acknowledged by the EU, awarded with the Romanian Academy Prize for his work as historian of European Integration. Chief Editor of "L'Europe unie" magazine (Paris), author and coauthor of numerous books, studies and articles.



Vasile DÂNCU

Born on November 25th, 1961 he is a Romanian politician, sociologist by profession. Professor at the Sociology Faculty of the University of Bucharest and at the Faculty of Sociology and the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences of Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. Founder of SINTEZA - a magazine of culture and strategic thinking. He is the chairman and owner of the Romanian Institute for Assessment and Strategy (IRES). Author of 10 books and numerous articles.



Vasile PUȘCĂȘ

PhD Professor at Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

He teaches contemporary history, international relations and negotiations. He worked as a diplomat in New York and Washington D.C., and then was a member of the Government and chief negotiator for the Romanian membership to the European Union, Chief of the European Affairs Department in the Romanian Government, member of the parliament. He is a consultant for several Romanian and foreign companies, and the author of numerous books. He is a board member in many international expert organizations, he teaches at prestigious institutions of superior education abroad.



Yuriy RADKOVETS

Vice President of Borysfen Intel Center for Doctoral Studies, Doctor of Military Sciences, associate professor, general-lieutenant (ret.).

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

EDITORIAL

The first USA – North Korea summit



Corneliu PIVARIU

On June 12th, 2018, president Donald Trump had the first meeting, that most analysts characterized as historical, with the North-Korean leader, Kim Jong Un. The brief joint statement (four points) signed by the two presidents the same day mentions, at the third point, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) commitment to work for "*total denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula*". It comes as a continuation of the Panmunjon Declaration signed on April 27th, 2018. At the same time, president Donald Trump declared, somehow unexpectedly, that he has discontinued the joint military drills with South Korea.

The document stresses the agreement of the two countries for a joint action in order to achieve a lasting peace in the Korean Peninsula, for achieving new relations between the USA and DPRK as well as for recovering PoW/MIA remains and the immediate repatriation of those already identified. The two sides committed to continue negotiations in order to fulfil these provisions.

The moment of this understanding was well chosen as probably there wasn't much time left for North Korea's successfully testing an intercontinental ballistic missile (which would have meant crossing the red line drawn by Washington) that could reach the USA's continental territory. So, the stage that could mean the USA wages a war certainly costly and with difficult to foresee consequences was not reached.

The two sides' agreement on denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula is a provision somehow unbalanced, certainly to the USA's benefit. North Korea does not have the means to verify such a promise while the USA can impose the observance of North Korea's promises through inspections. Moreover, the American nuclear arsenal is mostly placed on navies, submarines and bomber planes which are easily to gather together into the area although it is unlikely that the USA ever use a nuclear weapon against North Korea. The North Korean side is well aware of that and wants, in the most pragmatic way, a reduction of the American forces in South Korea and probably in Japan. A first gesture was made by president Donald Trump who declared: "*We will discontinue the joint military drills (with South Korea), that are very costly*".

As far as lifting the sanctions against North Korea is concerned, president Trump stressed that they will stay in place until the North Korean nuclear weapons are not any longer a threatening factor. The Secretary of State Mike Pompeo underlined that several times during the following days.

Back in the USA, the strong opposition to president Trump tried to minimize and find (fabricate) weak points of this historical summit. In fact, it outreaches by far the Korean Peninsula region and the issue of removing the nuclear weapons of North Korea's military arsenal. We consider president Trump made on that occasion a breakthrough in the Russian Federation's and China's relations with the North Korean regime (see also the declarations the Russian Foreign Affairs minister Serghei Lavrov made prior to the summit and who offered Moscow's good offices, the North Korean leader's letter addressed to Vladimir Putin after the summit with Donald Trump), a breakthrough which handled with strategic craftsmanship may lead to a Washington's even better positioning in Asia and globally.

So that, hereinafter, the diplomacy and the intelligence services will have even more important roles to play in future negotiations, in verifying the denuclearization stages and the developments of bi- and multilateral relations, stages that are just beginning once the Joint Statement was signed on June 12th, 2018.

The Current Geostrategic World-wide Outlook



The messianic doctrines of the XXI century and the positionings towards Europe

Cristian UNTEANU

The great power players of the world (together with their specialized brokers) are rapidly moving on another pathway where they do not stumble over all the paupers and where they do not have to play too many hours a day the part of the sovereign democracy.

Each of them wants to see, as soon as possible, how the power market of now that became randomised, full of newly arrived go-getters, who are unschooled and handicapped by the lack of a minimal training for the governance became a real danger precisely because it is completely unpredictable and, therefore, might generate conflicts which, accumulated, may lead to a catastrophe.

As a result of that and in real desperation and for avoiding the chaos, the leaders of the superpowers chosed to go back to the ideologies that consecrated the power of their countries in the most favourable momentum of their national histories, those on which the respective countries grew into empires, accumulated enormous wealth and secured for a long time clientele based relations allowing them to exert a kind of undeniable authority over large swathes of the world. Something not simply to do as the "death of ideologies" phenomenon was a profound one worldwide and constantly alienated the public opinion from the political class.

One is coming back spectacularly and firmly to those doctrines securing a total, almost discretionary, command of the power, all of them based on the overflowing, unique personality (for better or for worse, it does not matter) of the leader who, from the very beginning, presents himself to the national or international audience as a messianic sort of ruler. He is abso-

lutely convinced of that and the power of his personality and his inner capability of persuasion generates (or regenerates) the messianic feeling in the audience's mind and soul.

In the US's case, the "messianic will" manifested itself by the Monroe Doctrine, the only one which explicitly expressed itself based on the



principle called at the time "America to Americans" which was reformulated by Donald Trump's ideologues today into the slogan "We will make America Great Again".

Donald Trump is the utmost value produced by this very assertive messianism which ultimately explains all his current actions that became decisions of the US's domestic and foreign policy.

Let us remind the Monroe Doctrine's principles, a doctrine called so according to James Monroe's name, the fifth US president (two mandates, between 1817-1825) What he said then – something essential for America's subsequent becoming – in his speech in front of the Congress should be read today very carefully as one finds troubling similarities with the timeliness issue and with the possible deep fault line in the trans-Atlantic relations.

1. *The USA recognized one year before the independence of the new Latin-American republics*

and, therefore, North America and South America were no longer open for the European colonialization;

2. From that moment on, the USA considered any European meddling in the domestic affairs of the American continent as a threat to its security and peace;

3. In return, the USA will never interfere with the European issues.

Therefore, the rise and strengthening of the American power was considered possible only by detachment of any contact with Europe. It was a vital issue from the very beginning that made president Thomas Jefferson to be the first who, foreshadowing the Monroe doctrine, wanted to limit the intervention of the American policy on the Old Continent. He formulated the "non-engagement" doctrine:

"I have always considered as fundamental for the USA to never take part in the European quarrels. Their political interests are totally different from ours. Their mutual jealousies, balance of power, complicated alliances and principles and forms of governance, all these are alien to us. It is about nations doomed to an endless war. All their energies are intended to destroy their peoples' results of work, property and life" (Thomas Jefferson, 1823).

Certainly, after a long period of time the USA adopted another position leaving behind the isolationism and intervened decisively twice in Europe and saved it from vanishing.

This is the ideological vein that Donald Trump resurrected and he wants now to succeed in accomplishing the purpose he considers to be his fundamental mission, namely to lie sound bases for the America's economy. That could mean seriously damaging the relationship with Europe as is now looming. It doesn't mean anything as long as that is the essence of his messianic initiative. If his initiative is successful, his name will remain in history books associated with rising the USA's power on yesteryears pedestal.

The other leader of a superpower, Vladimir Putin, succeeded in a similar exercise in power. His messianic vision is blended in the Eurasian Union project accompanied by the resurrection of Russian Church's power, influence and glory of the Third Rome, the imperial variant of its existence in the Orthodox world's history.

From my own point of view, the fundamental document of this Russia's new ideology, perfectly embodied by Vladimir Putin's image and actions, is synthesised in an exceptionally interesting work of reference: "Foundations of Geopolitics: Russia's Geopolitical Future" by Alexandr Dughin (1997). A doctrine Marlene Laruelle described as being based on *"a joint conception of Russian identity and imperial destiny: peoples living on the territory of the Eurasian entity belong to a sole and unique community of destinies, as their unity comes from the Turkish-Slave alliance as well as from rejecting the West"*. Dughin speaks always of the *"need of establishing a new empire: Eurasia...neither a nation state, nor a regional power... since the Russian Federation is not a Russian State...it is not a historical state as its frontiers are haphazard, its defining symbols are vague"*.



What interests us most is that, on the one hand, we have now Donald Trump's messianic vision coinciding with an America's move towards itself, within confines defended with protectionist means already in conflict with the European allies. We have, on the other hand, Dughin's vision say-

ing that the *cordon sanitaire* separating the West (NATO/EU) from Eurasia, the small independent states of Central and Eastern Europe, have no longer reason to exist as they represent now a direct obstacle to the imperial Eurasian project:

"Made up of small nations and, historically speaking, of bellicose and irresponsible states, with numerous European claims and obediently depending on the West", the cordon sanitaire "should expand wherever there are connecting factors with Eurasia, with Orthodoxy or a Slavic conscience or we have a Russian population or historically close to it". A complete geopolitical redistribution should follow at the level of Central and Eastern Europe, and not "the annexation of some countries", moving instead to "the establishment of a federation of states or group of states which political orientation is, nevertheless, unitary".

Dughin's geopolitical vision presumes a recomposition of the European political geography starting from the centre towards the periphery to finally create a zone of cooperation and strategic partnership from Vladivostok to Berlin, to take the formula used once by the Belgian political analyst Jean Thriart, while the "New Prussian



Germany" will be at the middle of the new construction.

The two visions are in full expansion with amply felt global effects which reverberate vigorously on Europe. Where and when the disruption occurs and what will be the disposals the superpowers will negotiate in what concern the zones of influence? This discussion is under way now and we will see very soon the results that China expects with particular interest, the only global power which is now in territorial expansion of its economic interests, the only one able and wanting to be completely autonomous when needed in projecting far away its new development bases.

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A Letter to John: Where Are U.S.-Russia Relations Headed?

Andrey Kortunov, Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council, RIAC member

In the decades I spent working with the United States, I acquired quite a large circle of contacts in Washington. Collectively, they represent the so-called American establishment. Today, I'd like to address these Washingtonians as one individual, whom I'll name John for the sake of simplicity.

Dear John,

My letter is full of grief, which you probably share. U.S.-Russia relations are deteriorating with each passing day, and we still can't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Yet another desperate attempt to reverse the negative trend in bilateral relations has yielded no result. It's clear that we're in for even tougher times that may last for quite a while.

Apparently, U.S. pressure on Moscow will only intensify on a broad range of issues in several spheres. Cooperation, if it is still possible, will be selective, tactical, and situational. Your flamboyant president, who opposes you and your colleagues practically on his own, will keep losing battle after battle — at least on the Russian front. For Trump, Russia is a “toxic asset,” as you like to say in the United States.

I don't want to start debating how we got here and which side is more at fault—this debate might be endless, and we're unlikely to agree. If I may, let me ask you another, more relevant question.

John, what do you think the end result of all of this should be? As far as I can tell from Moscow, no tactical compromise from the Kremlin will change the overall vector of American policy. The United States has made a firm and long-term strategic choice, and last year's sanctions law is a clear and unequivocal indication of that. If Vladimir Putin makes slight concessions on Syria,

he'll be asked to abandon his partnership with Iran. If he is more flexible on Donbas, the issue of Crimea will be raised.

From now on, you'll be putting all the blame on Putin even if it has little to do with him. And we all know that Putin doesn't like to cave under pressure—be it foreign or domestic. So, there is no chance for some lasting compromise—at least one recalling the détente of the 1970s—even in the medium term.

How do you envision the preferred endgame for our current geopolitical contest? What will the “ultimate” U.S. victory in the twenty-first century Cold War look like, in your view? Let's look at some options.

John, you are certainly aware that many in Washington would prefer some variation of the 1991 scenario—that is, regime change in Moscow and the revision of Russia's foreign policy. Almost no one discusses this option publicly, but you and I have long since learned to read between the lines.

So, let's talk regime change in Moscow, say, in 2024 or even in 2030; better late than never. Without discussing how realistic such a scenario is in the context of the outcome of Russia's latest presidential election, I'd like to remind you of two things.

First, Soviet history—still recent—clearly tells us that intensifying external pressure on Moscow only hardens the Kremlin's resolve. Remember our lengthy conversations in Moscow, shortly before the start of perestroika? I think you won't deny that Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative wasn't what sounded the death knell for the Soviet Union. The country's demise was ushered in several years later, when Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev jointly stripped the USSR of its adversarial image, which had fortified the Soviet political and administrative system for decades.

It appears then that current American policy

brings Washington away from, not nearer to, its goal of regime change in Russia.

Second, let's assume that a miracle did occur, and that Russia followed the Soviet path out of existence. Be honest, John, are you able to predict the concomitant global and regional risks, the risks for U.S. interests and security?

We both remember well that the world was fortunate in 1991 to avoid violent turmoil in a nuclear superpower state. Let's leave the question of why the 1991 events unfolded the way they did to historians. It's not at all obvious that the same thing will happen next time. Won't you agree that the current Russian military-security establishment somewhat differs from the old Soviet nomenklatura and will hardly acquiesce to collective political suicide?

Let's continue. While regime change in Moscow is merely a theoretical scenario, continued cooperation between Russia and China looks far more realistic. John, for ten years you and your colleagues have been saying that the Russian-Chinese partnership is built on a fragile foundation, increasingly asymmetrical, and practically exhausted in terms of the potential for cooperation. Evidently, you would very much like relations between Russia and China to fail.

One doesn't have to be Halford Mackinder or, say, Henry Kissinger to draw a simple conclusion: further consolidation of the Russian-Chinese alliance would lead to the geopolitical configuration that the United States has been trying to prevent since at least the early twentieth century. Under this configuration, Eurasia would have a power center that would oppose the United States, exceed it in both population and resources, and potentially overtake it economically.

Will you take comfort in the fact that Moscow will be the junior partner to Beijing under this configuration? A slight consolation that is, don't you think? It might satisfy pathological Russo-phobes, but you, of course, aren't one of them.

Another possible option is Moscow's international isolation, its relegation to the political and economic side-lines, and the imposition of a

technological and financial blockade, all of which would gradually turn Russia into a pariah state.

But Russia will never become just another pariah state. If you drive Moscow into a corner, it will most probably take a leadership role in the international fraternity of such pariah actors, both state and non-state ones. It will certainly find itself capable of leading such a cause, and there will be more than enough pariahs in the world to go around in the foreseeable future.

John, we have known each other for many years. You know I am not your dyed-in-the-wool Kremlin propagandist. I am very critical of Russian foreign policy and never thought that Washington shoulders all responsibility for the current deplorable state of Russian-American relations. I can easily imagine that Washington may see Russia as a complicated, obstinate, intransigent, irritating, unpleasant, unreliable, or untrustworthy partner.

I'll also note that I don't agree with the demonization of the American establishment that is taking place in Russia today. I personally know many representatives of this establishment whom I regard as highly professional; these people don't just unconditionally love their country but also consistently support cooperation with Russia. Believe me, my laundry list of questions to Moscow political analysts, and especially to pseudo-analysts, is much longer than the one to you and your colleagues.

So, what's been happening to us all, John? When did we in Moscow and you in Washington go from producing expert analysis to creating political propaganda? When did we substitute trying to hurt the other side as much as possible for solving problems? When did we lose our knack for strategic thinking? And where did our intolerance of dissent and unconventional thinking come from?

I am not urging you to take pro-Kremlin positions, forget about fundamental differences between Moscow and Washington, and mechanically turn the current page in our relations and begin writing a new chapter. I am not saying that you should betray your moral principles when evaluating the policies of the current Russian

government. But let me allude to Max Weber, whose works you probably read in college.

When contemplating the relationship between ethics and politics, Weber divided ethics into two categories—ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility. Ethics of convictions implies the unyielding pursuit of moral principles regardless of the results, costs, and casualties to which it may lead. In contrast, ethics of responsibility calls for considering the specific situation one is in, focusing on a policy's consequences, taking responsibility for the predictable outcomes of one's actions, and being ready to prevent a greater evil even if it means resorting to a lesser evil.

Nowadays, ethics of conviction dominates in both Washington and Moscow. I don't even want to go into how adequate these convictions are for the needs of today's world. I'll simply point out that both capitals are thoroughly lacking in ethics of responsibility.

We have role models to whom we can look up. Our generation still remembers brilliant intellectuals of the bygone years—among them, George Kennan and Yevgeny Primakov, William Fulbright and Georgy Arbatov, Marshall Shulman and Anatoly Dobrynin. They taught us ethics of responsibility. These people were thinking in terms of eras and generations rather than election cycles and bureaucratic squabbles. Now these people are no longer with us; some left us sooner, others later. The last representatives of this illustrious cohort are crossing the Great Divide right before our eyes.

But we are not so young anymore, either, John. Our time is also running out. What intellectual legacy are we going to bequeath to those who will come after us?

Good luck to us all!

Sincerely, Andrey Kortunov

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Omens and divinations

dr. Adrian SEVERIN

The global diplomatic front was extremely active lately showing that the "world hybrid war" reached a stage of utmost tension. He who knows to read the omens and accepts its messages even when the message contradicts his preconceptions and frustrates his expectations may predict the future.



President Trump (therefore America) met successively president Macron (France) and chancellor Merkel (Germany). The first was offered a state dinner (the supreme honour, according to the American protocol). The last one was offered a cold meal.

President Putin (therefore Russia) met chancellor Merkel (Germany) and president Macron (France). The first one was offered a splendid bouquet of flowers (the utmost courtesy according to the grand Russian protocol). The last one was offered fresh water.

What is the resultant?

America uses France for seducing Russia and bringing it humbly back into its camp as it was the case during WWI. This alliance is essential now for counteracting China, the USA's real global rival.

Russia uses Germany for threatening America and make it accept it respectfully back in its camp, as was the case during WWII. It needs this alliance now for reclaiming and preserving its place at the global protagonists' table.

Behind these bucolic scenes with kisses and flowers a direct dialogue between the White House and the Kremlin is secretly taking place indeed generating or strengthening over Europe the French-German tandem and the Russian-American Entente. It makes sense.

President Xi (therefore China) offered chancel-

lor Merkel (Germany) an imperial reception. An attempt of encouraging Europe's alienation from America.

President Trump (therefore America) offered president Xi (China) an imperial reception as well. An attempt of preventing China to play alongside Russia.

In this show of international ballet France has no part to play. The French sauce is neither used in the American cook, nor in the Chinese one and, contrary to appearances, not even in the German one.

After the end of the show, Beijing and Washington were to negotiate tête-à-tête the architecture of the new world order. Russian tea was served indeed during the talks.

"The rest is silence" (William Shakespeare)

P.S. The above lines were inspired by the remarks of one of the most sophisticated exponents of the American political planning I was talking to recently.

Disclaimer: *The article represents the author's opinions and not necessarily Geostrategic Pulse's ones. The responsibility on the content belongs solely to the author.*

On the Iranian front of the global war



dr. Adrian SEVERIN

By their destructive force, the nuclear weapons are good for blackmail, not for use. With a millennia-long tradition in the negotiating art, Iran did just that.

It scared the world with his nuclear program; then it accepted negotiations with the world's powers for placing it under control; and the respective powers shook hands once the deal was in place without noticing that in the shadow of this agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – JCPOA or The Iranian Nuclear Deal – IND) other expansionist capacities will grow. Lifting the "international sanctions" subsequent to the "nuclear deal" allowed, among others, resuming large-scale exports of Iranian oil and, as a consequence, massive financial inflows just right for bankrolling the Shiite "armies" of the entire Middle East involved in classical or hybride wars, without nuclear component, able to change the already delicate geostrategic power balances in the area.

In several papers drawn up in 2013, I underlined that an American-Russian agreement for solving the crisis of Syria's chemical weapons could open the way for an American-Iranian dialogue, possibly carried out in a multilateral framework (with the participation of the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany), that may lead to an agreement on Iran's nuclear arming. And so it happened, except for, due to its nuclear obsession, the American administration forgot or renounced discussing two other equally sensitive problems: the ballistic program (namely manufacturing missiles able to carry the



nuclear warheads to the desired destinations at great distances from the launching place) and financing the Shiite guerrilla movements of the Arab Muslim world. Aware that it has already the means of manufacturing nuclear weapons in a relatively short time since reactivating the program yet not being interested in any way to enter an effective nuclear conflagration, Iran accepted the combination. Bringing its nuclear program to a halt was fully compensated by speeding up the program of the Shiite neo-imperial expansion (by classical means, by proxies or by subversions specific to the so-called hybrid war).

Although it is difficult to know, I myself, based on the abovementioned reasoning, believe that the Iranian side respected strictly the provisions of JCPOA. Any international inspection could confirm that. Therefore, strictly speaking, the international law guided by the principle *Pacta sunt servanda* (the promises made should be observed), cannot be invoked by any one to hold Iran to account and impose sanctions. If Tehran keeps its promises, Washington must do the same.

Unfortunately, things are not as simple as that. The international life is much more than the formal logic of international law can encompass. On the global level, the provision of law is circumscribed to the interests that are at stake and to the balance of powers. When the balance of powers changes, including by applying the conventions that represent source of law, the agreed rule falls into disuse. It becomes obsolete since within the new context it does not serve the purpose for which it was accepted and adopted by the players (legal entities of the international law).

Certain theoretical principles must be reminded before going on analysing the facts. Any international convention has as its subject matter and purpose putting the (juridical) relations between that parties in order by defining not only the way they should behave towards each other and/or towards third parties but also, as a guarantee of observing the obligations each one assumed and the modality of setting and maintain-

ing the balance of power between them statically and dynamically. Such an order has always a finality only: peace. When the order resulting from conventions as it was defined by them does not secure peace or at least does not provide security to stability and stability to security, it must be changed. If it is possible, in a consensual manner. If necessary (i.e. otherwise is not possible), unilaterally; with the risk of violent confrontations.

JCPOA order (which made Deveselu shield devoid of purpose) does not serve peace any longer. The argument: Iran's involvement in Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq etc.; not by nuclear weapons but by the dollars it got following lifting the economic embargo devised initially to deter the program of nuclear arming.

For counteracting the Persian imperialism (with Shia face), Saudi Arabia and its Arab friends backed ISIS (the Sunni Islamic state) as a form of religiously based self-determination. But Saudi Arabia is the USA's strategic partner and one of the Arab-Muslim powers accommodated with the idea of Israel's security; the latter is more than an America's strategic partner – a mini-America in the Middle East. This is why, one way or another, different American government institutions and schools of thought were more than complacent when they were not downright accomplices with ISIS. And that besides the the profitable smuggling of the black gold under the "administration" of the fundamentalist militias of the said "state", financed by the lucrative terrorism.

Yet the game through regional counterbalances proved to be too risky. The risk of the situation getting out of control became unbearable once Russia entered the stage simultaneous with the emergence of the first concrete geostrategic effects of JCPOA. Moscow's calculations are much more subtle than one might believe. The first impression is that they are exclusively designed to destroy ISIS and, to that purpose, preserve Bashar Al-Assad's regime in power in Syria. The Kremlin's objective, less noticed yet mentioned, is to replace or at least to diminish the influence of the White House (inhabited by more and

more aboulc tenants, lacking the will, inert, undecided, confused) in the Middle East, by containing, at the same time, the neoconservative impetus (the taste for regime changes through outside intervention).

What is completely ignored is that there is no way the "Third Rome" (Moscow) backs with a full heart an Islamic theocracy. And this all so more given that the presence of the said theocracy on the oil world marked leads to a slump in its price and directly affecting Russia's budget, a petro-dependent country. (President Donald Trump's mere announcement of denouncing JPCOA led immediately to a sharp rise in oil price on the international markets).

Russia's intervention in Syria should have as objective, besides balancing the forces in the conflict, as an objective weakening America's Saudi ally and pushing it in a robust direct confrontation with Iran, which became in the meantime dependent to a great extent on the Russian backing. (The meeting Putin-Netanyahu that took place May 9th, in Moscow under the cover of the participation of the Israeli prime minister to the manifestations occasioned by the Victory Day in the WWII had to do with these developments).

ISIS is practically annihilated. Iran's turn has arrived. The opposites vanish together. It was Hegel who said that, a philosopher whose fan was even Karl Marx in his younger days, the one recently celebrated by the UE's Christian-Democrats leaders. Such a development supposes a few preliminary steps and also assuming certain fractures hidden so far behind the scenes.

The understanding with North Korea is such a step. During the recent meeting between the North Korean leader Kim and Xi, the Chinese leader, it is said that the former declared: "Holding nuclear power is not an absolute necessity for the Democratic Peoples' Korean Republic and the denuclearisation is possible if the relevant parties remove the hostile policies and the threats to its security." A statement recalling the end of the Cuban missiles crisis, in 1962. It does not herald a possible American-North Korean

understanding facilitated and guaranteed by China but confirms it before being announced by the coming meeting Trump-Kim. In fact, it is a understanding between China and America concerning the order in Western Pacific. As was the case with the first Truman declaration, America's security area in Western Pacific will include Japan only and will leave the Korean Peninsula and, probably, Taiwan out.

The second step concerns a understanding (not necessarily public and express yet coherent and explicit) with Russia. It is necessary and legitimate. I am not aware of how much history does president Trump know yet I instinctively believe he does not feel the impulse of defending the borders drawn by Stalin and Hruschev in Eastern Europe. In this case he can redraw with president Putin, recently reconfirmed in office, the security architecture of this region as well as in the Balkans and in the Middle East. Unfortunately for Ukraine, it will be done at its expense (incidentally harnessing to our benefit the 1997 Romanian-Ukrainian Treaty). Fortunately, it is not done on Romania's expense as would have been the case in a Merkel-Putin Pact.

In order to make "America great again" in the current international context, president Trump will have to update the political realism of president Nixon (and of Henry Kissinger) towards China, Russia and, the last on the list Romania in thr 1970s. Then, we were in the midst of the Cold War; today, we are in the midst of hybrid war. Both are alternatives to the two World Wars.

The price – or maybe the bonus – of these options is to develop the image of existing since a long time fault lines yet partially hidden so far under the makeup of the solidarity of "values" and therefore improperly treated.

First of all fault lines between the two shores of the Atlantic; namely within NATO. The allies did not get the chance to negotiate their price and do not want to drop the agreement with Iran. Iran, in its turn, brokes the Euro-Atlantic unity by promising the Europeans it will continue to observe JCPOA, even if it is denounced by the USA.



identity and our democratic order. In the past, when the global protagonists were divided, the Romanians got by well. The transition moments at the level of the global order were usually good for the Romanians. Let us hope history will repeat itself.

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The EU and Europe's de facto states

Then fault lines between the "Old Europe" – imperialistic and globalist, allergic to America, rusophile and Israeli-skeptical – and the "New Europe" – nationalistic and prone to sovereignty, americanophile, allergic to Russia and Arabo-skeptical; namely within the UE. Normally, it should require abandoning the German-French Euro-jingoism in favor of a genuine democratic European federalism, on the one hand, and the American-Russian Entente to the detriment of the clash of the Euro-Atlantic and Euro-Asian tectonic plates, on the other hand. If we have instead a German-Russian Entente doubled by an Euro-Arab Entente, opposed to an American-Saudi-Israeli Entente, then the North-South war will be doubled by an East-West war; i.e. a global chaos from which either a new world's architecture or nothingness will come out.

In dependency Romania, resuming the American-Iranian hostilities will lead to opting for choices circumvented so far. Until then, (if that then comes in due time), the faultline between the Presidency and the Government palaces will get wider and will amplify the struggle between rival foreign secret services (in fact hybrid war) on the Romanian territory. The apparent draw games between the two palaces reflects the balance between the foreign powers controlling them.

