

GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

Bilingual-monthly publication of political analysis

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

Li X Jinping - the emperor of China

New combat capabilities in the structure of the Russian Federation's conventional land forces

The Strait of Hormuz and the International Policies

Donald Trump is guilty. He is guilty of not being stupid

Issues of establishing the unified intelligence community of the state

Recommended Reading: **National Identity and Modernity**

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

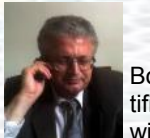
Former Minister Counsellor (economic affairs) covering for more than 30 years the Middle East and North Africa. An experienced connoisseur of the Arab world.



Dieter FARWICK

Senior Vice-President World Security Network Foundation

Brigadier General (ret), former advisor to Manfred Worner, 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 SÂNDULESCU

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 geo-strategic 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 PUȘCAȘ

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.



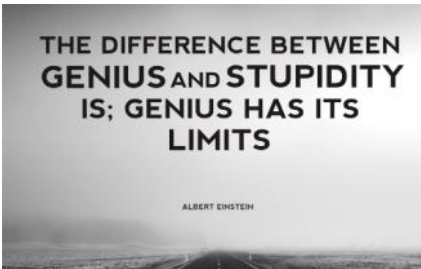
Yuriy RADKOVETS

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

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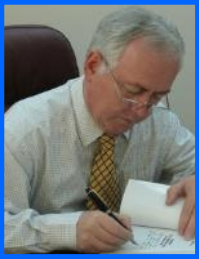
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Motto: "Opinions are free, but not mandatory"—I.L.Caragiale

EDITORIAL

Stupidity and corruption, scourges of the contemporary world or leverages of action for achieving geopolitical aims?



"The difference between genius and stupidity is that genius has its limits"

Albert Einstein

Corneliu PIVARIU

The Italian historian and economist Carlo Cipolla succeeded, after long years of research, in formulating five universal laws of stupidity serviceable in any society:

1. Man has always underestimated the number of the idiots surrounding him;
2. The likelihood of a man being stupid does not depend on his other abilities;
3. The stupid person is the one whose acts bring about losses to other people or groups of people and do not bring benefits to the protagonist or even turn it into negative events for himself;
4. The stupid always underestimated the stupid's destructive potential;
5. The stupid is the most dangerous type of personality.

We will not enlarge upon these formulations but their understanding will bring in interesting conclusions for the interested ones.

Yet scarce education or education with great deficiencies are to be added, too, to stupidity, something that begins to manifest more and more frequently including through a primal form of this lack of education or deficiencies in carrying out the educational process – workable illiterates. The latter percentage is worrying on the world stage as in 2005 it was reaching 68% in Brazil, while other statistics showed that it reached 47% in Italy, 43% in Mexico and 21.8% in Great Britain. We have noticed that, at the level of the European Union, there is a concern for reducing this percentage by 20% during the coming 10 years as the Nordic countries have a percentage of under 20% while Bulgaria and Romania have over 40% of workable illiterates.

A process of stupid-autocracy emerges in some countries underlining the existence within the administration and the central leadership and within other economic and administrative bodies of persons with precarious training, much under the level of good governance and of fulfilling the functional attributions of the positions they were appointed to.

Qui prodest this evolution? To a conglomerate of forces, many of them multinational, going after some of their own goals, political and economic or of a different nature, of some geopolitical goals aimed at redistributing the spheres of influence in the world much easier to be reached when the grey masses of the national populations are poorly prepared and with scarce education and without the awareness of belonging to a democratic values system.

Corruption is to be added to all that, an as old phenomenon as the human society or the world's oldest profession. A world without corruption is, indeed, a noble objective and, at the same time, it is fair to say, a utopian one as well. That does not mean one should not fight for diminishing corruption yet this should be done first of all through education and through a sustained economic growth of the states and thereafter through the state's bodies policy of fighting corruption. Unfortunately, a prudent observer may find out that in certain countries which can be of interest for certain forces there is the concern for using the flag of fighting corruption channelled as a matter of priority to some segments of the society for attaining some other specific goals which have quite nothing to do with the national interests of the respective states.

Here we see how stupidity and corruption are not only dangers for the societies they are developing into but also tools skilfully used by forces which pursue in fact other goals than those nicely promoted by international bodies such as the UN, UNESCO and others.

The Current Geostrategic World-wide Outlook



Li Jinping - the Emperor of China

Dieter FARWICK, BrigGen (ret) and publicist *

The XIXth Party Congress of October, 2017 when Li Jinping was re-elected and a successor was appointed was not the end of the current policy but the beginning of a Li Jinping's very confident policy with general strategic objectives.

By March 2018, he was elected president "for life". In what policy of power is concerned, that would have not been necessary as he detains the other two power positions – Chairman of Central Military Commission, which include 900,000 policemen, too, and Party Secretary "for life".

The Poliburo Standing Committee and the Communist Party of China lost their importance. With his position he embodies the party and strengthens it personally. For the sake of the party and in spite of the inefficiency, he stands by state enterprises which offer positions for the young aspiring and "deserving" politicians of the party leadership.

What makes him the "Emperor of China"?

First of all, he himself. During the last years he mercilessly cleaned the party of real or supposed rivals. "Corruption" was the catch-word for the end of many careers. It hit as well many multi-billionaires who disappeared from public life without a court decision. Their private companies were nationalised. End of story.

„Chairman of everything“ – a label of reconnaissance.

With him, all the threads converge onto an iron fist. The results of the activities of the intelligence services are presented to him directly. He has many "skeletons in his cabinet".

The approximate 800 million Internet users are subject to a complete surveillance.

The access to the international data services

will be closed or temporarily closed. There are informal employees of the secret services in every house and common dwelling who report the deviations from the "targeted behavior". The politically unpleasant events or concepts are temporarily blocked or completely cancelled.

The sanctions for misconduct may include: professional prohibition – particularly for the "activists for human rights". This prohibition is punishable by house arrest or confinement to a so-called "re-education camp" without trial for an indefinite period of time. There are hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens in such re-education camps – not only the Uigurs of Xinjiang. For the family members the "guilt by association" is applied. That applies to the case of gravely ill Liu Xia, the wife of Nobel laureate of the last end of the year, Liu Xiaobo, who wants to leave for Germany. The German chancellor did not succeed during her visit to facilitate Liu Xia's leaving to Germany.

The gravest penalty is, of course, death penalty which, according to human rights organisations, applies to 1,000 cases a year with a great number of undeclared cases.

The vast data quantity introduced by millions of Internet users are processed in the current profile of personality using the "the advanced artificial intelligence". For a good behavior plus points are granted and even for the smallest mistake minus points are registered. The respective points account, which is not known by the person in case, decides in what concern the affiliation and promotion within the party, the professional success or failure and the possibility of traveling - in China or abroad.

This account is filled in through surveillance and reconnaissance of individual "types of movements" and of usual manners during working meetings or party meetings.

Then, there is the "facial reconnaissance".

The insiders suppose that, in case of the cameras that are massively used publicly record approximately 70% of a human body, the person is recognized more than 90% for sure and 100% is desired.

Apparently, the social peace seems to prevail in China. Nevertheless, for years some 100,000 so-called "incidents" have been reported whereby military and police forces have been deployed for breaking the resistance in what concern land theft or dubious building projects of certain local leaders and officials.

Domestically, there are three conflict points:

Xinjiang in the west, where Beijing and its Han Chinese, who were forcefully resettled, leads a complete oppression against the Muslim Uigurs who, in their turn, fight back by attacks and acts of sabotage against the oppression with heavy casualties on both sides. In its issue of June 2nd, 2018, The Economist describes Xinjiang as "racist police state" whereby all kind of data concerning people and the way of driving one's own vehicle can be stored on the "Joint Platform of Integrated Operations" and reviewed within seconds. A perfect data storage. The same issue of The Economist mentions as well about "hundreds of thousands of Uigurs who disappeared in Xinjiang".

The major project - one belt, one road - which will be discussed later in more detail, is aimed as well at better controlling China's western part against the Uigurs including by rapid deployment of the military and police units of Central China. Officially, this project will bring West China more tourism through rapid connections domestically and abroad. There is no coincidence that this objective coincides with the strategic plans of implementation.

Tibet is still a second hot point, where the native population - especially the monks in the monasteries - fight against dictatorship. In Tibet, Dalai Lama, who resides in exile in India, has many followers and a great influence. As far as the traffic in Tibet is concerned, the railroads and roads networks were extended so that the military and police forces could be rapidly supplemented in case of upheavals.

Taiwan remains the third source of conflict, considered by Beijing as a Chinese province.

Opposite the island, a huge military arsenal was deployed on the continent. China insists on its right of reintegrating the separatist province into "continental China".

There are some obstacles in front of the desire or the intention of incorporating Taiwan by military force:

First of all, the USA and Japan and, probably South Korea, are supporting guarantees for Taiwan's independence. The cost of a military invasion could become too high even for China.

More than that, there is a tacit agreement: Taiwan abstains from too energetically requesting independence as long as China does not rattle too much the sword.

While travelling by train in continental China, your writer met Taiwanese tourists who are free to move around the continent and to invest especially in the real estate. That brings hard currency to Beijing. Beijing and Taiwan are benefiting of this pragmatic "modus vivendi". That does not mean "Peace for ever". A stronger China could risk invading Taiwan militarily - particularly if the USA's and Japan's security guarantees erode. Not tomorrow, or after tomorrow.

The Chinese plan with 10 pillars for 2025.

Li Jinping is not content with the so far achievements. He wants the strategic position especially in what concern the key-technologies such as artificial intelligence, e-mobility, digitalization, broadband and robotics for strengthening his connections and to reach top positions in the whole world.

As competitor, he sees the United States only. Europe has already remained much behind.

That applies to the German auto industry which will be forced to cope with the "supplier" status. China will set the pace and the standards. It is likely that the German industry succeeds in conquering a market segment through long life batteries and low wear and tear.

China is buying since years agricultural land all over the world, companies or shares, equipment and raw materials which could help China reach its 2025 objectives.

Here are the 10 pillars of key-technologies China aims at for 2025, when it wants to become a "strong" power:

- "Information technology,
- automation and robotics,
- airspace industry,
- maritime and navigation equipment,
- high speed railroads,
- electric vehicles, electrical energy,
- agricultural equipment,
- new materials,
- pharmaceutical industry and
- medical devices" (see Spiegel Nr.21 / 18.5.2018" Aufholen und Überholen ")

This is an ambitious program. Nevertheless, 2025 is but an intermediate objective. In 2035, China wants to be a "medium-size power", and in 2049, on the opportunity of the 100th anniversary of the Peoples' Republic to become a "world power" of the processing industry (see Spiegel Nr. 21 ebda.).

China exploits the systemic benefits of a centrally directed dictatorship which can plan and act strategically.

Global strategy - „one belt, one road“.

It is the "new" or "the digital silk road" – a thousands of billions of dollar project, which covers more than seventy countries – with a road, maritime and aerial transport infrastructure to Europe. In Germany, the port of Duisburg is already the reshipment point for the goods carried by train.

Li Jinping at the October 2017 party congress: "China is cramming the center of the world businesses" (see Spiegel Nr.21 din 18.5.2018).

The term "road" is misleading. It is a network of roads, transport lanes and air routes which should make Europe more accessible to China's economy and trade. A great deal of the high investment costs are borne by the partner countries under the supervision of the Chinese government. The construction projects are not publicly announced and are to be carried out mainly by Chinese companies. This applies to railroad transport and aircrafts, too.

Today, Chinese high-speed trains connect the great Chinese metropolises. And the Chinese aircraft industry is taking great stride forward.

The Chinese army – the beneficiary of innovation and investments.

The Chinese army is already a world power – behind the United States of America which twchnological advances are however eroding.

Military considerations are behind the global strategy "one belt, one road". The army will be able to work faster in all directions.

That applies to South China Sea which China considers a Chinese inland sea in spite of the decision of the Hague International Court of July 12th, 2016 which defined South China Sea as an "open sea".

That decision does not prevent China to build artificial islands there and to expand these small "aircraft carriers". This military infrastructure can be viewed on google.earth.

The USA president's announcements of giving up the "costly" military drills with South Korea are the result to China's power projection as well. However, the possible agreements with North Korea are worrying China. Its influence over North Korea may continue to decline. On a long term, China is afraid of the reunification of North and South Korea. As a result of the experiences and discussions in South Korea on the reunification, your writer considers that the desire of reunification within the political circles and among the South Korean population is feeble. Facilitating travel and families reunification would suffice to the people. A special quality of the Chinese army is the "cyber and information war" which adds a new dimension to any mo-

dern warfare. There is an "extension" of digitalization, of artificial intelligence and of robotics from industry to the army and vice-versa in this field as well. Quality only, not quantity is requested in this field.

The first Chinese military base in Djibouti at the geopolitical and geostrategic way out to the south and to the Suez Canal and the conflict area in Yemen is worth noticing (see Allgemeine Schweizer Militärzeitschrift 01/02/2018).

What future will China have?

Reading China's future visions takes your breath away.

The last decades proved China has the will and power to turn visions into reality – contrary to Europe.

Fortunately, history shows that future can unfold otherwise than it is hoped for. For instance the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990/91, almost thirty years ago with unsettled consequences until today.

The only power in the world able to halt the Chinese expansionist policies and the "Chinese dream" is the United States with its powerful partners – from Japan and India to Australia.

It is not clear yet whether the USA under president Donald Trump wishes and can eliminate the mistakes of Barack Obama's power policy in this region.

China itself can have changes and delays.

This applies to the strong Li Jinping. On his way to seizing power he acted rather brutally. Whether he continues to impose his power in an equally brutal way, the resistance to him and to his policy can increase especially in case the Chinese economy loses strength, demography decrease, the environment continues to deteriorate and the ethnic conflicts are on the rise.

There is still the distress potential in the re-education camps. LiXinping created not only friends in China following his purges but also bitter enemies waiting for their chance to take revenge.

An economic negative development can increase China's national debt which is now close to 300% of the GDP.

Can the trade dispute between China and the USA lead to a military conflict? In theory it is possible, but due to interdependencies – China needs the USA's Market and the USA needs China's money – it is unlikely. Poate disputa comercială dintre China și Statele Unite să conducă la un conflict militar?

Whether nevertheless a war between the two giants takes place, the world's political maps will be amended.

What means this possible development for Germany?

Chancellor's visit to China in May, 2018 did not bring new significant results.

Among others, Merkel spoke of a "deepening of the economic relations".

"Deepening of the economic relations" between two different partners? China, with its 1.4 billion inhabitants and an ever increasing power is a giant while Germany, with 80 million inhabitants and declining power cannot be an "equal partners".

The planning horizons are too far away: Germany thinks and acts „On the spot“ (specifically Merkel), China thinks along the following milestones: 2025, 2035 and 2049.

The said "deepening" may lead to a Germany's ever increased dependency on China – especially in the cars industry. There will be more "computers on wheels" in the future – due to China, too, - than German premium cars with internal combustion engines.

Since there will be no European common initiative for innovation and investments, Germany has to use the existing niches and look for more in order to secure the market share. That implies a closer cooperation with the corresponding European states and with North America in spite of Donald Trump who may rule still for maximum 6,5 years.

There are cooperation possibilities even after that.

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**) General Brigadier (ret) Dieter FARWICK, born on June 17th 1940 in Schopfheim, Baden-Württemberg. After finishing his studies he joined the German army in 1961 as a conscript. After a temporary employment, he became a*

professional soldier of the German Army- Tanks troops.

From platoon commander he went through all command positions to the commander of a tanks division. During this time he participated to the general training of the staff at Hamburg Command and General Staff College. Nationally, he was the Head of Military Intelligence Directorate.

During Dr. Manfred Wörner's mandate as minister of Defense, he worked for the political-military interface and, among others, was involved in drawing up two White Papers on defense. Dieter Farwick gained international experience as participant to one year course with London Royal Defense College.

In the 1990s, he worked for four years as Head of Operations with the former NATO Head Quarters Central Europe. He has played an essential role in developing the NATO program "Partnership for Peace".

He was transferred to the reserves with the rank of General Brigadier. When he was active officer and later on he published several books and numerous articles on issues of security policy and armed forces.

After retirement, he worked during ten years as editor in chief of the news service worldsecurity.com, on global security issues.

He is a member of the presidency of Weikersheim Studies Center and organises an annual conference on security policy.

Under Moscow's rule, the binomial controls Chişinău.

Tiraspol follows



Dr. Dan DUNGACIU

The fundamental question for those who want to really understand what is going on in Chişinău is the following:

Whether Vladimir Plahotniuc and the current ruling play against Russia, plays pro-Europe and under the American wing, how comes that after the outrageous episode of cancelling the elections for the mayor's office in Chişinău, the official Moscow and the Russian media (to an equal extent in the Russian Federation and in the R. of Moldova) kept their mouth shut? Neither did they said anything and did not harness the best opportunity to publicly annihilate "Vladimir Plahotniuc, the number one enemy", but they even praised the achievements of the government and its steps. Moreover, while the Democratic Party leader bragged in Washington about his successes concerning counteracting the Russian propaganda, as sputnik.md, the branch in Chişinău of Russia's world propaganda network is under his control and in the electoral campaign for Chişinău elections backed Silvia Radu, the "under cover" candidate of the same Plahotniuc. Once more: the prevailing narration was, and still is, that Filip's governance in Chişinău, based on the majority secured by the Democratic Party led by Vladimir Plahotniuc, it is anti-Dodon, and, therefore pro-European, pro-American, pro-Romanian and, it is, as a consequence, against Russia and the Eurasian vector. It seems that the only one which did not know that is... Russia! Since if it has had known it, how could have it fail the most formidable chance to hit the "hostile" governance in Chişinău, to publicly compromise it and, alongside it, to compromise it in front of the eyes of the citizens of the R. of Moldova and also of the Europeans and of the Americans a governance that defrauded the elections in a way unseen

even in the former USSR? Yet Russia was silent. Why? That is the question! There is something very rotten in the R. of Moldova... And there is not here about the whims of some sticklers in Buchares – the saboteurs of the small republic and of Romania's great foreign policy! – who were expecting a sign of a minimum benevolence for blindly endorsing Plahotniuc's regime or at least an official mention, even in passing, that this year is, nevertheless, the Centenary of all Romanians' Union, the Bessarabians' included. It is about something much more serious. And those who pretended and further pretend to overlook that have in reality no excuse any longer after June, 25th, 2018 the date the Supreme Court of the R. of Moldova invalidated the elections for the mayor's office in Chişinău. Let's us see what it is about. The R. of Moldova does what neither Russia, nor Balarus did. To see the gravity of what happened in Chişinău, imagine the following scene. The famous Russian dissident Alexey Navalny wins, uncontested by anyone, the elections for Moscow's mayorship. He is congratulated by his counterpart, OSCE declares the elections valid etc. Vladimir Putin only, hidden behind the absolutely independent justice – in the former USSR the justice was not independent, it was absoluted independent, invalidates the elections. Plain and simple. With an amazing argument, namely that the number of likes generated probably by a urge to vote from the opposition candidate in the preceeding week -end of the elections. How would have reacted Bucharest to such an episode? It is obviously a rhetoric question. Yet what we have to understand from this Russian imaginary example is that, keeping the proportions, it is exactly such a thing that happened under our eyes, in Chişinău! In a state that signed an Association Agreement with the EU, that got the liberalization of visas which was (almost) unconditionally endorsed by Bucharest all along these years. What happened there was without precedent, including for the former Sovier space. Neither Russia, nor Belarus ever did such a thing. There, the strategy was to block the potential dangerous candidates before they enter the elections and, in no case, after those have won! In Chişinău one went, here, further. Even further. The "explanations" which

were later circulated by the media in Chişinău are ridiculous and disqualifying. One relate to a conspiracy theory where Andrei Năstase would have been used by the Russians to destabilize the situation in the R. of Moldova, aware or not of the part he was playing, another on that the so-called "real estate mafia" that would have blocked his ascent fearing some onerous businesses which were to be revealed and de-structured. Obviously, nobody believed them. If the theories were believed, the first gesture of the government and Vladimir Plahotniuc would have been an invitation to a real and sincere debate with Andrei Năstase and the leaders of the opposition since we have in Chişinău a bigger problem than anything – Russia or the real estate mafia -, compromising us all beyond repair. So we all have to fight against it. Such a debate did not take place. And it won't since such "explanations" for invalidating the elections are completely baseless, at least until now. Moreover, after so many visits abroad, to Washington included, articles published on different sites – low-level, it's true – where Vladimir Plahotniuc accredited the idea he controls everything in the republic, how can one explain that the Russians or the "real estate mafia" are defrauding the elections under your very nose? Where were you? Therefore, you either cheated your partners – namely you do not control anything – or that the opposition's and not only statements concerning the political power involvement in the justice of the R. of Moldova are valid. There is no a third alternative. Moreover, mention should be made of an all too important element LARICS made a point of since almost a year about the existence of the binomial Plahotniuc-Dodon. As Moscow and the Russian media do, president Igor Dodon – him, too, ostensibly a sworn-enemy of the government – is deafening silent in what concern the invalidation of the elections in the sense that he is neither accusing the government, nor even the Democratic Party, to say nothing of Vladimir Plahontiu, a name he never utters. In a FB posting he wrote with a fake sadness: "Everything that is going on is the result of the Euro-unionists governance during nine years". As usual for Igor Dodon the opponents are generic, have neither name nor sur-



name, not even a name for the party. How come? Isn't Igor Dodon the leader of the Socialists Party which will join this fall the campaign for the parliamentary elections and will fight for parliamentary seats with the governing party? Then why is he silent? Why doesn't he challenge the political opponents? Who is he sparing? In fact, as Moscow and the Russian media do, the president of the R. of Moldova spares the binomial Plahontniuc-Dodon. The binomial Plahotniuc-Dodon who leads the R. of Moldova. Europe is discarding Chişinău... Contrary to Romania, which further endorses the "European roadmap of the R. of Moldova" even after the elections in Chişinău were invalidated, the EU and America reacted angrily. In the European Parliament, in a desolate hall – that indicated clearly not the lack of interest for the topic but the gross lack of interest in what concern the R. of Moldova – the European deputies approached, upon the Populists' proposal, the situation in the Republic. It was even tougher than during the Communists' times and was backed by 343 Euro-parliamentarians who "urge the Commission to cease any disbursements foreseen by the macrofinancial assistance (AMF) for Moldova; it considers that any decision on future disbursements should be taken only after the planned parliamentary elections take place and on condition that they take place in accordance with the standards recognized internationally and be assessed by the specialized international bodies and the AMF conditions have been fulfilled". Moreover, the Parliament requests the Commission to "cease the budgetary support for Moldova, using the June precedent when such ceasing

occurred after the banking crisis; it considers that the mechanism of ceasing the EU's budgetary support should be applied as a reaction to the invalidation of the elections for the mayoral position in Chişinău and that should include a list of conditions the Moldovan authorities must fulfill, among which the validation of the elections in Chişinău and that investigations aimed at concrete results and completely transparent be carried out as well as recovering the assets and the prosecution of the guilty ones, in case of fraud". As the text of the Resolution clearly indicates, it is not about "suspending" the financial support – as the power in the R. of Moldova falsely says –, but of its cancellation, since the conditions stipulated in the text will be never fulfilled by the authorities in Chişinău. In its turn, the United States is monitoring the judiciary proceedings under way for invalidating the results of the 3rd of June elections in Chişinău, as a statement of the US Department of State underlines: "The sanctity of elections represents the foundation of any democracy and they should observe the international norms. We expect the Moldovan government guarantees a transparent process of the court without political meddling. In case irregularities are found, we request all sides to approach them in a way that observes the rule of law and the democratic principles of governance, including the people's will expressed by the elections". Is Chişinău discarding itself, too? Chişinău retaliates angrily. The prime minister reacts pathetically, inaccurately and inadequate: "The amounts which were to reach the R. of Moldova from the EU, it is about 34 million euro, were aimed at improving the nourishment of the children in kindergartens and schools as well as for increasing the educators' salaries. Yet we will attract more money from the budget from our own sources". The statement concerning "the nourishment of the children in the kindergartens" is an obvious strategy of the government of counteracting the Resolution with the cheap appeal to emotion. The European funds were not clearly aimed at the destination suggested in a manipulatory way by the R. of Moldova's prime minister. Yet the attitude in itself and the message conveyed to the population interesting: the EU suspended

the money which was to reach the children and the educators... Nevertheless, we, the government, will do that without Europe's help! The prime minister met the ambassadors and the latter issued a statement in which they express not only their concern but speak explicitly of the duties the R. of Moldova has towards the EU and its rule of law. The Moldovan government reacts angrily and sends its version on the meeting with an amazing mention: "Complementing the statement distributed yesterday to the media by the European Union Delegation to Chişinău concerning the meeting between the prime minister Pavel Filip, the Head of the EU Delegation, Peter Michalko, and the ambassadors of the EU countries, the Government has some mentions which are unexpectedly missing from the respective statement and where the meeting is described only as the information supplied by one of the two sides (our note)". Namely the EU ambassadors to Chişinău are conveying distorted messages and clearly anti-government! And that is not all. The prime minister Pavel Filip, who declared lately that Romania, alongside Russia, are destabilizing the Republic, declared later that "some representatives of the European Union" sent his SMSs whereby the former ask him to intervene for the validation of the elections for the capital! More than that, in one of the messages he even received a deadline of two days. Such a public position was upheld by the speaker of the R. of Moldova, Andrei Candu. Vladimir Plahotniuc himself, after the final ruling of the Supreme Court of Justice of cancelling the elections, declared in an interview that "It is strange that the electoral agitation was penalized yet something much more serious, I believe, was overlooked, namely the violation of the law in what concern the meddling of foreign politicians". He deplored the fact that the court rejected the Socialists' complaint against Andrei Năstase who has had posted on his Facebook account supporting messages from Joseph Daul, the president of the European Popular Party, from Ludovic Orban, the president of the Romanian National Liberal Party and from mayors in Romania. Is it clear who are the enemies of the democracy in the neighboring Republic? In the same interview, Plahotniuc acknowledged prac-

