



GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

Bilingual-monthly publication of political analysis

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

Keeping the nuclear arms control alive

The glocalisation of geopolitics: the Russian Federation and MENA

The currency crisis of 2018?

Systematization of the main threats to the information security of a state

Recommended Reading: The history of terrorism: from antiquity to Daesh



Geostrategic Pulse Board

(in alphabetical order)



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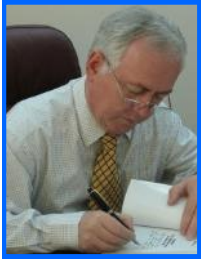
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Motto: "Opinions are free, but not mandatory"—I.L.Caragiale

EDITORIAL



From liberalism to illiberalism ... and thereafter?

Corneliu PIVARIU

The term, known primarily as *illiberal democracy* appeared relatively recently – in terms of historical time - and is most often quoted as being used by the well known politologist Fareed Zakaria in the article *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*, published in 1997 in *Foreign Affairs*. In a nutshell, the illiberal democracy is considered a system of governance whereby although elections are taking place the citizens are not aware of the activities carried out by those who exert the real power as a result of certain civil liberties being cut. A country ruled by illiberal democracy is not an open society and many countries are listed as neither free nor authoritarian, but presumably free and are placed somewhere between democratic or undemocratic regimes. And that also because although there are constitutional limits defining the executive power, those in power ignore the respective provisions or that there is not a constitutional framework appropriate for democratic freedoms in place. This is why the illiberal democracy is known as well as partial democracy, as low intensity democracy or hybrid regime.

We find an interesting approach in Francis Fukuyama's article *The New Tribalism and the Crisis of Democracy*, published in the 58th of August, 2018 issue of *Foreign Affairs*. He notices the transformations of the political world since the beginning of the 1970s until the first decade of the this century, when the number of democracies increased from around 35 to more than 110 while the number of people living in extreme poverty decreased from 42% of the total global population in 1993 to 18% in 2008. Fukuyama stresses nevertheless that in numerous countries and especially in the developed democracies the economic disparity increased dramatically since mainly the rich and the well educated enjoyed the benefits of economic growth.

This transition towards an increasingly open society and towards the liberal world order witnessed a gradual slow down or even became reversible. It is true that during the last years a number of democracies failed all over the world and democracy is losing ground. At the same time, many countries with authoritarian regimes, China and Russia ranked first among them, became increasingly attractive as template. Countries which seemed to be liberal democracies in the making or successful in the 1990s, including Hungary, Poland, Thailand and Turkey slipped back towards authoritarianism. In 1993 in Russia, Boris Eltsin assailed the parliament as a result of the unconstitutional acts it issued. He suspended the constitutional court, abolished the system of local governments and dismissed numerous governors. From the war in Chechnia to his economic program, Eltsin proved a total lack of interest towards the constitutional procedures and to the limits of his power. Maybe he was intimately a liberal yet his acts created a Russian super-presidency Vladimir Putin is successfully exerting today. Elections are being held regularly yet many foreign observers consider they are not free and correct. The assassination of journalists or of political opponents proves the limits imposed to the freedom of expression; the most important TV networks and newspapers are state owned or influenced by the government and support openly the government parties during the election campaigns. The state control over media is on the rise and its power is used as well for achieving certain foreign policy objectives while the actions of the political opposition are increasingly difficult.

A representative of the illiberal order in Europe is Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban who described in July 2014 his vision on Hungary's future as *illiberal state*. In his interpretation, the illiberal state does not reject the values of the liberal democracy yet it does not adopt them as central element of state organisation.

In a Freedom House report titled *Modern Authoritarianism: Illiberal Democracies* some prerequisites are presented so that illiberalism will gain ground in different countries, among which: when the

main ruling parties are defeated in elections and the illiberal forces succeed in taking their places; the fundamental weaknesses of the democratic institutions in the political sphere, including media, civil society, anti-corruption agencies and the judiciary. In practical terms, it is unlikely that illiberal forces manage to transform countries where the existing parties are strong, with loyal followers and where there is a power balance. If, however, the illiberal forces have enough political will and the defenders of the democratic institutions are not convincing and do not enjoy popular support, everything is possible, the Freedom House report underlines.