The current confrontation has nevertheless a merit. It allowed blowing the lid off the obscure understandings and of the internal criminal networks that acted and act for destroying the Romanian nation and its statehood. Even if they were not dismantled yet, the fact they were identified is important in itself since it makes sense of the struggle of the national forces, how many are they, for safeguarding the freedom,



Dr. Simion COSTEA

I attended the interesting event "**The EU and Europe's De Facto States**" organised by **Carnegie Europe, Brussels, on May 08, 2018**, under the Chatham House rule. The speakers analysed the situation of **Transnistria and Abkhazia**.

Speakers:

- Rustam Anshba, guest lecturer, Abkhaz State University;
- Jaba Devdariani, co-founder, Civil Georgia;
- Vladislav Kulminski, executive director, Institute for Strategic Studies;
- Vlada Lisenco, professor, Transnistrian Shevchenko State University.

Moderator:

- Thomas de Waal, senior fellow, Carnegie Europe.

Main ideas:

Transnistria conflict has been frozen from 1992. Does it make sense to engage with Transnistria? Yes, to avoid conflict escalation and bring closer a political solution. Local elites in Transnistria are interested in keeping this "de facto state" because the conflict is lucrative. But the conflict is geopolitical as well. Starting 2012, 3 baskets of negotiation have been introduced:

(1) economic and social (2) humanitarian and (3) political negotiations. Currently, the Republic of Moldova works on humanitarian, social and economic issues. Chisinau wants a solution in the framework of the Constitution. However, the political representatives in the process of negotiations on the Transnistrian problem settlement on behalf of Chisinau and Tiraspol **on 25 November 2017 signed four protocol decisions** which regulate the sectors of **education, agriculture and telecommunications**. These actions are included in the so-called "Berlin plus" package. Thus, the sides agreed on ensuring free movement of teachers and pupils of Latin-script schools from the left bank of Dniester. At the same time, the sides regulated the process of apostillisation of diplomas issued by the higher education institutions from the Transnistrian region. This measure will allow graduates of these institutions to continue studying abroad, including in the countries of the European Union. Another decision approved on 25 November is focused on access to the farmlands from the Dubasari district, placed beyond the Tiraspol-Camenca highway.

There are protocols on apostillisation of diplomas from Tiraspol University and on telecom, but nothing happens in practice. The new authorities in Transnistria have a huge budgetary deficit that historically used to be covered by the Russian Federation, which is not the case anymore for the last couple of years. Getting money from Russia is difficult for them. Agreeing on these types of protocols between Republic of Moldova and Transnistria show a constructive engagement from both sides and can facilitate a future political solution, when conditions will allow this.

All the political proposals of Chisinau were based on the integrity of the Republic of Moldova and were not implemented.

There are 9 universities in Transnistria, 4 out of which have a local status only; Transnistrian Shevchenko State University is

the most important. There are differences of curriculum, but in November 2017 mutual recognition was agreed, so Transnistrian students' diplomas are recognised on the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Transnistrian students want to participate in Erasmus+. A bilateral agreement on the participation of the Transnistrian Universities in Erasmus+ was signed. Transnistria received a confirmation letter from DG EAC in 2016. Already in 2017, 4 students went in Spain, and 3 students are on an Erasmus+ scholarship in Stockholm University.

National registration plates will allow to vehicles to move on the territory of the Republic of Moldova and abroad starting 2018. Civil society in Transnistria is still underdeveloped but contributes to confidence building programmes, with support from EU and UNDP, to develop infrastructure and soft.

Republic of Moldova is vulnerable to Russian influence; the gas debt to Gazprom (is over 5 billion dollars) is used as political tool. Huge migration rate in Transnistria, half of the population left. Migration rate is high in the Republic of Moldova as well. We hope a political settlement. Transnistrian-Russian university consortia work. But students need also European opportunities.

There are opinions that Gagauzia autonomy is not properly implemented, so Transnistria can't trust Chisinau. However, **the current government in Chisinau does a lot for Gagauzia and Transnistria**. They have created a commission which works with no publicity, very pragmatic. Gagauzia has mainly economic demands, in the framework of Moldovan's Constitution; Moldovan Constitution does not need to change because of that. There are positive signs for Transnistria's reintegration. Owners in Transnistria are interested in recognition of their properties.

The Republic of Moldova could become fed up with Transnistrian problems and



do its own way towards the EU. This is right, many think that EU and unification with RO are solutions. But most of Moldovans want Transnistria part of the Republic of Moldova. Up until now, none of the Moldovan political representatives has declared that RM would give up its rights over the breakaway region.

Moldovans use the existing laws which are not acceptable for Transnistria. Russia is the main decision maker in the region.

90% of electricity in the Republic of Moldova comes from Transnistria and there is **economic interdependence**. The size of Transnistria obliges it to cooperate. **Transnistrian industry** is linked to the Republic of Moldova. The football games are under the flag of the Republic of Moldova. Transnistrian companies are registered in the Republic of Moldova to export on the EU market. **DCFTA is useful for Transnistria (up to 60-70% of the exports from the Transnistrian region are going to the EU).** But Transnistria has almost free gas giving advantages to Transnistrian companies over the companies' registered on the right bank of the river; furthermore the economic agents from Transnistria are not paying VAT.

Moldova does not block Transnistria. There are not strong divisive lines. The Republic of Moldova does not like travels abroad of Transnistrian representatives, but accepts them as contribution to the conflict resolution. The EU is active on Transnistrian issue.

Abkhazia is part of the restructuring political space after Soviet Union and part of state building project, geopolitical conflicts and compromises. Unlike in the case of Moldova – Transnistria relations, **Georgia and Abkhazia do not talk.** Russia is the main impediment. **Nothing can be resolved before the conflict with Russia would be resolved.** Georgia uses a strategic patience because of tactical impotence. The current government does not prioritise **Abkhazia**. The government is conciliatory towards **Abkhazia** internally, but on

international stage there is a hard-line position because there is no interlocutor. Russian presence military is increasing. Georgian proposals recognise Abkhazian internal documents.

During the last 10 years, nothing has been achieved. Russia is a security guarantor for Abkhazia against any possible "aggression" from Georgia. Nobody in Abkhazia is interested to resolve the conflict. Abkhazia produces wine and tourist services and Russia is their market; in Transnistria there is industrial production needing a European market.

Identity is a powerful element for the younger generation in Abkhazia. They want to collaborate with Russia, not with Georgia. **EU engagement with non-recognition** is pragmatic and well received; EU supports civil society; there is a need for reforms and capacity building. Erasmus+ would be good. **Abkhazia is self-isolating;** status-neutral solution are needed and investment in education to prepare professionals.

The new generations in Abkhazia grow without links to Georgia and are more radical than the older ones. There was little EU engagement, while non-recognition is clear. EU needs more engagement in pragmatic way. Abkhazian authorities and young generation do not want a dialogue with Georgia, because Georgia wants Abkhazia back inside Georgia. There is more than an ethnic conflict. Moldovan-Transnistrian model of dialogue is not possible in Abkhazia. Abkhazian diplomas are not recognised, which impede the students to do mobility or continue their studies. Younger generations are more radical on dialogue with Georgia. They do not want that their diplomas to be recognised by Georgia. Abkhazian education system is different from the European one; they do not know how to apply for projects. If the EU agencies would recognise Abkhazian diplomas – it would be seen as recognition of Abkhazia. Russian recognition of Abkhazia puts new barriers in front of any Georgian-Abkhazian dialogue.





Virtual Democracy and Jihadi Johns: cognitive disconnects and CVE Propaganda

Dr Matthew CROSTON
Senior Doctoral Faculty
American Military University

While the Islamic State has not been able to maintain its physical geopolitical and military gains across Iraq and Syria over the past year, one area of continued disconcerting success has been its ability to maximize leverage and influence through virtual technologies and various social media platforms to recruit people to commit atrocities in major Western metropolitan areas. A growing literature documents exactly how the Islamic State (and its aligned off-shoots throughout the world) utilizes technology, but this front-end analysis is not matched by the equally important back-end part of the process: how and why do these virtual propaganda/recruiting tools work on populations living in Western democracies? This paper fuses elements of cognitive psychology and virtual technology with the world of countering violent extremism to explain why Western counter-terrorist organizations, from governments to the military to intelligence agencies, are actually losing the virtual propaganda war to violent extremists.

Western accountability in not properly integrating migrant communities into democratic societies will be explored. More importantly, this accountability will be shown to be crucially causal as to why some groups are 'in the West'

but remain frustratingly not 'of the West.' How the internet seems to be a perfectly pernicious tool to exploit this failure of modern democracy's promise to all of its peoples will also be analysed. The timeliness of this topic cuts across numerous important themes when it comes to the internet and society, including: the role of social media in political campaigns and the formulation of intelligence policy; accountability and the rights of redress, whether they be in violent or non-violent forms, in the platform society; innovations (in this case negative) in civic participation and engagement; online social movements; instability and volatility in political life; and the rise of extremism and polarization.

An extensive analysis of extremist virtual propaganda, both in terms of sites, methods, and psychologies, will be conducted, tying the effectiveness of the different types of virtual technology used and contrasting these techniques against the less efficacious and disappointing virtual policies being utilized by Western democracies to counter these groups. The overall failure of CVE (countering violent extremism) programs across Western democracies in the face of this virtual extremist onslaught will force some uncomfortable questions and discussions to the fore about how modern democracy in the digital age might be falling short of its ideals and civic promises. It also addresses what responsibility, if any, do commercial enterprises have over their virtual technologies and social platform

management? The presumed sanctity of internet freedom has clearly been leveraged by extremist groups savvy with virtual technologies. How to counter and depress this capability without adversely affecting the primacy of internet freedom will be addressed with possible



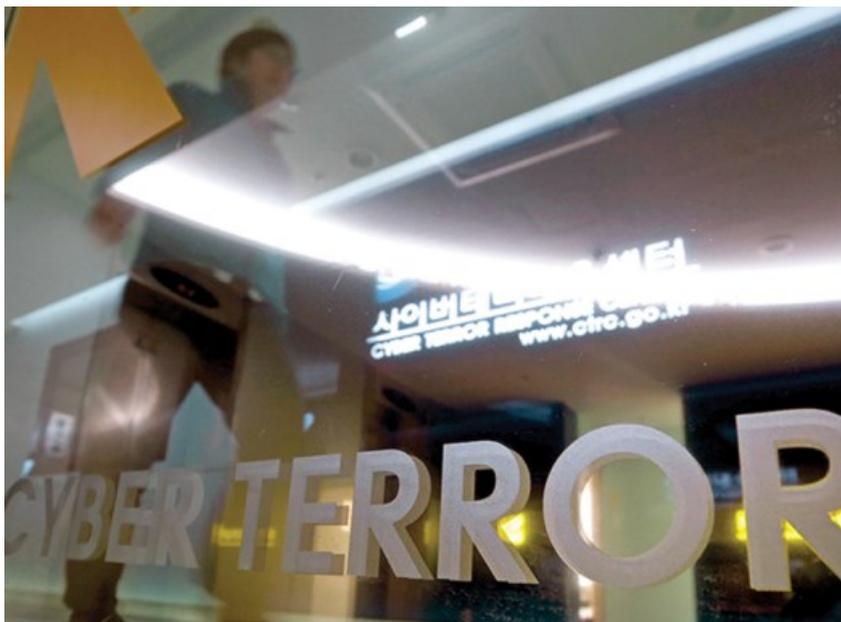


image as a bastion of male power.

But Europe needs more talent. To grow, thrive and flourish in a fast-changing world, it needs to draw on the skills, knowledge and expertise of all its citizens, not just the small minority who hold sway at the moment.

Europe can only reconnect with its citizens, inspire and motivate them, make them part of the conversation, if those who work for the institutions look like the societies they represent.

While sanctions and law suits against racists may be necessary, EU officials would be more effective in counter-

proposals outlined. Analysing this question finally allows the research to create new pathways for innovation in virtual CVE programs. Failure to bring this innovation about likely means the continuing success of extremist groups pushing anti-democratic ideals, forwarding violent extremist agendas across polite societies and killing more innocents.

ing the toxic narrative of populists and illiberals – including the tediously repetitive diatribes of Hungary’s Viktor Orbán and his friends – if they practiced what they preached on diversity and openness.

Britain is about the only country which has sent a significant number of non-white persons to the European Commission

Also, if Europe is to recreate and re-invent itself, become a more energetic and dynamic 21st Century power capable of holding its own against rising China and India, it will have to use the talents of all its citizens, regardless of their colour, race or ethnic origin.

Sadly, once Britain leaves the EU in March next year, the bloc’s Brussels-based institutions will become even less racially diverse and more boringly monochrome than they are at the moment.

The reason? Britain is about the only country which has sent a significant number of non-white persons to the European Commission, the European Parliament and other institutions. The European Parliament at last count had 17 ethnic minority parliamentarians out of a total of 751, around half of whom were British. The EU does talk a great deal – a very great deal – about diversity. The bloc’s motto, in fact, is “unity in diversity” and of course the 28 countries are different from each other.

As we gear up for 2019, Europe needs more talent and some colour



Shada ISLAM, Director of Europe & Geopolitics at Friends of Europe

As the jostling for jobs and nominations gathers momentum ahead of next year’s change of guard at the European Union institutions, it’s time to start walking the talk on building a truly diverse and inclusive Europe.

The EU’s management machines no longer represent the reality of Europe’s increasingly vibrant, diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-racial societies.

Some very smart people work at the EU institutions. And the bureaucracy’s belated focus on promoting women may finally change the EU’s

For many, this diversity has so far been good enough. Encouragingly, diversity now also means gender equality.

Women’s groups are demanding equal representation, equal pay and an equal voice in the debates on Europe. All male panels at conferences are becoming rarer. For those looking outside the pool of male pundits, the Brussels Binder provides the names of female experts on a range of issues.

The EU’s new “Diversity and Inclusion Charter” promises fresh action to reach at least 40% women in its management by 1 November 2019. The focus is rightly on creating a better workplace for all – including women, staff with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Intersex (LGBTI) staff and older staff.

Shockingly, there is no mention of ethnic minorities and their rights to equal treatment. No one buys the old argument that it is difficult and/or unethical to collect data on the racial or ethnic backgrounds of people – or that the EU institutions are in fact colour-blind.

European political parties must identify and support women candidates and people from different racial, religious backgrounds

Still, there is hope. As demonstrated by the recent “Black Europe” events held at the European Parliament, Europeans of African descent, estimated to number 15 million, are demanding their rights as full-fledged European citizens. Demands to be included in the European conversation are also being made by European Muslims, Jews, Roma and other minorities.

It’s time for action. In



the warm up for the 2019 polls, European political parties must identify and support women candidates and people from different racial, religious backgrounds. The European Commission and other EU institutions must actively look for talent beyond the usual white male suspects.

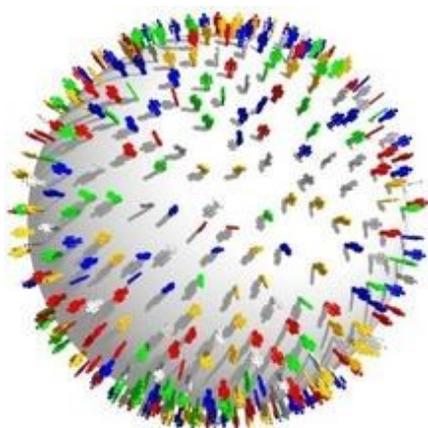
If the EU is to have any credibility on the issues of diversity and equality it must start changing the way it recruits,

thinks and acts. Affirmative action should be considered to encourage minorities to take part in the EU conversation.

The amazing Meghan Markle is proof that it is possible to update even the most tradition-bound institutions. With the new Duchess of Sussex in its midst, the House of Windsor suddenly looks modern, accessible and diverse.

The EU must also end the “same old, same old” pattern of yesteryears and finally put its house in order.

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Why is the Korean Reunification not to Work anytime soon (Denuclearisation of the Far East long way Ahead)

**Prof. Anis H. BA-
JREKTAREVIC, Chair-
man Intl. Law & Global
Pol. Studies**

*(authored 6 books on geopolitics, technology,
security and energy)*

ABSTRACT:

Following the famous saying allegedly spelled by Kissinger: "Europe? Give me a name and a phone number!" (when – back in early 1970s – urged by President Nixon to inform Europeans on the particular US policy action), the author is trying to examine how close is Asia to have its own telephone number.

By contrasting and comparing genesis of multi-lateral security structures in Europe with those currently existing in Asia, and by listing some of the most pressing security challenges in Asia, this article offers several policy incentives why the largest world's continent must consider creation of the comprehensive pan-Asian institution. Prevailing security structures in Asia are bilateral and mostly asymmetric while Europe enjoys multilateral, balanced and symmetric setups (American and African continents too). Author goes as far as to claim that irrespective to the impressive economic growth, no Asian century will emerge without creation of such an institution.

Key words:

Security, multilateralism, Asia, geopolitics, geo-economics, preventive diplomacy,

(nuclear weapons, border disputes, Council of Europe, OSCE, OAS, AU, EU, NATO, OIC, NAM, ASEAN, APEC, SAARC, GCC, SCO, KEDO, SEATO, BRIC, G-7, G-20, Japan, China, the US, Russia/SU, Alliance of Eastern Conservative Courts, pre-Napoleonic Europe, growth, middle class, nationalism)

How to draw the line between the recent and still unsettled EU/EURO crisis and Asia's success story? Well, it might be easier than it seems: Neither Europe nor Asia has any alternative. The difference is that Europe well knows there is no alternative – and therefore is multilateral. Asia thinks it has an alternative – and therefore is strikingly bilateral, while stubbornly residing enveloped in economic egoisms. No wonder that Europe is/will be able to manage its decline, while Asia is (still) unable to capitalize its successes.

Asia clearly does not accept any more the lead of the post-industrial and post-Christian Europe, but is not ready for the post-West world.

Following the famous saying allegedly spelled by Kissinger: "Europe? Give me a name and a phone number!" (when – back in early 1970s – urged by President Nixon to inform Europeans on the particular US policy action), the author is trying to examine how close is Asia to have its own telephone number.

Another fallacy is that the German reunification can be just copied. 15 days at any German institute of political science and one becomes expert of reunification. Yes, Germany is a success story since the neighbours were extremely forgiving. And that was enhanced by the overall pan-continental commitment to multilateralism – by both institutions and instruments. Europe of German re-unification was the most multilateralised region of the world. Asia today is extremely bilateral – not far from the constellations at the time of Hiroshima or Korean War of 1950s. No multilateralism – no denuclearisation; no denuclearisation – no reunification; no reunification – no overall cross-continental tranquilization of relations; no tranquillity – no Asia's sustainable success.

Why multilateralism matters? Author tries to answer it ...

By contrasting and comparing genesis of multi-lateral security structures in Europe with those currently existing in Asia, and by listing some of the most pressing security challenges in Asia, this policy paper offers several policy incentives why the largest world's continent must consider creation of the comprehensive pan-Asian institution. Prevailing security structures in Asia are bilateral and mostly asymmetric while Europe enjoys multilateral, balanced and symmetric setups (American and African continents too). Author goes as far as to claim that irrespective to the impressive economic growth, no Asian century will emerge without creation of such an institution.

* * * *

For over a decade, many of the relevant academic journals are full of articles prophesizing the 21st as the Asian century. The argument is usually based on the impressive economic growth, increased production and trade volumes as well as the booming foreign currency reserves and exports of many populous Asian nations, with nearly 1/3 of total world population inhabiting just two countries of the largest world's continent. However, history serves as a powerful reminder by warning us that economically or/and demographically mighty gravity centres tend to expand into their peripheries, especially when the periphery is weaker by either category. It means that any absolute or relative shift in economic and demographic strength of one subject of international relations will inevitably put additional stress on the existing power equilibriums and constellations that support this balance in the particular theatre of implicit or explicit structure.

Lessons of the Past

Thus, what is the state of art of Asia's security structures? What is the existing capacity of preventive diplomacy and what instruments are at disposal when it comes to early warning/ prevention, fact-finding, exchange mechanisms, reconciliation, capacity and confidence- building

measures in the Asian theatre?

While all other major theatres do have the pan-continental settings in place already for many decades, such as the Organization of American States – OAS (American continent), African Union – AU (Africa), Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – OSCE (Europe), the state-of-arts of the largest world's continent is rather different. What becomes apparent, nearly at the first glance, is the absence of any pan-Asian security/ multilateral structure. Prevailing security structures are bilateral and mostly asymmetric. They range from the clearly defined and enduring non-aggression security treaties, through less formal arrangements, up to the Ad hoc cooperation accords on specific issues. The presence of the multilateral regional settings is limited to a very few spots in the largest continent, and even then, they are rarely mandated with security issues in their declared scope of work. Another striking feature is that most of the existing bilateral structures have an Asian state on one side, and either peripheral or external protégé country on the other side which makes them nearly per definition asymmetric. The examples are numerous: the US –Japan, the US– S. Korea, the US–Singapore, Russia–India, Australia–East Timor, Russia–North Korea, Japan –Malaysia, China–Pakistan, the US–Pakistan, China–Cambodia, the US–Saudi Arabia, Russia –Iran, China–Burma, India–Maldives, Iran –Syria, N. Korea–Pakistan, etc.

Indeed, Asia today resonates a mixed echo of the European past. It combines features of the pre-Napoleonic, post-Napoleonic and the League -of-Nations Europe. What are the useful lessons from the European past? Well, there are a few, for sure. Bismarck accommodated the exponential economic, demographic and military growth as well as the territorial expansion of Prussia by skilfully architecting and calibrating the complex networks of bilateral security arrangements of 19th century Europe. Like Asia today, it was not an institutionalized security structure of Europe, but a talented leadership exercising restraint and wisdom in combination with the quick assertiveness and fast military absorptions, concluded by the lasting endurance. How-

ever, as soon as the new Kaiser removed the Iron Chancellor (Bismarck), the provincial and backward-minded, insecure and militant Prussian establishment contested (by their own interpretations of the German's *machtpolitik* and *weltpolitik* policies) Europe and the world in two devastating world wars. That, as well as Hitler's establishment afterwards, simply did not know what to do with a powerful Germany.

The aspirations and constellations of some of Asia's powers today remind us also of the pre-Napoleonic Europe, in which a unified, universalistic block of the Holy Roman Empire was contested by the impatient challengers of the status quo. Such serious centripetal and centrifugal oscillations of Europe were not without grave deviations: as much as Cardinal Richelieu's and Jacobin's France successfully emancipated itself, the Napoleon III and pre-WWII France encircled, isolated itself, implicitly laying the foundation for the German attack.

Finally, the existing Asian regional settings also resemble the picture of the post-Napoleonic Europe: first and foremost, of Europe between the Vienna Congress of 1815 and the revolutionary year of 1848. At any rate, let us take a quick look at the most relevant regional settings in Asia.

Multilateral constellations

By far, the largest Asian participation is with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation – APEC, an organization engulfing both sides of the Pacific Rim. Nevertheless, this is a forum for member economies not of sovereign nations, a sort of a prep-com or waiting room for the World Trade Organization – WTO. To use the words of one senior Singapore diplomat who recently told me in Geneva the following: “what is your option here? ...to sign the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), side up with the US, login to FaceBook, and keep shopping on the internet happily ever after...”

Two other crosscutting settings, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation – OIC and Non-Aligned Movement – NAM, the first with and the second without a permanent secretariat, represent the well-established political multilateral

bodies. However, they are inadequate forums as neither of the two is strictly mandated with security issues. Although both trans-continental entities do have large memberships being the 2nd and 3rd largest multilateral systems, right after the UN, neither covers the entire Asian political landscape – having important Asian countries outside the system or opposing it.

Further on, one should mention the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization – KEDO (Nuclear) and the Iran-related Contact (Quartet/P-5+1) Group. In both cases, the issues dealt with are indeed security related, but they are more an asymmetric approach to deter and contain a single country by the larger front of peripheral states that are opposing a particular security policy, in this case, of North Korea and of Iran. Same was with the short-lived SEATO Pact – a defence treaty organization for SEA which was essentially dissolved as soon as the imminent threat from communism was slowed down and successfully contained within the French Indochina.

Confidence building – an attempt

If some of the settings are reminiscent of the pre-Napoleonic Europe, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization – SCO and Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf – GCC remind us of the post-Napoleonic Europe and its Alliance of the Eastern Conservative courts (of Metternich). Both arrangements were created on a pretext of a common external ideological and geopolitical threat, on a shared status quo security consideration. Asymmetric GCC was an externally induced setting by which an American key Middle East ally Saudi Arabia gathered the grouping of the Arabian Peninsula monarchies. It has served a dual purpose; originally, to contain the leftist Nasseristic pan-Arabism which was introducing a republican type of egalitarian government in the Middle Eastern theatre. It was also – after the 1979 revolution – an instrument to counter-balance the Iranian influence in the Gulf and wider Middle East. The response to the spring 2011-13 turmoil in the Middle East, including the deployment of the Saudi troops in Bahrain,

and including the analysis of the role of influential Qatar-based and GCC-backed Al Jazeera TV network is the best proof of the very nature of the GCC mandate.

The SCO is internally induced and more symmetric setting. Essentially, it came into existence through a strategic Sino-Russian rapprochement¹, based, for the first time in modern history, on parity, to deter external aspirants (the US, Japan, Korea, India, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) and to keep the resources, territory, present socio-economic cultural and political regime in the Central Asia, Tibet heights and the Xinjiang Uighur province in line.

The next to consider is the Indian subcontinent's grouping, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation – SAARC. This organization has a well-established mandate, well staffed and versed Secretariat. However, the Organization is strikingly reminiscent of the League of Nations. The League is remembered as an altruistic setup which repeatedly failed to adequately respond to the security quests of its members as well as to the challenges and pressures of parties that were kept out of the system (e.g. Russia until well into the 1930s and the US remaining completely outside the system, and in the case of the SAARC surrounding; China, Saudi Arabia and the US). The SAARC is practically a hostage of mega confrontation of its two largest members, both confirmed nuclear powers; India

and Pakistan. These two challenge each other geopolitically and ideologically. Existence of one is a negation of the existence of the other; the religiously determined nationhood of Pakistan is a negation of multi-ethnic India and vice versa. Additionally, the SAARC although internally induced is an asymmetric organization. It is not only the size of India, but also its position: centrality of that country makes SAARC practically impossible to operate in any field without the direct consent of India, be it commerce, communication, politics or security.

For a serious advancement of multilateralism, mutual trust, a will to compromise and achieve a common denominator through active co-existence is the key. It is hard to build a common course of action around the disproportionately big and centrally positioned member which would escape the interpretation as containment by the big or assertiveness of its center by the smaller, peripheral members.