tically that the cancellation of the elections in Chişinău was a "first-degree felony". Questioned if the suspension of the EU financing affects the budget of the R. of Moldova, Plahotniuc replied that "Since this is an electoral year, we have foreseen the possibilities that these amounts be delayed or cancelled even if the invalidation of the elections in Chişinău did not occur because we all understand certain political movements and possible interests. This is why there is no question about the Moldovans being financially affected by such decisions". The most surprising declaration of the Democratic Party's leader is the following: "We will reconsider the reforms under way. They will be dully finalized. Yet we will prioritize them the way they result from people's main needs and not from the conditions of the different agreements as it was the case so far". One just hints to make oneself understood! Even if he did not refered directly to the Association Agreement with the EU, the Democratic Party's leader sent a clear message. These agreements, including the one for the Association, do not pertain to "the people's main needs", so that they can be put between brackets and they will be decided by the government and not by Europe or America, which are unappreciative to Chişinău's efforts and manipulated by opportunistic leaders wishing to harm the Republic and let, as the prime minister Filip said, the children in the kindergarden without nourishment and the educators without salaries... Besides the pathetic notes and manipulation, such tension, mutual incriminations and statements looking like blackmail for the EU are unprecedented in the R. of Moldova. Not only did Chişinău stepped back after the Resolution of the European Parliament yet it entered an open confrontation with Brussels. What do the binomial and Russia pursue in fact in Chişinău? Let's go back to the question at the beginning. What is going on there? What were the stakes for invalidating the elections in Chişinău? The main stake is political and, implicitly, geopolitical. First of all, Dorin Chirtoaca's dismissal and Andrei Năstase's victory in Chişinău became a genuine personal stake in Chişinău. Keeping the proportions, something of the sort of Alexey Navalny's victory in Moscow. And such a thing was intolerable and not

admissible for the one who leads the Republic. I.e. the strongest man in the Republic cannot prevent the most vocal of his enemies to take over Chişinău? That means he is not in fact a strong man... Besides the personal stakes, we have to do with a geopolitical answer. By invalidating the elections, the Democratic Party, i.e. Vladimir Plahotniuc, sent a clear and unequivocal message to everyone that no so-called pro-European alliance between PAS, The Yes Platform and the Democratic Party is not any longer possible. This "potential" coalition was supported tacitly or explicitly by both sides of the Atlantic (and in Bucharest). It would have been unavoidable for isolating the Socialists and Dodon, they said, even if the opponents (with reference to Maia Sandu and Năstase) could not assume publicly and do not want in fact. Yet they cannot do otherwise. It would have gone this way, the only version accepted by the West for isolating the Socialists. And, with their hands covering their noses, the three should have signed. That was the tacit hope of those who kept suggesting us that the street opposition should not get radicalized, to let the doors open, to not fight the binomial, the Oligarch etc. etc. Since in the end they will govern with him, too... Well, all their calculations, no matter how naïve they were, are now history. A credulous, stupid, childish history, yet nevertheless history. Today, after the mayoral elections in Chişinău were invalidated, Vladimir Plahotniuc's message is obvious: such a coalition is impossible. It is unconceivable now to make such a coalition. The fracture is too deep, it is profound, beyond repair. Plahotniuc burned all bridges with Sandu or Năstase. And did it in public, with a high flame to be seen and understood by everyone. A chapter is closed. And a sort of tacit but irritating pressure on the Democratic Party ceased. When the chances of the non-parliamentarian opposition (PAS and DA) of taking more than 50% of the votes are now minimal – including thanks to the amendment of the electoral law which the binomial Plahotniuc-Dodon imposed – the only alternative of coalition remaining is the binomial plus the independents, that will survive until after the elections as well. The power's message in Chişinău is: like it or not, that's it. From now on

all of you will have to admit that there is no other alternative, the opposition is too weak to win the majority, especially that we will do anything possible to weaken it further (do not look at Chişinău only because we will hit in the territory also, although no one speaks about that!). The political stake, namely maintaining the binomial at the governance even after the parliamentary elections is, in fact, geopolitical. Invalidating the mayoral elections in Chişinău and maintaining a belligerent status with the EU do not do anything but confirm what LARICS said since a long time. The ultimate tasks of the binomial are geopolitical, namely "solving" the Transnistria issue which today can be done only to Russian Federation's benefit. Namely the Transnistrianization which is being prepared gradually under our own eyes: the R. of Moldova's massive cedings of sovereignty in relation to Transnistria, the validation of the Russian army's presence in the R. of Moldova, the recent resolution voted at the UN by which the Russian troops in the R. of Moldova are legalized (the so-called peace keeping troops sanctified by the 1992 Agreement) etc. etc. Yet the Transnistrianization which is called in Chişinău the "country's reintegration" may be done, and Moscow knows that very well, only with a massive majority in Chişinău (constitutional majority), able to amend the already voted legislation and to impose a new one, appropriate for the "reintegration". The binomial plus the independents will be that majority. This is their real, assumed and interiorized stake and not the European integration. Solving the Transnistrian issue would be for them not only the lucky ticket for entering the History but also the



one securing their honorability today. That explains Moscow's stupefying silence, apparently unexplainable, and Igor Dodon's care towards the governance and the perpetuation of the Binomial Plahotniuc-Dodon and Chişinău's recent insurgency against Europe which, through Vladimir Plahotniuc's message turns the Association Agreement into something not-mandatory or even against the "interests of the Republic's citizens"... Something should be very clear. Those who keep today Vladimir Plahotniuc's hand must understand that, after the elections in Chişinău were invalidated, they keep the hands of Igor Dodon in their second hand...

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Dan Dungaciu is the Director of the Institute for International Studies and Relations of the Romanian Academy and member of the Experts Council of LARICS.

3 % for the current year. Inflation was still high in 2017 at 14.4 %. The local currency devaluated and the average was 24.6 UAH per USD. Ukraine diminished significantly its trade exchanges with the Russian Federation yet it was not able to get rid completely of the economic dependency on the latter, especially in the energy sector.

Ukraine's economy is dependent on the international lenders, including on their capacity as guarantors of the fiscal stability. In April, 2017, Ukraine received the fourth installment from the IMF in the framework of the Extended Fund Facility (EFF); after that, IMF financing in the framework of this program ceased. The main demands of the IMF in what Ukraine is concerned are: reforming the pension system, ending the moratorium on land sales, large scale privatizations and increased efforts in the anti-corruption field. These demands have, in our opinion, a significant impact on the oligarchic system in Ukraine.

**In Ukraine of today it is a great demand for
two basic value principles –
the rule of law and the inevitability of punishment.**

*interview exclusive for Geostrategic Pulse
with Mr. Victor CHUMAK, runner-up for
Ukraine's presidency, July 27th, 2018*

Geostrategic Pulse (P.G.): *In the framework of the electoral campaign, what are, in your opinion, the perspective of carrying out of offensive operations (by both sides) and of the Joint Forces Operation (the former Op. C. Terro). How do you see Ukraine's map in 2019 and in the perspective?*

Victor Chumack (V.C.): I think that military operations in the East can turn into a conflict of high intensity, exceptionally if the presidential election is won by a candidate that is not part of the current political establishment. Putin can do

The domestic political situation in Ukraine is still tense and is influenced by the perspectives of the next year elections. The current legislative initiatives have a dual significance as they are conceived for meeting the necessary conditions for securing the financial stability through foreign assistance but also for securing a favorable positioning of the current power, irrespective of the developments of the domestic political and social situation.

Ukraine's economy is under way of recovery. Last year the GDP grew by 2.5 % while the prognosis shows a potential growth of



this to make it clear from the first days of the presidency that the issues of the East and Crimea will constantly dominate both in the domestic and foreign policy of Ukraine. And he will also influence the new President's every step and action.

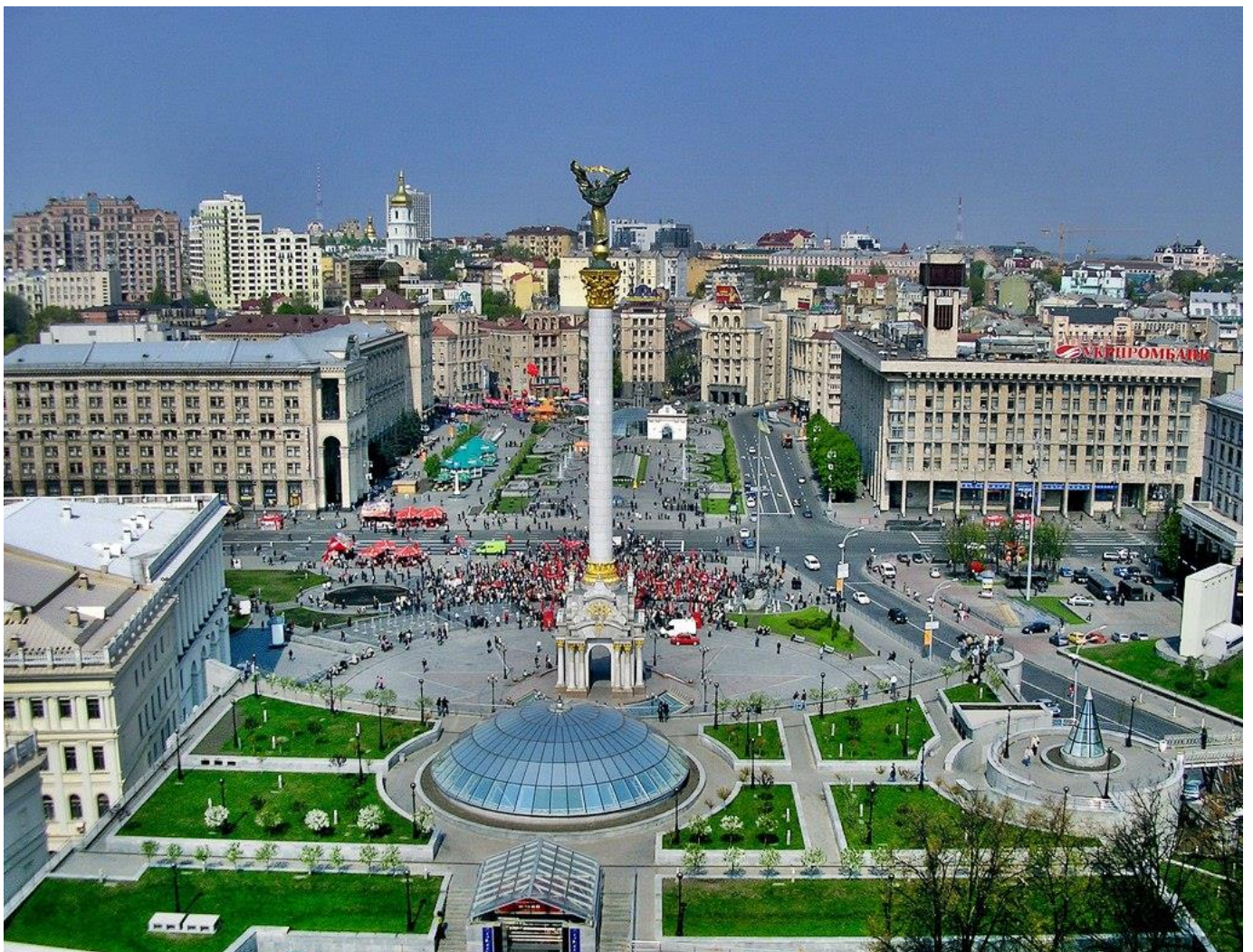
But the map of the country will not change significantly.

P.G.: *In the perspective of the time interval August 2018 – March 2019, many Western politicians but also the Ukrainians are worried of the possibility of the Russian Federation's carrying out hybrid type operations against Ukraine. How do you assess the intensity of the possible fake news concerning Ukraine during the presidential campaign in your country? Who will be the disadvantaged candidates by Moscow and why?*

V.C.: Without a doubt, the information war will continue with renewed vigor and intensity. Moscow, having the opportunity to produce fakes, will be promoting the most advantageous candidate for itself (Boyko, perhaps Vilkul, possibly Medvedchuk), discrediting all pro-Western candidates — Hrytsenko, Sadovyi, and others.

P.G.: *What is in your opinion the oligarchs' role in backing the runners-up to the presidency (for instance Y. Tymoshenko enjoys the Minister of Interior Arsen Avakov's and of some notorious oligarchs' support who may contribute both financially and media — through their trusts they control — to promoting her image).*

V.C.: Of course, the oligarchs will do their best to make an agreement (already at the start) with candidates with the highest ratings



on the preservation of the existing economic and political model. I call it “oligarchic kleptocracy”, which is based on monopoly property in the economy, monopolistic levers of influence on making political decisions, and a monopoly in the media.

This will apply not only to Tymoshenko, but also to other candidates who will have a chance to win elections as of February–March 2019.

As the saying goes, they won't put all the eggs into one basket.

P.G.: *In a statistics on the attachment of the EU's citizens to the values of the Union showed that the Latvians and the Romanians are the most attached to the values of this organisation, with favorable ratings of around 80 %. What is your perception in what concern the level of the Ukrainians' attachment to the EU' values?*

V.C.: In order to support values, one should live for at least a year where they work. What “European values” look like in reality is known only to those Ukrainians who lived or live in the EU. Others are only guessing. But today in the country there is a great demand for two basic value principles — the rule of law and the inevitability of punishment. Implementation of these principles is supported by almost 100 % of the population of the country.

P.G.: *You are aware of the appreciations of the big European and North-American chanceries concerning Nord Stream II (the pipeline connecting exclusively Germany to the Russian Federation). What impact do you think this project has on the systems of pipelines crossing Ukraine from a strategic perspective?*

V.C.: This project has nothing to do with the economy. It is political. Germany is not very much interested in supplying US liquefied natural gas to Europe, while Russia is interested in reducing transit through Ukraine. And Nord Stream II is just at the intersection of these interests.

But European countries should realize: in Rus-

sian strategies, energy carriers are weapons that are just waiting for being used.

P.G.: *I know that the recent past found you in important positions within the Group of Inter-Parliamentarian Relations USA-Ukraine or within the Ukraine-NATO Parliamentary Assembly. How do you see, from NATO-Ukraine relations perspective, after the 11th–12th July summit in Brussels and how do you assess the scarcity of references concerning Ukraine during the recent summit between the Russian and American presidents of July, 16th, 2018 in Helsinki?*

V.C.: I believe that Ukraine will be a member of NATO. But this will happen only when we have done our part of work: have carried out de-oligarchization, built transparent democratic institutions and done with corruption. The timing will depend very much on the results of the next presidential election.

P.G.: *What is your assessment concerning the past and future of Saakashvili “factor” in today's Ukrainian society?*

V.C.: Mikheil himself has learned what oligarchic deceit is about and opened the society's eyes to the fact that oligarchs do not need real reformers. They only need them as a screen, behind which they keep plotting to unlawfully enrich some of the politicians and oligarchs. He will return to the country and, most likely, will be an active political player.

P.G.: *I have read with great care your public assessments on the corruption in Ukraine generally, and the corruption in the armed forces in particular. How do you see counteracting these aspects?*

V.C.: Under oligarchic consensus, it is impossible to overcome corruption in a particular sphere. Corruption can be overcome if there are clear and understandable rules, standards and procedures, effective institutions, as well as the political will of the leadership of the country. We have fulfilled the first two conditions, but the

third one is so far not even close to this fulfillment. The current political leadership in the person of the President-oligarch is not interested in changing game rules. Therefore, it does not have political will to overcome corruption.

P.G.: *In light of the military events of 2008 and 2014, in Georgia and Ukraine, how do you assess Moscow's "project" of unifying the Slavic factor?*

V.C.: Putin's obsessive goal is to reproduce the Soviet Union in any other form, but precisely with the domination of Russian interests. Therefore, the policy of collecting all the lands will

continue to be dominant in Russia's actions.

P.G.: *If you would be requested to analyze the "Intermarium" and the "Three Seas Initiative" what would be your stance? Why?*

V.C.: I think that such regional initiatives are very useful: at least from the point of view of coordinating the policies of these countries in countering the hybrid threats from Russia.

Interview realized by Corneliu PIVARIU, Kiev 27.07.2018

Viktor CHUMAK

Leader of the "Wave" Movement, an MP, Deputy Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada's Committee for Preventing and Counteracting Corruption.

Born June 5, 1958 in Khmelnytskyi. The father - a Police Captain, the mother - a cook. Having served in the Army followed the example of his father — a combat officer who had gone through the whole war — and entered the Khmelnytskyi Higher Artillery College, from which he graduated in 1981.



In 1981–1992 served in the Armed Forces of the USSR: Kamchatka, Belarus, Turkmenistan.

In 1990 entered the Faculty of Law of the Taras Shevchenko Kyiv State University (in absentia), graduated in 1995.

In 1992 returned to Ukraine and got engaged in the process of creation of the Border Guard Service of independent Ukraine. Until 1999, had worked at the National Academy of the State Border Guard Service, the only institution at that time to train border guards, then headed the Department of Military Law there.

In 2000 transferred to Kiev, and headed the Directorate of Legal Support of the State Committee for the Protection of the State Border of Ukraine. As a leader and participant of working groups, he participated in the preparation and writing of 11 laws of Ukraine. Permanent member of the Ukrainian delegation in the negotiations with the EU on the EU- Ukraine Action Plan.

Participated in negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission. Was directly in charge of the development and support of the new law on the Border Guard Service, which laid the foundations for the reform of the Border Guard Service.

In 1999 and 2000 was the winner of the All-Ukrainian Competition for the best professional achievement — "Lawyer of the Year".

In 2004 political changes in the country slowed down the negotiation process on European integration. Not wanting to "sit on his hands" even as Major General, he decided to leave the civil service for the non-state sector.

2004–2009 — an expert, Director of Political Analysis and Security Programs, Director of the International Center for Policy Studies. In 2010, together with a team of like-minded people, created a new analytical center — the Ukrainian Institute of Public Policy.

In 2012 won the elections to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the 214th majority constituency (Dniprovskiyi district of Kyiv) in a rivalry with the odious Oles Dovhyi.

As the Head of the Committee for Preventing and Counteracting Corruption, he became one of the authors of the laws and initiators of the creation of NABU, NACC, databases of e-declarations of officials and laws on the prosecution of high officials for corruption abuses. Co-author of draft laws that opened the database about wealth and real estate of politicians and officials. It was through active anti-corruption policy that it was possible to ease the visa regime with the countries of the European Union.

In 2013–2014 — was an active member of EuroMaydan from the first to the last day of the Revolution of Dignity.

2014 — re-elected to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in the same district of Kyiv. Served as Deputy Head of the Committee for Preventing and Counteracting Corruption. As an independent and non-party Member of the Verkhovna Rada, he prepared a number of laws on political reform. Such as the new Election Law, co-authored the law on the impeachment of the President, laws on constitutional and judicial reform. Initiated an investigation into the illegal increase of “Rotterdam +” energy tariffs.

In 2017 was elected leader of the Civil Society Movement “Wave”, whose goal is to consolidate communities and parties to carry out a profound political reform of the country, to deoligarchize it and build an open society.





NEW COMBAT CAPABILITIES IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION'S CONVENTIONAL LAND FORCES

PhD Octavian DUMITRESCU

The Russian Federation has conducted several military operations in the recent years, in which, according to the public information, procedures difficult to explain using known scientific data have been used, which led to multiple speculations about these events. Some analysts assimilate these issues with the Russian army's use of asymmetric combat capabilities, associating them in terms of concept to the strategies of the hybrid war, which is being discussed with particular reference to the Ukrainian conflict. Of course, it may be possible that the intentions and doctrines of the Russian Armed Forces include some tactics and procedures leading to such conclusions, but the asymmetric conflicts or actions involve many different issues regarding the form and content of warfare, especially the use of means less specific to the military conflict, being mainly used by terrorist forces, reactionary forces or forces out of the control of the state. On the other hand, it is important to analyze the procedures and techniques based on advanced technology, with high efficiency in the military, without assimilating them to certain types of conflicts or military actions. The reality of current armed conflicts will demonstrate the types to which the new ways of conducting armed conflict belong to.

In this respect, we bring into the attention of the military specialists daily news on various types of conflicts and carry out a specialized analysis. An example could be the air operation in Syria, carried out by the Russian Federation in order to bomb the forces opposing the Syrian President, in which a fleet of TU-160 bombers flew from Russia to Syria without being detected by the specialized means of other countries, being assessed as sufficiently effective and technologically advanced. At least, there has not been public information on this operation. As for these bombers, the Russian officials said it is

possible that in the near future, the Russian Federation would develop such capabilities. Also, the Russian journal *Izvestia* published on 9 June 2017 information on the intention of the Russian military specialists to build new nuclear submarines Borei-A and Yasen-M class, which will be difficult to be detected by the NATO anti-submarine capabilities of the member countries, due to the new systems and equipment, in particular the new pumps with extremely low noise levels of the circulating liquids used for cooling the reactor and submarine systems and equipment as well as of the water filling the launching tubes of the missile before firing.

The new technologies that seem to be available to the Russian military specialists are probably part of less public development programs and, as a result, they have surprised some groups interested in the developments in the Russian Federation or the former Soviet space. At the same time, we must say that the Russian Armed Forces have undergone several reforms in doctrine, tactics, procedures and concepts used in military operations, organization and internal structure, endowment and equipment, education and training of the staff in order to modernize the Russian military organization. One of the most radical and comprehensive reforms of the Russian army was projected by the former Russian Minister of Defense Anatoly Serdyukov, during his 2008-2012 mandate, which mainly sought Russia's military downsizing from 1,3 million to 1 million people, focusing primarily on the number of officers, especially for reducing costs and concentrating forces under the command of four military districts instead of six former districts, and also to reduce command echelons by giving up division and corps echelons while reinforcing the brigade echelon, which thus became the basic tactical level in the combat hierarchy. The modernization of independent brigades became a priority and they were sufficiently provided with combat support elements, so that they corresponded to the new role in the direct subordi-

nation of the armies or of the military districts and could operate in combat without the support of the higher echelons. At that time, the reform initiated by former Minister Serdyukov has been heavily criticized and insufficiently supported financially, which later led to the minister's change in office.

The subsequent developments related to the reform of the Russian army have been led by the current Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu - a career military expert, together with the Chief of General Staff, General Gerasimov, who have reconsidered several parts of the reforms envisaged by the previous Minister of Defense. The main "reform" implemented by the current leadership of the Russian Armed Forces consists in the re-introduction of the division echelon in the organization and management of Russian Land Forces, so that at present, the army has both divisions organized into regiments and brigades organized into battalions, both echelons being subordinated generally to the army and, in certain circumstances, to the army Corps. The curiosity of specialists is drawn to the fact that some of the joint armies specific to the structure of the Russian land forces are organized exclusively by divisions, with some independent brigades, while others are exclusively organized by brigades, as shown in the adjacent table. This can cause difficulty in assessing correctly the combat capacity of the Russian army, the great complexity of the management and the specific staff activities, as well as difficulties in combat support, ammunition equipment, spare parts supplies. But, we believe that the Russian military officials have estimated these risks and set out corrective measures.

In terms of regional security, the situation has become more complex, both in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. This complexity has been determined by the position of the combat forces, especially of those belonging to the Land Forces of the Russian Federation. We find increasingly visible **the concentration of considerable forces in the West and South Military Districts of the Russian Federation.** A recent study by the *Institute for the Study of War - ISW* called *Russia's Military Posture: Ground Forces Order of Battle*

DISTRICTUL MILITAR VEST	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
<u>Armata 6</u> <u>Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 138 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 25 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 9 Art. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 5 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 26 Rachete • Brigada 95 Comandă • Brigada 132 Comunicații • Brigada 51 Logistică • Regimentul 30 Geniu • Regimentul 6 CBRN Ind.
<u>Armata 20</u> <u>Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 3 I. Mo., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 752 I. Mo. – Regimentul 252 I. Mo. – Regimentul 237 Tc. Gd. – Regimentul 99 Art. Autopropulsată – Regimentul 1143 Rachete A.A. – Batalionul 84 Cc. Ind. – Batalionul 337 Geniu Ind. – Batalionul 692 Comunicații Ind. – Batalionul 911 Logistică Ind. • Divizia 144 I. Mo., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 488 I. Mo. – Regimentul 182 I. Mo. – Regimentul 228 Tc. – Regimentul 856 Art. Autopropulsată – Regimentul 1259 Rachete A.A. – Batalionul 1281 Antitanc Ind. – Batalionul 148 Cc. Ind. – Batalionul 686 Comunicații Ind. – Batalionul 295 Logistică Ind. • Brigada 448 Rachete • Brigada 9 Comandă
<u>Armata 1 Tc.</u> <u>de Gardă</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 2 I. Mo. Gd., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 1 I. Mo. Gd. – Regimentul 15 I. Mo. Gd. – Regimentul 1 Tc. – Regimentul 147 Art. Autopropulsată Gd. – Regimentul 1117 Rachete A.A. – Batalionul 1174 Antitanc Ind. – Batalionul 136 Cc. Ind. – Batalionul 211 Geniu Ind. – Batalionul 47 Comunicații Ind. – Batalionul 1063 Logistică Ind. • Divizia 4 Tancuri Gd., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 12 Tc. Gd. – Regimentul 13 Tc. Gd. – Regimentul 423 I. Mo. – Regimentul 275 Art. Autopropulsată – Brigada 49 Rachete A.A. – Regimentul 538 Rach. A.A. Gd. – Batalionul 137 Cc. Ind. – Batalionul 413 Comunicații Ind. – Batalionul 330 Geniu Ind. – Batalionul 1088 Logistică Ind. – Batalionul 165 Medical Ind. • Brigada 27 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 6 Tc. Ind. • Brigada 112 Rachete • Brigada 288 Art. • Brigada 53 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 96 Cc. Ind. • Brigada 60 Comandă Informații • Brigada 69 Logistică Ind.