As early as 2015 Fareed Zakaria said that Turkey under Recep Tayyip Erdogan's leadership became a typical case of illiberal democracy and, after the so-called July 2016 coup attempt and the legislative changes which followed, it became a state evolving towards dictatorship, completing the specter of illiberalism.

A notion and a reality existing for a long time and closely related to the emergence of illiberalism is that of the *parallel state* or the *underground state* (*Deep State* – the expression used in the USA). It is said that the origin of this term derives from Turkish language - *derin devlet*, the secret Turkish network founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for undertaking clandestine operations in order to preserve the government structure. In our opinion, the earliest form of the parallel state is as old as democracy and it developed alongside the states' democratic evolution. The term underground state was mostly used for describing certain situations in Russia or Turkey, only to spread thereafter to Europe, but also to the USA, and referred to actions favouring the conspiracy theories. Yet there is a great reserve in openly approaching this phenomenon, most probably as a result of the actions that this *parallel/underground state* are carried out in accordance with other rules and principles than the democratic ones.

A possible definition of the parallel state: a grouping of personalities with first of all important positions in the state administration – especially within the power institutions (intelligence services and the defense system, justice, economic decision makers, politicians), media, culture, education and non-governmental organisations, acting for the achievement of certain political, economic and of other nature objectives according to their interests or of some foreign powers as well, others than the national interests of the respective country decided by official documents.

The 2010-2011 Arab revolts led to the disappearance of some dictatorial regimes in the Middle East (except for Syria) yet they did not led to democratization as strongmen regimes are still present and civil wars broke out in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. We are witnessing the triumph of the nationalism populism in many countries, one in one of the most durable liberal democracies in the world – Great Britain which in 2016 decided to leave the European Union (recent polls show that the population changed their mind and 59% of them would like to remain in the EU).

The troubled European Union, with a dismissive Brussels bureaucracy or, worse still, unable to discern today's world major geopolitical developments, dangling at the shelter of statistics underlying the relevance of the organisation worldwide yet without realizing enough what is going on in the east, west and south, will probably have the big surprise after the European elections to be held in May 2019. That is why the French president Emmanuel Macron, with a plummeting approval rate in his country had, on September 7th, in Marseille, a meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel, a day after he paid a visit to Luxembourg for preparing the general offensive of the *progress* against the *reactionary nationalism*. The meeting was intended to achieve joint actions for halting the electoral rise of the Euroskeptics populists and of anti-migration parties. Maybe more, Macron would like to form a Pan-European vehicle of the type of his party - En Marche, for acquiring a strong position in the EU.

On this background of political or even philosophical search, the world geopolitics tries to settle in a new equilibrium formula until which completion there will be economic and social convulsions and wars. A rather long period of time will pass until a new formula of global equilibrium is reached.

The Current Geostrategic World-wide Outlook

Keeping the Nuclear Arms Control alive



Alexander SAVELYEV*

“Back to the heydays of the global Cold War, what eventually kept the US and the USSR from deploying nuclear weapons was the dangerous and costly struggle called: ‘mutual destruction assurance’.

Already by the late 1950s, both sides achieved parity in the number and type of nuclear warheads as well as in the number and precision of their delivery systems. Both sides produced enough warheads, delivery systems’ secret depots and launching sites to amply survive the first impact and to maintain a strong second-strike capability. Once comprehending that neither the preventive nor preemptive nuclear strike would bring a decisive victory (put a premium on striking first to gain the initial advantage and set the course of the war, by element of surprise and quick assertion), but would actually trigger the final global nuclear holocaust and ensure total mutual destruction, the Americans and the Soviets have achieved a fear-equilibrium through the hazardous deterrence. Thus, it was not an intended armament rush (for parity), but the non-intended Mutual Assurance Destruction – MAD – with its tranquilizing effect of nuclear weaponry, if possessed in sufficient quantities and impenetrable configurations – that brought a bizarre sort of pacifying stability between two confronting superpowers” – prof. Anis H Bajrektarevic stated in his well-read policy paper on Security structures of Asia and Europe, concluding that: “MAD prevented

nuclear war, but did not disarm the superpowers.”