Multivector Foreign Policy

Finally, there is an ASEAN – a grouping of 10 Southeast Asian nations², exercising the balanced multi-vector policy, based on the non-interference principle, internally and externally. This, Jakarta/Indonesia headquartered³ organization has a dynamic past and an ambitious current charter. It is an internally induced and relatively symmetric arrangement with the strong-

1. *Analyzing the Sino-Soviet and post-Soviet-Sino relations tempts me to compare it with the Antic Roman Empire. The monolithic block has entered its fragmentation on a seemingly rhetoric, clerical question – who would give the exclusive interpretation of the holy text: Rome or Constantinople. Clearly, the one who holds the monopoly on the interpretation has the ideological grip, which can easily be translated into a strategic advantage. It was Moscow insisting that the Soviet type of communism was the only true and authentic communism. A great schism put to an end the lasting theological but also geopolitical conflict in the antique Roman theatre. The Sino-Soviet schism culminated with the ideological and geopolitical emancipation of China, especially after the Nixon recognition of Beijing China. Besides the ideological cleavages, the socio-economic and political model of the Roman Empire was heavily contested from the 3rd century onwards. The Western Roman Empire rigidly persisted to any structural change, unable to adapt. It eroded and soon thereafter vanished from the political map. The Eastern Empire successfully reformed and Byzantium endured as a viable socio-economic and political model for another 1,000 years. Feeling the need for an urgent reshape of the declining communist system, both leaders Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping contemplated reforms. Gorbachev eventually fractured the Soviet Union with glasnost and perestroika. Deng managed China successfully. Brave, accurate and important argumentation comes from diplomat and prolific author Kishore Mahbubani (The New Asian Hemisphere, 2008, page 44-45). Mahbubani claims that Gorbachev handed over the Soviet empire and got nothing in return, while Deng understood “the real success of Western strength and power ... China did not allow the students protesting in Tiananmen Square”. Consequently, Deng drew a sharp and decisive line to avoid the fate of Russia, and allowed only perestroika. China has survived, even scoring the unprecedented prosperity in only the last two decades. Russia has suffered a steep decline in the aftermath of the loss of its historic empire, including the high suicide and crime rates as well as the severe alcohol problems. Gorbachev himself moved to the US, and one vodka brand labels his name.*

2. *The membership might be extended in the future to East Timor and Papua New Guinea.*

3. *Symbolic or not, the ASEAN HQ is located less than 80 miles away from the place of the historical, the NAM-precursor, the Asian-African Conference of Bandung 1955.*

est members placed around its geographic center, like in case of the EU equilibrium with Germany-France/Britain-Italy/Poland-Spain geographically balancing each other. Situated on the geographic axis of the southern flank of the Asian landmass, the so-called growth triangle of Thailand-Malaysia-Indonesia represents the core of the ASEAN not only in economic and communication terms but also by its political leverage. The EU-like ASEAN Community Road Map (for 2015) will absorb most of the Organization's energy⁴. However, the ASEAN has managed to open its forums for the 3+3 group/s, and could be seen in the long run as a cumulus setting towards the wider pan-Asian forum in future.

Before closing this brief overview, let us mention two recently inaugurated informal forums, both based on the external calls for a burden sharing. One, with a jingoistic-coined name by the Wall Street bankers⁵ - BRI(I)C/S, so far includes two important Asian economic, demographic and political powerhouses (India and China), and one peripheral (Russia). Indonesia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Iran are a few additional Asian countries whose national pride and pragmatic interests are advocating a BRIC membership. The G-20, the other informal forum, is also assembled on the Ad hoc (pro bono) basis following the need of the G-7 to achieve a larger approval and support for its monetary (currency exchange accord) and financial (austerity) actions introduced in the aftermath of still unsettled financial crisis. Nevertheless, the BRIC and G-20 have not provided the Asian participating states either with the more leverage in the Bretton Woods institutions besides a burden sharing, or have they helped to tackle the indigenous Asian security problems. Appealing for the national pride, however, both informal gatherings may divert the necessary resources and attention to Asian states from

their pressing domestic, pan-continental issues.

Yet, besides the UN system machinery of the Geneva-based Disarmament committee, the UN Security Council, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – OPCW and International Atomic Energy Agency – IAEA (or CTBTO), even the ASEAN Asians (as the most multilateralized Asians) have no suitable standing forum to tackle and solve their security issues. An organization similar to the Council of Europe or the OSCE is still far from emerging on Asian soil.

Our history warns. Nevertheless, it also provides a hope: The pre-CSCE (pre-Helsinki) Europe was indeed a dangerous place to live in. The sharp geopolitical and ideological default line was passing through the very heart of Europe, cutting it into halves. The southern Europe was practically sealed off by notorious dictatorships; in Greece (Colonel Junta), Spain (Franco) and Portugal (Salazar), with Turkey witnessing several of its governments toppled by the secular and omnipotent military establishment, with inverted Albania and a (non-Europe minded) non-allied, Tito's Yugoslavia. Two powerful instruments of the US military presence (NATO) and of the Soviets (Warsaw pact) in Europe were keeping huge standing armies, enormous stockpiles of conventional as well as the ABC weaponry and delivery systems, practically next to each other. By far and large, European borders were not mutually recognized. Essentially, the west rejected to even recognize many of the Eastern European, Soviet dominated/installed governments.

Territorial disputes unresolved

Currently in Asia, there is hardly a single state which has no territorial dispute within its neighborhood. From the Middle East, Caspian and

4. Comparisons pose an inaccuracy risks as history often finds a way to repeat itself, but optimism finally prevails. Tentatively, we can situate the ASEAN today, where the pre-Maastricht EU was between the Merge Treaty and the Single European Act.

5. The acronym was originally coined by Jim O'Neill, a chief global economist of Goldman Sachs, in his 2001 document report: "Building Better Global Economic BRICs". This document was elaborating on countries which may provide the West with the socially, economically and politically cheap primary commodities and undemanding labor force, finally suggesting to the West to balance such trade by exporting its high-priced final products in return. The paper did not foresee either creation of any BRIC grouping or the nomadic change of venue places of its periodic meetings. O'Neill initially tipped Brazil, Russia, India and China, although at recent meetings South Africa was invited (BRICS) with the pending Indonesia (BRIICS).

Central Asia, Indian sub-continent, mainland Indochina or Archipelago SEA, Tibet, South China Sea and the Far East, many countries are suffering numerous green and blue border disputes. The South China Sea solely counts for over a dozen territorial disputes – in which mostly China presses peripheries to break free from the long-lasting encirclement. These moves are often interpreted by the neighbors as dangerous assertiveness. On the top of that Sea resides a huge economy and insular territory in a legal limbo – Taiwan, which waits for a time when the pan-Asian and intl. agreement on how many Chinas Asia should have, gains a wide and lasting consensus.

Unsolved territorial issues, sporadic irredentism, conventional armament, nuclear ambitions, conflicts over exploitation of and access to the marine biota, other natural resources including fresh water access and supply are posing enormous stress on external security, safety and stability in Asia. Additional stress comes from the newly emerging environmental concerns, that are representing nearly absolute security threats, not only to the tiny Pacific nation of Tuvalu⁶, but also to the Maldives, Bangladesh, Cambodia, parts of Thailand, of Indonesia, of Kazakhstan and of the Philippines, etc⁷. All this combined with uneven economic and demographic dynamics⁸ of the continent are portraying Asia as a real powder keg.

It is absolutely inappropriate to compare the size of Asia and Europe – the latter being rather

an extension of a huge Asian continental land-mass, a sort of western Asian peninsula – but the interstate manoeuvring space is comparable. Yet, the space between the major powers of post-Napoleonic Europe was as equally narrow for any manoeuvre as is the space today for any security manoeuvre of Japan, China, India, Pakistan, Iran and the like.

Let us also take a brief look at the peculiarities of the nuclear constellations in Asia. Following the historic analogies; it echoes the age of the American nuclear monopoly and the years of Russia's desperation to achieve the parity.

Besides holding huge stockpiles of conventional weaponry and numerous standing armies, Asia is a home of four (plus peripheral Russia and Israel) of the nine known nuclear powers (declared and undeclared). Only China and Russia are parties to the Non-proliferation Treaty – NPT. North Korea walked away in 2003, whereas India and Pakistan both confirmed nuclear powers declined to sign the Treaty. Asia is also the only continent on which nuclear weaponry has been deployed⁹.

Cold War exiled in Asia

As is well known, the peak of the Cold War was marked by the mega geopolitical and ideological confrontation of the two nuclear superpowers whose stockpiles by far outnumbered the stockpiles of all the other nuclear powers combined. However enigmatic, mysterious and incalculable

6. Tuvalu, a country composed of low-laying atoll islands, faces an imminent complete loss of state territory. This event would mark a precedent in the theory of intl. law – that one country suffers a complete geographic loss of its territory.

7. Detailed environmental impact risk assessments including the no-go zones are available in the CRESTA reports. The CRESTA Organization is powered by the Swiss RE as a consortium of the leading insurance and reinsurance companies.

8. The intriguing intellectual debate is currently heating up the western world. Issues are fundamental: Why is science turned into religion? Practiced economy is based on the over 200-years old liberal theory of Adam Smith and over 300-years old philosophy of Hobbes and Locke – basically, frozen and rigidly canonized into a dogmatic exegesis. Scientific debate is replaced by a blind obedience. Why is religion turned into political ideology? Religious texts are misinterpreted and ideologically misused in Europe, ME, Asia, Americas and Africa. Why is the secular or religious ethics turned from the bio-centric comprehension into the anthropocentric environmental ignorance? The resonance of these vital debates is gradually reaching Asian elites. No one can yet predict the range and scope of their responses, internally or externally. One is certain; Asia understood that the global (economic) integration can not be a substitute for any viable development strategy. Globalization, as experienced in Asia and observed elsewhere, did not offer a shortcut to development, even less to social cohesion, environmental needs, domestic employment, educational uplift of the middle class and general public health.

9. "Obama, the first seating American president to visit Laos, recalled that the US has dropped more than 2 million tons of bombs on this country during the heights of the Vietnam war – more than it dropped on Germany and Japan combined during the WWII. That made Laos, per capita, the most heavily bombed country in human history. 'Countless civilian were killed... especially innocent men, women children. Even now, many Americans were unaware of their country's deadly legacy here' – the president said in Vientiane in 2016." It took a good 40 years to the US press to fairly report on it, too. /Landler, M. (2016), Obama seeks to Heal scars of War in Laos, International New York Times, September 07, 2016, (page 6)/

to each other¹⁰, the Americans and Soviets were on opposite sides of the globe, had no territorial disputes, and no record of direct armed conflicts.

Insofar, the Asian nuclear constellation is additionally specific as each of the holders has a history of hostilities – armed frictions and confrontations over unsolved territorial disputes along the shared borders, all combined with the intensive and lasting ideological rivalries. The Soviet Union had bitter trans border armed frictions with China over the demarcation of its long land border. China has fought a war with India and has acquired a significant territorial gain. India has fought four mutually extortive wars with Pakistan over Kashmir and other disputed bordering regions. Finally, the Korean peninsula has witnessed the direct military confrontations of Japan, USSR, Chinese as well as the US on its very soil, and remains a split nation under a sharp ideological divide.

On the western edge of the Eurasian continent, neither France, Britain, Russia nor the US had a (recent) history of direct armed conflicts. They do not even share land borders.

Finally, only India and now post-Soviet Russia have a strict and full civilian control over its military and the nuclear deployment authorization. In the case of North Korea and China, it is in the hands of an unpredictable and non-transparent communist leadership – meaning, it resides outside democratic, governmental decision-making. In Pakistan, it is completely in the hands of a po-

litically omnipresent military establishment. Pakistan has lived under a direct military rule for over half of its existence as an independent state.

What eventually kept the US and the USSR from deploying nuclear weapons was the dangerous and costly struggle called: “mutual destruction assurance”. Already by the late 1950s, both sides achieved parity in the number and type of nuclear warheads as well as in the number and precision of their delivery systems. Both sides produced enough warheads, delivery systems’ secret depots and launching sites to amply survive the first impact and to maintain a strong second-strike capability¹¹. Once comprehending that neither the preventive nor pre-emptive nuclear strike would bring a decisive victory but would actually trigger the final global nuclear holocaust and ensure total mutual destruction, the Americans and the Soviets have achieved a fear-equilibrium through the hazardous deterrence. Thus, it was not an intended armament rush (for parity), but the non-intended Mutual Assurance Destruction – MAD – with its tranquilizing effect of nuclear weaponry, if possessed in sufficient quantities and impenetrable configurations – that brought a bizarre sort of pacifying stability between two confronting superpowers. Hence, MAD prevented nuclear war, but did not disarm the superpowers.

As noted, the nuclear stockpiles in Asia are considerably modest¹². The number of warheads, launching sites and delivery systems is not suffi-

10. *The Soviet Union was enveloped in secrecy, a political culture, eminent in many large countries, which the Soviets inherited from the Tsarist Russia and further enhanced – a feature that puzzled Americans. It was the US cacophony of open, nearly exhibitionistic policy debates that puzzled Russians – and made both sides unable to predict the moves of the other one. The Soviets were confused by the omnipresence of overt political debate in the US, and the Americans were confused by the absence of any political debate in the USSR. Americans well knew that the real power resided outside the government, in the Soviet Politburo. Still, it was like a black-box – to use a vivid Kissinger allegory, things were coming in and getting out, but nobody figured out what was happening inside. Once the particular decision had been taken, the Soviets implemented it persistently in a heavy-handed and rigid way. Usually, the policy alternation/adjustment was not coming before the personal changes at the top of the SU Politburo – events happening so seldom. On the other hand, the Soviets were confused by the equidistant constellation of the US executive, legislative and judicial branches – for the Soviet taste, too often changed, the chaotic setup of dozens of intelligence and other enforcement agencies, the role of the media and the public, and the influential lobby groups that crosscut the US bipartisanship – all which participated in the decision prep and making process. Even when brokered, the US actions were often altered or replaced in zigzagging turns. The US was unable to grasp where the Communist Party ended and the USSR government started. By the same token, the Soviets were unable to figure out where the corporate America ended and the US government started. Paradoxically enough, the political culture of one prevented it from comprehending and predicting the actions of the other one. What was the logical way for one was absolutely unthinkable and illogical for the other.*

11. *As Waltz rightfully concludes: “Conventional weapons put a premium on striking first to gain the initial advantage and set the course of the war. Nuclear weapons eliminate this premium. The initial advantage is insignificant...”... due to the second strike capability of both belligerents. (“The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed” by Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N Waltz, 2003, p. 112).*

12. *It is assumed that Pakistan has as few as 20 combat/launching ready fission warheads, India is believed to have some 60, and Korea (if any, not more than) 2-3 only. Even China, considered as the senior nuclear state, has not more than 20 ICBM.*

cient and sophisticated enough to offer the second strike capability. That fact seriously compromises stability and security: preventive or pre-emptive N-strike against a nuclear or non-nuclear state could be contemplated as decisive, especially in South Asia and on the Korean peninsula, not to mention the Middle East¹³.

A general wisdom of geopolitics assumes the potentiality of threat by examining the degree of intentions and capability of belligerents. However, in Asia this theory does not necessarily hold the complete truth: Close geographic proximities of Asian nuclear powers means shorter flight time of warheads, which ultimately gives a very brief decision-making period to engaged adversaries. Besides a deliberate, a serious danger of an accidental nuclear war is therefore evident.

Multilateral mechanisms

One of the greatest thinkers and humanists of the 20th century, Erich Fromm wrote: *"...man can only go forward by developing (his) reason, by finding a new harmony..."*¹⁴

There is certainly a long road from vision and wisdom to a clear political commitment and accorded action. However, once it is achieved, the operational tools are readily at disposal. The case of Helsinki Europe is very instructive. To be frank, it was the over-extension of the superpowers who contested one another all over the globe, which eventually brought them to the negotiation table. Importantly, it was also a constant, resolute call of the European public that alerted governments on both sides of the default line. Once the political considerations were settled, the technicalities gained momentum: there was – at first – mutual pan-European recognition of borders which tranquilized tensions literally overnight. Politico-military cooperation was sit-

uated in the so-called first Helsinki basket, which included the joint military inspections, exchange mechanisms, constant information flow, early warning instruments, confidence-building measures mechanism, and the standing panel of state representatives (the so-called Permanent Council). Further on, an important clearing house was situated in the so-called second basket – the forum that links the economic and environmental issues, items so pressing in Asia at the moment.

Admittedly, the III OSCE Basket was a source of many controversies in the past years, mostly over the interpretation of mandates. However, the new wave of nationalism, often replacing the fading communism, the emotional charges and residual fears of the past, the huge ongoing formation of the middle class in Asia whose passions and affiliations will inevitably challenge established elites domestically and question their policies internationally, and a related search for a new social consensus – all that could be successfully tackled by some sort of an Asian III basket. Clearly, further socio-economic growth in Asia is impossible without the creation and mobilization of a strong middle class – a segment of society which when appearing anew on the socio-political horizon is traditionally very exposed and vulnerable to political misdeeds and disruptive shifts. At any rate, there are several OSCE observing nations from Asia¹⁵; from Thailand to Korea and Japan, with Indonesia, a nation that currently considers joining the forum. They are clearly benefiting from the participation¹⁶.

Consequently, the largest continent should consider the creation of its own comprehensive pan-Asian multilateral mechanism. In doing so, it can surely rest on the vision and spirit of Helsinki. On the very institutional setup, Asia can closely

13. *Israel as a non-declared nuclear power is believed to have as many as 200 low-powered fission nuclear bombs. A half of it is deliverable by the mid-range missile Jericho II, planes and mobile (hide and relocate) launchers (including the recently delivered, nuclear warhead capable German submarines). Iran successfully tested the precision of its mid-range missile and keeps ambitiously working on the long-range generation of missiles. At the same time, Iran may well have acquired some vital dual-use (so far, peaceful purpose) nuclear technologies. There is a seed of nuclear ambition all over the Middle East, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey as the least shy ones.*

14. *"The Art of Loving", Erich Fromm, 1956, page 76. Fromm wrote it at about the time of the Bandung conference.*

15. *The so-called OSCE-Asian Partners for Cooperation are: Japan (1992), Korea (1994), Thailand (2000), Afghanistan (2003), Mongolia (2004) and Australia (2009). Within the OSCE quarters, particularly Thailand and Japan enjoy a reputation of being very active.*

16. *It is likely to expect that five other ASEAN countries, residentially represented in Vienna, may formalize their relation with OSCE in a due time. The same move could be followed by the Secretariats of both SAARC and ASEAN.*

revisit the well-envisioned SAARC and ambitiously empowered ASEAN¹⁷ fora. By examining these two regional bodies, Asia can find and skillfully calibrate the appropriate balance between widening and deepening of the security mandate of such future multilateral organization – given the number of states as well as the gravity of the pressing socio-political, environmental and politico-military challenges.

In the age of unprecedented success and the unparalleled prosperity of Asia, an indigenous multilateral pan-Asian arrangement presents itself as an opportunity. Contextualizing Hegel's famous saying that "*freedom is...an insight into necessity*" let me close by stating that a need for the domesticated pan-Asian organization warns by its urgency too.

Clearly, there is no emancipation of the continent; there is no Asian century, without the pan-Asian multilateral setting.

Vienna, 18 MAY 18

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17. In Europe and in Asia – even when being at the HQ in Jakarta, I am often asked to clarify my (overly) optimistic views on the ASEAN future prospects. The ASEAN as well as the EU simply have no alternative but to survive and turn successful, although currently suffering many deficiencies and being far from optimized multilateral mechanisms. Any alternative to the EU is a grand accommodation of either France or Germany with Russia – meaning a return to Europe of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries – namely, perpetual wars and destructions. Any alternative to the ASEAN would be an absorptive accommodation of particular ASEAN member states to either Japan or China or India – meaning fewer large blocks on a dangerous collision course. Thus, paradoxically enough in cases of both the EU and of ASEAN, it is not (only) the inner capacitation but the external constellations that make me optimistic about their respective success.



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CONSIDERATION**Jordan – NO to instability!****Corneliu PIVARIU**

The end of May, 2018 was marked by strong and wide street protests in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan after a period of several years in which Jordan was the most stable country in a unstable region. Their amplitude and, at the same time, the attention King Abdullah II pays to the domestic situation was proved by the resignation of the prime minister Hani al-Mulki and by the royal decree appointing the minister of Education Omar al-Razzaz to form a new government.

Razzaz, who formerly worked with the World Bank, succeeded in forming the new government (16 of the 28 ministers kept their portfolios), a government that took the oath on June,15th. The prime minister's resignation, as well as forming a new government and even snap elections were steps taken frequently in a usual manner by the Hashemite ruler in order to defuse some domestic situation crises. Furthermore, only between May, 2016 and March, 2018, the Jordanian government was replaced six times.

The crisis was triggered by the steps taken by the government in order to cut the budget deficit and to disburse the loan the International Monetary Fund granted in 2016. The steps were meant to bring in new taxes (10% for some agricultural products previously exempted from such taxes) as well as cancelling the subsidies on more than 150 other goods and products. In fact, the protests against the increase of bread price begun already six months ago, although with a lesser amplitude.

Jordan's economy was strongly affected by the regional crises, by the blockage of the commercial routes as a result of closing certain borders, of discontinuing Egypt gas deliveries and mostly by the important inflow of Syrian refugees, numbering 660,000 officially, but 1.5 million according to unofficial data, who created huge logistical problems and pressures on the labor market when the unemployment rate exceeds 18%, the highest in the last years, and the percentage of poor reached 14.4%.

The current government is made up to a great extent by conservative technocrats and a small number of liberal ministers and it is estimated they are not cohesive enough. The appointed deputy prime minister, Rajai Muasher, is a banker and an important businessman, follower of the predominant role for the private sector in the economy. Yet the government cannot have a predominant role in solving Jordan's economic situation. It is the wise Jordanian monarch and the foreign support he can catalyse that may alleviate the situation. On June 10th, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait decided at a meeting in Mecca to grant Jordan financial assistance of \$2.5 billion to Jordan covering a five years period consisting of direct transfers to the Central Bank of Jordan and financial guarantees. The economic analysts estimate the grant will help – for a certain period – the troubled Jordanian economy. In fact, the farsighted Abdullah II assessed that: *“the international assistance for Jordan fell sharply in spite of the difficulties we are faced with as a result of the Syrian refugees problem. Jordan is confronted with an economic crisis and with unanticipated regional changes. No plan can solve these challenges quickly and efficiently”*.

Jordan is particularly important for the current developments in the Middle East and especially in Syria, it is an important USA's ally that deployed around 2,800 military in Jordan with different missions, including handling Patriot missiles, it was a major logistical and not only hub in fighting Daesh from Muwaffaq Salti airbase, too. As of 2013, the USA granted Jordan defense loan guarantees amounting to \$3.75 billion and in February 2018 a memorandum increasing the assistance by \$1.27 billion yearly for the coming five years was signed.

Jordan needs a clear solution on a long term for its economic problems, something it can secure only with its allies and friends who should heed this purpose. A major instability in Jordan should be avoided as it may have unwanted and difficult to predict consequences for the entire Middle East.

The Main Factors of the Middle East Situation



**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST BETWEEN GLOBAL AND REGIONAL

After the lightning triumph over Mosul city and the proclamation in 2014 of the “new Islamic caliphate” of the third millennium, one of the first acts of “caliph” Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi – a dull act in itself yet having a substantial and expressive symbolical charge – consisted of bulldozing part of the earth wall marking the terrestrial border between Iraq and Syria. It was not only just a gesture intended to be a proclamation of the Islamic “unity”, but also mainly a manifestation of rebellion against a political geography fragmented a century ago by the Sykes-Picot agreement, by which the two global colonial powers – France and Great Britain – partitioned between themselves the former Ottoman province of the “old” Middle East.

Beyond its propagandistic populism, the act directed by “caliph” Al-Baghdadi was neither novel nor valid in its essence as it was circumscribed – consciously or not – to a centuries-old history marked by gestures of contestation of the historical borders among the regional states resulted from the partition of the former Ottoman Empire, gestures made either under the motivation of the territorial and identitarian reunification of the Arab world, or under the nostalgic urge of an illusory pan-Islamism. Until the beginning of the new millennium and after that, this tendency of making the borders more fragile reached not a few times paroxysmic heights with the fundamental difference that it unfolded more and more visible on the background of the balance – itself even more fragile – among the interests of the great players on the global geopolitical chessboard, on the one hand, and the more and more conceited ascent of the states in the area animated by the ambition of joining the regional power status and, ipso facto, of a player

wanting to have its voice heard and listened to in the new international concert.

One cannot say that the Middle East is among the most populous or the most developed regions. However, the area was throughout history and is now an epicentre of conflicts and confrontations among the world’s big powers in a competition determined by at least four factors: one of a symbolic nature, as the area is the birthplace of the three big monotheistic religions of the human civilization – Judaism, Christianity and Islam; a strategic one, as it is placed at the crossroads of three continents, including the important civilian and military navigation routes; the energy factor, as it has the biggest hydrocarbons reserves of the world; the economic factor mainly as importing market with a high absorption capacity, the products of the military industry included.

The reality that the big powers try ceaselessly and always to interfere directly or by proxies in the historical developments of the Middle East is well known. Now, and especially after the war between Iraq and the Islamic Iran and September 2001 terrorist-Islamist attacks, this interventionism of the Western powers and post-Soviet Russia was sensitively influenced and oriented towards pragmatic approaches, on the one hand, and of progressively returning of the world order to multipolarity of power, which is not any longer America’s sole monopoly.

On the other hand, in spite of its assets granting attractiveness, the Middle East itself evolved towards a conflicted status with multiple causalities among which, and not the least, the emergence of the regional states with hegemonic ambitions, the conflicts for influence or religious, sectarian or ethnical motivations, so that a schematic graphical representation of the conflicted networking troubling this part of the world will portray a complex network of interferences, connections and criss-crosses.

The regional powers – a shaky balance

Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel and, to a lesser extent, Egypt are today the states that cannot be ignored by any discourse on the regional balances of nowadays and of foreseeable future of the Middle East. It is fair to say that these five states have the real capacity of influencing the regional developments even if the nearer of more distant lessons of history, as well as the inherent specificities distinguishing them, call upon a separate address of each of these players.

1. Recep Teyyip Erdogan's **Turkey** made a defining title of its regional policy of outright rejection of any idea or act which finally leads to the emergence of a state entity of the minority Kurdish ethnics that would have, in Ankara's vision, as direct consequence, Syria's and Iraq's territorial dismantling and, in a likely perspective, of the very Turkish national territory. Turkey's interferences, be them political and diplomatic or especially military are primarily directed against the Kurds and only after against Islamic terrorist threats. So, Turkey is unwillingly morphing into an ally of a country such Iran, namely its traditional enemy in the context of the historical fault line between the Iranian Shiism and Turkey's majority Sunnism. On the other hand, the strongly nationalistic nostalgia of Erdogan's regime

which, never ceases to raise the issue of the validity of the 1922 Treaty of Lausanne, could have a boomerang effect to the extent Erdogan's revisionist spurts could awake, in the Kurdish historical mental, a contrary reaction in the sense of raising the issue of the conclusions reached and inked in the post-war Treaty of Sèvres, a fact which, in its turn, will oblige Ankara to conceive the materialization of a Sunni Muslim solidarity front including coming closer to Saudi Arabia, a country threatened, in its turn, by the cracks in the construct of the ruling family, by the costly perpetuation of the war in Yemen and, economically, by the abrupt decrease of the oil rental. But even in this case, a Sunni front will inevitably generate new conflicted situations: on the one hand, with Saudi Arabia itself, which will not give up in favour of Turkey its ambitions of absolute leader of Sunnism (Erdogan covets this statute, too), and, on the other hand, Iran's Twelvers Shia for which a rapprochement between the Turkish and Saudi Sunism will be certainly considered a serious *casus belli*. With all the consequences devolving for the Middle East's already frail stability.

2. **Iran** is another key-centre of power in what concern the pair of scales of regional influence. Yet this country is far from being a pillar of



stability and of domination ability due mainly to the major economic problems, to domestic fragmentation, increasingly difficult to hide animosities between the clerical circles and the reformist opposition, open to secularity. Moreover, the Islamic Republic is a multi-ethnic state whereby the Persians make up only 60% of the population of its demography. In contrast, the theocratic regime is distinguished by manifesting a strong will, support and infiltration of the Shia Muslim communities in the Gulf countries and in the Levant's geography, an ambition strengthened once more by America's invasion of Iraq that resulted in the disappearance of Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime and seizing the power in Baghdad by the new Shia sectarian leadership. Without being a factor of regional geopolitical reconfiguration, the Iranian sovereignty imposed on the Shia Iraq and the sectarian expansion of the Islamic revolution might become, under favourable circumstances, an Islamic Republic's leverage for weakening the Sunni nations and supporting the Mullahs' regional ambitions. However, the critical hostility in the relationship with Saudi Arabia could turn the franchise war in Yemen into a direct confrontation and a difficult to predict evolution of the tensions with the United States and Israel that may lead to the assessment that, for the time being, Iran is not in a position of strength and, consequently, has neither the interest, nor the potential of provoking major reconfigurations of the current political geography of the Middle East.