DISTRICTUL MILITAR VEST (continuare)	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
• <u>Flota din Marea Baltică</u>	• Corpul 11 Armată, compus din – Regimentul 7 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. – Brigada 79 I.Mo.Ind.Gd. – Brigada 244 Art. Gd. – Brigada 152 Rachete Gd. – Regimentul 22 Rach. A.A.
• <u>Brigada 336 I. Navală</u>	
• <u>Brigada 202 Rachete A. A. Ind</u>	
• <u>Brigada 79 Art. Reactivă Gd.</u>	
• <u>Brigada 45 Art.</u>	
• <u>Grupul Operativ al Fortelor Armate Ruse din Transnistria</u>	• Batalionul 82 I. Mo. • Batalionul 113 I. Mo. • Batalionul 540 Comandă

analyzes all of the Russian land forces units deployed in the military districts. The study notes the concentration of strong forces in the Western Military District of the Russian Federation, near the border with Ukraine, which maintain the tension in this region and provides the close counter-action against a possible involvement of Western forces (NATO, EU). Also, the same forces are responsible for the protection of the Kaliningrad enclave, located between Poland and Lithuania. We emphasize that the West Military District has the strongest units as compared to all other districts: the 1st Guards Tank Army, the 6th and 10th Joint Armies, whose forces are concentrated near Moscow, St. Petersburg and the Russian borders with Ukraine, Belarus and Transnistria. The table here shows the fighting composition of these land forces and the danger created by their presence in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea. The deployment of these forces reveals the strategy and intentions of the Moscow leaders: maintaining the conflict in eastern Ukraine and thereby maintaining or even increasing social and economic tensions in Ukraine and further potential strategic threats to the Baltic countries. Therefore, the Russian Federation is indirectly ready to influence the situation in the eastern regions of Ukraine, to counter

any possible NATO or the EU expansion to the east and, if necessary, to endanger the independence and sovereignty of the Baltic States, currently members of several political, economic and security European bodies.

A brief analysis of the Russian Federation's combat forces in the military districts shows that the western regions of Russian territory, namely those covered by the Western and Southern military districts are better provided with military forces and equipment, even if apparently the number of armies, divisions or brigades is comparable, at least in terms of the land forces. Also, we must consider the differences in combat capabilities of the structural entities - divisions, brigades, regiments or battalions - that make up the armies, namely aspects related to procurement, equipment, training and manning, weapons and the specific equipment to each military district.

Another significant aspect for our analysis is the size of the territory where the forces are deployed, the large distances specific to the territory of the Russian Federation that need to be covered in case of maneuvers between districts, the length of the border areas of their responsibility and the state of infrastructure in each military district. In this respect, it is clear that the Center, Western and Southern Districts have an advantage by the high density of the important localities, while the infrastructure is clearly superior to the one in Siberia or the Far East, to give only two examples. The Western and Southern Military Districts of the Russian Federation are vital in the confrontation - within relatively peaceful limits for now - between the Russian Federation and the European and Transatlantic West.

The Western Military District seems to be the most important district for the Russian political and military leaders and it includes the most important Russian military forces. The 6th and 10th Joint Armies and the 1st Tank Army have 3 Motor Rifle Divisions, 1 Tank Division and 30 Independent Combat Brigades of various branches (infantry, tanks, missile, anti-aircraft missiles, etc.), as well as several independent

DISTRICTUL MILITAR SUD	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
Armata 58 Arme Întrunite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 42 I. Mo., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 70 I. Mo. Gd. – Regimentul 71 I. Mo. Gd.. – Regimentul 291 I. Mo. Gd. – Regimentul 50 Art. Autopropulsată Gd. – Regimentul 1203 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 19 I. Mo. Ind. (Ossetia de Nord) • Brigada 136 I. Mo. Gd. (Dagestan) • Baza 4 de Gardă (Ossetia de Sud, Georgia), compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brigada 100 Cc. Ind. (Ossetia de Nord) – Brigada 12 Rachete (Ossetia de Nord) – Brigada 291 Art. (Ingushetia) – Brigada 67 Rach. A.A. (Ossetia Nord)
Armata 49 Arme Întrunite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 205 I. Mo. • Brigada 34 I. Mo. Ind. • Regimentul 25 Ind. SPETSNAZ • Brigada 227 Art. • Brigada 1 Rachete Gd. • Brigada 90 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 66 Comandă • Baza 7 Militară (Georgia)
Armata 8 Arme Întrunite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 150 I. Mo., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 102 I. Mo. – Regimentul 103 I. Mo. – Regimentul 68 Tc. – Regimentul 163 Tc. – Regimentul 933 Rachete A.A. – Regimentul 381 Art. Autopropulsată • Brigada 20 I. Mo. Gd. Ind. • Baza 102 Militară (Armenia), cu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 933 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 439 Art. Reactivă Gd. • Brigada 77 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 28 RBCN Ind. • Brigada 11 Geniu Ind. Gd.
Flota din Marea Neagră	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corpul 22 Armată (Simferopol, Crimeea), compus din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brigada 127 Cc. Ind. (Sevastopol) – Brigada 15 Art. Rach. Ind. de Coastă (Sevastopol) – Brigada 126 Apărare de Coastă Ind. (Perevalne) – Regimentul 8 Art. (Perevalne) • Brigada 810 I. Marină (Sevastopol)
Flotila din Marea Caspică	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batalionul 414 I. Marină • Batalionul 727 I. Marină

battalions of various branches. In addition, the land forces may be supported – if necessary – by other forces - air, strategic missiles, space, special forces and forces with a special purpose (SPETSNAZ), sufficiently effective to significantly enhance the combat capability of the land forces, as shown in the tables included in this material.

Returning to the idea of reform in the Russian army, it is significant that the current leadership of the Armed Forces has combined modern structures such as brigades with less modern and heavier structures such as divisions, both in terms of motorized infantry troops and the tank troops. Significantly important is the maintenance of the combat structure and capabilities of the 76th Air Assault Division, subordinated to the Air Assault Forces Headquarters deployed in Pskov (about 35 km or 20 miles of Estonia), a formation that can quickly operate in cooperation with the 6th Joint Army, since it has been previously subordinated to it, in case of a possible military operation in this region.

Along with the reform of the large units, an ample redeployment of forces has taken place in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation to bring them closer to the hot regions in the western and northwestern territory of the Russian Federation. It is clear that there is an intention of the Russian strategic leadership to continue and possibly increase the pressure on Ukraine and the Baltic States. In this respect, the reorganizations and reforms have been accompanied by deployments towards the western regions of the Russian territory, while the 6th and 20th Joint Armies have the most important responsibility in case of a possible augmentation of the Ukrainian conflict and initiation of specific hybrid warfare actions in the Baltic countries, as well as for the possible protection of the Russian enclave Kaliningrad. The 1st Guards Tank Army in the Western Military District is deployed near Moscow, but if necessary, several of its mobile components (regiments, independent brigades) may move westward, approaching the zone of conflict. Of course, such maneuvers require considerable time but, depending on the situation, they can solve the shortage of combat forces in a possible armed conflict in this region.

We consider that the **Southern Military District** is the second most important strategic district for the political and military leaders of the Russian Federation, considering the unstable strategic situation in the areas where the forces of this district are being deployed. According to the authors of the ISW study mentioned above, this

DISTRICTUL MILITAR CENTRU	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
Armata 2 Arme Intrunite de Gardă	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 30 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 15 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 21 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 92 Rachete • Brigada 385 Art. Gd. • Regimentul 950 Art. Reactivă • Brigada 297 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 2 CBRN • Brigada 91 Comandă • Brigada 71 Comunicații • Brigada 105 Logistică Ind.
Armata 41 Arme Intrunite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 90 Tc. Gd., compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 239 Tc.. – Regimentul 6 Tc. – Regimentul 80 Tc. – Regimentul 228 I. Mo.. – Regimentul 400 Art. Autopropulsată – Brigada 33 Comunicații. • Brigada 35 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 55 I. Mo. (Munte) Ind. • Brigada 74 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Baza Militară 201 (Dushambe, Tadjikistan), compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 149 I. Mo. Gd. – Regimentul 92 I. Mo. – Regimentul 19 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 119 Rachete • Brigada 120 Art. Gd. • Brigada 61 Rachete A.A. • Regimentul 10 CBRN • Brigada 35 Comandă • Brigada 106 Logistică Ind. • Brigada 28 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 29 CBRN Ind. • Brigada 232 Art. Reactivă • Brigada 179 Comandă

“district is responsible for supporting the current war in Ukraine, for the intimidation of Georgia and possibly of Turkey, as well as for the instability in the Caucasus”. The table above shows the land forces of the district: three Joint Armies (Air Defense), the land forces of the Black Sea Fleet and of the Caspian Flotilla, 1 Army Corps (in Crimea), 2 Motor Rifle Divisions, 21 Combat Independent Brigades (motorized infantry, reconnaissance, missiles and air defense, artillery etc), 1 SPETSNAZ regiment and the military bases in Armenia, Ossetia and Georgia. We mention that in the spring of 2017, this military district also included an additional 8th Joint Army, with the headquarters deployed in the Rostov region, less than 120 km (70 miles) away from the Ukrainian border.

We visibly note the combat strength of the dis-

trict, as well as Moscow's strategic goals of having sufficient forces close to conflict or unstable regions. The deployment of forces in the district clearly indicates their purpose. The significant presence in the North Caucasus - a region traditionally unstable - of the main strength of the 49th and 58th Joint Armies supports the statement above: the 2 Independent Motor Rifle Brigades and the SPETSNAZ regiment of the 49th Army provide both the stability (to be read intervention, if necessary) in the region and the possible maneuvers towards the west and north, namely toward Ukraine and Crimea; the forces of the 58th Army and the 42nd are deployed in Chechnya, the motor rifle brigades are deployed in Vladikavkaz and Dagestan, while the military base in South Ossetia has some brigades in North Ossetia. The presence of numerous military forces in a region full of turmoil and conflicts - more or less dormant - radiates pressure on Georgia, so as not to allow it to fall under the Western influence, as well as possible maneuvers to other conflict areas in the western regions of the Russian territory.

The Central Military District comprises two Joint Armies and is meant to maintain control over the border regions with Kazakhstan, China and Mongolia, and to strengthen the Western, Southern or Eastern districts, if necessary. The Central Military District includes 1 Tank Division, 3 Tank Regiments and 1 Motor Rifle Regiment, as well as more than 20 motor rifle, tank, missile, artillery and air-defense brigades, plus a military base in Tajikistan with 3 motorized infantry regiments. Although it does not have a combat strength comparable with the Western and Southern Districts, the Central Military District has its importance by monitoring about 2,000 km (1,200 miles) at the border with China, maintaining a small force near the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, but especially by protecting the underground nuclear facilities probably located in the Ural Mountains, according to the ISW study. The district has poor infrastructure and transport network that the Kremlin intends to improve in the future.

The Eastern Military District comprises the 5th, 29th, 35th and 36th Joint Armies, the 68th Ar-

DISTRICTUL MILITAR EST	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
<u>Armata 5 Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 70 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 59 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 57 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 60 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 20 Rachete Gd. • Brigada 305 Art. • Brigada 8 Rachete A.A. • Regimentul 25 CBRN • Brigada 80 Comandă • Brigada 101 Logistică Ind.
<u>Armata 35 Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 64 I. Mo. Ind. • Brigada 38 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 69 Ind, Acoperire • Brigada 71 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 107 Rachete • Brigada 165 Art. • Regimentul 35 CBRN • Brigada 54 Comandă • Brigada 103 Logistică Ind.
<u>Armata 36 Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 5 Tc. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 37 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 30 Art. • Brigada 35 Rachete A.A. • Brigada 103 Rachete • Regimentul 26 CBRN • Brigada 75 Comandă • Brigada 102 Logistică Ind.
<u>Armata 29 Arme Întrunite</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 36 I. Mo. Ind. Gd. • Brigada 200 Art. • Brigada 3 Rachete • Brigada 140 Rachete A.A. • Regimentul 19 CBRN • Brigada 104 Logistică Ind.
<u>Corpul 68 Armată</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divizia 18 Art. Mitraliere (Ins. Kurile), compusă din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regimentul 46 Art. Mitraliere – Regimentul 49 Art. Mitraliere • Brigada 39 I. Mo. Ind. (Sakhalin)
<u>Flota din Oceanul Pacific</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 155 I. Marină Ind. • Brigada 40 I. Marină Ind. • Brigada 520 Rachete Coastă Ind. • Regimentul 72 Rachete Coastă Ind.

COMANDAMENTUL STRATEGIC COMBINAT ARCTIC	STRUCTURI SUBORDONATE
<u>FLOTA DE NORD</u> (Severomorsk, reg. Murmansk)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigada 61 I. Marină Ind. • Brigada 53 Rachete Coastă Ind. • Corpul 14 Armată, compus din <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Brigada 200 I. Mo. Ind. – Brigada 80 I. Mo. Ind. Arctică

my Corps, and the Pacific Fleet, which subordinate a total number of 36 Combat Brigades (motorized infantry, marines, tanks, missiles, artillery, anti-aircraft missiles, coast missiles etc.). The responsibility of this district is to secure the borders with North Korea and partially with China and protect the region near Vladivostok. The long distances and the poor infrastructure in the regions of the district make it almost impossible to enhance the combat strength of the area by classical maneuvers. To compensate for this deficiency, the political and military leadership of the Russian Federation has deployed in this region missile brigades equipped with medium range ballistic missiles, capable of using nuclear combat components. Also, in order to counter any territorial disputes with Japan, the Kremlin leadership has deployed the 68th Army Corps in the Sakhalin Islands, consisting of 1 Artillery and Machine Guns Division with 2 regiments and a Motorized Infantry Brigade. This district also has the land component of the Russian Fleet in the Pacific, which has 2 Marines Brigades, 1 Coastal Missile Brigade and 1 Coastal Missile Regiment.

In order to provide strategy for the Arctic region, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, created in 2014, the **Arctic Joint Strategic Command**, which in reality is the Russian Northern Fleet. The development of new military capabilities in the Arctic seems to aim at securing the Russian facilities in the region, but also shows the interests for militarization and the Russian ambitions in the region. The composition of the so-called land forces of this **Arctic District** consists of 1 Marines Brigade, 1 Coastal Missiles Brigade and 1 Army Corps with 2 Motor Rifle Brigades.



The above presentation of the developments in the Russian Land Forces, although brief, reveals the interest of the Russian Federation to create a military force strong enough to cope with a conventional war in Ukraine and hybrid conflict in the Baltic countries at the same time, thus counteracting the growth tendencies of the Western influence, i.e. the eastward expansion of NATO and the EU. These interests naturally include Moscow's desire to restore the sphere of influence it had a few decades ago. The dimension that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation have got to in the recent years in all areas of military confrontation drew the attention of politicians and military officials from all the capitals of the region, from Europe and from Washington. This happened especially after the Russian air operation in Syria or the construction of high-tech submarines by the Russian Federation. Russia's increasing expenditure for the development of its military capabilities disregard any possible risks affecting the economic and social developments of the federation. The statement belongs exactly to President Vladimir Putin, who, at the end of last year, during the annual press conference, said that on the contrary, Russia cut its military spending by \$ 2 billion and does not spend more than other countries. We must say that the Russian Federation has other levers to supplement its military budgets, especially through the so-called military-industrial complex of the country.

The reaction of the international security institutions and international security players to these developments is still timid, just as it was the case with the annexation of Crimea, with no concrete results, while the enhancement of the NATO forces in the region, necessary for a possible counteraction in force, takes place at a slow pace. Any possible maneuver of NATO or the US after the beginning of a Russian operation in this region would be doomed to fail, given the rapid pace of a possible operation by the Russian forces.

The accumulation of armed forces in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea can only worry the international community and the international security institutions, having become dangerous for the precarious stability of this part of the world. This is true especially if we consider that in the proximity of the region there is an important conflict - the conflict in Syria - involving many countries in the region as well as the big international security players, while Turkey has taken some strategic options following the events of the past year and the Turkish President's recent new presidential term and extensive responsibilities, whose effects are difficult to quantify.

The geopolitical and geostrategic situation in the Black Sea and Baltic Sea remains complex with ample risks and threats to regional stability and international security, but apparently it has not yet become irreversible. As such, specific efforts are needed from the international community, the security institutions and all security players in the region and the world to halt the arms race and the accumulation of new weapons and military equipment and create conditions for peace and stability. Optimism does not seem exaggerated under the current situation of danger and threat.





DIPLOMACY OF TOMORROW: BETWEEN MULTILATERALISM AND OTHERNESS

**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

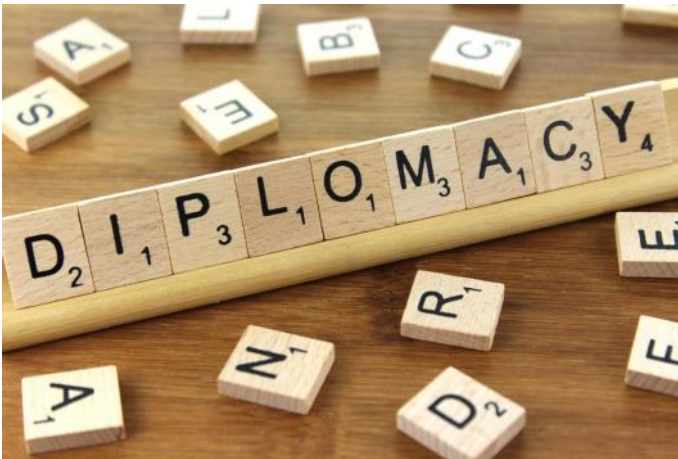
It has been stated, for good reason, that diplomacy emerged and evolved in an organic relationship with the idea of state and its functioning. Beyond this reality, today we may find out another parallel reality – and equally functional, namely that in our contemporaneity, the emergence and the offensive expansion of the cross-border companies, of the multinationals, alongside numerous global challenges and threats such as the jihadist-extremist phenomenon, climate disorders or cyber and information attacks, dispose of a huge potential of questioning the very precedence of the state in carrying out the international relations and, consequently, the idea itself of foreign policy. At the institutional state level, the centralisation of power in the hands of an executive and, ipso facto, of a political party, the opening and the more active involvement of certain ministries, institutions with domestic professional vocation towards the space of international relating and, not the least, the more and more visible amplitude of what is called “summit diplomacy”, namely at the direct level of heads of states seems to erode or even undermine the traditional authority of the ministries of Foreign Affairs and of their network of diplomatic missions.

What we can state looking through the eyepiece of our own life experience is the fact that after the end of the Cold War and the passage to another polarity of the global world and against the propagandistic assertions, diplomacy proved to be what it always was – a communication, maybe the most adaptable to the vicissitudes of history and the most versatile and resilient form of maintaining, if not a non-invasive status-quo then, at least, the only and the most direct discourse of the possible living together.

“More than a quarter of a century have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall and we continue

to identify ourselves with an obsolete order” says the prominent French political scientist Bernard Badie (in his work „*Seuls au monde*” – All Alone in the World -, La Decouverte, Paris, 2016), and underlined the feeling of disappointment with what he called “our blindness and incapacity of reading, analyzing and understanding the stakes of the contemporary world” and advanced the idea of the need of substantially renewing the manner of judging the new global order of the contemporary world, of a reformulation combining the predominantly pragmatic analysis of the existing reality with the non-conventional opening effort of understanding the “other” and towards the liberation from our own fetish paradigms. “Evading your self” for “building the otherness” is, from this point of view, a fundamental imperative of the adaptation process and of dynamizing the way of thinking diplomacy, its new functional virtues and the continuous demarche of buiding durable bridges between our own conceptions and the necessity of understanding the needs and the aspirations that only the acceptance of otherness allows us to discover and accept as undisputable realities.

Today, maybe more than ever, after WWII and after the end of the Cold War, that followed for almost half a century, the political science and diplomacy work are in the situation of understanding that the chessboard of a globalizing world that did not find either the conciliation with itself or the codification through the expected results, the chessboard of the international relations is affected by new cathegories of disarray and by new forms of its manifestation. And such state of affairs is not any longer compatible with that obsolete vanity which makes that each state actor succumbs to the temptation of believing it is one-of-a-kind and a sort of a Robinson Crusoe of the ideal diplomatic thought and action. When the evolution of modern world is taking place at an ever faster pace which is less and less predictable, diplomacy needs a new manner of receiving, of encompassing and of assessing the international order and the causal



factors determining the configuration and the relating. In other words, the diplomatic thought and action are confronted with the need of a harmonious and functional association between the pragmatic analysis and the disposal of the inherited, conservative prejudices which are reluctant to the adaptation and innovations, on the one hand, and the openness towards the values and virtues of the otherness through which intercession the living together with the great flow of ideas, interests, beliefs which, without being completely familiar to us, assault us and offer us options of behavior and of objective flexibility in making and adopting the decisions becomes more sustainable.

Making the effort of not remaining locked up within the confines of sacrosanct customs and accepting that there are other manners, too, of practicing diplomacy is not an attitude connected to fashion or to prevailing ontology during certain historical contexts but a necessity generated by the very need of connecting to the world today, of judiciously receiving and accepting the very norms polishing this world today and of selecting among them those alternatives intermingling harmoniously with the defense and the promotion of national or community interests as reasons which justify the sense and meaning of diplomacy.

Diplomacy is part and parcel of the process of identity becoming of the nation and state, which cancels from the very beginning the absurd and detrimental idea of the egalitarianism among the states' potentials, interests and ideals. Under such circumstances, it will appear,

and history does not lack examples in this respect – segregation, the cult of precedence of the strong ones to the detriment of the weaker and diplomacy will see its meaning and noble missions distorted and then we will talk of fake diplomacy seen either as a way of waging war with other means or of a diplomacy of persuasion through pressure. What we want to tell here refers to the global effort of getting diplomacy back into the natural flow of its grounds and reasons and of understanding that this artwork should not be exploited as a punitive instrument or as a mean of exclusivist and mercantile self-promotion of one's own interests but of turning it, through conjugated effort, into a fundamental leverage of preventing or, in extremis, managing crisis.

The world at this crossroads of two millennia underwent a series of shifts – both peaceful and violent – yet nevertheless it is, when we speak of the new global order, still dominated by a feeling, more blurred or more obvious of denial, negativity and reluctance. Nostalgia and reflexes inherited from the period of the Cold War are maintained and they still upheld the inertia of an American leadership and, generally, of a superpower or, in a multi-state framework, the harmful paradigm of the center as opposed to the "periphery" or the almost sacramental tabu of the image of a West preordained to embody the entire mankind's nobleness. Or, this occultation of the shifting realities, turning the back to globalism, the mercantile concentration in a severe nationalism or clinging fast to inertially repeating a past that time outdated long ago will do nothing but widen the fault lines and to increase the existing or emerging divergencies. And the black list of the trenches that still crisscross the global community is disturbingly long – from the rise of the terrorist phenomenon, to the huge social, ecological, climate and energy challenges to the multiplication of failed states and wars masked by proxies are as many existential threats to the contemporary human community.

The scholar cannot hide realities which recognition is blocked by barriers deeply rooted in the conscience tradition. Concepts such as "border",

"sovereignty" or "national security" appeared several centuries ago and altered or clarified their initial significance. The impetus witnessed during the last decades by the communication technology played a substantial role in this re-configuration of the world space and made the global chessboard be dominated by "social media", by "internationalization" and "multilateralism" while the emergence and rise of non-state actors on the global communication arena has a no less dynamic impact at the level of today's world arena, including on dealing with international relations. Or, all these added up make that the sphere of global relating be animated rather by the feelings of frustration, discontents and claims than by the elitist sentences of a cold and codified diplomacy placed above the boiling realities. This is why today's world and its diplomatic instruments need urgently the crystallization and adopting a model of policy of otherness to rehabilitate the notion of "local player" and to distance it from the unilateral interventionism that replaces the act of settlement and solving by intervention, threat, pressure. Today, when the construction of separation fences and of defense strongholds became an illusory guarantee, the security of each member of the global community depends more and more on everyone's security. Hence, for a state player or for an independent community, being a security provider means obviously securing, at the same time, your own security interest. Under such circumstances, the diplomacy of the future should distance itself from the competitive-concurrent character in order to turn itself into a diplomacy of cooperation and of multilateralism for serving equal security, the real peace and stability.



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TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS: HOW COMPANIES CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Carlos LÓPEZ-VERAZA PÉREZ

Public Prosecutor, Huelva, Spain

Identifying and prosecuting Trafficking in Human Beings (hereinafter, THB) is often very difficult because of the fear of the victims to testify in a criminal proceeding. Therefore, it is fundamental that there is cooperation among states, at all levels and with a holistic plan of action. However, we usually forget the major role that legal persons can play in combating THB, despite studies showing the importance of companies in this globalized crime. According to a report prepared by the Ashridge Centre for Business and Sustainability at Hult International Business School and the Ethical Trading Initiative, 77 per cent of companies think that there is a credible reason to believe that modern slavery occurs in their supply chains¹. We cannot demonstrate the real data of the use of corporations to commit THB but it is clear that THB, by its very nature, it is often committed within company's activities and there are companies that are most at risk, such as industries involving agriculture, migrant workers or seasonal product cycles. Therefore, trafficking is a liability for all companies and that liability could be in many countries not only moral, but also civil, administrative or even criminal. For this reason, companies should be aware of the responsibility that they have in the fight against THB and the serious consequences for them if their employers or their managers are involved in this type of crime. Apart from punishment, they would suffer a huge non-material damage as a result of the process.