3. The absolute hereditary monarchy in Saudi Arabia has the peculiarity of its domestic stability being dependent and conditional on the power ratio in a society strongly divided into tribes and clans, which was drawn into the forced financing (indirectly yet strongly marked by the Wahhabite doctrine) of the jihadist currents and entities and has created, ipso facto, the internal germs of its own destabilization. The Saudi monarchic regime that fights currently for counteracting the domestic threats, engaged in an obsessive conflict with Iran and more and more dependent on Western protection, can be characterized now as being weakened and fragile. The society's very relative liberalization (women's

right of driving a car or of attending shows on the stadiums or of the "historical event" of authorizing public cinemas) do not compensate the failures manifest in other fields. However, through its policy of over weaponizing promoted during the last years, by cross border massive financing of a strict Islam and by its statute of the "custodian of Islam's holy places", Saudi Arabia remains a power that cannot be excluded from the regional strategic equations yet as is the case with Iran, and has no interest of questioning the present configuration, political or of another nature, of the Middle East.

4. **The State of Israel**, which on May 14th celebrated 70 years since its official emergence on the Middle East's map is now in a discrete yet sustained campaign of identifying new allies in its regional proximity. On the background of the troubled developments on the chessboard of the Middle East, of the change of Administration at the White House and taking out of the drawers of time the "historical importance" of the peace treaties concluded with Egypt and Jordan, yet carefully avoiding the Oslo episode of the peace with the Palestinians, the Jewish state is vitally interested in maintaining the stability of the two neighbouring Arab states and of identifying new connection bridges with the Sunni Muslim universe that might help weaken and isolate its irreconcilable enemy – Iran. Until now, the damaged status of the Palestinian file limited practically any significant advancement towards the "Sunni block" whereby only pale positive signals came from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which seem to be rather a concession made to hasty Donald Trump. Netanyahu government is obviously concerned of the advancement witnessed in neighbouring Syria by Bashar Al-Assad's armies against the Syrian and Islamist opposition and also of the discrete yet continuous coming closer of the Iranian militias to the truce line of the Golan Heights. Israel has enough reasons of distress that are connected not only to the developments on the Syrian front and refers to Hezbollah militias in Lebanon or to the perpetuation of a troubled climate in Iraq that is under the intense pressure of the sectarian Shia projects. In such an environment, the

Jewish state needs new cooperation channels for stabilizing the situation in the Levant and is open to that purpose on condition that the Palestinian issue does not become a sine-qua-non for a wider detente of its networking with the community of the other regional Arab and non-Arab powers.

5. Finally, **Egypt** is further confronted with a powerful internal radical Islamist threat, especially in the Sinai Peninsula, and also with the challenges of the chaotic situation in neighbouring Libya: Egypt is now a declining regional power as a result of the failure of its pan-Arab unionist approaches, of the incapacity of democratizing the concept of power and governance and of modernizing its economic structure. Under these circumstances, Egypt was forced to accept Saudi Arabia's and the United Arab Emirates' financial support in exchange for taking part, alongside the two monarchies, to the costly war in Yemen. Benefiting from the society's atavistic dynamism, from the cultural prestige and influence in the Arab world and from the peace situation with the Jewish state as well, Egypt has the necessary energy to revive its reference role for the Middle East's general developments.

The regional powers have, in the concise approach of the preceding lines, the interest of maintaining in a functional form the status quo of this boiling Middle East and under the fever of its own identitarian redefinition after the not ended yet whirlwinds of the "Arab spring". Weakened by the transformations triggered 7 years ago and by the impact of a radicalized Islam, which is still active, these states have in common an element on which their future configuration might depend, namely their networking with this world's global powers, a world that became again multipolar.

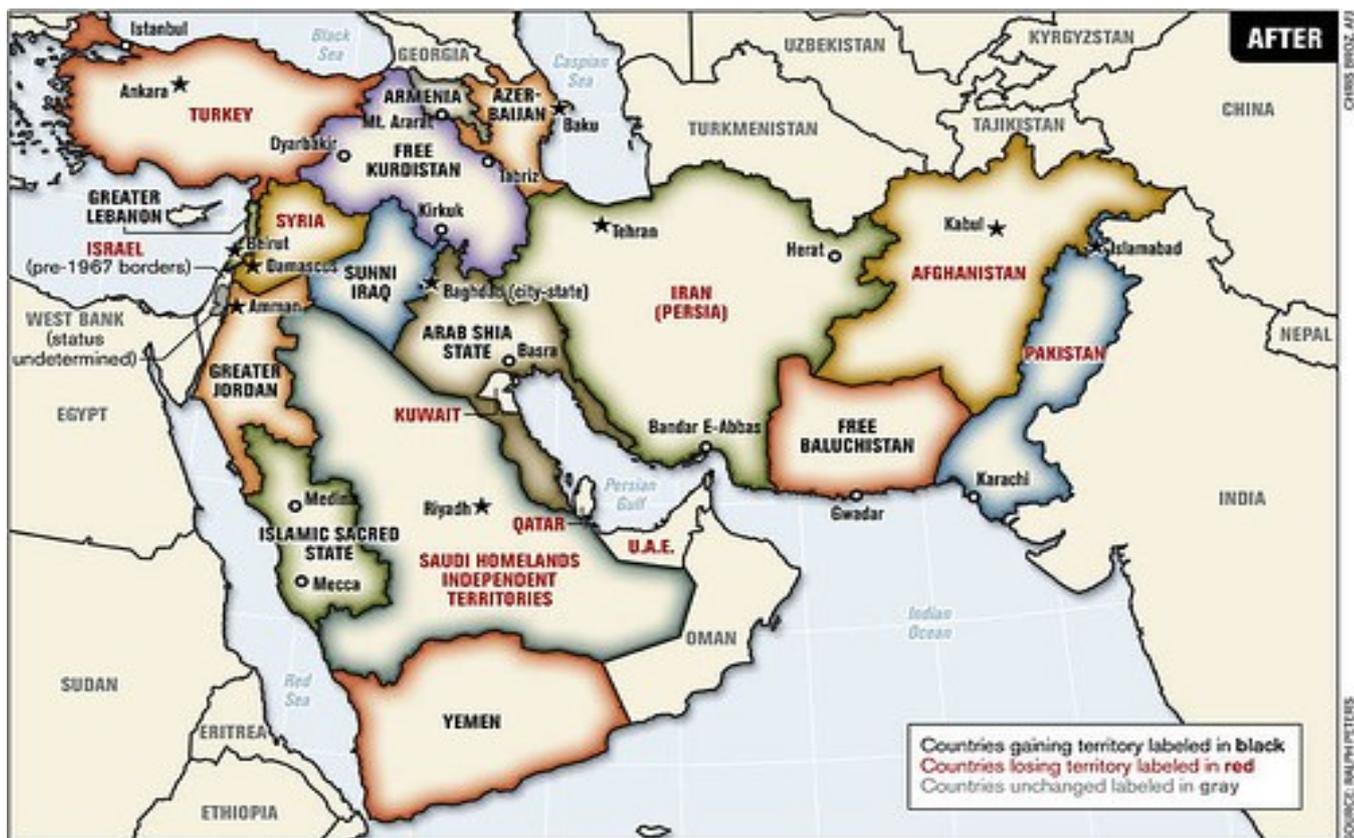
The global powers in the conflicted context of the Middle East

Through their interventionist policies, the great players on the chessboard of the global world had undoubtedly a substantial contribution to the rise and remaining in power in the Middle East of some authoritarian regimes whose he-

gemony bared them from a real adherence and support from their societies and nations. As against the political and military developments the region witnessed during the Cold War, the same players proceeded with an abrupt change of direction and acted for destabilizing, compromising and eventually replacing their former proteges. Such an action suffered from the mistake of an elective approach subject to their own interests at a certain historical moment: if, for instance, the violation by certain Arab rulers of the issues pertaining to the fundamental values of the Western democracy – human and citizen's rights and freedoms, freedom of expression, the liberalization of economy, equal opportunities – represented the main counts against Iraq, Syria, Libya and Iran after Khomeynist revolution, the same violations were overlooked in case of the absolutist Arab monarchies in the Gulf or even in case of the momentary rule of the political Islam of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2011 Egypt under the steamroller of changes. There were also theoretical documentation of the projects of "renewal through chaos" as it was the case of the famous creative destruction or "the chaos which builds" launched under George W. Bush Administration's auspices as ideological groundwork for democratization of this part of the world by destroying, through domestic chaos, the existing order and constructing, on its ruins, another Middle East built in accordance with the paradigms of Western democracy.

Even if today the great powers still bear the burden of the qualification of "arsonist firemen", these players' capacity of playing a role of referee, or at least of helpful factors for ending and morally and durably solving the tangle of conflicts suffocating the entire Middle East area cleansed of futile particles such as "great" or "new" that cannot be either denied or ignored. **The United States of America and the Russian Federation** are, from this perspective, in spite of their asynchronous position, the players with the greatest capacity (and the greatest responsibility) for acting in order to stabilize the Middle East.

Wishing to correct the years of the American martial policy under George W. Bush, Barack



The New Middle East according to the "constructive anarchy" theory

Obama Administration gave up totally any form of major involvement in the Middle East's geography and proceeded with, among others, a massive withdrawal of troops from Iraq and refused, at the same time, any substantial interference in the Syrian civil war (at least in its beginning stage), while Vladimir Putin exploited this "non-combat" policy in order to bring Russia back again in the position of a unavoidable player in the overall global order. The ascending tensions between Washington and Moscow on the margins of the Syrian file reached, however, a point whereby the Donald Trump Administration acknowledged if not the Russian Federation's role of global player, then at least the weight the latter has in the process of ending the civil war and of studying what has to be done in post-conflict Syria.

After a beginning period in which it left the impression of being favourable to a real thaw in the relationship with the Russian Federation, Donald Trump Administration proved to be extremely unpredictable and more rigid than most

pessimistic analysts and observers imagined. Since recognizing Jerusalem as eternal capital of the State of Israel followed by the transfer of the American embassy from Tel Aviv to the city of three religions, until blowing up the hopes of unlocking the peace process between the Palestinians and the Israelis up to the absolute hostility towards Iran and freezing the interlinking with Russia, Donald Trump Administration is promoting, including towards the Arab regional powers that are declared allied to America, the policy of a "new deal" whereby the dialogue is accepted to the extent the last word belongs to America only and under the conditions, including money-wise and of mercantile nature, accepted by the Trump Administration.

On the other side, Russia continues, under an artificial and frantic diplomatic rhetoric, to act completely contrary to the United States and is doing that not by a mechanically taking over certain schemes pertaining to the obsolete logic of the Cold War, but by exploiting Washington's political unilateralism in order to continue the

project of placing itself irrevocably and by all means on its site of great power on the chessboard of the global world. As far as **China** is concerned, it continuously promote the traditional rhetoric of defending human rights (yet using its veto power against any international resolution condemning the regimes violating these very rights), while for Beijing, the Middle East is less a hotbed of conflicts but more or even exclusively, a hydrocarbons source and a welcoming and roomy economic market.

*

Regional powers and global powers are as many players for whom the Middle East has become the chessboard of a double-dealing, of opportunism dictating the priorities on a short or on a medium run, as far as alliances or animosities, while the regional future is concerned, subject to the projects and interests of the global strategy of the great powers or staying in power or the rise to the status of big power of the Middle East's national regimes. Between the global interests and the regional possibilities, the Middle East remains a space of conflict and instability whereby, contrary to the situation existing at the end of the last century, both the global players and the regional players, active or emerging, seem to have understood and accepted that neither the global interests, nor the regional ones could be promoted by creating and maintaining the state of chaos and "constructive anarchy". The impact of the historical experiences might explain the skepticism and suspicion manifest by the Middle East's states towards the projects of the great powers in what concern security and political alliances which, in crisis situations, may be marginalized and replaced by the Western traditional policies of the "double containment" the region's history is full of.

The Middle East is, today, a space of artificial alliances with the extra-regional area, strange to a durable connection with what means a systemic framework of joint advantages, be it economic or security ones, and this individualization generates rifts, distortions and endogenous conflicts weakening the regional identity and making it more vulnerable and easier to be penetrated by

the offensive of the extra-regional projects. Thus, the Middle East, far from being "new" or "great" in a positive and creative sense, returns progressively to, if it did not become again, what it was at the emergence of this syntagm: a geographical landmark on the map of the interests of the great global strategic players.

EARLY ELECTIONS IN TURKEY: WHY WAS ERDOGAN IN A HURRY

Reza SHAHRESTANI

In agreement with his coalition partner, Devlet Bahçeli, leader of the National Movement Party, president Recep Teyyip Erdogan announced bringing the presidential and general elections one year earlier and set their new date on June 24th, 2018.

In April, 2017, the Turkish electorate opted, with a majority of 51.4%, through a referendum organized upon Recep Teyyip Erdogan's call, for Turkey's passing to the presidential form of governance and that in March 2019 local elections are to take place and in November of the same year, presidential and parliamentary elections follow.

Nevertheless, ever since the last year referendum, the idea of early elections dominated the way of thinking of the Justice and Development Party, and was generated by the apprehension that, under the circumstances of the unpredictable domestic and regional developments, the year 2019, initially set for the general elections, is "too distant" and leaves a chronological interval where both Turkey and the governance of the party chaired by Recep Teyyip Erdogan might be confronted with pressures and conflicting developments able to generate unwanted changes as far as the domestic stability is concerned and, especially to call into question Erdogan's very resilience and the future of his party having in mind in particular that the functioning of the governance system is affected by the existence of a contradictory parallelism between the parliamentary regime, consecrated by the

constitution, and the de facto presidential regime. Based on this contradiction, the alternative of bringing the elections one year earlier has crystalized in order to bring to an end the existing duplicity and, in the last analysis, to consecrate Erdogan's cumulation of absolute power in the state which he is exerting without a legal and constitutional cover. In the final analysis, hastening the presidential elections is a political decision circumscribed to a very timed equation of the advantages and disadvantages in a context where the military interventions Syria that Erdogan ordered code-named Operation "The Euphrates Shield" and "The Olive Branch" (the latter ended in a relatively easy capture of the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in Syria's north-west) resulted in a sensitive increase of the president's popularity, already affected by the Draconian measures taken after the failed putsch of the summer of 2016. Bringing forward the presidential and parliamentary scrutiny should be looked at consequently as an act of capitalizing on and harnessing such a favourable opportunity for strengthening the power for both Recep Teyyip Erdogan and for the Justice and Development Party.

Contrary to this analysis, there are quite a lot of observers who have different opinions and according to whom, Erdogan's decision was determined in reality by his concern of halting and avoiding at least two dangerous threatening factors both domestically and in the framework of Turkey's regional and international interlinking

Erdogan is managing, factors which are in a close complementarity relation. It is true that, according to latest statistics, the Turkish national economy is on the rise yet it is true as well the reality that the Turkish national currency witnessed and goes through a process of devaluation as compared to the western currencies on the international markets, a fact that even determined the president to declare that "Turkey is confronted with a genuine economic war it is decided not to lose it".

From this point of view, bringing forward the general elections represents – in the Justice and Development Party's analyses – a turning point which will "bring to an end to a contorted and troubled period of transition and will bring Turkey back to the straight path of a new system of stable and strong political governance".

The realities of the domestic crisis in Syria, witnessing a rapid and capricious evolution which might not be necessarily to Turkey's benefit should be added to this factor. The American-British-French triple attack against Syria's "chemical military capacities", the military incidents involving Iran's and Israel's air forces, the increased tensions between Russia and the Western community and NATO or the ideas circulating concerning the "importation of new military players in the Syrian domestic conflict" are as many factors with the potential of complicating Turkey's approaches, of creating unforeseeable problems related to Turkish presence on the Syrian territory and of further troubling the relations with yesterday's former American ally and even with today's Russian and Iranian allies.

From this perspective, bringing forward the elections was conceived by Recep Teyyip Erdogan as a preventive measure against any possible negative developments. In principle,



Meral Akşener

this move of announcing early elections provides Recep Teyyip Erdogan and the governing nationalistic political formation increased chances of obtaining the ballots victory and, at any rate, a better result than the one possible to obtain if the scrutiny take place, according to the initial schedule, in 2019. Their very bringing forward represents an advantage for Erdogan having in view that the 15 weeks period - spanning since the president's announcement to the



new date of the scrutiny - is, from the point of view of the political opposition formations led by People's Republican Party absolutely insufficient for organizing and carrying out an efficient electoral campaign with special grip to the electorate mass especially when the latter formations are far from clarifying the possible programmes and alliances for entering the electoral contest.

Mass media in Turkey are invoking as an Erdogan's serious counter-candidate "Turkey's Iron Lady", the sexagenarian politician Meral Akşener, leader of the so-called "Good Party" (*İli* Party) established on October 25th, 2017 by detachment from the National Movement Party. Yet for offering the Turkish electorate credible

reasons so that they offer the necessary suffrage for a victory over Erdoga, Turkey's "Iron Lady" will have to overcome serious handicaps she is confronted with among which, not the least, the very parties law which does not allow the participation at the electoral process of the political formations - such as "Good Party" - with less than one year since its establishment. Supposing that Meral Akşener will ask and obtain an exemption from this condition, the lack of popularity and adherence within the Turkish electorate remain something which, at least in light of the opinion polls, is in their majority a supporter of Erdogan. At the time these lines are written, the Turkish electoral mill contemplates the name of the former president Abdullah Güll, backed by the Republican Party (Kemalist type) and by

"Refah" formation (Islamist) - an option the Turkish annalists consider as "shy" and "unrealistic".

Although any scrutiny of such a scale may bring in surprises, too, the predominant view is that after the June 24th elections, Recep Teyyip Erdogan will strengthen his position of sultan-president.

Yet in less than a week, the ballots will speak.



GENERAL ELECTIONS IN THE LAND OF CEDARS: "LEBANON FOR (ALMOST) ALL LEBANESE"

Lamy FOUAD, Beirut

After nine years of parliamentary intermission and three extensions (2013, 2015, 2017) of the expired legislative, the Lebanese were finally invited, on May 6th, 2018 to cast their votes according to the new Electoral Law based on the proportionality criterium combined with the novel technique of the "preferential vote" which imparts the voter the right of stamping a certain electoral list and to vote for either the same list or for another list for a preferred candidate whose name is on the respective list.

For the direct observer of the electoral campaign preceding the vote, the striking impression was that he attends a specific electoral carnival "à la libanaise", marked by a formidable mobilization, impressive not by its amplitude but particularly by a staunch virulent rhetoric filled, like a cornucopia, with torrents of promises, pledges, show tears and screams for the future of a "Lebanon for all Lebanese", a unleashed confrontation that used without limits whatever the Arabic language can offer as far as the arms panoply is concerned – from the old stereotypes of a terrible psychological and linguistic war over the electorate to charges, threats, invectives and self-praises whereby the "red line" of de-



centy and common sense was violated under the impulse of a unlimited love for all Lebanese and, particularly for the 128 seats of the Parliament in Beirut.

The yellow flag of the "Shia and pro-Iranian Party of God" was hoisted on the statue of the former Sunni prime minister and martyr Rafik Hariri as a token of concord and national brotherhood and probably in the public space and on the stage of the electoral meetings faces and discourses which entered and wandered since a long time in the classicism of the Lebanese history succeeded each other – the same parties with calendar names such as "March 8th" and "March 14th", the same Shiite "Amal" Movement of the octogenarian Nabih Berri, the same Seyyd Hassan Nasrallah, the same Samir Geagea, the same "Lebanese Forces", the same eccentric Druze leader, the septuagenarian Walid Jumblatt and, particularly, the same primitive sectarian split of the domestic life which dictated Lebanon's history ever since its emergence as an independent state on the Levant's map.

And when the music stopped and the streets and public squares were left to the waste and sanitation workers, the figures spoke:

- 3.7 mil. de voters, including 1 mil. Lebanese of the diaspora;



- 49.20% participation to vote, a reduced percentage at least through the prism of the relentless campaign of electoral mobilization carried out by all formations engaged in the contest and the great stakes displayed under the sign of Lebanon's radical change, which "will not be any longer what it was".

The elections results confirmed this rhetoric prediction only to the extent they brought two less expected, although predictable surprises, namely the leap achieved by the Shiite formation Hezbollah which, together with the other Shiite entity, the "Amal" Movement, seized more than 50% of the parliamentarian seats, namely 65 out of the total of 128, on the one hand, and the severe setback scored by the Sunni camp led by prime minister Saad Al Hariri's "Future" current (*Al-Mustaqbal*) which lost one third of its parliamentary representation, falling from 35 mandates in the former parliament to under 20 seats and, nevertheless, maintains the chance of forming the new government by summing up the votes casted for the other lists and independent Sunni personalities participating in the elections, on the other hand.

The result of the elections was not ambiguous. The setback of the Sunnis grouped around prime minister Al-Hariri is unquestionable. The projection of the Shia forces led by Hassan Nasrallah's Hezbollah places the "resistance" doctrine and the Iranian influence in the Lebanese state's decision making elite and also in the core of possible political and military hurricanes where the official Lebanon and its military institution will be drawn inevitably into. A rebalancing of forces and influences is looming in the Christian political and sectarian camp too, where the president Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Current was seriously caught up by Samir Geagea's Lebanese Forces, totally hostile to Hezbollah's Shiites.

Except for, on the fragmented, shifting and complicated Lebanese political chessboard, the arithmetic imposed by votes computation does not necessarily correspond to the second specific mathematics particular to the Lebanese de-



mocracy which wants that the final tallies be decided behind the scenes by the "amicable" understandings among the "bosses" – be them parties', alliances' families', clans', sects', and, to an equal extent, by the external connexions, regional or international, by which all these are bound to foreign players, alliances and interests.

On this background, the rise of the Hezbollah militias is not due to May 6th vote. The domination of this political and military formation on the political Lebanese scene has begun at least a decade ago and was facilitated by the permanent mess and inconsistency of the Lebanese political forces. The result of May 6th elections which ended practically with a Hezbollah victory was influenced to a great extent by the developments of the regional political and military context and of Lebanon's geographical proximity. The United States' relative withdrawal from the regional "affairs", the deployment in Syria of the Russian army and of the Iranian militias and the consequent Bashar Al-Assad's salvation from falling, the surrendering position of the Lebanese and of its prime minister in front of the Wahhabite monarchy in Riyadh are but a few elements weighting heavily in the political and the Lebanese electorate's balance who was always very apprehensive and sensitive to the outside influence.

On the other hand, Saad Al-Hariri's "Future's" and Lebanese Sunnism's (relative) setback is not alien to the wider bankruptcy of the moderate and active Sunni forces and programs on the chessboard of the Middle East. In Iraq, in Syria



ades, Lebanon failed this time, too, the valuable opportunity it had of coming out of its old state garb of sectarian cantonal confederation and to find its way of passing to the modern state of "Lebanon for all Lebanese". After the elections, the formation of a new government follows, and the citizens do not expect too much mainly in what concern addressing the malignant chronic disease of corruption, political opportunism and of ever wider divide between the rich Lebanese and the poor Lebanese who get poorer and poorer. In this respect, the Lebanon that May 6th vote showed and will soon become apparent will be rather a partial Lebanon for all Lebanese.

or in Yemen they manufactured for themselves the hallmark of a loser force smashed between the "hammer" of the post "Arab spring" regimes and the "hard rock" of the jihadist terrorism, for which the Sunni projects proved to present a hardened blindness behind which and behind the ideologized self-victimization have been considered as synonymous and hotbeds of the great extremist blocks such as the "Islamic State".

On the other side, Hezbollah and its political allies won at least half of the votes on May 6th general elections. Considered by the USA as terrorist organization, Hezbollah got, through the victory record, not only a power asset on the Lebanese domestic chessboard, but also the capability of complicating the equation of the Western policies and particularly of the United States towards Lebanon and of giving new dimensions and prospects of addressing the ever threatening conflict with Israel, on the one hand, and Iran, as sponsor of the Syrian regime, on the other hand.

The very fact that Lebanon and its political class succeeded in bringing to an end a long political and parliamentary void they proved, irrespective of the elections result, that the country preserves its regenerative energy and the adhesion to the principles of democracy. Unfortunately, as was the case with the previous elections of the last two dec-

BETWEEN YOM HA'AZMAUT AND AL-NABKA: THE IMPOSSIBLE PEACE

Dr. MUNIR SALAMEH, Ramallah

On May 14th and 15th, the State of Israel witnessed two events with a double domestic significance yet with regional and international echoing likely to dramatically influence the equation of peace and war in the Middle East region in general, the prospects of solving the long Palestinian-Israeli conflict and, to an equal extent, the relationship among the main political and military players of this part of the world and on the chessboard of the global contemporary strategy.

In the first case, it is about celebrating the jubilee of the Independence Day (*Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, in Hebrew), marking this year, the birth, 70



May 14th, 1948: The Declaration of Independence

years ago, when on May 14th, 1948 the State of Israel was proclaimed, one day before the end of the British mandate in Palestine, an act that came as a culmination of the Zionist ideals as they were drawn up 52 years before (in 1896) by the Austrian Jew Theodor Herzl in his pamphlet "Der Judenstaat" (The State of the Jews).

From a juridical, territorial and demographic point of view, the creation of the State of Israel was based on Resolution No. 181 of the General Assembly of the UN of November, 29th, 1947 which provided for Palestine's partition between the Jews and the Arabs as follows:

- a Jewish state on 56.47% of the total territory with a population of 498,000 Jews and 325,000 Arabs;
- an Arab state on 43.5% of Palestine with a population of 807,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews;
- a regime of international tutelage for Jerusalem, with 100,000 Jewish inhabitants and 105,000 Arabs.

Since the Arab world did not accept the UN Resolution it considered unjust, 5 Arab states – Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria – and the League of the Arab States, (with its Arab Salvation Army, known also as the Arab Liberation Army, made up of 10,000 people – Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians, Palestinian Arabs and Egyptians of the Muslim Brotherhood) invaded the new Jewish state in November 1948. It was the first of the series of the great Arab-Israeli conflicts that ended in July 1949 by an armistice and with Israel's occupying a significant part of the former mandate Palestine and an exodus of around 711,000 Arab Palestinians, namely 50% of the Arab Palestinian population under British mandate or 80% of the Arab population of the Palestinian territory included by the Partition Resolution into the Israeli territory. 250,000 – 300,000 people who were expelled by the Jews before the the State of Israel's proclamation should be added to this first large wave of Palestinian refugees. Today, the total number of the Palestinian refugees registered as such

by the UN agencies for refugees amounts to 5,340,440 persons.

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The Arabic word *Nabka* is translated as "catastrophy", "debacle" and is the linguistic expression of a Palestinian remembrance that started, by the grace of history, 70 years ago, too, in 1948 and continues, contorted and dominated by the nostalgia of returning to origins while this "debacle" is commemorated every year by various manifestations and "marches of return", as a symbol of non-oblivion and of the hope in a messianic day of peace and justice. This year, the jubilee had two faces, on one side and on the other of the fence separating Israel from the "autonomous" Palestinian territories of Gaza and West Bank. Champagne cups were raised in honor of the 70 years of Israel's state existence and of the official inauguration of the embassy of the United States in Jerusalem, relocated from Tel Aviv by the grace of the peacemaker Donald Trump, on one side. On the other side, the Palestinians gathered in the "Great March of Return" and manifested for freedom, dignity and remembrance of all the vicissitudes they experienced during the last seven decades. Ovation and toasts, on one side, and, on the other side, the Palestinian demonstrators were met with toxic gas and the snipers' and security forces of the State of Israel's bullets.