I. BACKGROUNDS OF THE COMPANIES' CRIMINAL LIABILITY

Pope Innocent IV established the Societas delin-

1. LAKE Quintin, MACALISTER Jamie, BERMAN Cindy, GITSHAM Matthew, PAGE Nadine, "Corporate Leadership on Modern Slavery", Hult research in partnership with the ethical trading initiative, November 2016, p.9.

quere non-potest principle in order to prevent the papal excommunication of civil or business corporations, cities and legal entities for offences committed by one of its members². The principle was later consecrated in most of European systems of criminal laws. The notion of guilt has been considered as a concept of personal nature and therefore a company could not be criminal responsible for a crime until the 19 century, when the corporate criminal liability was set in the Common Law. The Netherlands became the first Civil Law country to introduce it into its criminal system in 1950, and nowadays most European countries have accepted that possibility. There exists a worldwide trend to corporate criminal liability³.

We must take into account that we live in a globalized world, where corporations operate worldwide, which directly implies a high risk of being involved in cases of modern slavery or THB.

II. LEGAL INSTRUMENTS ESTABLISHING CORPORATE LIABILITY IN RELATION TO THB

There has traditionally been some reluctance to attribute to companies liability for crimes committed by their managers or even by their employers. However, corporate liability has been considered a fundamental instrument against organized crime as established in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Article 10 obliges each State Party to adopt and establish the liability of legal persons for participation in serious crimes involving an organized criminal group, including THB. The liability of legal persons may be criminal, civil or administrative; the main point is that it must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

In the same vein, both the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human beings of 16.5.2005⁴ and the Directive 2011/36 on preventing and combating traffick-

ing in human beings require Member States to establish corporate liability. Specifically, according to articles 5 and 6 of the aforesaid Directive, all Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that legal persons can be held liable for THB committed for their benefit by any person, who has a leading position within the legal persons based on a power of representation of this legal person, an authority to take decisions on behalf of the legal person or an authority to exercise control within the legal person. Those measures shall ensure effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions, with criminal or non-criminal fines and penalties. Furthermore, it must be ensured that companies can be held liable for a lack of supervision or control, and what constitutes in my opinion the fundamental issue in order to use companies as mechanisms for fighting THB.

With regard to domestic legislations, I would like to make a brief reference to the UK Modern Slavery Act of 2015 and the California Transparency in Supply Chains Act of 2010. Both instruments impose obligations on large corporations in order to avoid THB in their supply chains, what constitutes major progress with regard to the fight against THB for labour purposes. Therefore, it would be desirable, in my view, to expand that type of regulations to other countries.

According to Section 54 of the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015 all companies with an annual turnover that exceeds £36m shall be required to make available a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year. That annual statement must address a full of organisational details such as the organisation structure, training about slavery, its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking, the parts of its business and supply chains where there is a risk of THB and its due diligences processes.

With regard to the California Act, it requires retailers and manufacturers doing business in

2. BRODOWSKI Dominik, DE LOS MONTEROS DE LA PARRA Manuel Espinoza, TIEDEMANN Klaus, " *Regulating Corporate Criminal Liability: An Introduction*", Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 6458, p.5.

3. OECD, " *Liability of legal Persons for Corruption in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*", 2015,p.9

4. Article 20 of the Council of European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human beings, Warsaw,16.5.2005.

California (that have over \$100 million in global revenue) to prominently disclose, on company websites, the extent to which, if any, the company engages in specific activities to detect and prevent forced labour and human trafficking in their supply chains—verification, auditing, certification, internal accountability, and training. Thus, companies should implement due diligence programs with effective internal controls, with identification of areas at risks and with implementation of specific policies in order to address those risks⁵. Otherwise, they can be in many states criminal responsible for modern slavery or human trafficking and we can imagine the devastating effect that it could bring to them.

Despite those regulations, THB cases against corporations remain too low. It is a relatively recent issue, with several obstacles such as the extraterritorial application of corporate criminal liability, evidentiary issues and the problems derived from subcontracting with complex corporate structures⁶.

III. MAIN COMPANIES AT RISK

As already mentioned, human trafficking is considered a form of transnational organized crime, which includes displacement of people from their own countries or regions. THB crimes are often committed in more than one country by organized criminal groups⁷. However, smuggling of and trafficking in should be differentiated. According to professor Anis Bajrektarevic there are four differentiating elements: (i) an exploitation and usage of the trafficked person over a long period of time; (ii) inter-dependency that forms a strong (brothers-in-arms like) linkage, between trafficked victim and organized crime groupings; (iii) eligibility for further networking (recruitment for criminal purpose); (iv) very often trafficking itself is not a voluntary move-

ment, but in the case of smuggled persons it always occurs voluntarily⁸.

Therefore, it is usual that companies are used as means for THB, in the process of recruitment, transportation or exploitation.

According to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime Trafficking in persons "shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation". Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Therefore, THB offences can be committed by different activities and each of them can involve a particular kind of company. For instance, while recruitment is usually committed on the Internet through false jobs postings, receipt of persons can be performed in hotels. Therefore, I am going to analyse which companies are most at risk stemming of the UN definition and differentiating between the various stages of the THB.

First stage: Recruitment

The initial stage of the THB process consists of the recruitment. It can be done by several means, and it depends on the purpose of the offence. However, there are usual forms of recruitment, both on THB for labour exploitation and in

5. D. Sherman Jeffrey, COMM B, BRAITHWAITE Colin, "Risk assesment tools for effective internal controls", First reference, September 2008,p.2

6. RODRIGUEZ LOPEZ Silvia, " Criminal liability of Legal Persons for Human TRaficking Offences in International and European Law", Journal of Trafficking and Human Exploitation, Paris Legal Publishers, 2017, p.105-110

7. A.FORSTER Bruce, " Human Traficking:A Transnational Organized Crime Activity", American International Journal of Contemporary Research, Vol.3 No.1,January 2013, p.1

8. BAJREKTAREVIC Anis, "The Palermo Convention, Ten Years After – toward the Universal Criminal Justice", GHIR (Geopolitics, History, International Relations) Addleton Academic Publishers NY, Volume 3(1) 2011, p.44

sexual exploitation.

Social networks play a fundamental role in the recruitment phase and for that reason it is extremely important to implement in those companies effective THB detections systems. It appears that 89% of 12-17 year-old love to chat on the Internet: class-mates, chat rooms or webnets. These are perfect points for traffickers, who use false identities to lure potential victims to a meeting⁹.

With regard also to the Internet, it is common to make use of false jobs advertisements placed on it. It seems to be difficult to detect that type of simulated jobs, but it is also possible to implement different channels for identifying presumed traffickers. The false contracts, and the patterns are always similar. The companies that operate on the Internet should be on the lookout for signs of THB.

Nevertheless, it cannot be ignored that the identification on the Internet is very difficult. The anonymity and mass audience of online services increases both the discretion and profitability of the services but complicates the fight against the recruitment. For that reason, in my opinion the companies that operate on the Internet should increase the delivery of information to users in relation to the THB. Companies should expose the risk of being victim of THB and they should explain the traditional methods used by traffickers. Furthermore, companies should also provide users with direct contacts of the company specialized in the fight against THB, representing intermediaries between users and police authorities.

Finally, private employment agencies, as labour recruiters, have an important role in this first stage of THB. Therefore, the issue of labour recruitment and the responsibilities of governments and employers to protect workers from exploitation were at the centre of the 103 debate of the International Labour Conference, which led to the adoption of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the Forced

Labour Recommendation 2013 (No.203). As specific provision, it is recommended the promotion of coordinated efforts by relevant government agencies, including efforts to regulate, license and monitor labour recruiters and employment agencies and eliminate the charging of recruitment fees to workers to prevent debt bondage and other forms of economic coercion¹⁰.

In the same row, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) call on governments, social partners, businesses, other international agencies, and all concerned stakeholders, to strengthen their efforts to address abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices in statement rendered in June of 2015 in which series of actions were requested:

1. Adopt and strengthen, criminal laws and other regulatory measures, to address the entire spectrum of fraudulent and abusive recruitment practices that may lead to trafficking in persons;
2. Raise awareness amongst recruiters, private employment agencies and employers in the private and public sectors on due diligence and best practices on how to eliminate abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices;
3. Enable cooperation among relevant government agencies, workers' organisations, employers' organisations and representatives of private employment agencies; promote strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors, and facilitate exchange of good practices within common migration routes;
4. Create complaint mechanisms and ensure that migrant workers who have experienced abusive and fraudulent recruitment practices or subsequent exploitation, gain access to justice and effective remedies, such as compensation;
5. Ensure the Right to Freedom of Association, maximise collective bargaining coverage and support trade unions in their efforts to organize workers, including migrant workers, to better protect them from exploitation during or result-

9. SKIOTOU Athanassia P., "Trafficking in human beings: Internet recruitment", Council of Europe, 2007, p.27

10. ANDREES Beate, NASRI Alix, SWINIARSKI Peter, "Regulating labour recruitment to prevent human trafficking and to foster fair migration, models challenges and opportunities", International Labour Organization 6459, p.7.

ing from the recruitment process.

6. Foster the transparent and participatory negotiation, conclusion and effective implementation of bilateral and regional agreements, rooted in international standards, as well as other specific mechanisms to ensure improved international coordination and cooperation and to close regulatory and enforcement gaps across common labour migration routes.

7. Ensure that national mechanisms to regulate the recruitment of migrant workers are integrated into labour migration policies and relevant bilateral and regional agreements, to ensure coherence between national laws and policies governing labour recruitment and the broader policies relating to employment, skills, and education.

8. Promote the ratification of relevant UN and ILO Conventions, in particular the recently adopted Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930; the Trafficking in Persons Protocol; the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No 181); the Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No 97) and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No 143) to ensure proper recognition and regulation of labour recruiters and employment agencies

b) Second Stage: Transition

According to the UN Protocol, it must be punished not only the recruitment, but also the transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons. One of the main characteristics of THB, and which distinguishes it from another forms of exploitation, is the transition stage. Victims are transported to the place of exploitation, either within the country or outside the country of origin of the victim, but in every case, apart from their families and friends, what makes them

more vulnerable. Modern slavery requires that people are moved from one place to another and for that reason. It is important to adopt measures to prevent THB in all kind of transport firms, hotels and hosting's companies.

Victims can be transported by land, sea and air. All shipping companies should be aware of the fights against THB. They can be responsible for human trafficking if they do not adopt any measure to avoid that the traffickers use their services to commit their criminal activities. Consequently, companies that depend on transport as part of their values chains, or that are supplying transportation services, must face the risk of being complicit in modern slavery¹¹. For instance, there have been several scandals of smuggling and THB using trucks among the world¹², with fatal endings in some cases. To deal with such situations, it was created the Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) with the mission to educate, equip, empower and mobilize members of the trucking and bus industries to combat human trafficking¹³. Its main goals are to saturate trucking and related industries with TAT materials, partner with law enforcement and government agencies to facilitate the investigation of human trafficking and marshal the resources of their partners to combat THB. Similarly, the International Transport Worker's Federation is trying to make people aware of the risk of low cost-holidays. Exploitation often happens at tourist destinations, hotels are anonymous and publicly accessible, making them likely venues for prostitution and crime. And even more anonymous would be new companies, which operate on online leaseings or rentings short-term lodging such as apartments or homestays. However, tourism and hospitality stakeholders are often unaware of signs, contributing unknowingly to sex trafficking and the transportation of human beings¹⁴, despite being likely to intervene not only in the second stage but also in the third phase of THB.

11. TRIER HANSES Thomas, "Transport-The risk of complicity in modern slavery", Sirius Publications, 645⁰, p.6.

12. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34073534>.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-40696306>.

13. <http://truckersagainstrafficking.org/>.

14. Carolin L, Lindsay A, Victor W (2015) Sex Trafficking in the Tourism Industry. J Tourism Hospit 4:166. doi:10.4172/2167-0269.1000166.



c) Third stage: Exploitation

Exploitation could be for several purposes but it shall include, according to the Palermo Protocol, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

This phase is what justifies the existence of THB and where the companies have more risk to be responsible for the crime. In contrast with the previous stages, where it is complicated to attribute criminal responsibility to the companies, at this stage, companies should have strong mechanisms of THB detection and specially, those companies that are most at risk.

According to a study elaborated by NGO Verité in 2016, eleven sectors were found to be the most likely to have a risk of human trafficking globally¹⁵: agriculture, construction, electronics, fishing and aquaculture, forestry, healthcare, hospitality, housekeeping/facilities operation, mining and basic metal production and textile and apparel manufacturing. But there are also additional risk factors. Particular products, such as those that have seasonal cycles, certain business processes, for instance in long and complex supply chains, the use of certain vulnerable

groups, such as women and children, and other operations in countries deemed as high risk. The study is mainly focused on the companies' role attending to their supply chains. In the context of the sexual exploitation, we cannot forget the situation of bars, clubs, escort agencies and brothels, due to the fact that they constitute an important focal point for human trafficking. It is clear that in many occasions the owner of that kind of business would be responsible for trafficking. But in many other cases, it would be

difficult to make them responsible for the scenario of a THB victim working in their establishments, especially when they are big commercial premises. And for that reason, it is fundamental to have the possibility to attribute to that business any kind of liability, whether civil, administrative or criminal. Nonetheless, the seriousness of the offence and the high risk of having workers which are victims of THB in such kind of an industry justifies, in my opinion, the attribution of criminal responsibility to that business or even to the owners, in cases of absolute lack of control.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Trafficking in human beings is a global problem and one of the world's most abhorrent crimes. It must be fought by land, sea and air, and with use of all the instruments of the rule of law. The fight against this crime must involve several actors with a multifaceted response. Otherwise, we will not be able to eradicate this shameful crime.

It is crucial that small, medium and large companies are involved in the fights against human trafficking. The aim of the traffickers consists in earning money and to that end they often need corporations. Therefore, if we achieve the goal of preventing the utilization of companies to commit THB, we would be able to put traffickers in a

15. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, "Trafficking in persons report 2015", United States of America, p.23.

difficult situation. Corporations are a fundamental element in the fight of all globalized crimes. We should emphasize that companies can and should play a vital role in preventing human trafficking.

At this point, there are already many companies that they are aware of the risks of being involved in a case of THB and take their responsibility for it. There are major initiatives in this area. For instance the aforementioned Truckers Against Human Trafficking or the European Alliance Bankers against Trafficking in Human Beings, which created a practical toolkit with “red-flag indicators”¹⁶.

With the globalization of business, international compliance is a necessity. The global nature of companies with subsidiaries, affiliates, and vendors all over the world provide great opportunities but also great risks of being liable for the actions of their staff¹⁷. However, there are many companies that are not conscious of the risks that they take if they do not implement effective measures against THB.

There is currently a worldwide trend to corporate criminal liability and it is only a matter of time we start prosecuting companies which are responsible for human trafficking. Judicial authorities, policy makers, press and civilian play an important role related to corporate liability. We should promote the awareness of companies of the necessity of the implementation of due diligence programs with effective internal controls, with identification of areas at risks and with implementation of specific policies in order to address those risks, and to avoid labour exploitation.

It is responsibility of all of us to combat THB with involvement of all the possible actors.

An early version of this text has been presented at the OSCE Conference (18 Alliance against



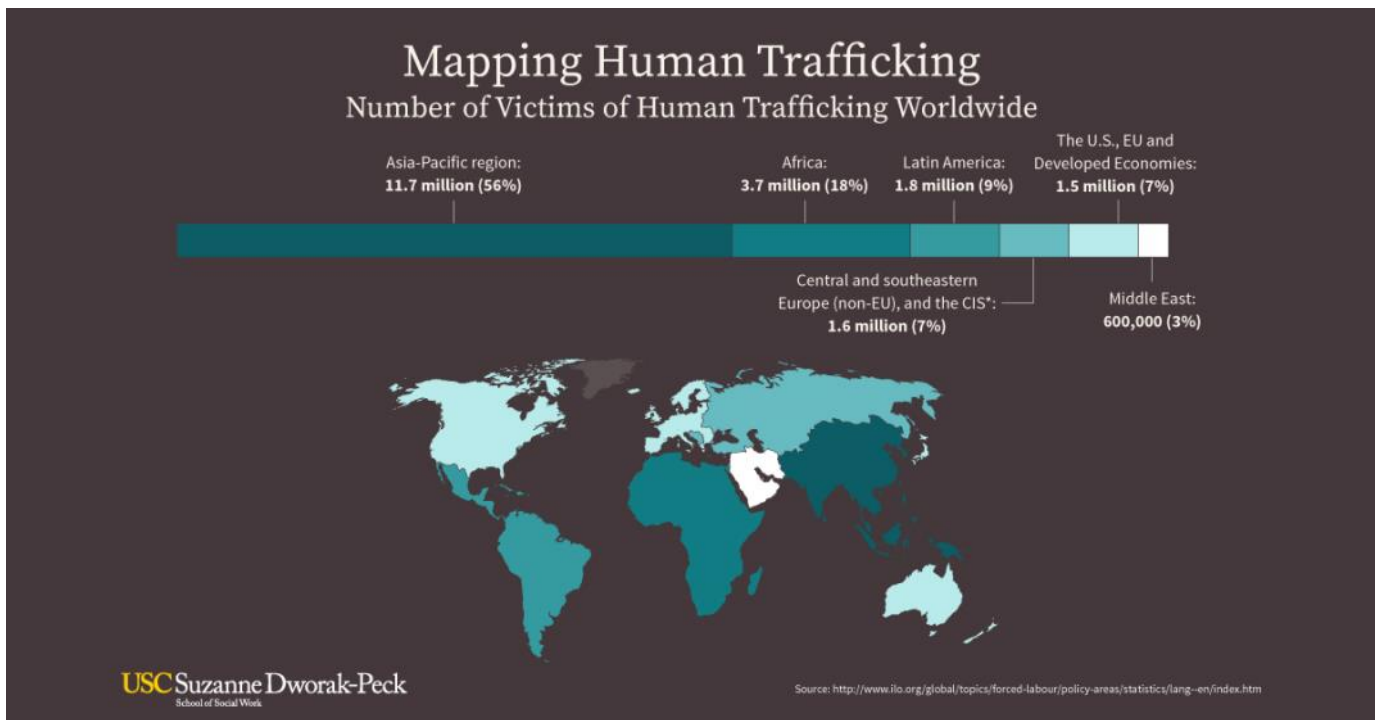
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CONSIDERATION**Turkey – a unavoidable player in the Middle East****Corneliu PIVARIU**

On July 9th, 2018, president Recep Tayyip Erdogan inaugurated his second mandate which marked, at the same time, turning the parliamentary system, in place since almost 100 years, into one where the political power is more concentrated at the presidency level.

The change takes place under the circumstances of the complex developments in the Middle East and particularly in Syria, as well as within the geopolitical global context of great powers' repositioning, of their shifting spheres of influence and the acerbic economic competition for energy sources and markets. We will see how beneficial this context will be for Turkey's political and economic developments in the coming years. The developments of the international situation, too, will represent a challenge for the team the president Erdogan has at his disposal and where the loyalty to the president is considered an at least as important factor as it is the competence if not even more important, given the circumstances. Turkish foreign policy should find the best solution between the anti-Western fluctuations and the neo-Ottoman dream of regional hegemony on the one hand, and the need of better relations with the European Union and the United States, on the other hand. These relations are, for the time being, extremely important when the economic growth begun to dwindle and foreign investments are not at the wished for level, something that could have a undesirable impact for the current Turkish leadership at the next local elections in March, 2019. The situation got more complicated following the hike in inflation and, on August the 1st, the Turkish Lira decreased to under 5Liras for 1US dollar. Moreover, the 10th of August president Donald Trump's announcement on doubling the tariffs for Turkish exports of steel (+50%) and aluminium (+20%), triggered a new devaluation of Turkish Lira by about 25% while a slight recovery was registered lately.

Having in mind Turkey's economic integration in the world's economy that lead to deepening its dependency on the latter especially as Turkey has no important energy resources and depends on imports, president Erdogan announced, on August the 3rd a 100 days program and appealed to all citizens to "release" the foreign currencies and the gold kept "under the pillow" and turn their savings into Turkish Liras, an appeal that did not seem to have the expected effects. On the other hand, Erdogan said that Turkey will not accept being dependent on the West and will change its focus on the Chinese market for loans (including the issuance of Yuan government bonds), without explaining why the Chinese would treat Turkey differently from the European or American lenders. Moreover, president Trump's decision of increasing the custom duties on steel and aluminium was assessed by the Turkish president as an economic war and addressed a message to his American counterpart: "At a time when Evil continues to haunt around the world, unilateral actions against Turkey by the USA, our ally of decades, would do nothing but harm the USA's interests and security". President Erdogan added: "if this current of unilateralism and lack of respect is not reversed, we will have to look for new friends and allies", and said that president Trump would do well to seriously consider this "before it is too late!".

President Trump himself acknowledged that the USA-Turkey relations are not in good shape currently. In all likelihood, he will wait some time in order to adapt and reconsider his position towards this important ally which can not be circumvented in case of finding a solution in the Middle East and in other geopolitical issues. And now here on this background, the Caspian Sea Treaty, which has been negotiated for decades, was abruptly signed, offering Russia a relevant position in this area. Russia took expediently the opportunity and Serghei Lavrov, the Foreign Affairs minister, declared that in the near future a four-countries summit (Turkey, Russia, Germany, France) on Syria will take place in Ankara with other countries invited, too, including international organisations (UN, OSCE, etc.). Turkish sources say the summit could take place on 7th of September.

The significances of these developments are complex and indicate that Germany and France could return to more important positions in the Middle East, wishing to invest in the major joint Russia-Turkey projects. It would be possible that a new Middle East emerges where Turkey keeps a unavoidable place.

The Main Factors of the Middle East Situation



FROM POST-ISLAMISM TO NECROSIS-ISLAMISM AFTER THE ARAB SPRING

**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

Islamism, understood as ideology and doctrine which resorts to religious references for arguing and assuming political purposes was not, as part of the contemporary Islamology noticed, a result of great popular upheavals of 2011 known as "Arab spring". Islamism accompanied Islam ever since Prophet Mohammed's biological demise as it has accompanied, too, the entire history of the Muslim nation and state during a long and acerbic confrontation between the religious factor and the sphere of politics where the stake was acquiring the temporal power and shaping the society, the state and the world in accordance with the precepts of the Islamic canonic law codified by *shari'a* law. The involvement of the Islamist currents and structures in triggering and developing the Arab "revolutions" was but the most recent and last episode of the Islamist history seen as a chronicle of the struggle for "reforming" Islam in the sense of its return to its dogmatic roots as they were codified by the fore-runners in order to achieve the supreme ideal of imposing the Islamic supremacy on the entire world. The failures recorded in all these attempts, the Islamist thinking's slipping in armed and social violence as political instrument and the deviation towards absolutism and hegemonist tendencies, as it was the case with 1979 Iranian Islamic revolution, determined the Western Orientalist researches to speak even since the 1990s of a bankruptcy if not of the death of political Islam as did the prestigious French political scientist Olivier Roy who, in his book *"L'échec de l'islam politique"* (Le Seuil, Paris, 1992), exposed in extenso the reasons justifying this conclusion among which:

- Islamism claimed to be the most authoritative representative of the concept of "the Third

World" yet made it on behalf of a overbidded religious universalism and mapped out a profound demarcation line not between rich and poor, between democracy and dictatorship but between religions, namely between "House of Islam" (*Dār Al-Islām*) as space of living together, tolerance and perfection, on the one hand, and the other religions considered as "House of War" (*Dār Al-Harb*"), a realm of disbelievers, conflicts and imperfection which should be corrected through Islamization work.

- Situated in a modern world, Islamism proposes itself to achieve by any means the Islamization of modernity which roots and contributions to the development of the universal civilization have a much older history than the history of Islam and with a profound awareness of its identitarian morphology.

- The dissemination of Islamist ideas in the Arab and Islamic world does not produce any effect on its geostrategic realities, in the sense it does not generate either more unity and solidarity or preclude the generation and the evolutions of the conflict hotbeds or a positive rebalancing of the influence relations and telling to this purpose is Afghanistan's example where the tribal factor is prevailing and stronger than the Islamic affiliation.

For the political Islam dominated by the ideology of the "Muslim Brotherhood" movement, the "Arab spring" projected, for the first time, Islamism at the top of the political hierarchy by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's acquiring state power and by the Islamist formation "Al-Nahda" (Renaissance"), as Tunisian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Nevertheless, the euphoria of victory determined in both cases a hasty process of forced and brutal Islamization of the society and state institutions, a campaign which was hit by the reaction of social rejection

of the ephemeral Islamist rules which "mandate" ended equally abrupt, after a year only, either following the intervention on the political chessboard of the military institution, as it was the case in Egypt, or by the self disqualification and withdrawal from the political life of "Al-Nahda" formation in Tunisia. Two failures which were to have dramatic consequences for the very existence and future of Islamism in the Arab world.

The transformations generated by the steamroller of the "Arab spring", bringing back into question the validity and the credibility of the Islamist thesis, outlawing the Islamist formations or the disastrous involvement of the currents born from the ideology of the "Muslim Brotherhood" in the civil wars in Syria, in Yemen and Libya, their work and their coming closer to the extremist-jihadist and Salafist wings of the radical Islam and the practical disappearance of any Islamist activism on the political chessboard were as many elements contributing to the re-emergence of the discourse of the end of Islamism and its passage to what was denominated by the "post-Islamist era" term.