This year's "Great March of Return" started on March 30th, and between this date and May 14th, the responses of the Israeli army resulted in 105 dead and more than 10,000 injured among the Palestinians and, during the "hot days" of May 14th- 15th and the next, another





66 dead and 2,400 injured were recorded on the separation line between Gaza and the Israeli territory. And all that with Israel's argument - that nobody denies - of defending itself "against terrorism" or, as an Israeli official said "it is better to be criticized than to be presented with condolences". (It is difficult to know whether the families of the dead will be presented with condolences and compassion from any one).

In the tradition of an old and comfortable diplomacy of prudery, the governments and the leadership of international agencies reacted, with a few exceptions, in the same already known and transient rhetoric.

The General Secretary of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, was content to reiterate the appeals to caution and calm, while Raad Al-Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, rebuked Israel for "the excessive use of force" and asked - who? - to hold... the Israeli security forces to account!

The UN Security Council expressed its "discontent and sadness" for the killing of Palestinian civilians and requested, at the same time, an investigation of Gaza massacre. As usual, the United States vetoed a resolution to that purpose.

The Secretary General of the Arab League, Ahmed Abu Gheit, saw it appropriate to place himself in the position of public and international prosecutor stating that "it is shameful to see countries participating, alongside the USA and Israel, at the celebration of transferring the American embassy to the occupied Jerusalem by gravely violating the international resolutions". In all likelihood, the feeling of imputability to

other states expressed by the Secretary General has its more pressing timeliness in case of the Arab League which, at least since the 1993 Oslo Agreements, a period including the last two years of his leadership of the League, this organization of the "Arab unity and solidarity" did not stand out by any concrete initiative to support the "Palestinian cause" represented by a Palestinian state which, even having no territorial dimension is, nevertheless, member of the Arab League.

We finally mention the step taken by South Africa by summoning Israel's ambassador to express "protests and consternation" for what happened and requesting him to leave the country as well as the singular virulence the Turkish leader Recep Teyyip Erdogan (currently in electoral campaign!) reacted with and engaged in a competition with prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the play of mutually expelling the ambassadors and high consular officials.

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Since seven decades, among anniversaries, commemorations and funerals, the Palestinians and the Israelis do nothing but convey to one another the same message which blend more and more into final victory for one side and into the ghost of final renunciation, for the other side, and which speaks little or at all about peace and more and more of the impossible peace, known lately under the commercial brand of the "deal of the century".

SYRIA: STAFFAN DE MIISTURA, THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE...WEAPONIZED POLITICAL SOLUTION

Maher NABOULSI, Syria

Ever since the first months from its beginning, the civil war in Syria was accompanied by declarations, international resolutions and Arab initiatives which introduced the passage, in 2014, to the process of political negotiations known in the chronicle of the "Syrian revolution" as "the Geneva Process", a process unfolded in episodes like a TV series and which inspired, through the

years, another two negotiation "processes" called according to the locations where they were initiated or carried out, namely Kazakhstan's capital, Astana, and the tourist resort Sochi on the Black Sea Russian shore. These "processes", too, generated countless series of declarations, appeals to restraint and calm, to ceasefire or "de-escalation". None of these were observed or implemented in their letter and spirit and the war went on seemingly with more rage both from the side of the regime and its allies and from the Syrian and Islamist opposition, on the other side, as if nothing happened on the political and diplomatic segment. The paradox that all the belligerent sides continued their military campaigns and spoke conscientiously of the "imperative" of political negotiations as a mechanism for a real solution of the crisis was there all along. In reality, such a rhetoric has no other meaning than each player getting an as advantageous position as possible on the front and, thus, arguments and assets of strength at the negotiations table. All this merry-go-round, coincidence or not, one has found out that in a way the international mediator Staffan De Mistura took a relatively similar position to the effect that each offensive or campaign carried out by the regime in Damascus for reconquering areas or towns from the rebels' control was followed by declarations through which the international diplomat pleaded, on behalf of the UN, for resuming and continuing the negotiations which never took place in the literary and traditional sense of the word as a face to face meeting at the same table of the parties to the conflict.

Now, after the opposants of the Damascus suburbs were expelled and on the background of the preparations the loyalist army and its allies are making for continuing the armed campaign to the north-west and to the south of the country, Staffan De Mistura and the head of the European diplomacy, Federica Mogherini, manifest their preoccupation and concern for the fate of the inhabitants of Idleb, Hama, Deraa and Suweida and repeat by and large the same lament they interpreted for Aleppo, Homs and Ghouta. Any gesture of compassion is human and commendable yet it is futile when coming

from two high officials, one of them a UN representative and this naturally raises questions concerning the organisation's role and its responsibility for the non-combat position towards the hundreds of thousands dead Syrians, towards the millions of refugees and displaced, towards the more than one million crippled, towards the more than 70% Syrians living below the critical poverty line, towards the huge desert of debris Syria's towns and villages were turned into. It is sad to note that in all this Syrian calvary, Staffan De Mistura's role was rather to keep his position and of making the inventory of the loss of human life and material losses resulting from the Syrian war while the world organisation he represents is limiting itself to bureaucratic declarations and to some resolutions no one among the belligerents and players involved in the Syrian tragedy took them seriously since a long time.

The Syrian file has reached a stage whereby all the belligerents and their supporters consider that any political solution for this conflict will be possible only when, in military terms, the strongest on the front will be the one to impose the configuration of that political solution. The brutality of the combats the Russian Federation and Iran are engaged in on the Syrian military chessboard has no other explanation except the desire of securing solid "bridge heads" allowing them to dominate the process of a negotiated solution of the conflict. If such a solution will ever become achievable.

It would be unjust, unrealistic and simplistic to hold to account totally or partially some officials – with high position but officials – for the numerous and lamentable failures the international peace demarches got stucked into. If a direct causality of these failures is to be identified, that lies in the very manner the United Nations Organisation and its Security Council addressed – in a defective way – the letter and the spirit of the principles of international law and the rules of behavior codified in the UN Chart in what concern solving the conflicts.

Article II of the Chart of the United Nations, in its paragraphs 1, 4 and 7, provides for explicitly

the principle of sovereign equality of all member states which are requested that in their international relations to abstain from threatening by force or using force against the territorial integrity and the independence of another state. Moreover, the 30 resolutions the UN adopted so far in what concern the Syrian conflict state, state without exception, the commitment to respect Syria's independence, unity and the territorial integrity in accordance with the purposes and principles consecrated by the fundamental Chart of the United Nations Organisation. After seven years of war, we may rightly ask what did the Security Council do in practical terms to ensure precisely the observance and the implementation of these purposes and principles that were laid down from the very beginning in order to secure that peace, security, sovereignty and independence of states and peoples are the only beliefs ruling the international life and the relations among the states and nations contributing to its normality. Under the sacrosanct, anachronistic and detrimental authority that the great powers reserved for themselves in the Security Council by the name of "veto right", the principles set out by the UN Chart are arrogantly ignored while the international law criteria are undermined and misinterpreted in order to serve the selfish interests of the powerful ones and to offer them fighting arms in the acerbic and vain confrontation for repartitioning the world order and imposing their political, strategic and geopolitical interests. Syria is but one among the many victims of this logic and practice that represents the secular and onerous "bible" of the club of the strong and affected by the hypocrisy that generated so many human

dramas and catastrophes.

It is hard, if not immoral, to believe that all the military campaigns waged by the Western community in the more than 200 military interventions they initiated and had the role of main player were determined by an intense love for the democratization and freedom of the invaded and mutilated peoples, from the medieval conquistadors to the dramas unfolding now in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen.

As it becomes apparent, the peace in Syria will be, if it will, reinstated according to the principle "first come, first served", meaning that, under the circumstances of a Syrian conflict that lasts longer than the WWII, the peace in Syria will bear the mark of hand grenade and machine gun.

And, for that, neither Kofi Annan, nor Lakhdar Brahimi, nor Staffan De Mistura and nor lady Federica Mogherini will be guilty of.

Then, who? It would be dramatic to forget the reality for manufacturing clones of Slobodan Milosevici, so that the world leaders bestow upon them the accolade for the triumph above some Syrians in shroud.

THE NUCLEAR ACCORD WITH IRAN: FROM "5+1" TO "4+1". AND THEREAFTER?

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

On May the 8th, 4 days earlier than D-Day initially known, president Donald Trump signed the Executive Order concerning the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 Nuclear Treaty with Iran in the 5+1 format on the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear programs. The international community, with the exception of Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, expressed their regret for this decision which, in the specialists' opinion "ended the best agreement ever achieved in the military nuclear field". The other 4+1 signatories of the agreement expressed, in a first reaction, and in a more or less explicit manner, the intention to form a common front against Donald Trump's will and of



finding modalities of keeping the agreement alive in the new diminished formula.

The American president's signature on the said decision ended the efforts and demarches undertaken by the European partners for convincing the White House leader not to produce the rift and they suggested in exchange as a continuity variant the possible negotiation of an appendix or of any other form keeping the agreement alive and giving him at the same time satisfaction to the contestations formulated by the American side. Donald Trump preferred to treat with indifference the suggestions and the opinions of his closest partners on the European continent – Theresa May, Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron.

The commentators noticed that by their opposition towards Donald Trump's gesture, his allies positioned themselves closer to Moscow than to Washington after what, until the rift day, they made up a solidary front against the Russian Federation including by imposing penalties and exerting diplomatic collective efforts for isolating Vladimir Putin.

As far as the regime in Tehran is concerned, it opted for testing the other signatories' ability to adapt to the new conjecture especially when the head of the French diplomacy, Jean - Yves Le Drian, declared that the "agreement is not dead". To that purpose, president Hassan Rohani granted the other signatories a respite "of very few weeks" for exercising due diligence for guaranteeing the continuity of the agreement and warned that in case of failure, Iran "will adopt quite a different stance".

On the other hand, immediately after the president's announcement, the Secretary of the Treasury, Steven Mnuchin, issued a statement synthesizing the penalties to be applied to Iran:

- Steps to limit the exports of Iranian oil that are to enter into force 180 days after denouncing the nuclear treaty. During this time, the American side will proceed with re-evaluating the extent to which the interested states diminished their energy imports from Iran;

- After 90 days from May 8th, Washington

will impose restrictions on selling dollars to Iran, on buying gold, rare metals and precious stones from Iran, the steel and aluminium transactions, the investments on the Iranian market and the car manufacturing industry;

- Cancelling the export licences to Iran granted to the civilian aeronautics industry companies, Boeing and Airbus included;

- Sanctions concerning the Iranian ports, Iranian maritime cargo vessels and Iranian ship-building industry will come into force after 180 days;

- Sanctions will be applied to transactions among foreign financial institutions and the Central Bank of Iran and with the Iranian insurance and reinsurance companies.

Beyond the political side of the problem, the no less important issue of the relationship among the European companies and the regime in Tehran remains and it is expected that the former, and particularly the financial and banking institutions manifest increased prudence in its relations with Iran. Even in what concern the Russian Federation, it is doubtful that the enterprises, the companies and the banking system in the Federation are ready to take the risk of continuing the relations with the Iranian side when that would mean an open conflict with the United States and implicitly falling under the sanctions regime applied by the American government. In fact, the volume of foreign investments, be it European or Russian, was relatively low even after the signing, three years ago, the "5+1 Agreement".

As we said, president Donald Trump made the decision concerning the nuclear agreement with Iran by ignoring not only the opposite insistences of the European leaders, of the security agencies or of the Congress circles in Washington.

The US president's persistence of carrying out his previously announced intentions could have several explanations yet the most plausible seem to be the following:

- An incomplete or superficial understanding of the terms and provisions of the terminated Agreement;

- Carrying on the presidential strategy of liquidating any legacy reminding of the period of Barack Obama Administration;

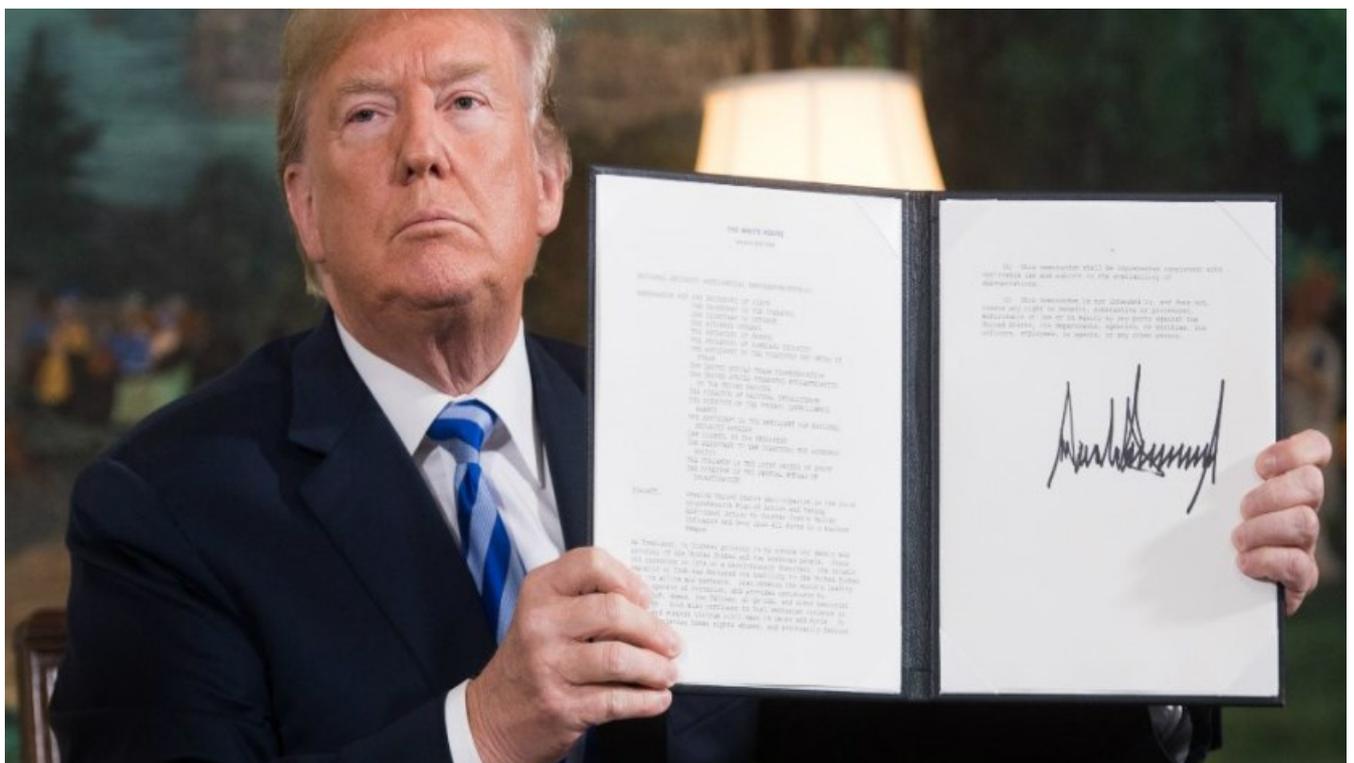
- The desire of weakening, by all possible non-military means and even to destroy the theocratic Iranian regime and the viability of its supporting institutions.

In his TV speech, the president Donald Trump stated that Iran violated the provisions of the agreement for which, since its signing, the International Atomic Energy Agency issued no less than 10 reports concerning Iran's nuclear activities with the same conclusions, namely that Tehran observed its commitments. Last April, the Secretary of Defense, James Mattis himself confirmed before a Senate Committee that the "verification reports were very robust". Donald Trump's arguments for supporting his decision had shortcomings that call into question the very haste of the decisionmaking. So, president Trump backed his stance by stating, among others, that "by virtue of the Agreement, the United States has to pay Iran as compensations the amount of \$100bil". In fact it is about unblocking the Iranian funds deposited in the American banks "frozen" by the Administration. And the respective amount represents the frozen assets in

the western banks, not only in the United States.

Beyond this rhetoric game of the "ends justify the means", the United States' termination of the multi-state Agreement with Iran will have as pragmatic as complicated security sequels, as German chancellor Angela Merkel acknowledged.

First, that will mean cancelling the provisions of the Agreement concerning Iran's obligation of accepting the invasive international inspections of its nuclear installations and infrastructure. From now on, Iran will be exempted from such an obligation. The Iranian experts and scientists have the know-how to manufacture the atomic bomb. It is not a novelty and the collection of documents and pieces older than 15 years that would have been amassed by Mossad and prime minister Netanyahu displayed to the public opinion in a pathetic and histrionic manner do not say anything novel from this stand point. Or, as the international inspections and inquiries will not be accepted any longer on the Iranian territory, Tehran will feel free to resume its activities in the field in broad daylight and without being obliged to justify or hide what it is doing. It goes without saying that such a scenario will do nothing but lead to new escalations of the ten-



sions that have already reached a critical height not only between America and Iran but also between the two shores of the Atlantic. There are not a few voices in Tehran – of the tough Mullahs and of the almighty organisation of the Revolutionary Guard – declaring bluntly that, for Iran, the Agreement with the Western community had, if not devastating effects, they were at least non-significant especially in the economic, commercial and financial fields and, therefore, Iran should terminate without remorse such a "losing treaty" for its side. High voices in the regime's hierarchy led by that of president Hassan Rohani's announced already Iran's availability of reactivating its programs of producing enriched uranium and of renouncing to the other limitations imposed through "5+1". That could be the trigger for new tensions serviceable for justifying a new direct and open conflict with the Islamic regime in Tehran. Would that be the real motive and purpose that determined Donald Trump's decision?

What will America's European allies do?

If, after 2015, accomplishing the collective agreement with Iran represented a title of glory for the European diplomacy, the step taken by Donald Trump three years only after signing the Agreement means, for the European allies a severe, difficult and inconvenient blow and, one may say, humiliating for them who proved, on the whole, unable of influencing the individual approaches and thinking of the "master of the White House". Germany, Great Britain and France in particular understood in advance the intentions of the American president in what concern the fate of the collective agreement concluded with Iran and that generated longstanding consultations and discussions with the former head of the American diplomacy, Rex Tillerson, whose dismissal was perceived by the great European chancelleries as a starting moment of the Trumpist global policy practices with a stick in one hand and a handful of dollars in the other. If the European allies made huge efforts for concluding the Agreement and tried with the same insistence to change Donald Trump's intentions, that was due first of all to economic and commercial reasons as well as to

the expected advantages from the cooperation with Iran as party to the treaty and which is, moreover, an oil country and open to investments in economy and infrastructure. Or, Donald Trump's seismograph recording type signature brought to an end all these expectations and hopes. The Europeans, and not only Ms Merkel, have therefore serious reasons for anger.

After Donald Trump's announcement, the European media comments and the American ones were marked by concern and pessimism and there were quite a lot of columnists and commentators advancing the idea that the step Washington made seeks to create the preamble for a warlike worsening of the interlinking with Iran – an impression reinforced as well by the intensification of the missiles "dialogue" between Israel and the Iranian forces deployed in Syria. It is a moment whereby the Western-European community is subject to a test and challenges unusual since a long time in the Euro-Atlantic relations.

Yet it is very probably that between May 8th and the effective beginning of applying the American anti-Iranian sanctions, the European chancelleries and the diplomacy in Brussels will exert maximum efforts to save what is left to save from this weakened formula in which, after the announcement of the fracture, the "5+1" scheme came down to 4+1 and has the perspective to come down to 3+1 after the Brexit and even to a mere 3 if Iran listens to the rhetoric of the Revolutionary Guards.

Three days only after the event, the "Foreign Policy" magazine published an ample analysis of Donald Trump's decision, a decision it considered "a dangerous rejection and denial of the American traditional diplomacy" and estimated that "the world will have enough reasons to ask if the United States will not repeat the Iranian precedent in case of other security treaties America is a party to and, maybe, to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation where the USA had a fundamental contribution to its realisation. The "Foreign Policy" called into question rhetorically "why should the others observe an arrangement agreed upon if the United States



wants only to reap the benefits without doing anything for that?"

Related or unrelated to the American magazine analysis, France was the first of America's ally which initiated an acid counteroffensive to the arbitrary measures adopted by president Donald Trump as significant voices of the decision making circles in Paris insisted on the idea that "the Europeans are not and should not behave as some Donald Trump's houseboys". In Paris, too, a proposal was made for setting up an European agency with similar duties as the American Department of Justice, namely to draw up and impose counter-measures meant to defend the interests of the European companies and the community independence in promoting their own international relations. The Kremlin submitted for analysing an idea which seems to interest the European Union, namely concluding an ample free trade agreement with Iran.

It is obvious that, in the coming period, the European and international developments and reactions to the American withdrawal

from the "Iranian agreement" will be abundant and not at all shy. After the tour the head of the Iranian diplomacy Mohamed Javad Zarif made on 19th-20th of May to the European Union members states, the European Commissioner for Energy, Miguel Arias Canete, paid a visit to Tehran and had talks with the minister of Foreign Affairs Javad Zarif, with the chairman of the Iranian Organisation for Nuclear Energy, Akbar Salehi, and with the minister of Petroleum, Bijan Zanganeh, who were presented with the European Union's suggestions for counteracting the effects generated by the American decision among which the continuation of Iranian oil and the payments are to be done in euro and directly between the European banks and the Central Bank of Iran.

However, the authoritarian "test" Europe was subject to by the Administration in Washington will certainly be an opportunity for seriously contemplating whether it is not high time Europe walks on its own feet and not on Donald Trump's.



THE V-TH SYRIAN WAR?

Dinu COSTESCU

In its modern history, namely since the proclamation of its state independence from France on April 17th, 1946 and also in the chronicle of the great Arab-Israeli conflicts in the Middle East, the October 1973 conflagration (the "Ramadan war" or the "Yom Kippur war", in its Israeli version) was the last major confrontation between the Arabs and the Israelis in which Syria was directly involved after the participation of its armies to the May 1948 war against the newly created State of Israel and after the second Israeli-Arab war ("The Six-Day War") of June, 1967 that ended with Hafez Al-Assad's Syria losing the Golan Heights. As of the spring of 2011 until today, Syria ("Bashar Al-Assad's this time") is engaged in a fourth war with Israel whereby Israel is engaged on the sidelines only and the main protagonists are the regime in Damascus and the part of the Syrians who want that the country "be their's". A war which, for the first time, is not one of "liberating the territories occupied by Zionism" but rather a "franchises war" whereby several regional and extra-regional, secular and sectarian, bigger or smaller protagonists animated by the "love" for "democratic Syria" or for their own strategic projects and interests are waging either their own jihad or the contest for the strategic expansion in this country of the Middle East or in the morphology of the new multi-polar world order.

During the last part of this year's spring, media analysis with their entire arrays of linguistic and partisan tools spoke more vocally or cautiously on the near perspective of this fourth war in Syria coming to an end even advancing to this purpose prognoses and horoscopes concerning the identity of the winners and that of the losers. Surprisingly, the media discourse divides the two camps in a strange way. As far as the losers are concerned, mention is made as a rule of either the Syrian opposition, or the jihadist factions or one of their sponsors, while the winners side is limited to one protagonist: Bashar Al-

Assad and, less often, the Russian Federation and, probably Iran. Very few words or not a word about the Syrian people. In none of the two categories.

Beyond the prognoses, more or less optimistically as far as the victory of the peace on war, at the end of this year's spring and beginning of summer the same media, too, but this time the political circles of the closer or more distant spaces of the Syrian geography were speaking of the gloomy perspective of a fifth war for which Syria is to become an operating theater, namely the ongoing worsening tensions between the State of Israel, backed by the Trump Administration, on the one hand, and the Islamic Republic of Iran – an active player in the Syrian civil war and in other conflicted files of the Middle East, on the other hand – a war which once started could become the epicentre of a new conflagration with centrifugal energy of setting fire to an Israeli-Iranian conflict with easily to predict dimensions, duration and consequences, according to many analyses.

At the beginning of February, the transnational think-tank "International Crisis Group" (ICG), issued an analysis titled "*Israel, Hizbollah and Iran : Preventing Another War in Syria*", emphasizing the idea that the Syrian civil war entered a new phase whereby Syria could become the stage of an armed confrontation between the Jewish state and the Iranian theocratic regime. The reason: the increased fears of Netanyahu's government concerning the perspective that very soon the neighbouring country become a permanent "Iranian military base" and, moreover, directly threatening the Israeli national security interests.

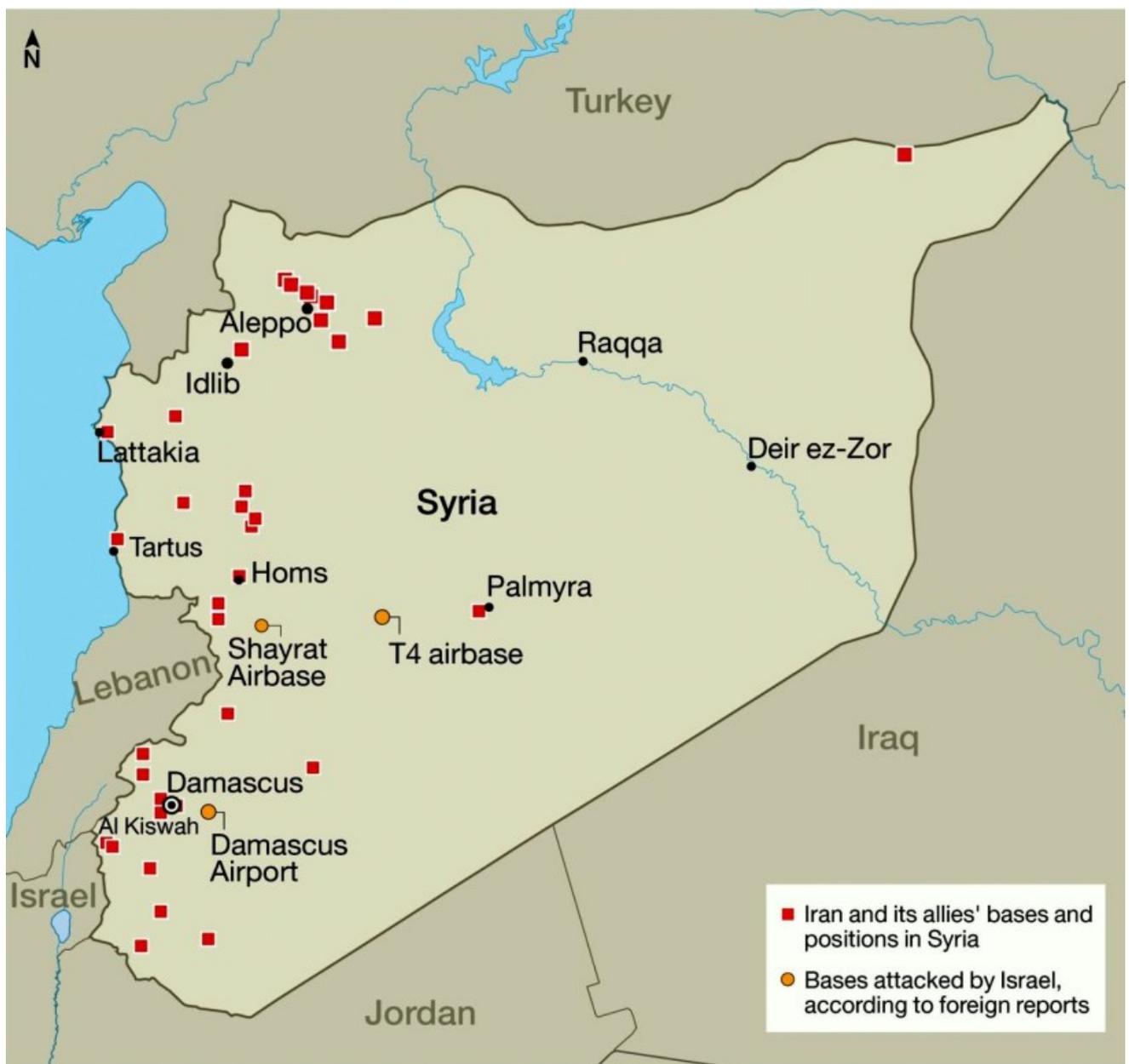
Such apprehensions are easily understood as long as the tactical considerations that prevented so far a new war between Tsahal and the Lebanese militias Hezbollah are no longer topical and the war of more and more virulent declarations engenders a sense that cutting, manu military, the Gordian knot of the mutual hostility is an option that especially Israel is taking into consideration more and more seriously.