For the Islamologues who dealt with this theme, such as the French Islamologue Olivier Roy, his co-national the sociologist Gilles Kepel or the Iranian-American political scientist Assef Bayat, of the University of Illinois, this post-Islamism is described as a multi-dimensional and multi-directional movement which gives a pragmatic and consciously promoted expression to a program that wants the Islamizing movement and thought to come out of the limits of the social, ideological, political and intellectual field in order to project itself into the space of an alternative modernity achieving a *modus cooperandi* between Islam as individual option and the concepts of freedom and democracy. By progressively distancing itself from the totalitarianistic and exclusivistic logic of the Islamism, post-Islamism proposes itself to assimilate and promote forms of compromise and of co-existence between pluralism, multilateralism and compromise. Yet the success and the sincerity of such "co-existence" between freedom and democracy, on the one hand, and compromise, on the other hand, is profoundly doubtful at least due to two reasons:

first, because the democracy slogan was used, as well, by the Islamist parties during the electoral campaigns and, once they were projected to power, Islamism (for which, by tradition, "democracy is the bastard and poisoned fruit of the Western civilization") was to manifest itself as an acerbic conceptual and pragmatic denial of this democracy. Second, because that compromise the post-Islamist rhetoric speaks about is, in its intimate essence, but a recourse to the old religious concept of concealment (*takiya* or *kitmān*) which designates in Islam the temporary and conjectural dissimulation of the identitarian affiliation to Islam as a protecting measure and avoiding a persecution or an adverse conjecture, a measure that ceases immediately once the cause or the conjecture that generated resorting to this *takiya* cease. It is, in other words, about what in the culture of many peoples is expressed by the wisdom of a reed that bends itself before the tempest for not breaking and return to the normal status once the tempest ceased. In a way, such a strategy means, as Oliver Roy said, an attempt of translating a secular laicism into a profoundly Islamic religious space.

The concept of "post-Islamism" is neither enough elaborated, nor consolidated by the experience of confronting reality and that explains also the hesitations characterizing the attempts to work out an as comprehensive as possible definition of the phenomenon. This is why some scholars assimilate post-Islamism with what would be a "**retro-Islamism**" understood as a conservative doctrine marked by the nostalgia for reconstructing the global Muslim state adverse to the nation-state and to its contemporary values. Except that, in order to reach such finalities, classical ideas such as those regarding democracy and freedom are accepted but only to the extent they can serve to reaching such a goal. On the other hand, the supporters of the so-called **neo-Islamism** are on an opposite position, of a doctrine that emerged as a results of the shifts generated by the "Arab spring" phenomenon and which, from our point of view, could be rather defined as a **pseudo-Islamism** or as a "**populist Islam**" (*islamawiya* in Arabic), or "**Islamism without Islam**" insofar as in this

case it is about a current that uses the Islamic religious cover only for electoral purposes and of maintaining a rate of visibility at the level of the religious social media without proposing illusory aims such as creating the Universal Islamic state or the literal application of the Muslim canonic law.

All these denominations are a natural resultant and an expression of the process of identitarian re-thinking and of adapting political Islam pertaining to the obsolete tradition of the "Muslim Brotherhood" to the contemporary world's new values system. And this process of Islamism's oscillating between the return to a bankrupt past and self-propelling into fake, populist and not too convincing paradigms, namely oscillating between a retro-Islamism that exhausted its persuasion power, an artificial neo-Islamism and a populist Islam equally alien to the Islamic society, could be characterized rather by the appellation of **necrosis-Islamism** by which one identifies the process of gradual extinction of an Islamism that lost its future, a de-Islamised, delegitimate Islamism, losing increasingly the influence within the social body and lacking the necessary instruments for attracting, extending and consolidating its influence. A clinically dead Islamism after the lamentable failure of its first governing exercise on the background of the "Arab spring" by the Islamism institutionalized in Egypt and Tunisia and profoundly affected by the traumatizing experience of the political Islam in its jihadist-Salafist version, embodied so dramatically and blood-tainted by the illusory "neo-caliphate" of the third millennium.



The Strait of Hormuz and the international policies

Reza SHAHRESTANI

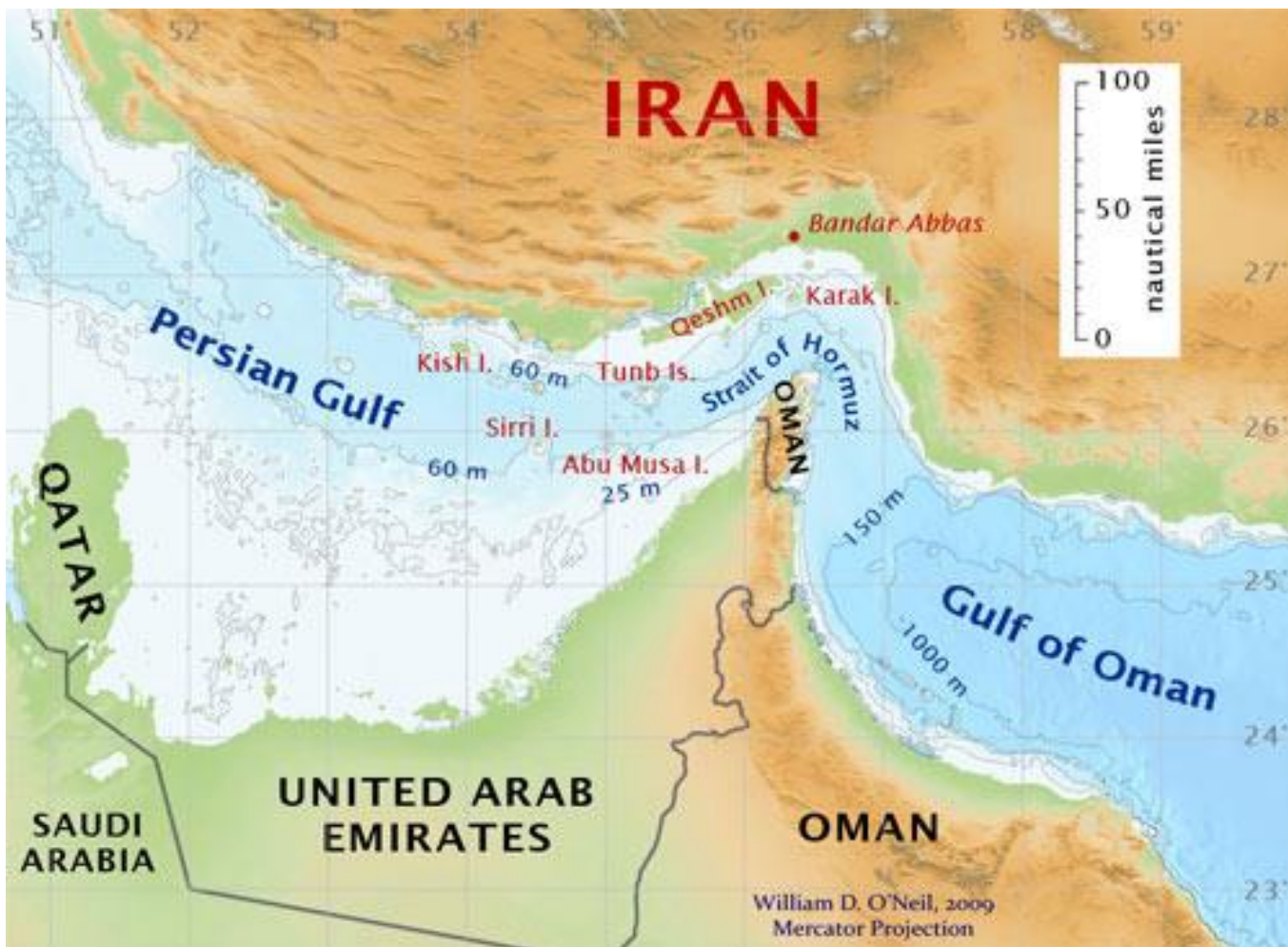
A preamble

November the 4th is the "D Day" Donald Trump's Administration set for entering into force the embargo on the Iranian oil exports, namely on the imports of this source of conventional energy by the states and companies having commercial relations in this field with the Islamic Republic of Iran. From this perspective, the American president let it be known that, at the beginning of July, he agreed with the monarchies in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the increase of their oil output by 2bbd for offering compensations to current importers.

In Switzerland, the Iranian president Hassan Rohani declared, in retaliation, that "the United States should understand that blocking his country's the oil exports will mean blocking the energy exports of all the oil producing states in the Gulf when the daily transit from the Gulf towards the outside world represents 20% of the regional trade, 40%, respectively, of the world's maritime oil transport, as the Strait of Hormuz situated at the south-eastern tip of the Gulf is the only maritime oil maritime outlet of this strategic energy region towards the planet's oceans.

Supporting president Rouhani, the general Qassem Soleymani, the commander of the famous *Faylaq Al-Qods* (Al-Qods Brigade, the supporting wing of the abroad operations of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard), in one of his rarely interventions, he pathetically proclaimed and said he "is kissing the president's hands for the latter wise words uttered in due time", ensuring that the "Revolutionary Guard are ready to act in the spirit of the policy that will be decided to the interest of the Islamic Republic and will prevent by all means the oil exports of this region".

On the other side, high American officials did not spare media declarations in the region, whe-



reby they said that the army of the United States will firmly act, in cooperation with the allied forces in the region, for securing the oil transit through the Gulf waters, the freedom of navigation and normal carrying out of the world trade with energy resources.

Is it about a war of declarations or we will witness a hot autumn in this part of the world and of the Middle East?

The Strait of Hormuz and the international policies

Once President Donald Trump announced, on May 8th, 2018 that the USA terminated unilaterally the treaty with Iran on the control of the Iranian nuclear program (JCPOA) and put again in practice the sanctions against Iran and the emergence of the first Iranian threats in reaction to the USA's action of either closing or blocking the access to the Strait of Hormuz, the oil, freight

and insurance markets begun to witness worries, anxieties, excitement and fears concerning future developments and the immediate effects were being felt on the international prices. Such manifestations intensified daily as the two grace periods the USA granted for carrying out covered by the said decision come closer. The first grace period expired after 90 days (August 6th, 2018) and the second after 180 days (November 4th, 2018). The USA's departments and agencies made public the specific sanctions for each period so that countries and private companies take necessary steps for finalizing the ongoing contracts and for observing the sanctions imposed by the USA.

The second stage of sanctions pertains directly to oil maritime transport activities, oil transactions (total blocking the Iranian oil exports), the Iranian maritime ports operations, blocking the activities of its naval yards etc.

The sanctions the USA's president on May 8th,

2018 were updated last time on June, 27th 2018 and are continuously under review.

The Persian Gulf countries (Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates), known also as the Arabic Gulf, are producing around 27-30% of the oil global output and have around 2/3 of the proven oil reserves in the world. At the same time, the Persian Gulf countries have around 36% of the proven natural gas world reserves. Around 90% of the Persian Gulf countries oil exports sent to the Far East, USA or Europe are passing through the Strait of Hormuz.

According to US Department of Energy estimations, 22-30 oil tanks are transiting daily the Strait covering around 30% of the oil global consumption (around 90 million barrels or around 12 million metric tons while Romania's annual oil consumption is around 11 million metric tons). As a result, the Strait of Hormuz is considered a strategic maritime choke point.

Militarily, the Strait of Hormuz has a length of around 225 km and an average width of around 80 km, the narrowest place measures 50 km and the water depth is between 45 and 220 m. The fairway for navies' entry into the Gulf is between 3.2 and 10 km wide, a length of 31-35 km and a depth of 75-100 m. At the same time, the exit

fairway of the Gulf has a width of 3.6 km, a length of 25 km and a depth of 80-225 m. The Strait is located between Iran and Oman and there are several islands in its area, most of them uninhabited and under juridical dispute among the coastal states, and they are important for establishing the territorial waters (15 maritime miles) of the sides. Currently, the Strait of Hormuz's fairways are in Iran's territorial waters and it secures the necessary light-signalling for the safety for the maritime traffic. Such a state of affairs significantly increases Iran's strategic importance in the Persian Gulf area. One of the great disputes between Iran and the USA is that Iran recognizes the freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz of the commercial vessels yet it requests prior notification and obtaining the approval for the military navies. The dispute is still open and difficult to solve because neither Iran nor the USA ratified the 1982 UN Convention -Law of Sea (UNCLOS). Iran considers that the passage of the military navies, especially

the USA's ones, through the Strait of Hormuz threatens its national security as coastal state. For preventing such potential menaces to Iran's national security, it constantly threatens to close the Strait. A particular incident concerning Iran's manifestation in the area took place in 2016





when 10 American sailors were arrested in the Iranian territorial waters of the Strait of Hormuz. This incident raised the awareness of the international community on the significance of the Iranian authority on the Strait.

Iran did not ratify UNCLOS, the 1982 UN Convention because it did not agree with the provision **"peaceful transiting of the military navies the territorial waters"** and with the provision concerning the **"right of military navies to transit the international straits"**. The reasons for which the USA did not ratify the UN Convention UNCLOS are still unclear. Upon the last attempt of 2016, the American Senate could not get the two thirds necessary vote for the ratification.

The Strait of Hormuz, which lies in Iran's territorial waters and has the regime of international navigation route, a combination that makes even

more difficult the correct interpretation of the applicable rules to this strait. To date, Iran secured free navigation through the strait for all commercial navies, irrespective of the vessels' flag, without any incident being recorded.

Iran's claims concerning prior notification and obtaining the approval for transiting the territorial waters for the military vessels there is nothing out of the ordinary in terms of international practices. Signatory countries of the UN UNCLOS Convention such as Croatia, Egypt, Malta, India, Indonesia and South Korea request prior notification while countries like Norway, Sweden and Denmark request prior notifications and obtaining the approvals for transiting the military vessels.

As coastal state to the Persian Gulf, Iran strengthened its shore defenses and has now in

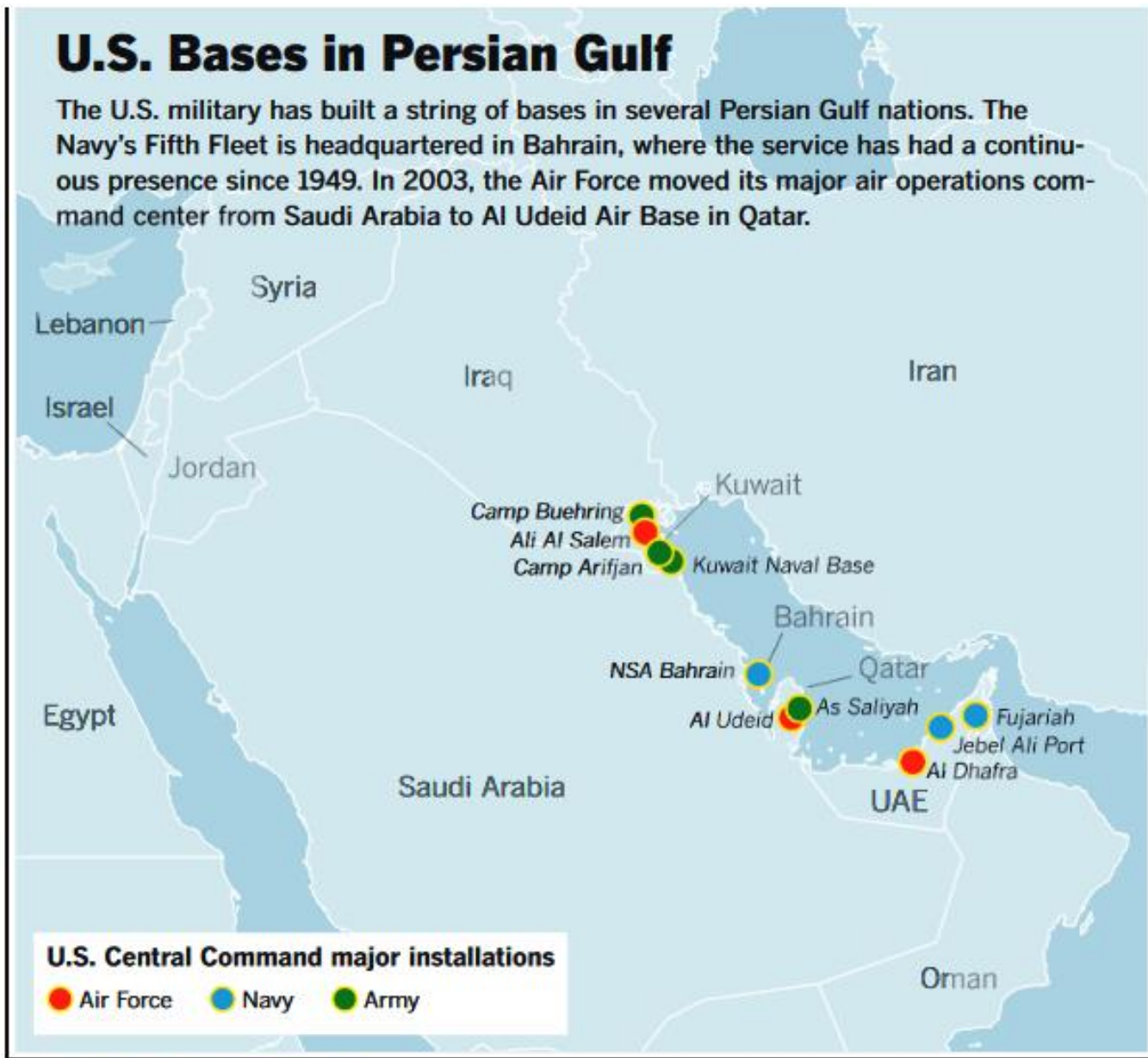
place an efficient defense system made up mainly of anti-navy missiles batteries.

For maritime operations, Iran has two military naval forces, IRIN (Islamic Republic of Iran Navy) set up by the Shah of Iran and IRGCN (Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy) set up after the 1979 Islamic revolution and the latter force is more numerous than the former and enjoys a greater confidence from the country's leadership. IRIN has 13,000 sailors, 2,600 marines and 2,000 militaries of the maritime aviation. In terms of navies, IRIN has 7 submarines, 2 destroyers, 3 frigates, 2 corvettes, 4 missile-carrier boats, 6 torpedo boats, 3 coast patrol

boats plus logistic support boats, mines setting boats and minesweepers.

At the same time, IRGCN maritime force has around 20,000 troops and around 150 boats and small boats (missiles carriers, torpedo boats and assault boats).

The main doctrine of the military maritime forces is Asymmetric Naval Doctrine and Passive Defense meant to harness the advantages of Iran's geographic location and the specificity of the approximate 1000 km-long coast offering many places for hiding and harboring small boats.



Source: <http://library.cqpress.com>

During the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, Iran destroyed around 546 commercial navies in the Persian Gulf using mainly mines, torpedoes and surprise attacks with small boats. During the same period, several American military vessels were damaged in the Gulf area.

The Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Arabian Sea are the responsibility area of the US Fifth Fleet with the NSA Bahrain support base, in Manama. The difference of navy power between the USA forces and the Iranian ones is notorious and should not be explained. However, over the years there were numerous Iranian actions of provocation, attempts of intimidation and harassment especially as a result of Iran's requests of prior notification and approval for transiting the Strait of Hormuz for the military vessels. The US Navy statistics show that there were 22 harassment actions in 2015, 36 in 2016, 14 in 2017 and none this year. The majority of such actions were carried out by the Iranian forces with small, very manoeuvrable speed-boats which are difficult to identify by radar. From the analysis of the military drills of the American forces in the Persian Gulf it appears that the greatest danger concerning a possible Iran's decision of implementing the closure of the strait is by mining the area. The Americans estimate Iran has around 2,000 modern marine mines. Even if the Iranian forces have a mine setter only, the Iranians' practice in the 1980-1988 war proved that they could successfully use commercial vessels and small boats for setting mines barrages.

The Europeans rejected on July 16th, 2018 the United States' request of economically isolating Iran and adopted a juridical mechanism for protecting the European companies present in this country from the American sanctions the head of the European diplomacy announced. At the same time, the French minister of Foreign Affairs insisted in his turn on the necessity of allowing Iran to continue selling its oil.

The EU and other signatories of

the treaty concluded in 2015 with Tehran, China and Russia, are searching for a financial mechanism guaranteeing Iran the capacity of exporting its oil.

The energy sector brought Iran revenues of \$50 billion in 2017, according to European customs. The source of revenues is mainly the oil as the gas export is meagre, 10 billion cu.m. in 2017 only. Iran exports 3.9 mbd - 20% to the EU and 70% by China and other Asian countries, the UE data show.

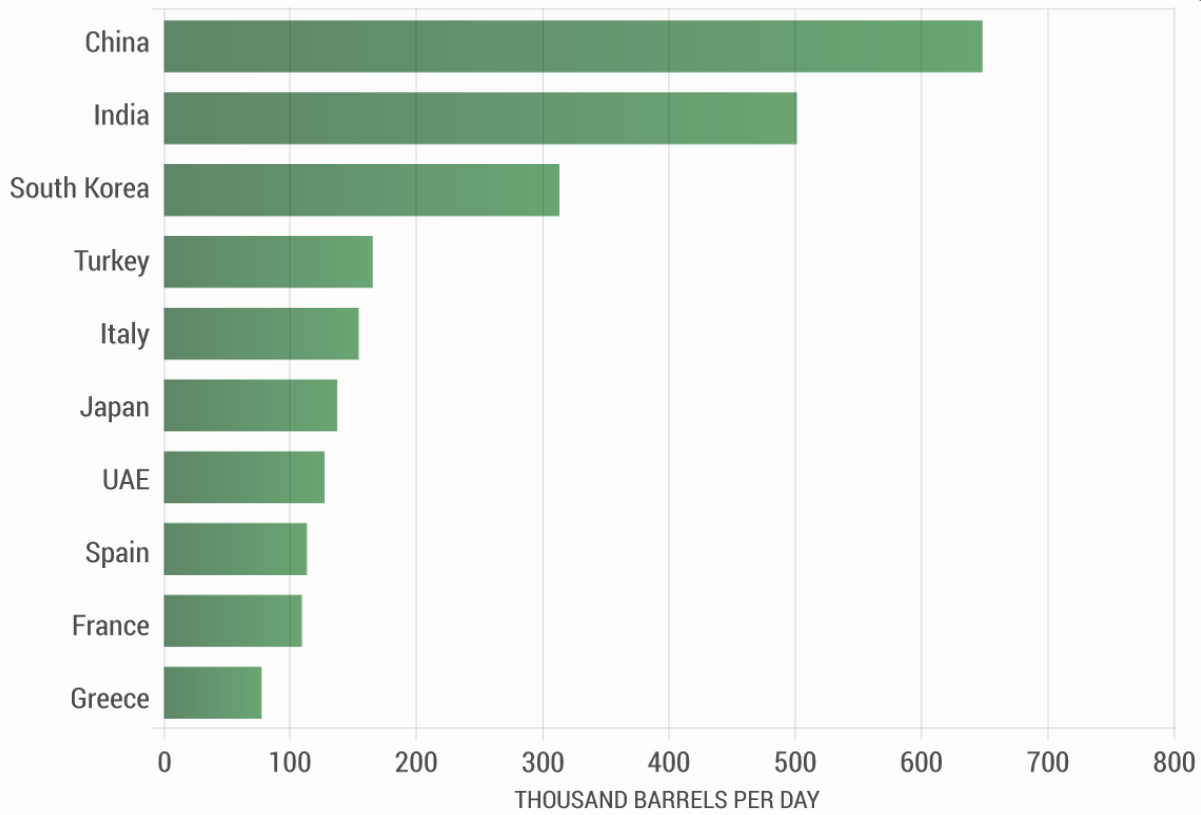
The USA's sanctions on Iran pursue reducing Iran's revenues from oil and natural gas to nil. The second part of these sanctions is to come into force on November 4th, during the middle-term elections in the United States.

A possible Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz would significantly unbalance the oil demand and supply on the global market since it supplies daily, together with the Persian Gulf countries, through the strait around 26.5 mbd representing 29-32% of the daily supply on the international market.

The USA is not worried of a possible new oil crisis since in 2017, according to the Energy Information Agency, for the first time, its daily oil output exceeded Saudi Arabia's production (12,090 barrels/day) reaching 15,999 barrels per day, and that turns the USA from an oil importer into a great oil exporter.



Top Importers of Iranian Oil



Note: Average from November 2017 to April 2018
Source: Bloomberg

Graphic redesign by Geopolitical Futures



THE PRESIDENTIAL TURKEY: A NEW CROSSROADS

Reza SHAHRESTANI

"A festival of democracy!". With these words, the Turkish leader Recep Teyyip Erdogan described the June 24th snap presidential and general elections which, with a unprecedented participation to vote of 90% of the electorate and by the approval rate of 53% for president Erdogan validated not only the 2017 constitutional referendum concerning Turkey's transition to the presidential system of governance headed for another two mandates by "super-president" Erdogan but also the final separation from the Kemalist stage of Turkey's modern history. In the new context, the head of state is benefiting from important amendments making Recep Teyyip Erdogan the first Turkey's president invested with increased powers and attributions among which:

- The missions, competences and decisions of the executive power will be taken over by the head of state and is not any longer a joint privilege of the president and the government. At the same time, the president maintains his active links with the political party he founded and leads;

- The president has full powers in issuing presidential decrees and rulings in all the fields pertaining to the executive power and authority;



- The president nominates and dismiss the state's high officials including ministers and high magistrates;

- Nominates and invests the vice-president or the vice-presidents of the republic;

- Submits to the popular referendum the constitutional amendments;

- Coordinates the drawing up of the state budget prior to being subject to the parliamentary debate and approval;

- Instates the state of emergency with the legislative approval;

- Is accountable before the parliament which has control attributions of the presidential activities.

For the first time in Turkey's modern history, the constitution stipulates the abolition of military courts and the transfer of justice under civilian control.

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There are many analysts who are either Erdogan's sympathisers or opponents and who underlined his special "courage" of bringing forward by almost a year and a half the presidential and general elections when, according to estimates, compact segments of the population disagree with the "dictatorial and policing" measures Erdogan imposed during the last two years, namely after the 2016 aborted military coup.



His victory at the 2018 ballot will have as effect on a short and a medium run a rejuvenation of the Erdoganist ideology and doctrine which was affected lately by the symptoms of the old-age and exhaustion yet, at the same time, Turkey's transition to the presidential system could not avoid the effects of an international climate characterized by fluidity, tensions and of a difficult to predict evolution.

The June 24th ballot brought Turkey to a new and complicated crossroads having as causal origin the conjugated action of at least three identifiable factors and of which the reformist impetus of the "absolute president" will have to take into account at every step he takes for implementing "the new reform" promised in the electoral campaign.

First of all, it is about the domestic chessboard and climate strongly influenced by the evolutions that led the Justice and Development Party to power and which created, by Erogan's and his political formation's policy, deep fault lines in Turkey's social and economic corpus. The new constitutional reality places Recep Teyyip Erdogan on a volatile line between the rational use of power he is invested with for strengthening the democratic process and a positive confrontation of the economic and social challenges, on the one hand, and the euphoric attractivity of the totalitarian tendencies which brought him already the accusation of "neo-Ottomanism" and the ambition of wanting to be not only the "strongest Turk" of the contemporaneity but also the new sultan with Ottoman ambitions veiled and out of touch with the daily realities of the nation he was propelled to lead, on the other hand.



Second of all, it is about the manner Recep Teyyip Erdogan will position himself in relation to the regional political, military, security and sectarian environment which witnessed, in its turn, a process of resettlement and complication of the balances system both at the level of the Arab world and at the general level of the Middle East. The dynamic transformations this area witnessed including as a result of the "Arab spring" led already during the twenty years since the Justice and Development Party is at the helm, to a double failure of the Erdoganist regional policy, namely the devaluation of the well-known theory of "zero problems with the neighbours" and losing the initial credibility of the project of imposing and disseminating the "Turkish model" for shaping and development of the Arab-Islamic Middle East.

And, thirdly, it is about the international context and climate within which Recep Teyyip Erdogan succeeded in creating animosities, difficulties of communication and conflicted status. The "new" Recep Teyyip Erdogan takes over a Turkey having at its south an ongoing civil war, a war which through its duration and the multitude of interferences turned into an internationalized conflict whereby at least two global military powers – the Russian Federation and the United States – and at least three regional military powers – the Shiite Islamic Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel are involved.

Two weeks after the June 24th snap presidential and general elections, on July the 9th, a pompous inauguration ceremony of Recep Teyyip Erdogan took place in Ankara with the



THE ARAB MONARCHIES OF THE GULF AND THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

Dinu COSTESCU

attendance of 22 heads of states and 28 heads of governments. The ceremony was opened with the religious moment of collectively reciting the beginning verses – *Al-Fatiha* – of the Qur’anic scripture and was dominated by Erdoğan’s taking the presidential oath in front of the parliament and the nation. The festivity provided an opportunity for a pathetic speech of taking the office and of announcing the formation of the new Executive made up of 16 ministers as well as instituting the office of vice-president of the republic, a position for which Fouat Oktaz, a technocrat who headed the Turkish Agency for handling the emergencies, was nominated. Within the government, the key-portfolio of Finances was taken over by the president’s son in law, Berat Albayrak, while the Ministry of Defense is headed by the Chief of Staff, Hulusi Akar, and Mevlut Cavudoglu kept his position as minister of Foreign Affairs.

Recep Teyyip Erdogan has begun his new mandate under the sign of three fundamental and programmatic imperatives – the “revival” of the Turkish culture and civilization, the economic and social recovery and getting rid of the terrorist challenges and threats. Therefore, Erdoğan’s first two political actions were an official visit to Azerbaijan and the attendance of the recent NATO summit in Brussels. That determined some commentators to wonder whether the “new” Erdogan will replace the tie and the bow tie by the turban or he will use all these symbolic accessories for what will be the “presidential Turkey”.

In 1981, upon the initiative of sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, emir of Abu Dhabi emirate and, since 1971, president of the Federation of the United Arab Emirates, the seven monarchies on the eastern and south-eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula set up the sub-regional organisation called “the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf”, made up of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrein, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman with the fundamental aim of sub-regional integration of the member states in the economic and social, circulation of goods and persons, security and defense fields, an aim which, after almost 40 years since the inception of the organisation, is far from materializing in juridical and institutional terms.

Except for the Sultanate of Oman, which maintained a neutral policy, decision-making independence and impartiality, the other monarchical regimes orbited around Saudi ambitions of leadership and regional supremacy, a tendency that increased with the victory and consolidation of the Islamist revolutionary theories of the theocratic regime in Tehran set up in 1979 through the anti-monarchic coup initiated and





led by ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni. The said orientation witnessed a special boost after the "Arab spring" broke out in 2011 and resulted in blood tainted civil wars in Syria, Libya and Yemen, on the one hand, and in the deterioration of the conflicted relations between the monarchy in Riyadh and the Iranian Islamic regime as well as with the emergence and rise of the jihadist-Salafist phenomenon, on the other hand.

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On the background of the confusion, uncertainties and challenges generated by the "Arab revolutions" and the conflicts the latter created, the Arab monarchies in the Gulf (except for the Sultanate of Oman – the only member state of the Gulf Cooperation Council which did not break off diplomatic relations with Damascus) focused their attention on the developments in Syria and placed themselves politically, militarily and financially alongside the Syrian opposition, including the radical Islamist formations and considered that the removal from power of Bashar Al-Assad's Baathist regime, allied with the regime in Tehran, would have resulted in halting the regional expansionism promoted by the Islamic Iran. To an equal extent, the policy promoted especially by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar (until the 2017 fracture that occurred between this emirate and the rest of the neighbouring monarchies) as far as the Syrian file was concerned, was meant to extra motivate the United States to get involved more actively and more pragmatically in the strategies of



removal through pressure and power the Alawi and secular regime in Damascus. Whether such an aim was not reached during the mandate of the former president Barack Obama, neither the new strategy adopted by his follower at the White House, Donald Trump, meets the extent wished for by the monarchs in the Gulf yet offers promises to that purpose measurable by the pecuniary advantages the United States would get from the "Arab allies" in the Gulf in exchange for the security protection "services" granted to them.

The failure of the initiatives meant to tip the balance of forces in favor of the Syrian opposition determined the monarchic regime in Riyadh to act more bluntly in what regional policy was concerned: the military intervention in Bahrein for suppressing the protests of the Shia minority in the kingdom, hardened the tone in the relationship with Lebanon for determining the latter to marginalise pro-Iranian Hezbollah, has engaged in the war in Yemen directly and by proxies, the offensive courtship of the American president Donald Trump, the attempt of consolidating the control over the hawkish wing of the Syrian opposition by creating the so-called "Riyadh platform" opposed to the other factions close to Turkey and to the Russian Federation and, not least, appointing the belicose son of the king, Mohammed Ben Salman, as crown prince are but a few telling examples in this respect.

At the same time, Qatar's continuation of sponsoring the Islamist movement of the Muslim Brotherhood (which Saudi Arabia banned) was one of the main causes that led to the decision of the monarchy in Riyadh, supported by the United Arab Emirates, Bahrein and Egypt of demonising the emir of Qatar, of breaking relations with him and to subject the emirate to a severe economic embargo, of the latter links with the outside world and of openly accusing the emirate of being sponsor of the terrorist phenomenon in a context in which the Wahhabite monarchy itself was not stranger to such attractions for the religious Islamic radicalism. Yet that decision had unexpected consequenc-

es for their promoters as it determined a quick rapprochement between Qatar, on one side, and Turkey and Iran, on the other, and a lamentable setback of the Syrian opposition represented by "Riyadh platform" against the decisions and measures imposed on the ground by the Russian Federation, Turkey and Iran on the background of "Astana and Sochi processes". Under such circumstances, Saudi Arabia and its satellite monarchies have now too small a voice or at all on the chessboard of the Syrian war and in what concern the initiatives of pacifying Syria. The new orientation of the Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini monarchies towards coming back to the dynamic reality of the regional geopolitics and rethinking their own alliances system in the sense of coming closer to the State of Israel and thus acquiring an asset for the Administration in Washington's maintaining the strategic commitments of backing the abovementioned regimes in their confrontation with the Iranian Shiism could be circumscribed within this framework. In fact, both in this issue and in all of the evolutions in the Arab-Persian Gulf region, the Gulf Cooperation Council is practically represented by Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, while Bahrain remains a submissive performer of the directives received from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait is rather concerned of its own domestic political and economic crises, Qatar, under embargo, is promoting its own independent visions and programs including in its relating with the United States of America and Oman maintains itself within the traditional limits of its uncommitted policy in the thorny files of the region and of the Middle East as a whole. And, such a state of affairs does not do anything but add a new element of instability to the already tense regional climate and devaluate, once more, the idea of Arab unity of which the modern Arab world manufactured a coat of arms for decades on end, a coat of arms which proved illusory in the end.

SYRIA: BETWEEN ALIENATION AND CONSTITUTION

Maher NABOULSI

At the time these lines are written, the inhabitants of Damascus are living under the pressure of a double euphoria. First of all, because after seven years of war and following the Russian allies' "advices" the logistics compartments of the Army and of the intelligence services, proceeded with decommissioning the check points and concrete barriers which proved to be not only a security instrument but also a generous source of revenues for the personnel serving the said barriers. The Damascenes take back their streets, avenues and the small streets that were forbidden to them as a result of the vicissitudes of war and the joy tears are, most of the time, accompanied by the question uttered either with the lips or guessed in their sights waiting for the long awaited light from the other end of the tunnel: is peace coming?

Second of all, not only Damascus's citizens, but all Syrians, irrespective of the belligerent camp they sympathize with or detest, are frantically following the negotiations race for the setting up of the so-called Committee on Drawing Up the



Damascus: a check point manned by security troops

New Constitution of the post-conflict Syrian state, a race carried out behind the scenes of the "political elites" chosen and empowered by the regime's and Syrian opposition's foreign sponsors for establishing the content of the fundamental law of the Syrian state before this state benefits of any guarantee that its very existence will be possible and that "post-war Syria" will be edified on the basis of certain imperiously necessary attributes for being able to speak of a real state existence. In a bargain climate driven outside the country, as it is the case with the demarches carried out by the international representative Staffan De Mistura on the side of the players supporting Bashar Al-Assad's regime (Russia, Iran) with the same aim of reaching a consensus concerning the setting up of the committee for drawing up the constitution taking into account that the authorities in Damascus cling on the position already expressed during the February 18th meeting of the Security Council in accordance with which the setting up of this international body should be decided exclusively by the People's Council (the Parliament of the Syrian Arab Republic) which validity is contested by the opposition and its regional or international foreign sponsors. In all this bazaar-like bargaining, the rule of the game is simple and was followed by the regime and the factions of the political and military opposition ever since the beginning of the "negotiations process", an itinerant process carried out in episodes either in Geneva, or in Astana, in Kazakhstan, or in Sochi, in the Russian Federation and it is in its essence, for each side involved, the refusal of any new ideas or proposals so that later the same ideas and proposals be accepted under the pressure exerted by the sponsors players and depending on the understandings or the disputes among the latter. And since the consensus moments were rare and did not last, the entire process turns into a feverish temporization and buying time in the hope that each of the foreign powers involved in the Syrian internal conflict secures an as consistent as possible advantage for the final partition of the "Syrian cake".

It goes without saying that during all this time in which the arms go on speaking and the so-

called "de-escalation zones" prove to be more and more clearly what they were from the very beginning – namely a simple rhetoric exercise – in all this wasted time the Syrians, be them of Damascus or of any Syrian district or town, be them displaced or refugees in neighbouring countries continue the desperate and humiliating struggle for survival to the extent that this extreme coordinate of the existence means fighting chronic starvation, malnutrition, diseases, the ravages generated by the sectarian war between the Shiism directed from abroad and the extreme Sunnism descending from Al-Qaida or the consequences of the lamentable but equally brutal Islamic "caliphate" of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi. As a dramatic result, the dynamics of the internal politics is limited to sterile struggle between the barons and rich men's war. The highest monthly salary is under \$100 while the international reports mention that the monthly threshold of poverty is \$190 as a minimum for day-to-day subsistence.

*

The regional and global players which are confronting for as much influence in Syria as possible are measuring the dimension and future configuration of this country with the measurement unit given by the military evolutions on the multiple fronts of the Syrian war while the indigenous camps directly involved in the conflict, namely the regime and the political opposition, are reduced to the status of instruments used either for undermining or temporizing the settlement initiatives or for dynamizing the efforts of implementing peace projects when these favour one or another of the sponsors.

There are many questions waiting for an answer before fabricating a constitution that risks to be rather one for managing the post-war anarchy than an instrument of guaranteeing the Syrians one of the fundamental rights consecrated by international law, namely the right of living in a state meeting all the criteria of functioning normally. Is Syria today disposing of all arguments for its juridical and moral redefinition as a modern, independent and sovereign state in

all its components, including the capacity of controlling the territory and all the conflicted forces which are currently struggling for ripping beyond repair what remained of Syria that existed seven years ago? What are the guarantees for securing an active, joint and constructive role to the society in reconstructing Syria from ashes, namely that role which, even from the first stages of the "Syrian revolution", was annihilated by the irreducible confrontation between the regime and its foreign backers, on the one hand, and the political, military, sectarian or clan detachments of the opposition itself, on the other hand, but also by the regionalization and, then, internationalization of the Syrian war by the interferences of no less than 10 foreign players – state or non-state – and of a "coalition of mercenaries" who came from over 70 states for delivering their own jihad of for finding a better paid place under the sun.

In this seventh year of war, Syria is, once more, in the stage of a pre-modern state overwhelmed by anarchy and sectarian conflicts that threatens to maintain their resilience capacity in the authority and decisions structures of the post-war order, too, in case the future constitution of the Syrian state will be drawn up and imposed by foreign players and interests without any participation of the Syrian social factor – the first one affected by a conflict in which it is not the society but the foreign protagonists will have the control in accordance with their own interests.

Under such circumstances, vexations, starvation, diseases and ignorance will continue their devastating presence with or without the con-

crete barriers dotting the avenues and streets of the "new Syria".

SYRIA: LET ASSAD REMAIN, AND IRAN LEAVE!

Maher NABOULSI

The Arabic speaking press inserted, several times during June and beginning of July, at their "breaking news" column, information according to which repeated armed clashes would have taken place in different locations of the Syrian geography between units of the Syrian national army and Iranian militias deployed on the Syrian domestic front that resulted in the Iranian troops' and Hezbollah's fighters' evacuating their positions that were taken over by Bashar Al-Assad's army. In the same context, regional media outlets commented on the fact that the Russian Federation notified the regime in Tehran concerning the preparations for a future termination of the Iranian military presence and its withdrawal from Syria. In principle, such a notice is not surprising as in the perspective of the war coming to an end, Moscow is directly interested that the only foreign military forces deployed in Syria after the conflict be the Russian ones. Yet the fundamental question is what are the Russian Federation action margin and limits up to where it can exert pressures or offer other satisfactory alternatives in exchange of Iran's military withdrawal from Syria. Coincidence or not, the stance of the Russian side regarding the Iranian armed presence on the Syrian domestic chessboard corresponds, in its spirit, with the wishes and the signals sent to this purpose by the Israeli government led by Benjamin Netanyahu, signals which several times took the form of direct aerial attacks carried out by Israel's aviation against Iranian military targets on the Syrian territory and that such actions received the green light from Vladimir Putin.

What happened, therefore, during the last months so that one can speak today of the perspective that the Russian-Iranian "honeymoon" turn into a conflicted space? And is this change



imposed by evolutions or, on the contrary, a natural result of the conflicts of interests between two occupation armies claiming the same war trophy?

In almost all years of the Syrian war, the Russian Federation was, as it is known, Bashar Al-Assad's first protector and supporter of the survival of his regime and was involved directly starting with September 30th, 2015 militarily under the disguise of fighting Islamic State and, in general, the terrorist phenomenon which, according to the Russians meant the Islamist jihadism and the Syrian political and military opposition. Aware that an anti-terrorist involvement in a guerilla war was too costly, including in terms of life loss, Russia reserved only the preponderant role of an aerial attacker and of supplying necessary information for carrying out advantageous campaign on the front while direct confrontation of the terrorist organisations and formations was left to the Syrian army and to Iranian, pro-Iranian and Syrian militias. And it must be acknowledged that these militias, most of them on Tehran's payroll, have had a substantial role in confronting the Islamic State – Da'ish- fighters as they brought a no less substantial contribution to changing the demographic configuration of the Syrian society, to generating the huge exodus of refugees and displaced people that made today's Syrian morphology be fundamentally different of what the Syrian state and society were before the war broke out in the spring of 2011.

However, during the last months, Syria became a chessboard of acerbic confrontation and competition among the great foreign players and especially between the Russian Federation and the United States of America and these two powers are the factors on which depends the denouement of any discourse about solving the Syrian crisis and about the future of this country and its people. What is taking place on the background of an apparent American-Russian irreducible hostility is the effect of the consensus of substance between Moscow and Washington and what is imputable to other causes or to other regional players is, in the last analysis, the result of the fact that most of the time the only thing the

two agree upon is that they can't agree. A paradox Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump agreed upon during their July "historical" summit in Helsinki.

In the current equation, a new topics of the dialogue – confidential or public – between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin administrations is the "Iranian file" and the issue of this country's withdrawal from the military equation of the Syrian conflict, without bringing the ideas discussed or agreed upon necessarily and always to the knowledge of the other regional players involved on the Syrian chessboard, namely Turkey, Israel and, it goes without saying, Iran itself. Contrary to Turkey and Israel, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the militias they are managing are deeply infiltrated into the Syrian geography and society starting with the Mediterranean coastline, the center of the country to the Syrian-Lebanese border with tendencies of expansion towards the Syrian-Israeli demarcation line on the Golan Heights, in the south-west.

The Syrian war, already in its eighth year, brought analysis elements making the Russian Federation's planners and political decision makers consider that Iran is not any longer a fundamental necessity for Syria and for future peace arrangements.

Will the Iranian regime comply with the appeals requesting it to renounce outright to the human, military, financial and economic sacrifices made for reaching the situation whereby many Iranian officials declared that "losing Damascus is like Tehran itself is lost" in order to accept in the end exactly such a loss?

For Bashar Al-Assad it is difficult if not impossible to comply with the Russian, American or Israeli requests to eliminate, by a simple presidential order, the juridical argument based on which the Iranian army is in Syria, namely that the Iranians came to this country "upon the request of the Syrian government". Yet, faced with Trump's decision, made one week before his meeting the Russian leader in Helsinki, of suspending the support for the Free Syrian Army, and after a week of government and Russian offensive south of Syria and imposing Bashar's

control in the Daraa – Soueida – Bosra southern area, the aforementioned decision is more attractive than the "brotherhood of men-at-arms" with Ali Khameney's Pasdarans especially when this last major victory was possible thanks to Vladimir Putin. The Russians, the Americans, the Israelis, the Turks, the Saudis, all want the Iranian Islamic revolution's departure from Syria and are willing to accept in the framework of this barter Bashar Al-Assad's remaining in power in the hope that the future constitution will find a "solution" for this Gordian knot. What is to be done? A direct military conflict between these "allied" players, the Russians included, is difficult to imagine. And the only option would be pushing Israel forward in a war of attrition against the Iranian presence which may determine Tehran, surrounded as well by the American pressures on the background of Washington's withdrawal from the "nuclear agreement", to accept the departure from Syria with the possible conclusion of an agreement providing for maintaining contact bridges and usufruct for Iran on the Syrian space.

It is a scenario pushed forward since some time without having an explicit reaction from Tehran so far.

In all likelihood, the reaction will be known before the end of this summer.

THE "DEAL OF THE CENTURY" OR THE ILLUSORY PEACE BETWEEN THE PALESTINIANS AND THE JEWS

Munir SALAMEH, Ramallah

Since the end of March, Gaza Strip is the stage of violent confrontations between the Israeli army and the Palestinian protesters who are under the punitive embargo imposed by the double pressure they are subject to by the Israeli authorities, on the one hand, and by the embargo applied by the National Authority in Ramallah, on the other. Ample solidarity demonstrations of the Palestinians in the West Bank with their co-nationals in Gaza that are staged are met by the crackdown of the security forces of the Na-

tional Authority and of Fatah movement and all these evolutions are marked by loss of life due either to Israeli bullets or to the batons of the anti-riot formations sent to the streets to the orders of president Mahmoud Abbas.

On this background, Donald Trump's team made up of Jared Kouchner, son in law and the main advisor to the leader of the White House, David Friedman, the new American ambassador to Jerusalem and Jason Greenblatt, special representative for international negotiations – all three originating from Jewish families and fierce supporters of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian autonomous territories – are hardly working, either in their personal cabinets or making marathon tours in the Middle East for finishing the last details of the famous "deal of the century" through which Trump Administration identifies the achievement of the "historical" and final Israeli-Palestinian conciliation and ultimately solving the seven-decade old "Palestinian issue". It is possible that by the time this issue of "Geostrategic Pulse" reaches its readers, the "Trump plan" be officially made known to the interested parties and to the public opinion. As far as the concrete content of the American initiative of solving the Palestinian-Israeli dispute is concerned, the scarce information that reached the mass-media gives to understand that the "deal of the century" will mean that the short passage through history of the much-discussed "two-state" theory comes to an end, the Palestinians being offered in exchange a state with limited sovereignty on around 40-50% of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, possibly completed territorially with an extension into the geography of the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula and a capital to be set up in Abu Diss locality, a Palestinian settlement on the outskirts of Jerusalem. This tailored "state" will be demilitarized – except for the personal light weapons – with no territorial contiguity with Gaza. For accepting these "concessions" offered by Israel, the Palestinian state is promised a substantial financial support which will be made up, in the design of the businessman Donald Trump, not of the assistance coming from the American or Israeli treasuries, but from direct contributions of the Arab world

in general, from the oil monarchies in the Gulf, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and the international community in particular. Between 50 and 60% percent of the actual area of the West Bank, occupied by Jewish settlements, will pass under Israeli sovereignty as will the Jordan Valley, separating the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and will remain under Israeli military and security control. Finally, a connection corridor between Gaza and the West Bank is to be achieved yet under Israeli control, as well. The Jewish state is to have the control over the air space and territorial waters of the Palestinian "state", which will have, nevertheless, the right of partially using the maritime ports of Ashdod and Haifa and of Ben Gourion International Airport. Gaza Strip would also receive substantial "financial compensations" and assistance for building up infrastructure in the field of electricity and of maritime port activities as well as an extension into the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula. As far as the families and the descendants of the Palestinian refugees are concerned, a "fair" solution would be offered to them within the Palestinian state, as any return on the current Israeli territory is out of the question.

Mention should be made in this context that the traditional "cause of the Palestinian people" is not any longer on the agenda and among the preoccupations of the Arab and Islamic states. A first step in this regard was made by Saudi Arabia, whose crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman openly declared that the "Palestinians have to accept what they are offered and if they are not satisfied then they should shut up, should not lament and return to the negotiation table". The Israeli daily "HaareZ" stated, on the other hand, that five "moderate" Arab states (non-specified) expressed already their accord on the plan proposed by Donald Trump's Administration while the same Mohammed Bin Salman floated even the perspective of a cornucopia flowing millions of dollar for the future "Palestinian state" if the Palestinians themselves will accept Donald Trump's and his advisors' futuristic vision. The reactions of the Arab League and of the Islamic Cooperation Organisation as representatives of

the global Arab and Muslim communities were limited to protest statements and condemnation of Donald Trump's decision of recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's unified capital and of transferring the American embassy in Israel to the "Holy City". The only non-Arabic regional voice who spoke of backing the Palestinian "legitimate rights" was the Turkish president Recep Teyyip Erdogan's yet such proclamations were made on the background of the campaign for presidential and parliamentary snap elections after which the president became super-president with quasi-discretionary powers. It is less important whether now Erdogan will maintain his sympathetic rhetorics for the Palestinians as long as his voice will sound alone in an international global community too busy with its own problems for taking time for the situation of the Palestinians.

The president of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmud Abbas rejected from the very beginning the American project of the "ultimate solution" for the Palestinian issue and declared that the United States and implicitly Donald Trump's Administration lost their quality and credibility of honest broker in the file of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Under such circumstances, what are Mahmud Abbas's chances and what are his assets for backing his claims and policy?

In all appearances, the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah seem to stake on the backing of the international community (European) which in the current context is more of an illusion. Without real instruments and leverages of action, the Palestinian side, itself eroded by major internal conflicts and dissensions – either between the National Authority in the West Bank and Hamas movement in Gaza Strip, or within the National Authority, within the Palestine Liberation Organisation and within Fatah movement – is compelled to deny and reject *sine die* the options offered by the United States and by Donald Trump's strategy. An option which, after all, could be accepted by the tandem Trump-Netanyahu, having in mind a possible surprise coming from Mahmud Abbas himself – an octogenarian with health problems and increasingly contested within the Palestinian social edifice.



the attention not only in his country and in the Arab-Islamic world, but also on the chessboard of the political, economic and international finance life by a series of measures and initiatives he himself inspired or were only attributed to him and which out-

After 1948 *nakba* (catastrophe) and after 1967 *naksa* (defeat), a third *naksa* or *nakba* is looming with the possibility of being the final one for the "Palestinian cause".

SAUDI ARABIA : A YEAR WITH "MBS"

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

I

After a two-year "internship" (2015-2017) and second in line as crown prince of the Saudi throne, in the shade of his cousin Mohammed Bin Nayef, the young and ambitious emir Mohammed Bin Salman, the eldest son of the third wife of the king Salman Bin Abdul Aziz was appointed by his father on June 21st, 2017 as crown prince, cumulating at the same time the position of minister of Defense and chairman of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs. As controversial as he is admired especially among the young generation, the future monarch of the Saudi dynasty imposed himself in the media discourse and political folklore by the abridged form of his name - "MBS". He attracted

lined the portrait of a future reformer and dynamic king. A year after his appointment and in the context in which the prospect that in the near future the octogenarian monarch Salman abdicates in favor of his son is evoked, the Saudi kingdom is confronted, at the same time, with the hope and the worry for what the future monarch will bring to the kingdom and to the Saudis who, in their greatest majority, are under 25 years of age.