After a F-16 Israeli jet operating in the neigh-

bouring airspace was downed by the Syrian SAMs and after launching a mini-war of drones that the Iranian militias in Syria were not alien to, the synusoid of tension increased abruptly to a higher level. It's no secret indeed that, since the the Syrian internal crisis was triggered, in 2011, the Israeli aviation carried out – with the Russian Federation's knowledge and acceptance – numerous raids and aerial strikes against Syrian and, to an equal extent, Iranian military targets that resulted in casualties among the Iranian troops.

Generally, the Israeli state abstained from an

active alignment on one of the camps engaged in the Syrian internal war and punctually struck targets in order to impose the observance of what prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu called "red lines" or interdictions which non-observance may be considered as a war declaration and, overriding among those, is preventing Iran from supplying Hezbollah in southern Lebanon with missiles and other military equipment, on the one hand, and blocking Iran's persistent attempts of setting up "footholds" close to the armistice line separating, since 1974, the part of the Golan Heights Israel occupied in 1967 from



The Iranian military presence in Syria Source: Haaretz

the south-west Syrian territory, on the other hand. However, at mid September 2017, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Iran signed the agreement on the so-called "de-escalation" zones in several hot regions of the Syrian national territory including the south and south-western border area with Jordan and the Israeli "border" on the Golan Heights. Israel notified the signatories and especially the Russian Federation its request that no Iranian or Hezbollah's military presence be closer than 60 km from the armistice line in the Golan in the geography of these enclaves yet it obtained a limit of 20 km only, a distance which, according to Israeli sources, was not respected by either the Iranian Revolutionary Guard or by Hezbollah militiamen. In retaliation, the government in Tel Aviv intensified the frequency of its aerial raids and increased the deliveries of arms and military equipment to at least seven rebel groups of the Syrian opposition acting in the border area of the Golan Heights.

Mention should be made that the State of Israel has military bases on the entire area of the half part of the Golan it occupied more than 50 years ago as well as a powerful electronic, optical and cameras surveillance station on the Tel Abu Nada Mountain of the Mountaineous Hermon massif, at around 60 km south-west of Damascus. All these, added to the continuation by the Iranians of strengthening their armed presence and of carrying out in Syria programs of military production, contributed substantially to an abrupt deterioration of the hostility climate between the Iranian and the Israeli states, something that determined the Israeli minister of Defence, Avigdor Lieberman, to declare in an irritated voice that now "barking time is over. It's high time we bite, and we bite deep". Benjamin Netanyahu, in his turn, was addressing, during the last meeting on security at the Munich Conference (17th-18th of last February), Iran a serious warning: "do not try to test our patience for our retaliation will be tough. If need will be, we will attack not only Iran's Syrians proxies but Iran itself!".



The Israeli warnings were labelled by the head of the Iranian diplomacy, Javad Zarif, as "completely laughable".

A mere war of nerves?

Short time after the aerial incident that resulted in downing the Israeli jet by Syria, the former American diplomat Dennis Ross, spokesman for American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) declared that the incident "should awaken both the international community and

the Trump Administration" and added that "if Russia does not halt the Iranian presence in Syria, the the United States must not stay inactive". The ex-diplomat Dennis Ross wanted to convey the idea that "if the Russians stay idle" and do not halt the Iranian expansion, Washington should intervene militarily in Syria in order to do that. But is really the White House willing to put into practice Dennis Ross's suggestion? Isn't the appeal to an American intervention of this type meaning that Israel has neither the capacity nor the readiness of engaging alone in a large-scale conflict with the Islamic Iran? In its relationship with the Iranian presence in Syria through the Russian connection, the issue is precisely Moscow's opposition to an escalation towards a new war on the same front Russia is waging its own war. It is true Benjamin Netanyahu and Vladimir Putin agreed upon an "amicable" understanding: Israel grants Moscow the latitude of rescuing Bashar Al-Assad's regime and Putin turns a blind eye to the Israeli bombardments of Iranian or pro-Iranian targets in Syria. Nevertheless, as the Israeli analyst Anshel Pfeffer assessed (Haaretz, February 19th, 2018), the said understanding is not significant any longer to the extent Russia rejects *in integrum* the Israeli approaches on the "Iranian question". The abovementioned International Crisis Group report quoted to that purpose the statement of a Russian diplomat who said among others: "The Israeli officials tell us that Iran fights in Syria with the overriding purpose of destroying the State of Israel, that Iran is motivated not by state interests but by considera-

tions pertaining to sectarianism and theology and that we, the Russians, should build the future Syria freed from the Iran's presence. We want to take into consideration the Israeli interests but it is impossible to take seriously their arguments".

There are not a few voices in the Israeli political and media circles requesting that Iran "be taught a unforgettable lesson". Yet, in Benjamin Netanyahu's and his bellicose minister of Defence Avigdor Liberman's opinion, the perpetuation on a long term of the conflict with Iran on "the low burner" would be preferable to the extent it would keep the "Iranian question" in the international limelight, a situation Israel would benefit from international support and from the Trump's Administration, without such a "smouldering war" threatening to expand yet leading to a definite wear and tear of the Iranian resilience potential and to the erosion domestically of the stability of the theocratic regime in relation to its own Iranian society.

The die of the conflict was not cast yet, so that one should not exclude the possibility that the region and the area of the Syrian conflict witness a new hot summer.

SYRIA : BETWEEN "TAQSIM", "TAQASUM" AND SPHERES OF INFLUENCE



**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

On April 20th, the Russian Press Agency Interfax broadcasted a declaration of the deputy minister of Foreign Affairs, Serghei Riabkov, who, commenting the developments in Syria stated

that "Moscow has no clear vision in what concern the perspectives of maintaining Syria's territorial unity". In his declaration granted to "Deutsche Welle" TV station, the Russian official mentioned verbatim that "the Russian Federation can not state precisely how things will evolve in what concern the chances that Syria re-

mains a unitary state territorially and socially".

The same day and shortly after Serghei Riabkov's declaration, the Turkish president Recep Teyyip Erdogan was invited to attend a seminary organised by Bugaz University in Istanbul where, during his speech, the Turkish leader spoke almost ostentatiously of the "initiatives some promote for crumbling the Middle East starting from Syria and Iraq". President Erdogan declared also that these "conspiracies" are aimed not only at the two Arab countries' falling apart but also at the scission of Turkey's social, national and territorial integrity" and warned that "today's Turkey is completely different from the old Turkey, it is the Turkey that will not lay down its arms in front of scenarios drawn up abroad". In this case we are rather in front of a populist declaration. To the extent that in order to avoid such a splitting perspective, the only step Erdogan proposed is passing to a presidential governance regime which in fact represents the sole objective of the early elections of July, announced by the president and approved by the parliament in Ankara.

Looked at in itself, the theme of Syria's territorial, state and social fragmentation is not new and it is to be found more or less explicitly in most packages of proposals, initiatives and plans which, over the years, were thrown on the green velvet of the roulette where the existence of a state and of a people are gambled with.

The novelty is that, on the one hand, it is for the first time such a scission approach is openly evoked by the Russian Federation and Turkey – two of the main players engaged on the domestic Syrian conflict chessgame – and, on the other hand, such an approach is taking place when the tripartite attack the USA – Great Britain - France against presumptuous facilities of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal is kept in the spotlights as a turning point in approaching the Syrian file from the perspective of a possible "final solution" to this blood-tainted conflict. Already the main Arabic speaking mass media were talking of such a perspective and telling to that purpose is the analysis which the Londonese daily "Al-Hayat" – with Saudi financing – presented

and supported in its issue of April 19th, namely "a Syrian solution according to the Kosovo model" whereby the editorialist advanced the idea that only a complete duplication of the "treatment applied to the ex-Yougoslav space – i.e. massive US or NATO bombardments on the "Baathist" Syria" followed by a territorial dismantling could lead to a war's coming to an end and to bringing peace.

There are studies, analyses, prognoses and scenarios that have been written during more than seven years of conflict on dismantling the Syrian state entity and which, put up together, may end up in numerous and respectable volumes. "Geostrategic Pulse" has constantly approached this "solution" it considered not only immoral and anachronic but also a serious aggression to the international law principles and to the normality in the contemporary international relations.

Yet one finds out that since the up to now approaches pertaining rather to virtual and speculative field, the subject came closer almost dramatically to the realm of a reality under way of crystalizing – a reality that is being born in the context of some multinational occupations which fundamental form of manifestation may be called, without a fear of erring, by the syntagm of "military occupation" to which the Russian Federation, the United States, Iran, Turkey take part and, in a more discrete form, Great Britain, France and Israel. Under the name of "serviceable Syria", the regime in power is granted only a part of the national territory which administration is managed according to the Russian Federation's and Turkey's interests. The Syrian national territory is marked by the presence of more than 30 military foreign bases and locations which imagological representation offers the image of a splitted country in what can be called "zones of influence" or "zones of interest" of the abovementioned powers, which are in an acerbic contest for securing, each of them, security zones or, in extremis, spaces whereby the authority is partitioned according to amicable criteria avoiding direct conflicts and clashes of their interests and projects.

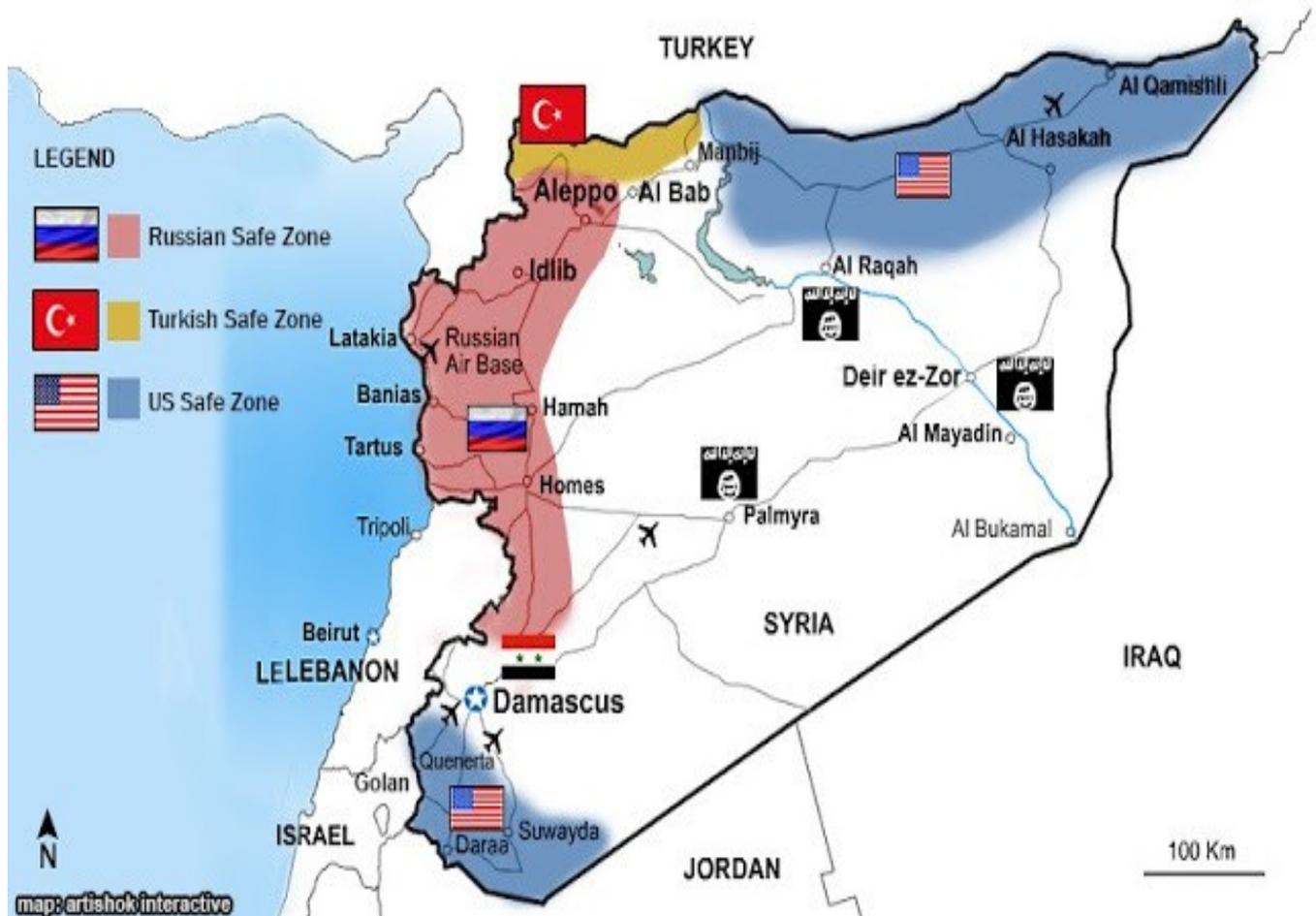


There are two words in Arabic deriving from the same phonetical stem and having different meanings that express as convincing as possible the status-quo nature under way of taking roots and of consolidating in Syria. First, it is about the noun *Taqsim*, with the literal sense of "partition", "decoupage" as action exerted from outside and by outside causalities acting on the whole in the sense of its dismemberment and taking under control of the resulted fragments. Second, it is about the noun *Taqāsum*, signifying the action by which two or several factors are distributing among them portions of a whole corresponding to the "influence and interest zones" or "coexist" and divide among them handling the same zone of interests.

In Syria's reference case, setting up and the pragmatism of these two terms are achieved, as the events history shows, by means of weapons and blood shed when to these two means the diplomacy is not added, too, considered, according to Clausewitz's definition, as "war waged by other means".

Starting from the current situation on the Syrian front geography, one may say that we witness a slow process of configuring the demarcation lines among the future zones of influence and control that will mark post-conflict Syria's map.

Thus, we speak of a Syrian "province" including the territory east of the Euphrates River, representing approximatively one third of the total area of the Syrian territory. Demographically, this area is dominated by the Kurdish ethnics, but, no less important, there there are 90% of the exploitable oil resources and around 45% of



The main areas of foreign influence in Syria

the natural gas deposits. From a geopolitical perspective of the domestic Syrian conflict, the "province" witnessed major developments – from Kurds' separatist projects to the military bases and locations set up by the American army and Turkey's military interferences materialized in the Operations code-named "The Euphrates Shield" and "The Olive Branch" – and all these made that the northern Syrian territory be practically scinded in two main zones of foreign control and influence, namely the United States' and Turkey's.

In Ankara, at the beginning of April, presidents Vladimir Putin, Recep Teyyip Erdogan and Hassan Rohani reconfirmed their committment for maintaining the "de-escalation military zones" established at Astana and insisted, at the same time, on the imperative of defending Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty. An insistence which, beyond rhetoric, is hiding, in reality, the three leaders' consensus on mutually acceptable

partitioning of the areas of control and influence in Syria, and also on a more active coordination in counteracting the strategic projects the policy of Donald Trump's American Administration is taking into account in Syria.

The reality is that on the background of suspicions and adversities characterizing the relations among the foreign belligerents involved in the Syrian domestic conflict, Syria's future remains surrounded by uncertainties. After the campaign in Ghouta area of the Syrian capital came to an end to the benefit of Al-Assad regime, and in light of his orientations of continuing the military offensive towards the north-western Idlib district, towards the southern border with Jordan and the Golan Heights, Syria will continue to be a chessboard of a tight competition among the regional and international players for imposing and consolidating their own areas of interests and influence.

It is difficult to imagine, from this perspective,

that the post-war Syria will recapture the cohesion, homogeneity and the unity it had before 2011.

The scission of this country is a state of affairs suggesting rather than otherwise the tendency of the existing zones of influence of being turned, on a short and medium term, into mini-states configured in accordance with the front structure at the time a peace will be proclaimed.

Today, the discourse on "serviceable Syria" is not any longer topical. This syntagm denotes in reality a part of the Syrian territory under a double occupation: Russian and Iranian. And the strip that stretches between Lattakia district passing through Tartous and Baniyas governorates to Homs is, one may say, a Russian exclusivity zone marked by Russian air and terrestrial bases and filled with Russian air defence systems is a Syrian region where the sole authority on the military and civil society belongs to Vladimir Putin who, rhetorically, shares it with Bashar Al-Assad's regime in a sort of "taqasum", having the perspective of becoming indefinitely a pattern of the "united and sovereign" Syria in press statements only.



Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), in 2014, until the official announcement, at the end of 2017, by the government in Baghdad and the Multinational anti-jihadist Coalition led by the United States, of the triumph over this terrorist-Islamist entity and of the de facto evanescence of the ephemeral "Muslim caliphate" of the Iraqi imam Ibrahim Awwad Al-Samarrai, morphed in onomastic terms in "caliph" Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, the entire international community could follow the inconceivable atrocities perpetrated by that entity – the nighmarish images fixed in the affective memory accompanied and surrounded by the black flags – symbols of the "new caliphate" inscribed with the lapidary text of the Muslim "profession of faith" in Allah's monotheistic uniqueness and in its Prophet's truth.

ISIS : FROM THE BLACK FLAG TO THE WHITE PENNANT?

Reza SHAHRESTANI

During the three years that passed since occupying Mosul in Iraq and the proclamation of the



Today, the gloomy black banners heralding death, destruction and tears do not flutter any longer in Iraq or in Syria on the buildings of former public and social interest or over the endless convoys of Toyotas crossing the desert dust for carrying the "fighters unto Allah's path" towards other crimes, rapes, bloodshed. The black banners disappeared together with the territorial disappearance of the nightmare placed under the fanatic cry "Allah Akbar". Yet can one really speak of the death of this tumor? The answer seems to be rather deeply negative.

In its involution towards evanescence, "Islamic State" repeats the experience which, at the time, Ossama Bin Laden's "Base for the world jihad" went through. If his earthly remains vanished – as we are told – in the ocean depths, his ideas and the doctrine that substantiated it and the fanaticism that raised it to the rank of a philo-

sophical system that remained above and continue to anesthetize the reasoning's and to generate tragedies inspired by the Middle Ages' mentalities. The former jihadists enlisted under Bin Laden's turban and inspired by the latter and by the older "Arab Afghans" were outshined and then clustered together again under other identities and continued to activate as independent cells or re-assembling for creating other "bases" rebaptized Djabhat Al-Nusra, Ansar Al-Islam, Al-Murabitun, Ansar Beit Al-Maqdes and other similar names and who are seeking either new coordinates in the geographical space or to keep alive their doctrine ideals and mobilizing new candidates for jihad and crime as prelude to promised paradise.

Such a resilience and regenerating capacity after the hydra's survival are legitimizing the anxiety, the bewilderment and the questions concerning the truth about the death of the salafist-jihadist extremism. For the time being, sporadic and convincing answers came also from the jihadists who remained after the official announcement of the evanescence of Islamic State: suicide attacks or car bombs, assassinations, robberies, summary executions or the already classical use of heavy vehicles as death cars in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Western Europe were perpetrated after Islamic State was eulogized – are coming to give the most discernible answer to the apprehensions connected to the "Daesh syndrome": the Islamic terrorism is not dead, Islamic Sate is under way of face-shifting, its ideology is far from being vanquished.



The "White Flags"



Tuz Khormato, geographical location

The few information we have allow us to offer an edifying example to the abovementioned sense.

Beginning with the end of 2017, some Arabic speaking mass media circulated, timidly at the beginning, then more and more certainly, reports of the emergence of a new "offshoot" detached from the former "caliphate" having two initial points of reference which later proved to be real: in the Iraqi Kurdistan, a newly established group descending from the corpus of the "deceased" Islamic State and having as distinguishing sign not the famous black flag but a standard having as effigy a head of a lion – a symbol of masculinity! – self-titled the "Group of White Banners" (*Ar-Rayāt Al-Baydā'* in Arabic).

As it is described by the reports of the Iraqi intelligence services, the group was made up in November 2017, of former fighters of the terrorist group "Islamic State" who, after Mosul was liberated at the beginning of July, 2017 succeeded in breaking through the attack line of the Iraqi forces and withdrew to the barren area of Hamrin Mountains in Salaheddin district, north-east of Iraq, at the western extremity of the Iraqi Kurdistan. Their headquarters is near the Kurdish town of Tuz Khormato, a former air base of the Iraqi army and numbers between 500 and 1,500 men among them for-

mer Iraqi jihadists, Turkmen, Sunni Arabs, Kurds, former fighters of the Islamist formation *Al-Jaysh Al-Islamiy* (The Islamic Army) who took refuge from the Syrian jihadist fronts and criminal elements making up the so-called "Kurdish mafia". The supposed founder of the group is the former Daesh Turkmen fighter Hiwa Chor, a felon haunted by the Kurdish militias Peshmerga, by the Iraqi army and by the Shia Iraqi militias "Popular Mobilization" (*Al-Hashd Al-Shaabiy*).

The group fights mainly against the Iraqi army, yet it is already feared by the local population by the similarity of their brutal actions and of the well-known tactics of "Islamic State" (from kidnappings, robberies, forced dispossession to suicide attacks, car bombs, and locally smuggling oil of Kirkuk area etc) and operates in the less populated areas of the mountainous masiffs of the administrative districts Salaheddin, Dahouk, Suleymaniya, Dyala, up to the desert regions in Tikrit town neighbourhood.

According to Iraqi military and Kurdish sources, the group has important quantities of arms and ammunition, including mortars and armored vehicles, night vision equipment etc. amassed and stored even before Daesh's official defeat in the network of the many caves and caverns existing in the mountainous chain of this area of Kurdistan.

The deployment area of the "White Flags" is, in spite of the appearances, a space whereby ethnical and sectarian conflicts among the minorities living there, the administrative chaos, the lack of security and social involvement of the Kurdistan Autonomous Authority or of the central government in Baghdad makes this area one of the most unstable and dangerous regions of the post-conflict Iraq and the fact that it became a focal point for the terrorist group descendant of "Islamic State" confirms, once more, that anarchy, the dissolution of state institutions, poverty, social insecurity, ethnic and sectarian dissensions provide the fertile ground for setting "footholds" of the terrorist-jihadist phenomenon and its dissemination in the geographical and social dimension. In fact, members of the "White Flags" who were captured confessed that

the strategic purpose of this group is exactly of reconstructing a germ from which the "new Daesh" rises again in adapted forms.

Even if the authorities in Baghdad and Erbil provided assurances that the "White Flags" do not represent a major security threat, they are no less threatening taking into account that the group under discussion could be one only of several such similar groups trying to repeat the precedents granted by the evolution of the defeated Al-Qaida went through to the birth and expansion of the most devastating terrorist challenge of the contemporaneity: Daesh.

How can we live with the Iranian nuclear weapons?



Dieter Farwick – Gen. Bg.(ret) and publicist

The American president's lonely decision – and its consequences.

There still exist signs and wonders in the German government public TV. After the USA's unilateral withdrawal from the so-called "nuclear agreement" – in its original name "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)" – the American president Donald Trump was, strongly criticized especially in Europe. All the parliamentary groups assessed his decision as a "major strategic mistake" which will increase tensions in the conflicted Middle East region – that might end in a possible military conflict.

In the political TV program "Kontraste", MDR presented on May 24th, this year, a 9 - minute footage titled: "Why does Tehran, in spite of the nuclear agreement, represents a threat to peace. What if Trump is right?". Even this title, too, is a challenge for the signatories of the "plan" (no "contract", no "agreement") and for their supporters. There were governmental officials from China, Germany (signed at that time by the For-

Foreign Affairs minister, Gabriel, backed by the Chancellor), France, Iran, Russia and the USA who presented the concluded document on July 14th, 2015 in Lausanne and celebrated it as a "historical step" towards a safer world.

The "father" of this achievement is considered even today to be the then American president, Obama, who wanted to have an "agreement" with Iran at all costs. The same is valid for the other signatories, too.

In spite of the widespread euphoria, there were public voices warning before and after the signatures and underlined serious shortcomings of the agreement yet they were marginalized by the responsible governments and their voices were not listened to enough by the public since the majority of mass media joined the celebrating chorus. The warnings were not fit for the euphoria wave of a historical success.

On 13th of October, 2017, Trump was already speaking of "Iran's secret nuclear program" combined with the clue of unilaterally withdrawing from the "plan" in case his doubts were confirmed, something he really did on 9th of May, 2018 under heavy criticism from "all sides" except for Israel and Saudi Arabia. The renegotiation was repeatedly excluded – even by president Hassan Rohani. The Europeans are trying to save the "deal". The result? Still open.

What are the essential facts of "Kontraste" footage?

They are verifiable facts, no hypothesis.

There was not a comprehensive valuation of Iran's present and future policies before the negotiations begun. The "Iran's Shia theocracy" is not led by a politically elected president, but ultimately by the ayatollah Ali Khamenei who, supported by the ayatollahs of the Revolutionary Guards, is selecting the candidates for the parliament and presidency then "decides his candidate".

This is today's Hassan Rohani, the so-called "moderate reformer", who formally led the negotiations and who was kept on a short leash by



ayatollah Khamenei. He was closely monitored by the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) who are under direct control of the country's president. Since 1979 ayatollah Khomeini's decision, they became a powerful "state within the state" in the economy and particularly in the army. Ayatollah Khomeini said about the Revolutionary Guards that "if Revolutionary Guards would not exist, this country would not exist". The national budget is not controlled by the parliament – it's a secret. The same applies to research and development of nuclear weapons in fortified installations – most of them underground – which are separated from the research and development installations in the civilian nuclear field. The "Shiite theocracy" never made a secret of its objectives – in the competition with the Sunni Saudi Arabia – and challenges the latter supremacy in the Middle East. An important intermediate objective is establishing the Shiite corridor from Iran through Iraq and Syria to the Mediterranean shores, destruction of Israel and weakening Saudi Arabia and its Sunni allies, including the war by proxies in Yemen. Without the Revolutionary Guards' support for Assad's regime in the "ground war", Assad would have been removed since a long time – before Russian troops' joining the war in Syria. In Lebanon, Iran backs Hezbollah with a lot of money and modern military equipment. Their support for the Palestinians in Gaza Strip was manifest in the violent attacks on the occasion of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the State of Israel. The missiles launched on the Israeli territory were made in Iran.

Israel's counterattack was exclusively aimed at the Revolutionary Guards' military installations and at their armed positions. Through a successful management of previous crises, the US led coalition did not kill or wound either Russians or Syrian troops. Even when fighting Iranian positions, there were no dead or wounded thanks to early warnings of the coalition.

Can the reader imagine that the Western negotiators did not know these realities of the secret nuclear arms? Your writer cannot imagine such a thing. It is obvious someone did not want to let the „sight of the whole” be disfigured by such facts. This is particularly valid in case of the American president Barack Obama who was advised in 2008 through an IAEA confidential report that Iran had already a "cold-start". Obama decided to completely hide this piece of intelligence under the motto "No war with Iran. There is no Iranian nuclear weapon". It is possible that the classified facts were brought to president Trump's knowledge before or after his taking office and, together with other previously hidden facts, made him to quit the agreement. Obviously, the Europeans did not take seriously Trump's warnings.