II

The launching by Mohammed Bin Salman of his projects of reform and economic, social and even religious modernization took place in a context when Saudi Arabia felt very acutely the effects of fall of prices on the international markets of conventional energy resources but also the burden of three years of a costly and uncontrollable indirect war with Iran it is waging in Yemen to which the massive financing - which did not lead to the expected results - for the jihadist Islamist opposition on the front of the Syrian civil war has to be added. The monarchical regime is confronted, at the same time,



Mohammed Bin Salman Al-Saud, the crown prince of the Saudi throne

with the pressures coming from a civil society more and more connected to the realities of contemporaneity and to an equal extent neglected during the last decades and subject to severe stringencies and prohibitions imposed by the conservative religious ideology of the Wahhabi Salafism. The reigning family's cohesion and unity is equally threatened and severely shaken by the vexations it was subject to as a result of massive purges, arrests and marginalization imposed by MBS under the guise of eradicating corruption on the background of the future king's ambitions of removing any dissent and concurrential hurdles that could prevent the rise of the crown prince to the throne.

There are several categories and fields the problems the reformist prince will have to inevitably confront with uncertain outcome.

First of all, it is about the domestic chessboard with the components, sensibilities and asperities generated mostly by the consequences of the projects of economic and social reforms the ambitious prince wants to implement in the framework of Vision 2030 to which, among others, the gigantesque project of creating an economic development zone at the Red Sea in the area the Saudi, Egyptian and Jordanian borders meet is circumscribed to. The cost of the project: \$500 bil. In the same context, the implementation of the NEOM project (a composite sigle with the sense of "New Future" derived from the Latin

"neo" and the first letter of the Arabic word "mustaqbal", meaning future), a Saudi version of the Silicon Valley, with an area of 26,500 sq.km, namely three times bigger than Cyprus, to which another pharaonic project foreseeing turning about 50 Saudi islands in the Red Sea under Saudi sovereignty into a hallucinating luxury tour-

istic paradise meant to attract foreigners and to substantially contribute to refreshing the kingdom's budgetary reserves. These projects and others, included in Vision 2030 of the reformer emir, assume, in order to become serviceable reality, huge investment to be attracted, an endeavour that proves by now as doubtful as adventurous.

Second of all, it is about the kingdom's positioning in the regional context that makes the Saudi foreign policy be ruled completely by the acerbic hostility towards the Iranian theocratic regime and by the irreducible competition for supremacy and political and sectarian influence not only over the Middle East but, to an equal extent, at the global level of the Islamic community. Since more than three years, a violent franchise war is waged in Yemen between the Saudi Wahhabism and the twelver Iranian Shiism, a war conceived by the monarchy in Riyadh, without being declared as such, as a useful means of hijacking the attention of its own Saudi society from the fault lines affecting the solidity of the huge ruling family but also from the prohibitions a ultraconservative religious regime and owner of an absolute monopoly on the country's economic and material resources imposes to a social corpus deprived of the perspectives of self-improvement and of human and professional fulfilment. The obsession of the anti-Iranian competition determined emir MBS to sacrifice

the very cohesion of the sub-regional organisation of the Gulf Cooperation Council by ostracizing Qatar emirate on charges of sympathies and relations with the "Persian foe" and of sponsoring the terrorist-jihadist currents – a charge with a manifest politicking and populist character as long as Saudi Arabia itself registered in its history's chronicle many similar charges. The reimbursement, by 2030, of outstanding foreign debts amounting to around \$100 billion or carrying out the huge contracts of more than \$320 billion concluded for military equipment and other economic projects with the United States or the investments meant to create employment for local citizens and renouncing to employing foreigners are as many realities questioning the real financial possibility of the Saudi economy for supporting the future king's gigantic reformist "visions". Pressed by his own commitments, Mohammed Bin Salman proceeded with at least two steps with contentious consequences. First of all, listing on the stock exchange a part of the oil colossus ARAMCO (Arabian American Company), known usually as "Saudi Arabian Oil Company" and then launching, under the pretense of fighting corruption, of an extended campaign of purges, arrests and hoarding the assets of some hundreds first-hand exponents of the ruling family, of the business circles, ministers and former ministers, clerics etc. – operations that resulted in collecting around \$100 billion, according to the statement of the crown prince himself. The campaign, supervised by MBS, offered the opportunity of getting rid of possible opponents either from Al-Saud family or, from the second branch – Al-Sheikh – of Al-Saud's tribe, writers, men of culture or descendants of the former monarch Abdallah II.

III

Third, it is about the projects that MBS announced of implementing a profound religious reform aimed at "returning to Saudi Arabia of yesteryear", namely to a regime cleaned out of the Wahhabite religious radicalism and adopting an "in-between" Islam, moderate and open to the world and to the dialogue with other reli-

gions and civilisation areas. The prince's initiative is salutary in itself and important at least from two reasons: first of all, because speaking of "returning to a moderate Islam" (namely to the period before the alliance between the tribe Al-Saud and the preacher Mohammed Ibn Abdel Wahhab and the emergence of the Saudi dynasty and the Saudi kingdom), MBS recognized that, contrary to the official propaganda, Saudi Arabia is ruled by a radical jurisprudence school descending from the Hanbali Islamic school of jurisprudence which inspired ideologically great part of the Salafist radical contemporary currents and groups. Then, recognizing indirectly this truth and giving it up, the prince recognises implicitly that the fundamentalist religious element is incompatible and even forbids the modernity the future monarch wants to introduce into the country. On the other hand, speaking of introducing an "in-between" Islam, MBS proceeds with a play on words which, unknown to those less familiar or non-familiar with the traps the Arabic language, creates at least deformed impressions and convictions. Thus, in order to uphold his thesis, the prince resorts to the Arab word "*wāsitiya*", circumventing the right word "*wasatiya*". Or, the first lexeme cannot have the meaning of "moderate", or "centerline", given the fact that it derives from the toponymy of "Wāsit" which is the name of the old synonymous Iraqi town and district where there was an as fundamentalist as possible Islamic school. The concept of *wasitiyya* was developed by the conservative ideologue and theologian Ibn Taymiyya in his book *Al-aqida Al-Wasitiyya (The Wasitite Dogma)* written upon the request of a cleric in Wāsit whereby all the other canonic schools of the time were rejected as deviant and a Salafist sort of "reform" of Islam was proposed in the sense of literarily and strict reading of the sources of this religion. The sense with moderate meaning of the word is "*wasatiya*" which indicates a middle (in-between) position or attitude. Or, Wahhabism – which does not recognize itself as being "Wahhabite"- uses the term developed by Ibn Taymiyya, and not the term "*wasatiya*" which has the sense of "moderate". In other words, Wahhabism of which MBS says it does not exist, loses its validity since declaring

war to a Salafist Wahhabite without clarifying of what particular "Wahhabism" one speaks about means making a reform which does not bring any change.

On the other hand, the "Wahhabism" itself and the clergy it is represented by were and continue to be, besides the political regime imposed by the clan Al-Saud, the second pillar supporting the existence of the Saudi regime and of the monarchic state which emergence has at its base the political and religious pact concluded with Mohammed Ibn Abdel Wahhab's cast and movement. Throughout the last two centuries, there were attempts of contesting the Wahhabite clerical power and influence yet none of these were convincing and organised enough for reaching the proposed purpose. The question whether the emir MBS has today enough convincing arguments to weaken the powerful sectarian Wahhabite foundation on behalf of laudable promises by their significance yet doubtful from the perspective of the objective possibilities of achieving them arises.

*

Will the future monarch Mohammed Bin Salman rule a kingdom many analysts are describing with the old phrase of "giant with clay feet"?

Truth is that the Saudi monarchy and state are currently confronted with problems that did not exist three years ago, part of them being attributed either to the crown prince's direct initiative or to his influence on the royal decisions which did nothing but aggravate some difficulties or diminishing the perspective of overcoming them.

The measures forcefully imposed by MBS for consolidating his own power domestically and eliminating the potential competitors aspiring to the throne had as consequence with a long term resilience deepening the existing dissensions between the restricted circle of decision-making power and the cohorts of direct or collateral members of the ruling family frustrated by the marginalisation they are subject to and by the absolutist concentration of the power leverages

and material benefits in the hands of the future king. It is meaningful to this sense that eight out of the eleven brothers of the king Salman Bin Abdul Aziz are having trouble hiding their discontent that by the manner he secured his succession to the throne and by the abusive appointment of his son to the rank of crown prince, monarch Salman perpetrated a unforgivable violation of the traditional rules of succession to the Saudi throne. Or, such a breach affects not only the ruling family but also the state's fundamental institutions, led by the army and the security forces, unhappy with either the adventurous engagement in the detrimental war in Yemen or with the numerous dismissals MBS ordered at the highest echelons of planning, decision and command.

Externally, the Saudi involvement in most of the conflicted files of the region brought to the country an isolation status not only in the framework of the Arab-Islamic world but also on the global chessboard whereby certain states of the European Union suspended military deliveries to Riyadh or condemned the country for war crimes and grave violations of human rights and freedoms especially in the war in Yemen. The same causes, plus those related to the embargo imposed on Qatar, are at the origin of the more and more visible incongruity – either politically or in the field of economic coordination with the other Gulf monarchies and the rigid and authoritarian positions of the Saudi regime, many of them inspired or imposed by the ambitious future king. On the other hand, the Saudi-led Islamic military coalition in Yemen is affected by the increased reluctance of certain member states among which the Sudan and, more recently, Indonesia announced their withdrawal from under the flag of the Saudi-Iranian war camouflaged under the guise of fighting terrorism and of "bringing back the legality" to Yemen. Within the same Arab-Islamic community, the lack of firm reactions towards the future of the Palestinian file and the monarchy's more and more transparent coming closer and an abrupt and gratuitous normalisation of relations with the State of Israel are not welcome.

An abrupt break with the clerical Wahhabi-

Salafist circles would have no favourable results for the power projects of prince Mohammed Bin Salman. There were conflicts between the monarchy and the conservative clergy in Saudi Arabia's modern history which were solved either by crack-down or by the ephemeral "accomodation" of the clergy with the respective crisis situations and the latter coming back to the forefront of the domestic life, without the very essence of



Wahhabism being significantly affected. Or, under the current circumstances, the kingdom's clergy has the capacity of influencing the collective mind of a strongly religious society that is discontent with MBS's pro-Western "heresies" and of the superficial reforms he wants to implement.

On the other hand, the observers and the commentators of the Saudi political developments are noticing the media campaign and the campaign of the Saudi intellectual elites of backing Mohammed Bin Salman as a "peace-maker" with Israel in a context whereby in 2018 there are 40 years since the historical visit the former Egyptian president Anwar El-Sadat paid to Jerusalem where, in a pathetic speech delivered from the Israeli Knesset's tribune, expressed Egypt's desire of peace, a desire turned into reality by the conclusion, in 1978, of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty – the first peace juridical act along the lengthy and bloody Arab-Israeli conflict. In

Riyadh, the printed and electronic media, the debates and the organised talk-shows present MBS as the new Middle East's Sadat (even if at the time Egypt was banned from the Arab League for making peace with the enemy and Sadat fell under the bullets of the Islamist fundamentalists). Under the title "Yes, for an Israeli embassy in Riyadh", the electronic news outlet "Al-Khaleej" (The Gulf) wrote: "The crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman will not waver for a moment to address the Knesset, in Jerusalem, if he receives an invitation to that purpose from prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Bin Salman will not waver for a second to accept such an invitation and to announce setting up diplomatic relations with Israel. Today, Saudi Arabia and Israel are on the same side of the barricade fighting the Persian foe and... the Turkish Ottoman hegemony(!)" With the remark, made by other analysts, that MBS is ready to accept all these and renounce to all conditions formulated by the "Arab Initiative" launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002 whereby, among others, it was about establishing a Palestinian state having its capital in... Jerusalem.



Until Nobel's peace laurels coveted by the trio MBS-Trump-Netanyahu, it is to be seen to what extent the immediate future confirms if MBS continues its road towards the top of power or if he proves himself to be a "giant with clay feet".



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Donald Trump is guilty. He is guilty of not being stupid

Petrisor PEIU, analyst

More sustained than ever, the Bucharest mourners choir raised to the air the reflections downloaded from the the sites coming off well and informed us of the imminent world's collapse in the chaos of a global war trade triggered by the unchecked president of the United States, Donald Trump.

And what do we learn, appalled, from the army of good of nothing people well paid who moved abruptly from day-to-day Bucharest sensationalism to the vision of the global pessimism which encompassed the mankind since the White House accomodates the owner of the most unconventional diplomatic language in America's history? That the entire world will be destroyed, that all countries will lose, that Trump is irrational, that Trump offended the all too innocent Germans, that Trump surrendered to merciless Vladimir Putin to whom he offered Crimea on a plate together with his ridiculing the FBI; and finally, during last month, **Trump became for the Romanians, too, thanks to TV stations, to analysts and to doctors in security, the supreme danger, the devil who divides the mankind united around the globalist values.**

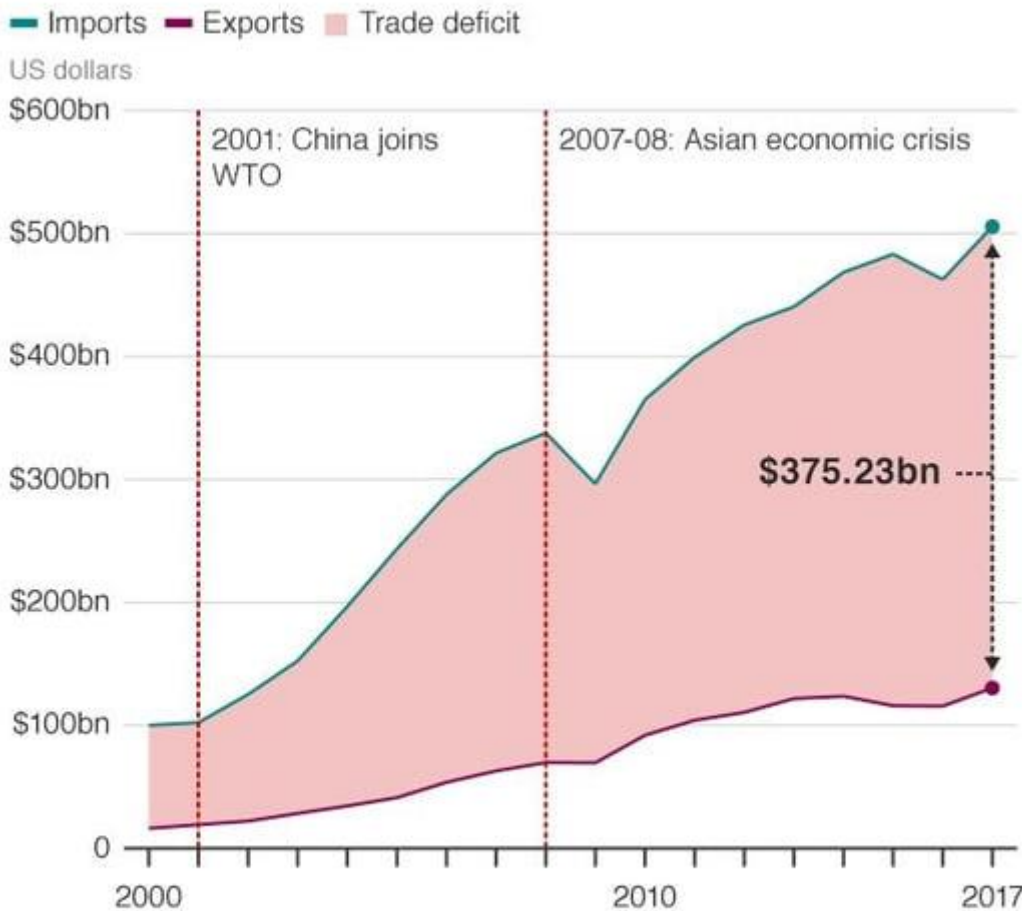
I have no doubt that the glorious indigenous globalists, probably intensively fed with Turkish tomatoes imported from Italy and with raspberries grown in Portugal and imported from the Netherlands neglected the outdated side-business of reading or the more antiquated practice of resorting to figures and took over, desiring not to bother the convenient axioms of modernism, all the very exaggerated phrases listed by anti-Trump propaganda spread by the army of the universal bureaucrats.

The world still lives with the blind belief that all the world's states have to have asymmetric commercial rules with the all too powerful America. Namely, we all, Europeans, Chinese, Russians, Japanese have to be allowed to levy high tariffs on the American goods yet the Americans have to be obliged to buy whatever we have in excess; we all have the holy obligation to subsidize cheese, wine or wheat while the Americans are strictly forbidden to do so.

Moreover, we all can impose whatever restrictions we want on our own markets, to subsidize gas or electricity for our own industries, but the Americans have no moral right to do that on behalf of world's uprightness. Moreover, the Americans are obliged to back the security of an European Union which bureaucracy's favorite sport is to demonize Washington and fight against its interests; the same Americans have to defend the Europeans against the Russians and have no right to shake hands with the detestable tennant of the Kremlin while the Europeans are allowed to build pipelines for bringing gas from the Russians. Finally, **the Americans are condemned by the cruel world public opinion, embodied by Federica Mogherini, to witness in an inert way how the Chinese are occupying the market, banks and the country with counterfeited or subsidized goods.**

Well, the same "impartial" public opinion devoted to global development, outwitted Clinton's Americans for accepting (in 2000, with effect from 2001) China's accession to the World Trade Organization(WTO), although the Chinese were nowhere near observing the international rules. **From then on until now, although it became the second world power and its first economy in comparable figures (PPP), China remained a poor developing country and its**

US trade in goods with China



*All figures are in billions of US dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified

Source: US Census Bureau

BBC

small slippages from free trade rules should be forgiven. Here we have, for instance, the way the Chinese-American bilateral commercial exchanges evolved since 2001 and why is Trump worried:

Truth is that Beijing's official policy has still (17 years since joining WTO) as priorities to harass those who want to sell to China goods manufactured outside China and preventing foreign investment that do not associate Chinese partners (especially state enterprises). Moreover, Chinese government's major official objective is called "Made in China 2025" which aims at replacing the imported goods with Chinese products!

In spite of the stupid belief that the Western

companies invest there because salaries are lower or for being "closer to the market", the harsh truth is that one cannot sell quite anything to China if you have not a partnership (joint-venture) with a local company and do not accept to give in technology to the local partner: for instance, no European, Canadian or Japanese company could sell high-speed trains to China short of a partnership with the Chinese railroads public company but for signing such a partnership one should accept a "technology tran-

sfer" for manufacturing most part of the train in Chinese factories!

Similarly, auto companies intending to sell or manufacture electric vehicles in China can do that only if they are equipped with batteries manufactured by a local factory and the only local companies supplying batteries benefiting from government subsidies (they offer therefore goods with a lower price) are those with Chinese ownership!

China proceeds successfully with subsidizing its goods either by preferential bank loans or by huge government investment amounts which, allegedly, determine the investments in accordance with "profitability rules". For instance, local authorities

(provincial governments) have set up no less than 30 distinct investment funds which invest more than US\$100 billions in semiconductors industry and induced a growth of global production of 25% in a few years; after two years of flooding the market with cheap products, the competitors of the Chinese companies will go bankrupt allowing the Chinese companies to dominate the market. Beijing tried to do the same thing on the world market of solar panels in 2010-2011 but lost and companies such as Suntech or Chaori generated gigantic losses that were immediately covered by the Chinese banking system. Here we have to say that, contrary to Western banks, the Chinese ones are benefiting from a population's savings rate several times higher due to an excessive frugality of the Chinese consumer: if an American was eating on average a 250 grams *steak* a day, the Chinese was eating the same quantity during a fortnight...

The state energy companies in China are responsible for more than 90% of the acquisitions in the field yet they buy only locally manufactured products, in factories having local partners while the plan "Made in China 2025" foresees, for instance, increasing the acquisition of local products by 70% until 2025.

All the abovementioned examples indicate the vicious manner in which China built the huge commercial excedent with the United States and explained the reprisals decided by POTUS (President Of The United States).

Another front opened by Trump in the global commercial conflict is the one with the European

Union. **America's fourth biggest commercial deficit** is in Germany's favor (US\$65 billions) when the Americans buy yearly more than 1.3 million German cars. Well, **the custom tariff for the Europeans cars sold to the USA is of only 2.5% while any American car sold to the EU bears a custom tariff of 10%.**

Is Trump looking foul or irrational any longer now? Besides, the current levels of asymmetrical custom tariffs were agreed during the Uruguay Round of the GATT time (the forerunner of WTO) when the European Union had 12 members and not 28 as it is the case now, plus and explosive car industry in the new member states.

For better understanding the discrepancy Donald Trump speaks about, here there is the weighted average of the custom tariffs imposed by



(source: data.worldbank.org/indicator/)

the main Western commercial players:

In other words, the USA has an average of the custom tariff of 1.7%, the EU of 2.0%, Japan of 2.5%, while China remains much outside the graph scale with more than 10%!

In its 2017 report, the Office of US Trade Representative raises the awareness on a multitude of concrete cases "sabotaging" the solidity of the amplest commercial space in history: the com-



mercial exchanges between the USA and the EU (an European excedent of US\$151 billions in trade in goods and an American excedent of US\$31 billions in trade in services): from imposing, to the detriment of international standards, of the EU harmonized standards bombastically baptized '*New Legislative Framework*' in Brussels, in 2008, up to imposing the French standards in the civilian nuclear field to the detriment of the American ones internationally accepted; the Europeans, under the guise of fighting for renewable energy, are undermining the American export of wood pellets, for instance and are forbidding inscribing certain American products with "whiskey", to say nothing of preventing the access on the European market of American medicines, many of them cheaper and more efficient than the local ones. **The Europeans are imposing all kind of non-tariff barriers under the funniest of pretenses such as forbidding mentioning on the labels of the American wines of some "traditional terms" such as "tawny", "ruby" or "chateau",** but also tariff barriers, namely high custom tariffs for certain goods such as 26% for fish and seafood, 22% for trucks, 14% for audio-video equipment etc. The American lawyers and auditors are not entitled to practice in the EU and in some countries a non-EU nationality is forbidden even for the pharmacists (Austria, France, Hungary) and all these are another set of restrictions.

Going through all these data and examples, it is obvious that Donald Trump did nothing but took over and exploit the increasing discontent of the farmers, steel workers or of those in the American auto industry irritated

by a discriminating treatment that brought to America an enormous deficit especially in its relations with those who defy America. **How to explain to the Americans that they have to pay hundreds of billions of dollars for the safety of some who swear the American values in the morning, at noon and in the evening and who forbid the USA using the word "whiskey" on the labels?**

How to explain to the tax payers they have to pay for the security of the 10 million jobs of the European auto industry and the Europeans request you a four times bigger custom tariff in exchange? How to explain the Americans they are not allowed to sell liquefied gas to the Europeans in order to protect Gazprom's market in Germany?

Well, this is in essence what Trump is blamed for in Bucharest or in the rest of Europe: that he is not stupid enough to be mocked of by some defended by the American Army, some who prosper as a result of the access on the American market yet shut the door to the American exporters! Well, how unbalanced can you be to believe that one as Donald Trump, who became billionaire and president of America accept this reality?

Petrișor Gabriel Peiu is PhD of Bucharest Politehnica University (1996), former advisor of prime minister Radu Vasile (1998-1999) and of prime minister Adrian Năstase (2001-2002), state undersecretary for economic policies (2002-2003) and vice-president of the Agency for Foreign Investments (2003-2004).



The Secret Services of the 21st Century and Security Issues



Issues of establishing the unified intelligence community of the state

Victor HvozD Ph.D. in Military Sciences

Abstract

In the article, the authors express the views on the outline of a single intelligence space of the state.

Key words:

intelligence agencies, intelligence community, military security, single intelligence space, security and defense sphere, Ukraine

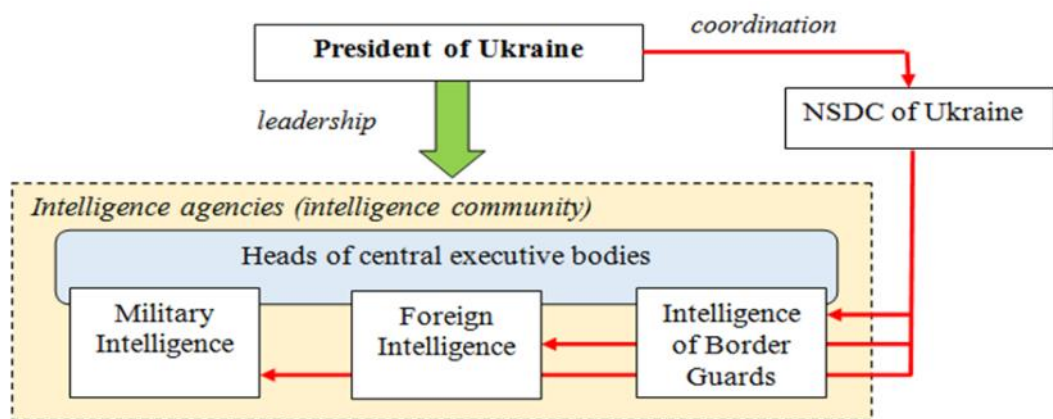
Presenting the main material. The main component of the information support for the military security of the state is intelligence (the intelligence community — if there are several intelligence agencies). On the quality of the functioning of the intelligence community, depend the quality and validity of the management decisions that are made, and, accordingly, the work and viability of the entire state mechanism and, often, the existence of the state as such. On the way in which the intelligence is managed (led), depends the effectiveness of its activities, especially during crisis periods. If there are internal contradictions in intelligence management, they create additional threats to

the national security of a country due to the ineffective use of intelligence agencies, and hence — improper informing public officials. The afore-said causes the need to develop appropriate views on the composition and structure of the intelligence community of the state, which determines the relevance of this article.

Usually, considering the intelligence agencies of a state, the intelligence community is meant. However, the “intelligence community” is a generic term for the bodies that collect information and conduct intelligence activities in the interests of the state.

At this, the way in which this “community” is being managed, as well as its possible interconnections with consumers of intelligence information are not taken into consideration. That is, it is impossible to consider the “intelligence community” as a system with its own functions and tasks. Accordingly, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of its work and to determine the requirements for it.

An analysis of the legislative framework of Ukraine on information support and intelligence activities shows that in Ukraine the intelligence community is represented by three branches (Picture 1).



Picture 1 — The intelligence community of Ukraine

Intelligence communities in other states have similar structures.

As a rule, the general leadership of the intelligence agencies of any country rests with the President, and the direct leadership of the intelligence agencies rests with their chiefs. At the same time, the President (or a specially created body) also may be responsible for coordination of the activities of intelligence agencies.

It should be noted that the procedure for providing information from intelligence agencies to consumers has not been actually specified de jure. Usually, information consumers are determined by the decision of the state leadership, while even the subject of the national security system may be deprived of access to intelligence information.

Thus, most of the subjects of national security are isolated from the information necessary for the implementation of relevant functions in this sphere. All the information from intelligence agencies can only be passed on to consumers through a particular person. The mechanism for making a request for obtaining intelligence information by the subjects of national security is not provided at all.

That is, the intelligence community exists in the state, but there is no system for providing intelligence information to interested state authorities. In such a situation, even if there is relevant information, there is a high probability that it will not reach its consumer.

The concept of a single intelligence space (SIS) involves an organic combination to the single system of intelligence agencies and subjects of national security.

Conceptually a single intelligence space should include (Picture 2):

- subjects of national security of the state;
- intelligence agencies;
- coordinating body for intelligence;
- databanks and databases;
- information and telecommunication systems;

- intelligence (information resources).

Intelligence agencies within the SIS are the basis upon which a single intelligence space is based.

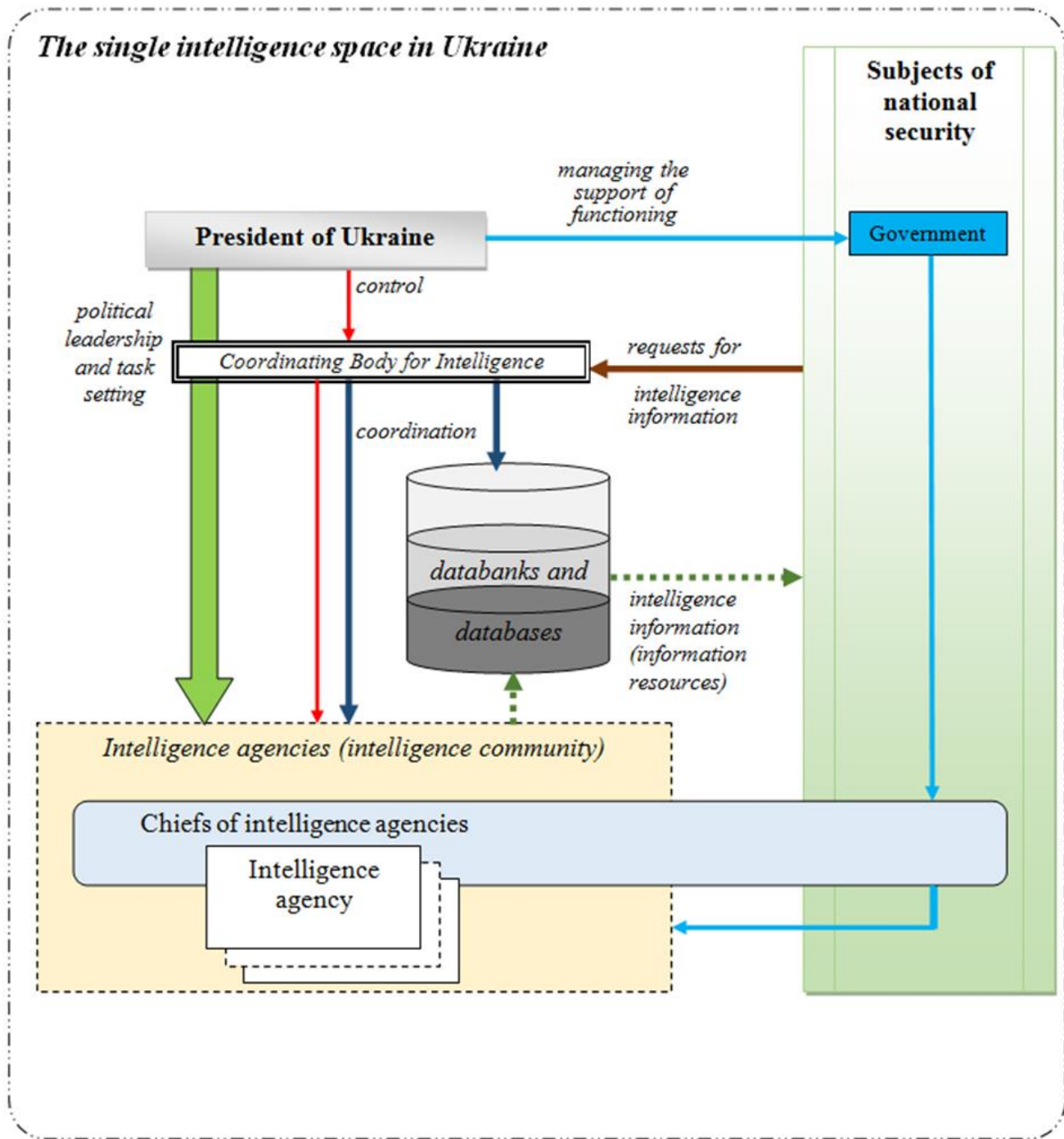
The Coordinating Body for Intelligence must necessarily include chiefs of intelligence agencies or their representatives. Creation of such a body would allow, in addition to the actual coordination of efforts, to exchange opinions, thoughts, to develop vision for resolving this or that problem, to find points of intersection of the interests of intelligence agencies and other members of the SIS, and so on. In such a body, if necessary, it is possible to work out joint actions, to develop joint operations plans, to combine efforts — secret intelligence, operational, anti-terrorist, etc.

Databanks and databases with appropriate technologies for their maintenance and use, and *information and telecommunication systems* create the information infrastructure of a single intelligence space. This infrastructure provides for the circulation, accumulation, access and exchange of intelligence. Besides, it has the function of monitoring the preservation and sharing this information. For this end, it should operate on the basis of keeping state secrets and targeted information reception, which provides information interaction of interested organizations, as well as meeting their needs for intelligence, along with preventing its uncontrolled circulation. Databanks would have certain restrictions on access levels and strict gradation of information by directions.

The proposed outline of the SIS involves three types of leadership in the intelligence community:

- political leadership and setting of tasks by the President through the coordination body for intelligence. The tasks are then brought to the intelligence agencies of Ukraine through the relevant government leaders;

- control and coordination (managing the support of functioning). The control is exercised by the President through the coordinating body, coordination is usually the prerogative of the coordinating body for intelligence itself, which, in addition to the heads of intelligence agencies,



Picture 2 — Conceptual structure of a single intelligence space of the state

should include, as noted above, also the leaders of the government;

- managing the support of functioning of the intelligence community is proposed to be carried out according to the following pattern: President — Government — heads of intelligence agencies — intelligence agencies.

The proposed approach to building a single intelligence space, in our opinion, will allow:

- to organize the work of the intelligence community of the state;
- to increase the efficiency of the work of the intelligence agencies by coordinating efforts, exchanging information and experience, and hav-

ing feedback;

- to increase the validity of making management decisions through access to a certain amount of intelligence information;

- to increase the interest of consumers in the quality work of the intelligence agencies and, accordingly, in promoting their work, which will positively influence the support of the intelligence community;

- to streamline the procedure for the interaction of intelligence agencies among themselves, with state authorities, organizations and law enforcement agencies.

Conclusion. Thus, the proposed approach to building a single intelligence space will allow us to determine the basics of transition from the intelligence community to a single intelligence space, which will create the basis for increasing the efficiency of the work of intelligence agencies and the feasibility of management decisions in the sphere of national and military security.



A Look at Lone Wolf Terrorism in the 2020s

Interview with Dr. Matthew Crosston

Faculty Member, Doctoral Programs, School of Security and Global Studies, American Military University



In 10 years' time, the "9/11 syndrome" will be over, according to Dr. Matthew Crosston. In this exclusive vlog, American Military University's Dr. Crosston discusses terrorism in its current state and what the future of counterterrorism efforts will look like in the next decade.

Video Transcript:

Al-Qaeda did not intend for the Twin Towers to fall. The terror group just wanted to hit them; that would have been success. The fact that they actually achieved a much greater success than they ever anticipated created peer pressure on themselves. Anything they did next had to be of equal value or of equal impact as the Twin Towers collapse.

That made it difficult for al-Qaeda to do anything smaller. The unfortunate thing about the inter-terrorist rivalry that exists between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State is that the Islamic State has made a very important divergence from al-Qaeda strategy. The Islamic State does not suffer from al-Qaeda's 9/11 syndrome. "We didn't do 9/11," they say. "So anything we do if it



works to our cause and has a benefit to us is okay.”

As a result, counterterrorism efforts will be dealing with the inter-terrorist rivalry that exists between al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. In Europe and, unfortunately, in parts of the United States, vehicles are now being used to kill people. Individual shooters go into nightclubs or get on buses with bombs in their backpacks. These are things that al-Qaeda did not do throughout the 2000s. But the Islamic State’s biggest successes have come from “old school terrorism,” which is at the top of its agenda.

Countering Lone Wolf Terrorism in the 2020s Is Going to Get More Difficult

Countering lone wolf terrorism in the 2020s is going to get more difficult. We are going to have to deal with stopping these small-scale events, which may be less bloody and kill fewer people, but that are much harder to detect and therefore much harder to deter.

Space is going to become a new battleground for the U.S. and its Western allies. There’s a presumption that the next “space race” will involve drones. In that respect, the West has a clear technological advantage that will exist far into the future. Our main competition will come from China, Russia and even India, which we often think of as an ally.

Countries Are Going to Compete for the Many Beneficial Military Applications

Countries are going to compete for the many military applications that will benefit science, diplomacy, and political and economic development. As an emerging threat, the space race matters greatly because the United States and its Western allies are not going to be able to keep their advantage the way they will do with drones.

We’re going to see four or five competitors that are actually coequal when it comes to their technological abilities and capabilities. We won’t be able to just offset them or neutralize them automatically. That leaves a lot of interesting new work for us to do in the future. In North Korea’s case, it has the capability to acquire, build, develop and ultimately launch nuclear weapons.

We don’t know if the Islamic State is ever going to be destroyed in the sense that it will be dead to us geopolitically, that it will weaken enough to make it irrelevant as a global entity. The Islamic State will probably continue to exist at the regional level.

The Islamic State is going to stay at least impactful across the greater Middle East, especially in [Syria](#) and Iraq. These kinds of terrorist groups don’t just disappear overnight. It may seem to us in America as if they’ve been around for a long time, but compared to other groups, they haven’t been here that long. The Islamic State will probably exist for another generation at least and we will be continuously working to defeat it.

In terms of what the future is going to bring,



especially in global security and strategic intelligence, we're going to see the United States move away from formal engagement in wars around the world. We're going to see increased informal engagements at a localized or regional level and sometimes probably out of the public eye. We'll find out about diplomats or military units being killed in skirmishes that we were not aware of our involvement in or what our aims were.

We have spent 15 years openly, explicitly involved in wars. We've had an entire industry of academics grow up complaining about that involvement. As the United States moves into the future, we need consider what would be even worse — to formally engage in wars that we think are ambiguous and not succeed in what we're trying to accomplish?

Instead of a war that leads to peace, will we engage in more intelligence-oriented operations on a smaller scale to influence skirmishes in five, six, or seven spots on the globe with a lot of critical geopolitical and transnational implications for them?

About the Speaker

Matthew Crosston, Ph.D., serves as senior faculty for the doctoral programs in Strategic Intelligence and Global Security (DSI/DGS) for the School of Security and Global Studies at American Military University. He holds a doctoral degree in international relations and national security studies from Brown University. Other academic credentials include a post-doctoral fellowship in international relations and global security from the University of Toronto; a master's degree in post-Soviet affairs, democratization and development from the University of London; and a bachelor's degree in Russian, Central European, East European and Eurasian Studies from Colgate University.

Matthew is currently the Vice Chairman and Senior Editor for Modern Diplomacy. He is an author and international speaker on peace mediation, human rights conflicts, resource dilemmas, intelligence, change leadership, and education.







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Military Technology and Equipments, New Weapon Devices

Mobile radar 1L121E (Russia)



The Geostrategic Pulse has published several articles on unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) and in most cases we referred to the armed forces using them in strictly military operations. However, drones have become a perfect weapon for the secret services as well, as they are used especially in top secret remote killing operations, which makes the anonymous authors less morally responsible. Also, these weapons are highly effective and their negative political impact is minimal in the fight against terrorism.

More and more dangerous, alongside the development of various weapons with larger ranges and enhanced transportation capabilities, the drones have turned from tactical and operational missions to strategic operations.

The states interested, mainly the military powers, have been looking for solutions to fight drones, and so they have been developing new technologies in the field of radars.

For a while, until the year 1991, Russia has given less importance to developing radars (Desert Storm campaign made them take Stealth technology very seriously), mainly mobile radars. Their territorial systems ensured the radar coverage they needed for research, and they were strictly defensive. The West in its turn, has not developed ground radars for the last 50 years, and the focus has been placed on AWACS

radars used in offensive operations.

The Russian company NNIIRT has introduced an export version of its 1L121-E mobile 3-D air-defence radar at the Aero-India 2013 airshow in India. The 1L121-E solid-state active phased array radar that operates in the UHF band is designed to detect small air targets such as low-flying mini unmanned aerial vehicles (mini UAVs) and precision-guided munitions (PGMs). The radar is mounted on vehicular platforms and is operated by a crew of three.

The 1L121-E provides full hemispheric coverage and is designed to operate on the move or on the halt. Moving from stationary to mobile operation requires about two minutes. The array comprises 36 transmit/receive modules arranged in a phased array controlled matrix covering 60 degrees in elevation, reaching up to 90 km range with minimum distance of five kilometers. At this operating mode the radar can simultaneously track 64 targets. For full-hemispheric coverage 90 degree elevation is employed, reducing detection range to 20 km. The minimum range is set at only two kilometers, simultaneously tracking only 32 targets. When covering full-hemispheric scan the radar mechanically rotates at rates of 50 to 800 m/s

The radar detects and classifies up to four different target types, positioning each target with an accuracy of 100 meters, with 1 degree accuracy in elevation and azimuth. It will differentiate between two targets spaced 300m apart. In addition to the detection of targets the radar also performs electronic profiling of the target, assessing signals emitted by aircraft, drones or PGMs. This input can assist in threat assessment, jammer location and identification of non-cooperating targets (IFF).

This radar was first shown during the Moscow Air Show (MAKS) exhibition in 2011. It was developed by NNIIRT, the organization responsible for numerous Russian ground-based radar developments. At MAKS 2011 it was displayed on a tracked MT-LBu vehicle.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Eitan Armoured Personnel Carrier



The Eitan is an Israeli-made 8x8 armoured vehicle personnel carrier which was unveiled in August 2016 by the Israeli Ministry of Defense. The vehicle is designed to replace the old fleet of M113 tracked armoured personnel carrier in service with the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) since many years. The Eitan is being developed by the Ministry of Defense Tank Administration in cooperation with the IDF Ground Forces. The vehicle was developed following of the lessons learned during the Gaza war Operation Protective Edge in 2014. According the Israeli Ministry of Defense, the Eitan is one of the world's most advanced and protected wheeled combat vehicle. The vehicle will be ready for serial production in 2018 with an annual production rate of several dozen systems.

There are two variants: the APC, equipped with a remotely operated .50 Cal machine gun; and the IFV, equipped with a remotely operated turrets mounting 30/40mm automatic cannon.

The Eitan 8x8 armoured personnel carrier can be fitted with a wide range of weapon stations. The APC version is fitted with a remote weapon station armed with a 12.7mm heavy machine gun. The IFV (Infantry Fighting Vehicle) version can be fitted with remotely operated turrets

armed with 30/40mm automatic cannon. This turret can be also armed with anti-tank guided missile launchers.

The layout of the Eitan 8x8 armoured personnel carrier is similar to standard modern wheeled armoured vehicle with the driver and engine at the front, combat module in the middle and troops compartment at the rear. The Eitan can carried a total of 12 military personnel including commander, driver, gunner and 9 infantrymen with a weight from 30,000 to 35,000 kg. The hull of the Eitan uses a combination of armour protection system

including passive armour module at the front and sides. The floor of the vehicle offers high level of protection against blast effects of mines and IEDs. The infantry enter and leave the vehicle through a small hydraulically operated ramp at the rear of the hull.

The Eitan 8x8 armoured personnel carrier is motorized with a 750 horsepower engine. It can run at a maximum road speed of 90 km/h. The vehicle uses an 8x8 driveline configuration. The tyres of the vehicle are fitted with runflat system



designed to resist the effects of deflation when punctured, and to enable the vehicle to continue to be driven at reduced speeds (under 50 km/h), and for limited range (up to 16 km), depending on the type of tire

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Leading Articles, Studies and New Analyses

CIA – The Secret War against Terrorism**Author: Mark MAZZETTI****Publisher: Corint Books, 2018**

Mark Mazzetti (b. 1974) is a correspondent for the New York Times. He graduated from Duke University with a degree in politics and public policy. He obtained a master's degree at Oxford, after which he began his journalistic career. He collaborated with The Economist, US News & World Report, Los Angeles Times, being a correspondent at the Pentagon. The volume "CIA – The Secret War against Terrorism" has been translated into ten languages and became a New York Times bestseller. The author has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Together with Dexter Filkins he has won the George Polk Award for the way in which he documented the Americans' secret war in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In 2006, he was given the Gerald R. Ford Prize for his articles on national security.

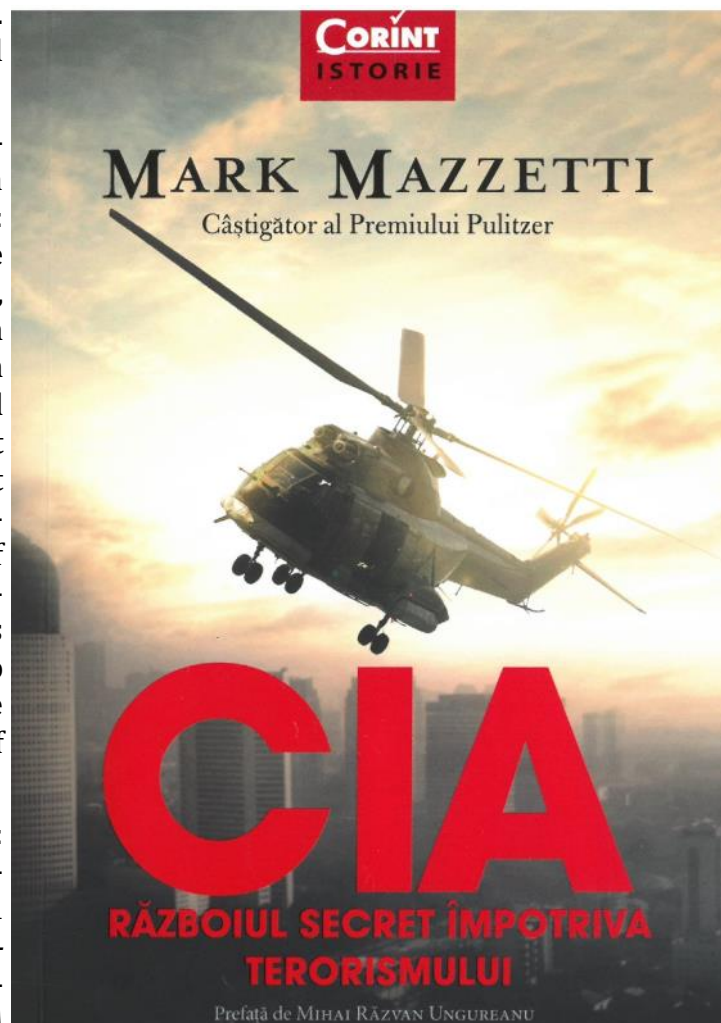
Referring to the CIA mode of action, especially after 11 September 2001, Mihai Razvan Ungureanu says in the preface of the book: "In fact, it is about the transformation of the CIA operative activity in the last decade, which gradually morphed into a combination of classic espionage and small short-term armed intervention with a decisive technical input, meant to surgically eliminate suspect targets or those proven to be terrorist. (...) It is becoming more and more present and increasingly mentioned during the years of massive interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, where, as the deployment of troops was consuming resources - urging Washington to seek a gradual reduction of armed presence in the theaters of operation – presents itself as the optimal, logistic and tactical option".

Besides the Preface, the book also includes: Note on the Edition; Main Characters; Prologue – *The War Beyond*; sixteen chapters: 1 – *The Permission to Kill*; 2 – *A Marriage between Spies*; 3 – *Shadow Assassins*; 4 – *Rumsfeld's Spies*; 9 – *The Angry Bird*; 6 – *A*

True Pashtun; 7 – *Convergence*; 8 – *A War Waged by the Intermediaries*; 3 – *The Base*; 10 – *Games without Borders*; 55 – *The Return of the Big Boss*; 12 – *The Cutting Edge of the Knife*; 57 – *The Battle for Africa*; 14 – *The Exposure*; 15 – *The Doctor and the Sheikh*; 5⁰ – *The Fire from Heaven*; *Epilogue – A Spy in the Quiet World*; *Acknowledgements*; *Note on the Sources*; *Bibliography and Index*.

The author has become, after many years of investigative journalism, a specialist in investigating secret CIA prisons and says: "I have been concerned for a long time with the subject of CIA prisons and over time, I have tried to shed light in this case. First of all, I wanted to find out the names of all the countries where such prisons existed. I have managed to map these locations at a rate of 75 percent and Bucharest is one of them".

Presented by Cornel VAIDA



National Identity and Modernity

Author: Andrei MARGA

Publisher: Libris Editorial, Braşov, 2018

Andrei Marga has specialized in contemporary philosophy in Germany and the USA. Being a professor of contemporary philosophy and general logic, Andrei Marga was the longest-serving rector of Babes-Bolyai University (1993- 2004 and 2008-2012), Minister of National Education in the Ciorbea, Vasile, Isarescu governments and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Ponta 1 government as well as President of the Romanian Cultural Institute.

The philosophical system of Professor Andrei Marga – which includes new theories of the meaning, rationality, methodology and argumentation, monographs of thinkers and themes, the theory of modernity, the theory of the contemporary society, the theory of international relations, the philosophy of law, the current analyses and reforming programs – has recently been supplemented with the theme of the identities.

The author states in the *Introduction* that the volume “projects the lights of modernity on the national identity”.

This “projection” occurs “in four stages which correspond to the four parts of this volume”.

In the first part - *Designing National Identity* – the author explains the concept of national identity, using the argument that “*only within a theory of modernization can we speak about national identity without the fear of slipping in ideology*”.

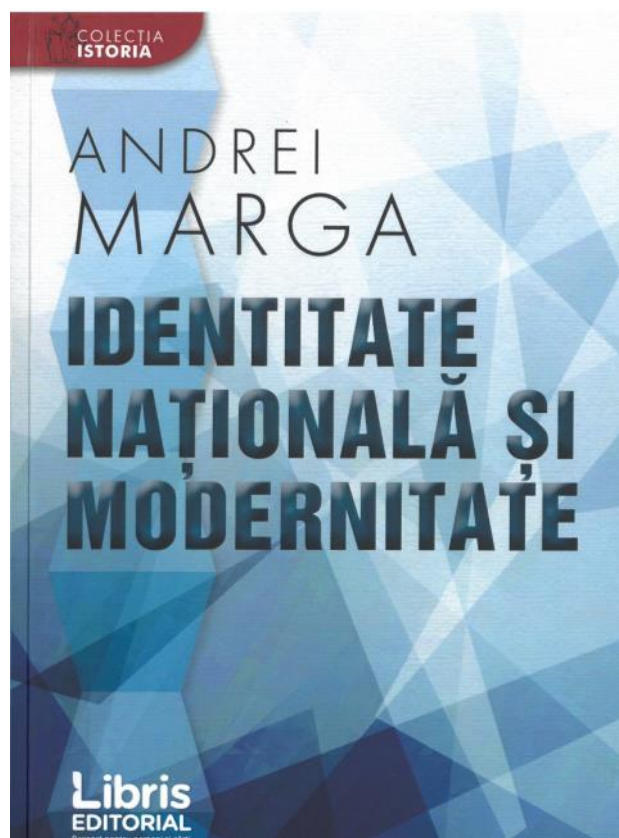
The second part - *National Identity Today* - examines the Romanian national identity starting from the assumption that “*national identity is not a feature with other features of the life of a nation, but something that exists and manifests in and through them. (...) Moreover, national identity is not assumed once and for all. National identity bears the traces of history and depends on it. It always asserts itself by what a nation is doing or is not doing in its practical life, in the framework of the other nations*”.

In the third part of the book entitled *National Reconciliation*, the author states that: “*the national reconciliation has remained the condition of asserting the Romanian identity in convergence with modernity. (...) A discussion about national identity which sees the themes as being closed is from the very beginning conventional and late and it is not connected to democracy as a form of life*”.

In Part Four - *European Identity* – the author analyzes national identity in its manifestation closely linked to the affirmation of other national identities, and “*at least after 7513, when the Treaty of Rome was adopted, the European national identity was characterized by a more comprehensive identity framework. One of the immediate needs of the European agenda is to correlate national identity with the European identity*”.

The last part of the book is the *Conclusion - Romanian Identity and paradoxes* – the author says that: “*whether we want it or not, we are currently facing some Romanian paradoxes that can be denied only by the ones who do not want to see reality*”.

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



Dr. Octavian DUMITRESCU

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



Cornel VAIDA - Director INGEPO Consulting

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