What are the most serious shortcomings of the so-called "Deal"?

- The biggest mistake is the fact that the civilian nuclear program only is subject to negotiations. Iran submitted 18 civilian installations for IAEA's inspections. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) carried out some inspections only since the deal was concluded. It is not surprising at all that no suspected military developments were detected at the civilian installations. Iran generously accepted to "freeze" the development of its civilian nuclear activities for 10-15 years. In return, the sanctions against Iran were lifted. So, big amounts of currencies entered Iran's coffers including from lifting the embargo on the Iranian oil exports. These big amounts flowed without detour to the Revolutionary Guards who were already mentioned at the chapter of Iran's backed terror. The Iranian people touched a small part only of this money.

Their precarious economic situation did not improve. Once Trump withdrew from the "Deal", he imposed tough sanctions against American and foreign companies that would continue to make all types of transactions with Iran. It is to be seen if the Europeans would succeed in creating a financial safety net for the affected states. There is no surprise the fact that big German companies, such as for instance Siemens, halted all commercial transactions with Iran. If one compares the importance of the trade with Iran with that of the USA's it is no surprise. Nevertheless, the USA's decision intensifies the beginning of the trade war with Europe as a result of its punitive tariffs imposed unilaterally on steel and aluminium products on June 1st, 2018;

- The second biggest mistake – according to "Kontraste" – is the fact that further development of ballistic missiles is not part of the "Deal". Incredible, but true. During the last years, Iran succeeded to manufacture and test successfully ballistic missiles that can reach southern Europe – to say nothing of Saudi Arabia and Israel. That would make no sense. The further development of the nuclear warheads without developing, at the same time, the necessary means of carrying them would make no sense either. Iran continued to develop nuclear warheads in close cooperation with Pakistan and North Korea. According to intelligence reports, in May, 2010, a Pakistani type "cold test" of an Iranian foothold test was seismographically registered in Asia under a mountain in North Korea at a depth of 400m that was reported in the specialized magazines. The former president Ahmadinejad was declaring that Iran has already become a member of the "nuclear club" since 2006/2007, something rejected as a bluff in the West. In a "cold-start" the trigger of the end of one warhead only is ignited and not the warhead itself. From a "cold-start" there is a short way only to a "hot start" with a nuclear warhead – maximum a year.

What comes next?

There is no "smoking gun". Iran rejected any amendment to the "plan". It will not allow in-

spections of the reasonably suspected military installations as leading the nuclear weapons program that was banned at the mid of 1980s by order of ayatollah Khomeini in the secret area of the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran). The Revolutionary Guards are entitled to "shoot" any religious or political leader who would open military installations for inspection. After 10-12 years, the "plan" expires. Then, we will have to take into account that Iran will declare itself "a nuclear power" and the latest a year after that it would announce a nuclear blast – a thunder for the entire world and especially for the Middle East which states cannot just sit and watch. This development of nuclear weapons represents a clear violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NTP) signed by Iran in 1968 under Shah Reza Pahlavi and ratified in 1970 without ever being cancelled by the following ayatollahs. NTP has been signed so far by 191 states.



and its Sunni neighbours and Israel – and attack Iran by economic, diplomatic, political and military means – including cyber attacks and special forces – and pushing Iran into decentralized, modern wars which could exhaust it in time and space and lead to a "regime change" on a medium term. Waging such an

orchestrated operation will be difficult and costly in terms of blood and money yet contrary to accepting a Shiite nuclear theocracy as leader of the Middle East it would be the least of evils;

- The United States, Israel and other states with modern air forces could carry out a surgical strike against Revolutionary Guards' nuclear installations. Such an operation does not preclude that all command and control systems are destroyed and leaves the Revolutionary Guards the chance of a counter-attack with nuclear weapons these fanatics would take. There would be a nuclear war which could not be limited to the Arabic Peninsula and Europe. Consequently, this scenario would be the biggest major accident and therefore should be rejected.

How can we live with Iranian nuclear weapons?

There are only bad and very bad solutions:

- We could sweep under the carpet the grave concerns which were highlighted by "Kontraste" and other sources. Iran could continue undisturbed its nuclear program and in 10-12 years will present it to a stunned world: nuclear warheads ready to use on intercontinental ballistic missiles. Iran will not have to use these weapons, instead it will continue to conquer the Middle East. It will threaten the countries opposing its conquest by discouraging the counter-measures of using the nuclear weapons. Motto: The resistance is futile;

- The Europeans – like the USA did – could abandon the "understanding" and join the USA, together with other willing states – such as Saudi Arabia

All these scenarios imply a paradigm shift of our Western populations in a robust assertion while our military should have a strong fighting readiness to say nothing of the necessary resources for appropriate weapons and equipment.

There is no time to waste. Time works in Iran's favour thanks to the irresponsible conclusion of a "understanding" that seriously harms the global security for future generations.





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Economic Horizon



THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WORLD ECONOMY. A BRIEF EVALUATION

Dr. Adrian CONSTANTINESCU

On the whole, the world economy continues to grow even if the growth curve tends to flatten. And that in spite of increased vulnerabilities generated by a potential trade war, of further exacerbation of the public debts problems, of certain geopolitical risks etc. As a result, there is a certain pessimistic view concerning the sustainability of global economic growth.

In the first months of 2018 the economies of *industrialized states* witnessed a slight decrease of the growth pace. In many of these states the investments and the productivity increased yet modest results were registered in what concern the employment and salary gains.

The **US** economy continues to be in a good shape and witnessed increases of the GDP, of industrial production and investments. Exports, in their turn, increased significantly as a result of a weak dollar and of an expanding foreign demand for American goods and services. Concomitantly with an increased consumption and the decline in unemployment, the inflation and salary increase pressures are on the rise.

In the light of the above, we consider the USA is on its way to proceed with a macroeconomic risky experiment: "injecting" certain fiscal stimuluses even when the economy runs full steam. Under such circumstances it is likely the Federal Reserve takes anti-inflationary steps in order to water down or even annihilate the positive effects of the experiment.

As far as **Japan's** economy is concerned, it is now in a prolonged period of constant expansion. Yet even if it continues to run well, is more and more confronted with the slowdown of domestic demand as the pressures concerning the salary are increasing and the tensions in the international trade are manifest.

The eurozone witnessed in 2017 the highest growth rate of the last decade. Yet a slight slowdown of the global GDP, manufacturing and services sector were noticed. The possible continuation of such a tendency could underline a series of structural problems and unsolved tensions due to some centrifugal political forces as well as to some external commercial frictions.

Great Britain continues to lag behind other European states as far as economic growth is concerned. The said growth was due particularly to the contribution of net exports to the GDP, to a sustained demand of British goods and services and the continued weakness of the British Pound. In all likelihood, the uncertainties generated by Brexit negotiations will further impede investments and ultimately the rate of GDP growth.

In 2017, *the emerging economies* brought a substantial contribution to global economic growth and many of them are able to witness even better performances in 2018. Asia's emerging economies benefitted from the domestic and foreign demand for their goods and services. They are, nevertheless, vulnerable to the fluctuations of capital flows, especially to their reversal.

China maintained a robust and rather balanced economic growth on the whole of activities sectors. On the background of consolidating his political power, president Xi Jinping was able to gather a team of economic specialists with strong reformist visions who are to proceed with implementing ample economic and financial reforms. Because the main challenge for China is exactly implementing reforms not only in the financial system but also in other segments of the economy, particularly the state companies.

On the other hand, mention should be made that the direct effects of a possible trade war with the USA on China's economic global growth

would be modest and temporary. Yet on a long run the negative sequels on the multilateral trade system would be significant.

As it was the case in 2017, **India's** economy witnesses the highest growth rate in the world. The main factors that contributed to economic growth were a spectacular resuming of the investments, the constant increase of labor productivity and the expansion of the manufacturing industry. At the same time, mention should be made that the Indian economy is relatively well protected against external shocks and that secures a conducive climate for economic growth.

Although they recovered from recent recessions, **Brazil's** and **Russia's** economies continue to register modest increases and are becoming more vulnerable to different external and domestic shocks. In spite of the political and social tensions, the employment continued to raise in Brazil. Both economies witnessed significant growth of their exports.

To conclude, one may say that, on the whole, the state of the world economy is relatively good. Nevertheless, one should take into account elements such as the upward curve of the USA's and other developed states' public debt, the adverse demographic evolutions and the increase of foreign debt of some emerging economies as many risk factors linked to the evolution of the world economy in the coming period.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN AND THE NEW OIL WAR



Dinu COSTESCU

Lately and in an accelerated succession, several reunions, seminars, round tables either public or behind closed doors have been taking place and are taking place in different capitals of the Middle East and outside it and all that had in common an one-point working agenda, namely the huge and attractive hydrocarbons discoveries announced and located generally off-shore of the Eastern Mediterranean. The specialists speaking of this issue were unanimous in assessing that through their volume and quality, these new conventional energy resources have the capability of fundamentally reconfiguring the setting of the regional strategical geography and of opening a new era in what concern the relationship among the world's states and nations including conflictual and competing interlinking and that would give the Mediterranean basin a similar dynamic from several points of view with what is existing for a while in the South China Sea area with the difference that the new Mediterranean oil and natural gas cornucopia has

the valuable advantage of being situated, in the political geography, at the crossroads of three continents – Europe, Africa and Asia.

The evaluations made so far indicate that the hydrocarbons reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean are of 192 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrel of oil and mention should be made that similar re-

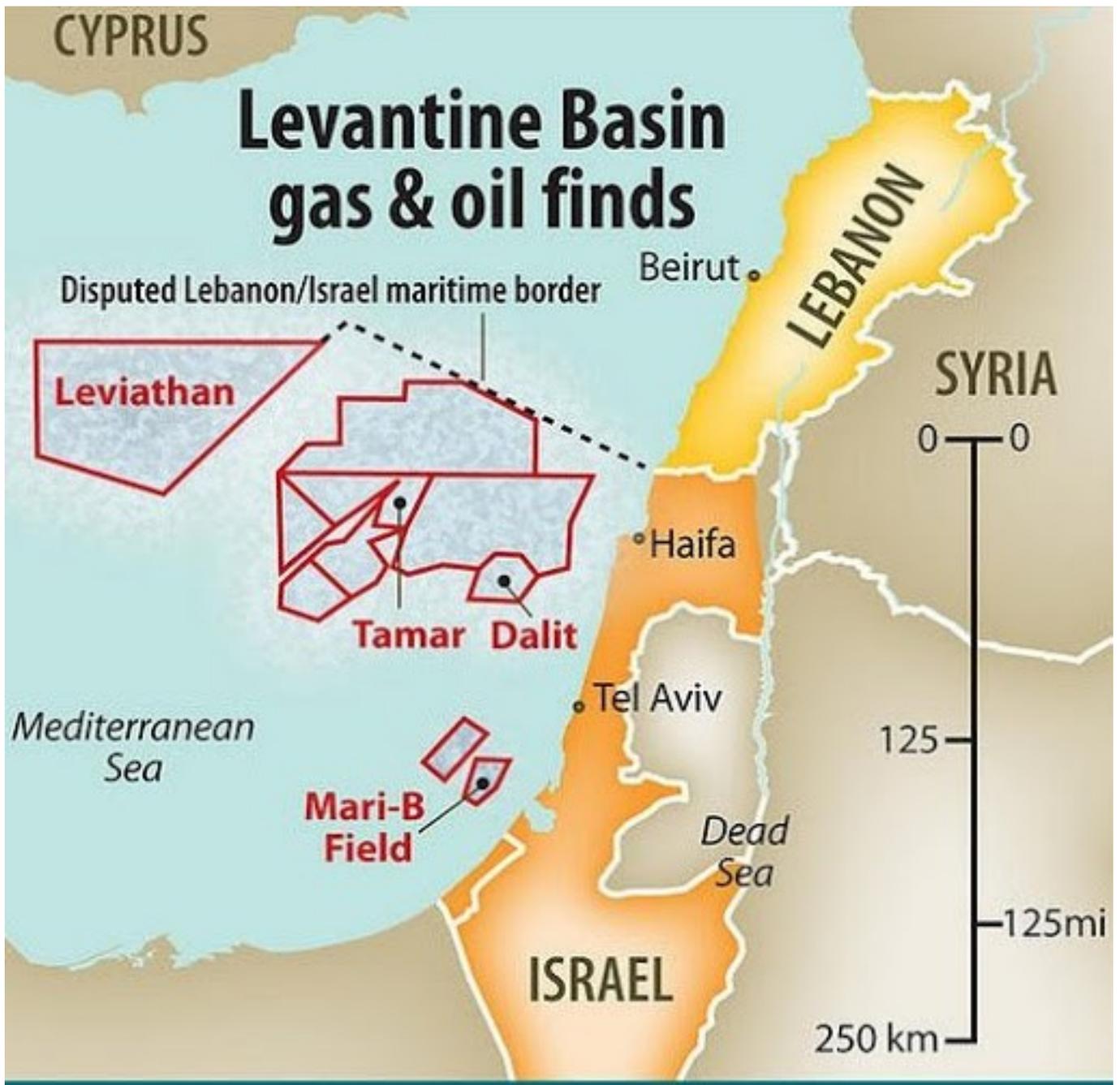


searches indicate even bigger quantities.

However, the Mediterranean will not be an easily approachable space. The explorers venturing these waters risk being caught in a complex web of regional disputes and rivalries. Turkey told them repeatedly to stay away from the Greek Cypriot waters. Last year, Italy protested against Malta's announcing a bid for oil and gas explora-

tions covering parts of the Ionian Sea claimed by Rome. Malta itself is disputing with Libya the offshore areas on its south. Israel and Lebanon are disputing the Leviathan block, close to their territorial waters separating line.

The enthusiasm and pyrexia created by the said discoveries cannot hide the simple reality that where there is bonanza, there there will be,



The U.S. Geological Survey estimates a mean of **1.7 million barrels of recoverable oil** and a mean of **122 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas** in the Levantine Basin Province.



tions of threatening conflict. As against Israel's pretensions of being sole administrator and exploiter of the proximity hydrocarbons, the Lebanese Hezbollah, with Iran's support, threatened with armed attacks against the Israeli oil platforms, oil tankers, and oil infrastructure. It is a *casus belli* with all prospects of escalation.

sooner or later, a competition jam-pack of claimants of the beneficiary status and, ipso facto, to a congestion of conflicted problems related to a simple to enounce question yet complicate to answer to: who is entitled to access this bonanza, to exploit it on a macroeconomic level? And, seeking the answer and taking into account that the Mediterranean is naturally surrounded by riparian states, another thorny issue is reached, namely that of the "economic exclusive zones", themselves closely connected to the delimitation of the territorial maritime waters on which the access to the much coveted reserves depends. Sometimes, such disputes are solved amicably, as it is the case between Israel and the Cypriot island, sometimes the disputes are sent to the Hague International Court, as it was the case with the Serpents Islands disputed by Romania and Ukraine in the Black Sea or perpetuating it, as it is the case with the disputes without prospects of a solution, in many cases. There is, in the same line, a multilateral conflict whereby there are several states involved, such as the State of Israel, via the Leviathan and Tamar blocks, or Egypt, via Zohar block in the Egyptian territorial waters (whose mapping is contested), Cyprus, claiming that Aphrodite and Calypso deposits belong to its exclusive economic zone and Lebanon, claiming the access to part of the blocks administered by Israel. The Lebanese and the Israelis did not reach by now a consensus as far as the economic exclusive zones are concerned, respectively of their territorial waters. Moreover, due the fact that the pockets of natural gas are linked to the coastal line of both states, and the bilateral disputes on the edge of this issue has generated, not a few times, situa-

The Iranian Islamic regime's backing manifested for Lebanon punctually in this case is not due to some of Iran's debatable economic interests in the energy field. It relates rather to the Iranian general strategy and projects in the Middle East area generally and in the Eastern Mediterranean in particular, given Iran's known and officially acknowledged strategy of securing access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean via the so-called Iran-Iraq-Syria-Lebanon "Shiite corridor".

One of the sequels of the seven years of civil war finds itself in the fact that Syria ceased its hydrocarbons exports to Europe and searched for a kind of compensation from Iran and the Russian Federation for those losses and a diversification of the beneficiaries of Syria's conventional energy networks, especially of the oil and gasfields in Rumeylan, Qamishli governorate, and of Jabissa block, north-east of the country, which, by the way, were explored and commissioned by Romanian specialists. Initially, Iran even intended to finance a pipeline which, passing through Syria, carry the hydrocarbons out-



put to the Mediterranean Sea and further on to Europe. The project was abandoned due to the situation generated by the civil war. In its turn, the Russian Federation is interested in a post-conflict involvement in prospecting, exploring and exporting oil and natural gas from Syria's deposits. In fact, the Russian Federation and Syria signed in January an agreement whereby the Russian side was given exclusivity for extraction and primary processing works of Syria's hydrocarbons deposits. It is understood that Bashar Al-Assad's triumph in the current domestic conflict and his staying in power will allow Russia not only to strengthen its strategic position in the Levant and in the Middle East area but also a massive involvement in the future process of Syria's reconstruction, including by reinvesting the incomes resulted from exploiting the Syrian natural gas and oil, in general, and of the energy sector of this country, in particular.

The oil agreement between Syria and the Russian Federation exceeds significantly the oil output domain and stipulates ways of rehabilitating the damaged platforms and infrastructure, consulting assistance in the energy field and training a new generation of Syrian oilmen. However, the main international aspect and the key-point of this movement is the final and unconditional consolidation of the Russian interests in the Middle East.

There is no secret that one of the main stakes in

the struggle for Syria is related to the access to the Mediterranean Sea and to its hydrocarbons deposits with all the tension hotbeds pertaining to this competition. And, from this standpoint, Cyprus's case offers a telling example to the extent that, following the Aphrodite and Calypso blocks discoveries, the Cypriot island has the prospect of becoming the new Mecca of oil producers and exporters and even raises the hopes of a possible island's reunification after the fracture that occurred 44 years ago. Except that, confronted with this perspective, Turkey adopted, from the very beginning, a unconcealed hostility attitude which was reflected on Egypt, whose president, Abdel Fattah El-Sissi, expressed his desire and intent of developing his own energy industry in cooperation with Cyprus. Such a tense climate might result in a very likely standing together of the other regional producers (especially Greece, Cyprus, Lebanon and Israel) for counteracting Ankara's regional ambitions, a solidarity that may be joined by some European states and Italy made the first step to that direction.

The Eastern Mediterranean's oil turnabout is just at its beginning. Yet the competition for the access to the energy reserves of the "Middle Sea" is twisted enough to lead to regional tensions with the prospect of degenerating into crises which, in their turn, morph into extreme conflicts.



The Secret Services of the 21st Century and Security Issues

Mihai MĂRGĂRIȚ

THE WORLD OF SECRETS FROM TRUTH TO FICTION IN THE TURMOIL OF THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE TRANSITION

The world of secrets: from truth to fiction in the modern society

Any modern intelligence service is rooted in the history and traditions of its people. The roots have persisted so much in the historical conscience and development of humanity that they have sometimes exceeded reality and turned into legend. Regardless of the location of the world communities, regardless of the exacerbated character of these legends (either favorable or unfavorable to intelligence), they have always been a product of the public perceptions and of the different representations of realities that concern their daily lives. But, if intelligence services for example, may, at some point, have goals aimed at covering operational actions and do not exclude certain obscure interests of group, these ideas can easily be deformed and then released to the public, following a trajectory from the real to the legend, as mentioned at the beginning. Intentionally or not, there may even be the practice of altering certain **"parts of the truth"** that **"are gliding to the public"**. After being embellished and enhanced with fakes, they are publicly launched again to the entire community. In intelligence, such metamorphosis can also be used to fascinate some of the public (such individuals do exist), manipulate people or create new legends in a complex scenario with very important objectives predetermined by the political power. By relying on the secret nature of their work (not infrequently exaggerated and abused) and being under the permanent pressure of the civil society that persistently requires the media exposure of **"the mysteries and the finding of the unknown"** of general interest, the services can provide answers that

have been made in their own laboratories. However, such legends have existed anywhere in the world, at any stage of democratization of the state and unfortunately, they will continue to support a variety of perceptions and theories, pursuing a well defined purpose, dictated by personal and group interests, leading to obsessions, prejudices, paranoia and conspiracy, asphyxiated with **"fake news"** that shatter the society as a whole and terrorizes citizens.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the diversity, increased frequency and aggressiveness of these legends and improper practices, we should understand that intelligence services are necessary. This is the great lesson that we have learnt since prehistory to the present day, namely that intelligence, carried out in various forms and methods, has become an indispensable tool for the survival of society. And society, with all of its members, has accepted it.

But, in a democratic spirit, in order to shorten that road **"from the truth to fiction and further to the legend"**, the civil society can and needs to call on the urgent need to adapt or, where appropriate, reform the intelligence community in accordance with the scope and appearance of changes in the domestic and international political and economic situation.

Through the careful and very thorough study of



numerous materials in question that have appeared in the recent years at the international level, certain tendencies to go **“from truth to fiction”** can be noted in the states or related to the states where democracy is vulnerable, as a result of the new configuration of world geopolitics caused by the collapse of communism in Europe and by the end of the Cold War.

Transition in the reform of the intelligence services

Such a perspective is, in my opinion, presented in the article **“Comparing the Democratization of Intelligence”**, signed by Michael M. Andregg și Peter Gill, published in the journal Intelligence and National Security¹⁾, volume 29. According to the two authors, the objective of this work is to select some of the main themes that are included in a collection of articles publicly presented in two different locations - Canada and Brazil. International conferences on the democratization of intelligence services have been organized with the stated desire to **“encourage more comparative work in this key area of intelligence studies”**. To this end, the two authors nominated a large number of articles from colleagues, including Marina Caparini, Marco Cepik, Chris Ambros, Eduardo Estévez, Helge Lurds etc.

Although the **“single-country studies”** and the **“comparative studies”** of all the mentioned authors refer to a period of time including 2014 and although it is a little late, I cannot overlook **“the intentionally incorrect and obsessive approach”** referring to the intelligence services, under the protection of M. Andregg and P. Gill's article. In the article mentioned above is men-

tioned that there is **// an extensive comparative politics literature on democratization but key questions remain as to how this might be applied to the distinctive field of intelligence as a government activity. What is clear from the pre-existing literature and the articles here is that intelligence is, in some sense, the “last frontier” (our emphasis) for attempts to democratize previously authoritarian governmental structures and processes.>>**

First of all, the **“incorrectness”** of this text comes from the fact that the intelligence services are considered **“the last frontier”** of democratization. I personally believe that such a formulation is a very serious **“error of perception”** in terms of democratization. The problem is the other way around. Firstly, since democratization is such a complex process, we can only speak about **“a radical reform and prioritization of the intelligence services”** in order to provide strength to the rule of law. This is a prerequisite for the implementation of the political will and, in any case, it cannot be considered a final frontier. I inform the distinguished authors that the intelligence services of former European communist countries were the first structures to be reformed immediately, as a key condition to join NATO and the EU, mandatory in order to be accepted at the negotiating table.

But, the seriousness of what I have called an error comes from the fact that, according to the text, this perception has dominated the whole **“pre-existing literature and the articles listed here”**. So, here is how a legend was made. With great skill, an apparent banal phrase - **“the final frontier”**, but which has serious conceptual connotations, has been insinuated into a simple phrase in many articles with exciting titles for

1. Michael M. Andregg și Peter Gill: *“Comparing the Democratization of Intelligence”* in *Intelligence and National Security*, Volume 29, 2014 - Issue 4: *Democratization of Intelligence*.

• Dr. Michael M. Andregg is Professor at the Department for Law and Peace Studies of the St. Thomas University from St. Thomas, Minnesota, US. He has been teaching at the University of Minnesota since 1981. He has obtained a doctoral degree in genetics at the University of California, Davis (1977). He directed his attention to the causes of the war in 2014, previously having written a book for which he was awarded a prize for national peace in 1999.

• Peter Gill is the author of the volume *Policing Politics* (London: Cass, 1994) and *Rounding Up the Usual Suspects?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), co-author of *Intelligence in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2nd edition, 2012). He is also co-author of the *PSI Handbook of Global Security and Intelligence: National Approaches* (in two volumes; Westport: Praeger, 2008) and *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates* (London: Routledge, 644³). He specialized as a scientific researcher in the former authoritarian regimes, for which he was awarded *Leverhulme Emeritus Fellowship* in 2010.

other analysts and with a great appeal to the public (on themes of the democratization of the intelligence services in the ex-communist European countries). And, in order to ensure the fulfillment of its purpose, the related issues have been debated in two conferences organized in Canada and Brazil, far away from Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans (one of the major areas studied), which represented a favorite area of compared analysis for other authors, to which I will refer later. I want to be understood correctly in terms of my perception of the intelligence reform. If it is done at the beginning of the democratization process, it does not preclude its continuation during the transition and even beyond. Thus, even if we started from the unlikely political consideration that **"there is a powerful intelligence service behind every powerful politician"**, we could admit that in the context of the controversies and uncertainties inherent in the very complex process of transition from a totalitarian political regime to a democratic regime with committed aspirations put into practice, it is possible to have **"side-slips"** from any intelligence agency. They are very likely generated by the duplicity of its leaders or by a small group inside the major levels of management and control, acting on purely personal and political partisanship. And the respective service, as an overall structural entity, in this case may be subjected to **"the blind exploitation"** in the final benefit of a third party's interest. We cannot blame the whole service. However, the measures to be taken cannot be considered the elements of a reform as part of the democratization process. Such side-slips, in a society which is in the process of consolidating the rule of law, are **"remediable accidents"** through the firm and timely political action of the parliamentary majority that is representative for the power of the people and a guarantee of the continued democratization.

As for the **"obsessive approach"** of the works, we note that most of the "comparative analyses"

on the reform of the intelligence services mentioned by the two authors are carried out by bringing together in the same analysis, countries from all the continents and from certain distinct geographic areas and regions. Thus, we find countries from Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, South America, Africa and India where, according to the authors, democracy is in the process of being installed or consolidated. Therefore, in their view, by comparative analysis, which I called **"generic", "totalitarianism and communism are assigned the same phrase - authoritarian regime"**, which is arbitrary and unfair. The two previous political regimes that stand at the origin of the respective countries, although similar in form, are completely different in content. Thus, even if the comparative analyses highlight the particular features of each state, they have a more observant character and are less relevant to the formulation of pertinent conclusions.

In the same key of interpretation, as stated above, Marina Caparini's article entitled **"Comparing the Democratization of the Intelligence Governance in East Central Europe and the Balkans"**²⁾ presents some interest for our debate. From the simple scientific rigor raised by the two authors of the previous article and in terms of the combination of the two sub-regions mentioned by Marina Caparini, I wonder: can Ukraine, Greece and Turkey - countries that are part of the area - be included in this comparative analysis based on the author's affiliation to the geographical area? Such a comparative analysis on the selected area can be built on none of the methodological considerations. But ... probably, the purpose is different. It is true that today the arbitrary division of the world based on geopolitical and geostrategic interests prevails. *No comment.*

Without getting into the details of this article, I only note that the two sub-regions are designated according to the pace and nature of the political and economic changes made by the countries

2. Marina Caparini: „Comparing the Democratization of Intelligence Governance in East Central Europe and the Balkans”, published in Intelligence and National Security, Volume 29, 2014 - Issue 4, published online: 10 Jul 2014

• Marina Caparini is scientific researcher at the International Affairs Institute of Norway. She is also senior associate of the security governance group. She has doctoral studies in war at King's College, London.

included in this region after the fall of the communist government as well as by the state of their relations with the European Union. It is true that these are important aspects that give character to the countries. But, in order to preserve the objectivity of the scientific research of the geographical area, it might have been interesting if each country mentioned had been the subject of a single case



study, as was the case of Helge Luras' study on Bosnia and Herzegovina or Florina Cristiana (Cris) Matei's article "**Balancing Democratic Civilian Control with Effectiveness of Intelligence in Romania: Lessons Learned and the Best/Worst Practices Before and After NATO and EU Integration**". Afterwards, noting the appetite for the analysis of communism showed by the analysts gathered around Mr. Michael M. Andregg and Peter Gill, I think it would be useful to have a comparative analysis based on the "**common past**" of all European countries that belonged to the communist regime with all its structures – the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Pact - and on their "**common present**" given by their current membership to EU and NATO. Methodologically speaking, a comparative analysis approach would be more appropriate for these countries. I do not think that there would be actual political interests that would conceal the historical truths.

Further on, the author presents a series of lessons to be learned, to which I have certain reservations, since I have identified here a section which I called "**between fiction and reality**". Thus, it is stated that these lessons are drawn from comparing experiences on democratic reform in countries in the geographic area defined by the two sub-regions. But, the criterion of a common geographic space is used here as well. Again, this criterion is of no relevance to justify the grouping of all the states together within the same comparative analysis. Of course, a certain exception here would be only the states created

from the former Yugoslavia. Indeed, they have a common geographical layout, but more important are the common connections established between the administrative-political structures specific to the federal system of the former socialist republics. All the other countries in the region have been totally different from each other, therefore requiring a separate analysis, an in-depth view of all the

details of their actual existence and future projection. I consider here: communism as a political regime, the way in which the countries abolished communism, the governments' democratization and the intelligence democratization. In addition, I believe that the value of the truths that have not yet been discovered in the short history of the post-communist era of all these countries would not have deserved to dissipate "**ab initio**", in a "**common**" address, be it even a comparative analysis that is not yet providing relevant elements. For example, what is the truth on Kosovo? Here we find the author of the article circumventing significant truths from the relatively recent history of the analyzed countries. The author emphasizes that "**the significant factors in strengthening democratic governance of intelligence include the nature of the communist regimes and the legacies they have created, regardless of (our emphasis) whether there have been armed conflicts during the transition, the extent and nature of the external assistance (particularly of the EU), the power of the media and the civil society**". Apart from the ambiguous nature of this consideration, we find that, in the author's view, the moments that signaled the changes and initiated the transitions do not really matter. Surprisingly, the armed conflicts **have no significance** for the author of the article, as the reader may note when reading the article. In my opinion, moments such as the "**bloody revolution**" (Romania), "**armed conflicts**" and "**guerilla conflicts**" resulting from the disintegration of a federal state (Yugoslavia) and even "negotiations at the green table" obtained after

more than ten years of protests by the Solidarity trade union movement, generalized throughout the country and resulted in arrests, deaths and injuries (Poland) cannot be forgotten. Of course, as stated by the author of the article, these factors have influenced the way in which the transitional regimes have sought to introduce institutional reforms to restrict the powers of these services and their susceptibility when being unreformed. But, when referring to the extent and nature of the external assistance (EU), the author of the article probably did not think of the discrimination made by Western powers among the states in Central and Eastern Europe by supporting in priority the establishing the Visegrad Group. The real purpose of this initiative was then retracted, affecting other countries in the EU integration process. In time, things got unveiled. What does this group of states represent nowadays with their domestic and foreign policy in relation to the EU cohesion? We are not to comment on it here and I do not aim at counting the warnings launched by the EU against Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic. But, the author, without making reference to this, states that some factors ***“would have influenced the measures taken to remedy the abuses of the intelligence services of the previous communist regime and the post-authoritarian state legitimacy”***. Unlike other European countries that have been freed from communism, in the case of Romania it cannot be the case of ***“remedying abuses”***! In this country, the big change was made through the 1989 bloody revolution (unique in Europe), and the transition began with the execution of the presidential couple Ceausescu and the immediate disbanding of the communist security. The leaders of the security and the members of the Executive Political Committee of the Communist Party have been trialed and sentenced, just like other people found guilty of killing and injuring protesters during the revolution etc. These are details that cannot be circumvented in any literary or journalistic stylistic form of public expression. For

this reason, I think this article could be considered a mere political advocacy with a specific objective and with pieces of truths that wangle the purposes and the scientific nature required by specialists to complete the basic political profile of the analyzed period. Such articles, in my opinion, could also generate assumptions that would make up “legends” as mentioned at the beginning of this material. In fact, it is known that such legends about Romania have been released to the public both from within and outside the country in the equation ***“from truth to fiction”*** during and after the revolution.

“The road between truth and legend” and manipulation

Another article where, in my opinion, we find a segment of ***“the road between truth and legend”***, expressed in a different purpose and unique context to intelligence, is entitled ***“Rethinking Policies for Collecting Information on the Security of the Group of “Five Eyes” and the Practices in the Post-Snowden Era”*** ³⁾.

According to the authors, the article addresses both policy makers and the public on the understanding of the role of security services in liberal democratic states and their prospects in the post-Snowden era. He explores the challenges faced by the process of intelligence gathering in the countries forming the ***“Five Eyes”*** group - particularly those affected by the “intelligence leaks” made by Snowden. It is claimed that in this situation, the debate must go beyond the simplistic notions of privacy to security, leading to a more detailed understanding of the political and ethical dilemmas dealt with by policymakers and intelligence agencies. To this end, the authors state that they provide the framework (methods, context and target) in order to promote a better perception of the practical political and ethical problems of collecting intelligence that arise in the post-Snowden era. The framework is a first step to help decision makers better navigate between the two fundamen-

3. Patrick F. Walsh and Seumas Miller: *“Rethinking Intelligence Collecting Policies for the Security of the States of the “Five Eyes” Coalition and the Practices in the Post-Snowden Era”*, published in *Intelligence and National Security – 2016*.

•The Coalition of the “Five Eyes” includes the intelligence services of the US, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

tal rights of the citizens ***“privacy and security”***.

In conclusion, I personally think that the disclosures made by Snowden in front of the investigators ***“cannot be entirety real and they also include fiction”*** in order to strengthen credibility to those who offer him protection and, in a possible extreme situation of extradition, in order to have precaution and reduce the severity of the action in the event of a possible trial in his home country. As a result, the data released to the press by the investigators certainly contain ***“legends”*** that are intended to be plausible and ***“mislead the enemy”*** or even only for the ***“fascination of the public”***.

Democratization, intelligence services and the fight against the great corruption

Europe is currently under pressure from some profound and important changes, hopes, clashes of principles, controversial attitudes, disappointments, failures caused by the complex process of reestablishing each state in the pattern of normality. In the case of the countries that have got rid of the communist burden, the change has been made more at a declarative level, in terms of ideology, aiming more at a political reform – ***“the multi-party system”*** and the reconsideration of ***“the right to own private property”***.

Therefore, the whole society has entered a fierce race to occupy a comfortable place in the system of political power, most of its members having the engines at full throttle, fearing the ***“spectrum of poverty”***. The rich appeared in the first stage - those who had been delving into the so-called ***“sweet common cake of the socialist property”***, according to the principle of savage capitalism promoted by the crooks of the beginning of the transition period – ***“do not ask me how I made my first million of dollars”***.

Governments have been formed mostly by politically unprepared people, some of whom have later proven to be also immoral. Overall, they were unable to put into practice the reform process at a legislative and executive full extent,



which was necessary to the new political and economic system, although they benefited from external consultancy. In the name of promoting market principles, laws have been issued that rather served the interests of certain groups; the national wealth has been looted; the reversing of the hierarchy of human values has been reversed; deception, political hiring and theft have been nonchalantly and systematically promoted, encouraging high-level corruption, starting from the top of the political and public administration system.

During the transition period, assuming the set of high performance objectives required for the accession to the European and Euro-Atlantic values, in the framework of the domestic economic and social chaos, life has shown that the states have launched on an unknown path of reform, without having the practical solutions of another transition experience. It is known that the governments of the world powers engaged in restoring the world order ***“have worked”*** on multiple levels, with worthy perseverance to prepare the historical moment of change in the Communist Europe. But that was it. The transition was probably only implied and expected.

After the moment of change, due to the policy of ***“forced globalization”***, the democratic West-

ern world came up with offers to integrate into the EU and NATO. While the integration was optional, due to the launch of a steady stream of incorrect information about some countries considered from the start **“second-hand countries”**, integration has been selective, based on the principle of **“double standards”**, which meant that some countries have been required less reasonable criteria. There are current intentions to alter the roadmaps along the way, establishing **“multi-speeds”**, though they have been **“active”** for some time **“out of sight”**.

In the initial euphoria of the successful change, many truths have not been identified or have been concealed, being revealed later, as difficulties occurred in the transition process. Some of these issues are serious and almost impossible to overcome. The integration process has brought considerable benefits to those who have handled the offers of control in the country and abroad. And the simplistic approach of these offers as well as the lack of own effort from countries benefiting from the support of the European Community have not contributed to the consolidation of the guaranteed man's rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of the law.

That was the moment when the foreign **“false partners”** and **“local cardboard barons”** have proliferated, representing the illegal enriched of the transition.

This is in short the essence of the officially unreported failure of the post-Cold War reform, meeting the specific characteristics of all the states that had to pursue it in Central and Eastern Europe. It was mostly diverted from the proposed final political and economic purpose. This is an opinion formed on the basis of the present realities in the former communist countries in this area, which cannot be concealed anymore by **“fake news”**, being identified and courageously unveiled by the media and confirmed by the large protests that have taken various manifestations mainly in Europe.

Faced with such economic turmoil marked by corruption, at a time when the EU policy seems to go into collapse, when the international geo-

political situation has become seriously tense at the level of the world powers' leaders and therefore it rearranges its principles for a new world order, in my view, there is one question that the civil society in Europe and elsewhere needs to answer: ***is it time to implement radical solutions in the fight against the great corruption, high-level widespread and which re the principles that must govern it?***

Can the intelligence services support the law enforcement structures?

The support that intelligence agencies could offer to the authorized structures for law enforcement is a very actual issue, debated not only in Europe but all over the world, in an attempt to take severe measures against the generalized high-level corruption, terrorism, money laundering, drug trafficking, organized crime and other very serious criminal offenses. The debates have revealed different opinions with pros and cons.

In the US, they have emerged as a result of the alarming increase in the number and severity of crimes, being absolutely imperative to streamline cooperation between the law enforcement organizations and the intelligence community. The arguments started from the need for information, especially for crimes committed by US citizens abroad. Both policymakers and academics consider that it would be logical to reveal the huge volume of information available to the intelligence community through its powerful capabilities for collecting information, which include systems and human agents available worldwide. Others were of the opinion that it would be simple that the information obtained by intelligence agencies to be made available to investigators and prosecutors in support of their efforts to bring terrorists and narcotic traffickers into the US courts. There were also observers that considered that things could go even further and suggested that the support would be required in particularly dangerous cases, such as CIA secret operations or actions against attempts of military coups.

The close coordination of the efforts made by

the law enforcement agencies and the intelligence services in the intelligence community (along with the Department of State and the Department of Defense) has been assessed as having significant challenges. The US intelligence experts unequivocally say that *// the separation of national law/security is particularly important, being deeply rooted in the character of the American government. The paradigm "national security" favors the aggressive, intelligent and active collection. It anticipates threats before they appear and intends to act preventively against suspected targets. In contrast, the paradigm of "law enforcement structures" stimulates reactions to the information provided voluntarily, uses arrests and ex-post facto trials, governed by the rules of evidence and protecting the rights of the citizens >>4)*

Also, the division of responsibilities between the intelligence and law enforcement structures is also considered necessary and it should be provided in detail in the statutes and executive orders. Numerous observers - including officials of the intelligence agencies - strongly believe in the fundamental importance of the law enforcement efforts of the relevant services, regulated by specific laws and rules designed to protect the rights of the accused and appreciate much less the restricted operations of the intelligence agencies.

It should be noted that in the US, shortly after World War II, **the National Security Act of 1947** was issued, which established the CIA. It prevented the Agency to take any responsibility on law enforcement and internal security. This provision, derived from a determination appropriated by the Congress and the Truman Administration, was justified at the time *//so as not to create an "American Gestapo" or violate the FBI jurisdiction>>*.

Later on, following the sensational revelations about the inappropriate activities of the intelligence agencies, both the intelligence community and monitoring committee of the Congress have decided to separate more the activity of the in-

telligence services and agencies of law enforcement in order to prevent the use of intelligence techniques against citizens, unless they have obtained by rulings of the court of law.

It is also to be noted that before the end of the Cold War, acts of terrorism and those related to narcotics and contraband were considered matters of national interest. As a result, an **Executive Order on US Intelligence Operations**, signed by President Ronald Reagan on 4 December 1981, assigned specifically the CIA responsibilities for the collection and production of intelligence on the foreign aspects of the narcotics production. The intelligence agencies were authorized *"to participate in the activities of the law enforcement agencies to investigate or prevent the clandestine intelligence activities of the foreign powers, international terrorism or activities of any kind regarding narcotics"*.

Then, after the end of the Cold War and in view of the assessment of threats in accordance with the new configuration of the world geopolitics, intelligence agencies were forced to severely and clearly adjust their efforts, respecting the standards of the national security requirements in the new context. By mid-1990's, about one third of the 1980 levels were reduced and many specific missions of the Cold War have disappeared. As a result, the intelligence community has faced major challenges in adjusting the acquiring of technical equipment specific to its activity. In this case, open sources such as books, newspapers, radio, television programs, brochures etc have been widely used. Human collection has also been a special challenge, since the personnel and methodologies previously applied on themes like Soviet diplomatic or military policies were very different from what has then become necessary in the new post-Cold War period in order to collect information. Intelligence on terrorist groups and drug smuggling has become particularly important.

The emergence of transnational threats in recent years and the great availability of the intelligence resources belonging to the intelligence

4. **Richard A. Best, Jr.**, is a specialist on national defense and international affairs: *CRS - Report for Congress, Intelligence and Law Enforcement: Countering Transnational Threats to the U.S. Cap. XII: Intelligence Agencies Support Law Enforcement*, <https://fas.org/irp/crs/RL30252.pdf>.

community have led many to seek greater use of its assets to obtain information that could be used at some point in the criminal proceedings. They evoked the fact that its structures have already been collecting a multitude of data from all the regions of the world. The storage and retrieval capacities as well as the thousands of trained analysts who could be of great use to support the efforts of the law enforcement structures have been brought into discussion. In some parts of the world, the unique contacts in the field of intelligence can provide invaluable information about the activities that may be related to the violation of the US laws. This is possible because most of the collection of information focuses on topics in remote geographical areas and probably it will remain so.

In the subsequent years, investigations have been marked by a certain reluctance of the two structures (intelligence and law enforcement) to achieve an interactive relationship between them. This *“over-caution”* was based more on the perception that closer association would mean a *“high political risk”*, higher than it would result under the prohibition of the law.

The separation of the domestic intelligence services from the law enforcement structures

The law enforcement structures and the intelligence services have fundamentally different purposes. While the purpose of the law enforcement structures is to obtain a conviction in a specific criminal case, the task of the intelligence services is to collect as much information as possible about the potential threats to the state and society. Therefore, an information service

might prefer not to arrest an identified criminal if it would reduce its ability to collect additional information. Also, an intelligence service might not want to disclose its information in an open trial for fear of betraying its source of information. However, the collection of intelligence on organized crime requires skills similar to those used by intelligence agents. In certain circumstances, the targets of the internal intelligence services could be involved in organized crime. Therefore, the interests of the two organizations would overlap. In addition, intelligence agencies have no authority to carry out criminal investigations, or the power to arrest and conduct searches. When it is clear that a crime has been committed, the collection of evidence and execution of arrests could be made by a specialized branch of the police. In the case of the domestic intelligence services, the approval for surveillance and investigation in an open area shall be given only if there is evident action and if there is an obvious and clear problem of violence and suppression. The intervention of the domestic intelligence services could be justified by the need of targeting an organization where its influence has led to violence or there is a reasonable damage. But, law enforcement and the exercise of executive power against violence belong only to the law enforcement.

In conclusion, in any situation the two organizations – intelligence and law enforcement – would be, **coordination and cooperation between them must be provided at a governmental level, directly and unequivocal. However, it must be very clear that the domestic and foreign intelligence services must never be involved in any domestic political activity.**





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Military Technology and Equipments, New Weapon Devices

**Project Scorpio
in the United Kingdom**

In the United Kingdom, Project Scorpio is known under the name of Future Rapid Effects System (FRES) programme and includes five families of medium-weight vehicles, in at least 16 variants, and the procurement of an estimated 3,300 vehicles. The FRES vehicles were to meet the army's long-term needs for new medium-weight armoured fighting vehicles and will be deployed on rapid intervention, enduring peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations and support to high intensity, major combat operations.

The five vehicle families are utility, reconnaissance, medium armour, manoeuvre support and basic capability utility vehicles. The requirement, first announced in 1998, was for 3,700 vehicles, but by 2006 this had been reduced to 3,300 vehicles.

The £13bn FRES programme was the highest priority equipment programme within the British Army. The whole-life cost was estimated at up to £60bn. The utility vehicles were to include 1,700 to 1,900 wheeled 8x8 vehicles from 25t to 30t, accounting for 60% of the number of FRES vehicles and about 50% of the programme costs.

The specialist FRES vehicles – reconnaissance, medium armour and manoeuvre support families – would consist of about 1,500 vehicles, 40% of the FRES vehicle total and 50% of the cost. The fifth family, basic capability utility vehicles, were not to a full FRES specification and would be procured separately from the FRES programme.

The FRES system of systems integrator (SOSI) would be responsible for integration across all the FRES vehicle families and interoperability between FRES vehicles and other UK armed forces systems. The SOSI would also carry out system engineering, capability integration, and programme and design management. The SOSI



contract was awarded to Thales / Boeing in January 2008.

Potential reconnaissance vehicles put forward were the CV90, offered by BAE Systems, and ASCOD SV, offered by General Dynamics UK, and were awarded assessment-phase contracts in November 2008.

In May 2008, General Dynamics United Kingdom Limited was selected by the UK Ministry of Defence as the provisionally preferred bidder for the utility vehicle design (UVD). However, in December 2008, this preferred bidder status was withdrawn, the UK MoD citing failure to achieve agreement on commercial conditions.

The three contenders that were not included in the Trials of Truth were: the integrated demonstrator vehicle from BAE Systems, the armoured modular vehicle from Patria and the VCI from Iveco.

FRES interoperability requirements

The FRES vehicles were to be very much more complex than current vehicles and also needed to interface to other programmes and systems such as the A400M transport aircraft, the FIST soldier system, Bowman and other command, control and communications systems.

The requirement for FRES were revised to include an increased level of protection against improvised explosive devices and rocket propelled grenades. As a result the FRES vehicle weight increased from 17t to typically 25t to 30t.

The FRES utility vehicle was originally specified to be transportable by the C-130J Hercules which carries loads up to about 18t. The FRES vehicle specification was revised to be transportable by A400M, which can carry a vehicle up to 37t. The A400M will enter service with UK forces in 2011. For vehicle weights of over 37t the vehicle's armour and systems would be transported separately.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Armoured robots and armoured fighting vehicles (Russia)



When Russia shows off equipment at this year's annual victory parade, included in that number will be an armed robot that Russia claims saw action in Syria. The Uran-9 looks like a tank in miniature – 30mm cannon on a turret on top of a small tracked body. But unlike the armored beasts of war seen on battlefields for over a century, there's no human nestled inside. And, according to statements published in Russia's state-owned RIA Novosti, Deputy Minister of Defense Yuriy Borisov confirmed that the country tested Uran-9 robots in Syria.

"This is where it gets interesting. The exact RIA quote is as follows: "The defense ministry announced that the robotic Uran-6 complexes designed for mine clearance were well-proven in Syria, as well as Uran-9 multifunctional reconnaissance and fire support system."

The statement is clearer about the theater in which the robot was tested, but doesn't resolve any of the questions about why no observers have spotted the Uran-9 yet, and why Russian

media itself hasn't heralded the fighting power of the robot. Indeed, when it comes to listing the capabilities of the machine, "Uran-9' was created to protect personnel from enemy's fire. It has

powerful weapons that can hit not only live force and lightly armored vehicles, but also tanks, as well as other highly protected objects. Uran-9 is built into the Unified Control System at the tactical level, and has protection from unauthorized access and electronic warfare means."

The exact nature of the armament here is less interesting than the fact that the Uran-9 is armed. How armed robots are fielded and controlled is a question for the future and a pressing concern on battlefields today. If the control is at

the tactical level, what rank does that put the person operating it? Are they directing the Uran-9 by waypoints on a tablet or steering it remotely, with a person constantly responsible for its every movement. What kind of communications is it relaying back to the person operating (supervising?) it? Is it making targeting decisions on its own, and then checking in with a human before firing? Just how protected from unauthorized access can a robot be when it's controlled in-theater.

And finally: if the Uran-9 is in fact in Syria, why hasn't it been seen in combat yet, and what is Russia learning from the experience? Syria is hardly the first civil war to be used as a testing ground for new weapons of war, and how those lessons are interpreted can have far-reaching ramifications for entire families of technology.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Leading Articles, Studies and New Analyses

Strategy. A Complete History**Author: Lawrence FREEDMAN****Publisher: Litera, Bucharest, 2018**

Lawrence Freedman has been a professor of war studies at King's College, London, since 1982. He was elected member of the British Academy in 1995 and he was named the official historian of the Falklands campaign in 1997. Since 2009 he has been the British official reporter of the Iraqi war. Professor Freedman has written numerous papers on nuclear strategy and the Cold War and he is a well-known commentator on contemporary security issues. His book "A Choice of Enemies: America Confronts the Middle East" received the Lionel Gelber Prize in 2009 and the Duke of Westminster Medal for military literature. The book presented here appeared in 2013.

It seems that there is no human activity that needs a **strategy**, the word being especially used when we consider some sort of future action.

The Preface of the book states that: "There is no generally accepted definition of the word *strategy*, which would describe the domain and set its limits. A contemporary common definition mentions keeping a balance between purposes, methods, means; identifying objectives and the resources and methods available to achieve those objectives. (...) In general, the strategy comes into play when there are conflicting interests and there is need for solutions. This is why the strategy is more than a plan".

In addition to the Preface, the book comprises five parts, as it follows: Part I: Origins, with five chapters; Part II: Strategies of Force, with twelve chapters, Part III: Strategy from Bottom to the Top, with eight chapters, Part IV: Strategy from Top to Bottom, with eight chapters, Part V: Theories about Strategy, with the three chapters, Acknowledgments, Notes and Index.

The publishers wrote about the book that: "Lawrence Freedman captures the long history

of strategic thinking in a consistent and profound story of how it came to influence every aspect of our lives. At the heart of the strategy we find the question whether it is possible to manipulate and shape our environment rather than become victims of the forces beyond our control. Freedman shows that the inherent unpredictability of this environment subject to random events, the efforts of our opponents and missteps made by friends provide necessary and dramatic challenges to the strategy. Armies, corporations and nations rarely change a state of things with another, making their way through a series of situations, none of them being exactly as anticipated. The process always requires a reassessment of the original strategy, as of the final objective, its image being fluid and flexible, governed by the starting point and not by the final one".

Presented by Cornel VAIDA



Secret Services

Author: John Hughes-Wilson

Publisher: Meteor, Bucharest 2017

Colonel John Hughes-Wilson is one of the most experienced authors and analysts of intelligence activities, contemporary military developments and military history. John Hughes-Wilson is the author of several very successful books and of a large number of articles on the intelligence services and other topics related to defense. He was many times the commentator of the BBC television and radio station for various national events.

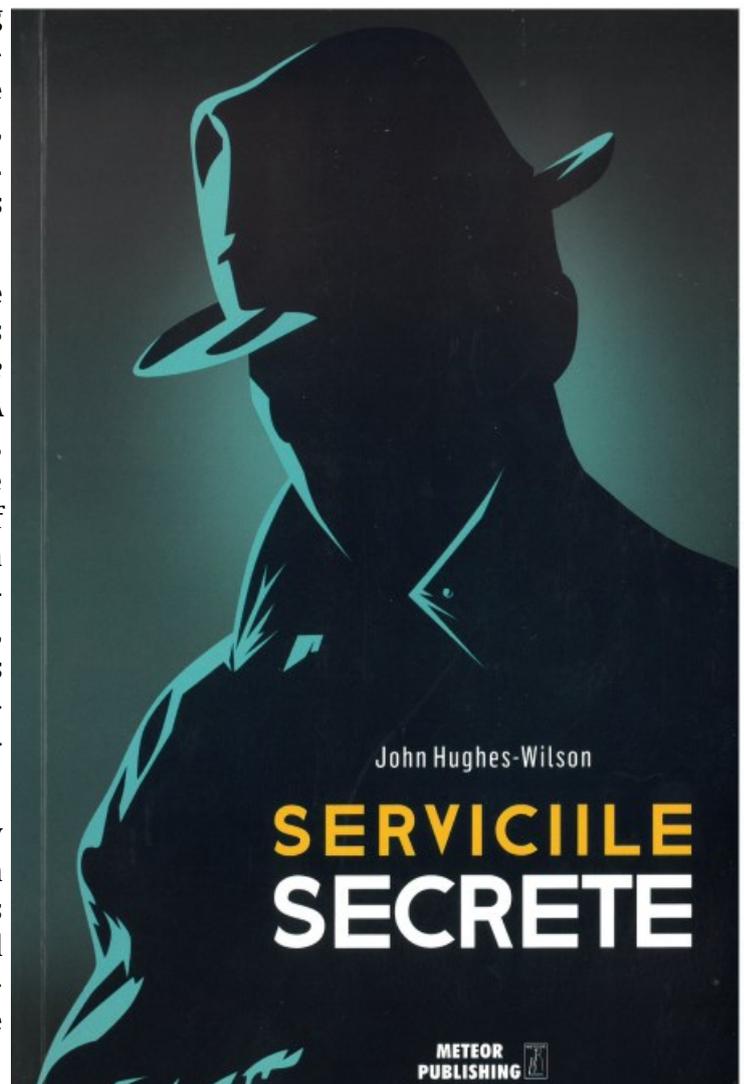
He is Archives Bi-Fellow at the Churchill College Cambridge, Editorial Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute, Whitehall and he has been Chairman of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides. After completing the training as an infantry officer in the Sherwood Foresters, he was selected by the Intelligence Corps, for whom he served in the Falklands, Cyprus, Saudi Arabia and Northern Ireland. He has also worked in the dangerous jungles of Whitehall and the NATO headquarters.

The author writes "About this book" in the first part of the Introduction: "The book has its origins in the work *Military Intelligence Blunders*, written in 5³³³, which sold well. A second, updated edition appeared in 2004, after the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and after the invasion of Iraq. And it became a bestseller. I was both surprised and impressed to see that the volume has been translated into six languages, including Turkish and Japanese, and it has become a recommended lecture for the intelligence agencies and a textbook for specialized university courses.

A lot has changed since 2004 until today and I have tried with this new book – which is more comprehensive than the previous one - to capture some of these changes and assess their impact in order to give the reader a much broader view on the intelligence services".

The publisher writes that: "The book examines the potential pitfalls of the traditional information cycle; the dangerous uncertainties of spies and human resources; the manner in which the Cold War has become a war of electronic information; technical revolution that has begun with the use of the image recognition during the First World War and the Cuban missile crisis; the extent to which the Israeli intelligence services failed before the Yom Kippur War; the consequences of the fact that Stalin deliberately ignored vital information; how the information obtained by the interception of electromagnetic signals (SIGINT) have brought America one of the greatest victories; the truth about WikiLeaks; if the September 11 attacks could have been avoided; other topics of public interest".

Presented by Cornel VAIDA





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 in 2008.



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



Cornel VAIDA- Director INGEPO Consulting

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