What is the state of nuclear disarmament today? Following lines are giving a comprehensive overview of the efforts in the post-Cold period.

* * * * *

For almost eight years we have been witnessing a decline (or even absence) of Russian and U.S. efforts in the sphere of nuclear arms control, which can be seen at both the official and expert levels. The last achievement in this field was the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New Start Treaty) which was signed by Russia and the United States in 2010 and entered into force in February 2011. Since then, issues pertaining to further steps in nuclear disarmament have disappeared from the agenda of Russian-American relations.

In the past, such pauses were filled with active consultations and were used to rethink one’s own policy in this area and comprehensively assess the other party’s position. Preparatory work continued even in the period between the fall of 1983 (when the Soviet Union withdrew from all nuclear arms negotiations with the United States) and the spring of 1985 (when the negotiations were resumed), while informal contacts between the parties (primarily through scientific communities) became much stronger.



Over a period of fifty years, the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia achieved significant progress in curbing the nuclear arms race and gradually and steadily lowering the level of nuclear confrontation between the

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two major nuclear powers. In the Soviet Union/Russia, the greatest achievements in nuclear arms control were made during the rule of Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev. Vladimir Putin played an important role in the ratification of the START II Treaty (2000) during his first term as president, as he convinced legislators of its effectiveness and usefulness for Russia's security interests, and in the conclusion of the Russian-American Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (2002). Dmitry Medvedev earned a place for himself in the history of nuclear disarmament by signing the aforementioned 2010 Treaty. It was only during the brief rule of Yuri Andropov (from November 1982 to February 1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (from February 1984 to March 1985) that there was no tangible progress in nuclear arms control.

In the United States, all the eight presidents that preceded Donald Trump—from Richard Nixon to Barack Obama—had achievements in this field. It is still an open question whether Trump will want to break with this tradition. In any case, there are several arguments both in favor of and against such a possibility. It should be emphasized that not everything depends on the desire or unwillingness of the U.S. administration to conclude new agreements in this area. Russia's position has an equal role to play, and this position does not inspire much optimism at the present time.

Politicians and experts name many reasons for the breach of Russia-U.S. relations in the field of nuclear arms control. One of them is believed to be the deterioration of Russia-West relations

over the Ukraine crisis. But facts show that the problem arose much earlier. In March 2013 (that is, one year before the events in Ukraine), former chief of the presidential administration of Russia Sergei Ivanov openly said that Russia was not interested in further reductions in armaments and named the reason for that: the completion of the modernization of Russia's strategic nuclear forces and its unwillingness to eliminate new strategic weapons that had only recently entered service.

Another argument, named by President Putin in February 2012, is the need to involve third nuclear powers in the nuclear disarmament process after the 2010 treaty. Further explanations provided by some other officials, including Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, claimed that deeper reductions (outside the treaty's framework) would make the strategic offensive weapons of Russia and the U.S. "comparable" with those of third nuclear powers.

Moscow puts the main blame for the failure to achieve new nuclear arms control agreements with the U.S. on the missile defense problem. This problem arose now and then in Soviet times and came to a head in 1983 when President Reagan proposed the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The SDI slowed down START I negotiations and nearly blocked the conclusion of this and other nuclear disarmament agreements. The United States' withdrawal from the open-ended ABM Treaty in 2002 and its subsequent efforts to create and deploy missile defense in its own territory and territories of its allies, coupled with unsuccessful attempts to reach agreement with Russia on joint missile defense programs, exacerbated the situation still further.

Moscow also explains the lack of progress in strategic nuclear arms reductions by the possession of nuclear weapons by Washington's NATO allies. Anatoly Antonov, who at that time was Russian deputy defense minister, said this factor "cannot be ignored." Other factors that Moscow says should be "taken into account" include the "Global Strike" concept, the deployment of strategic precision-guided conventional weapons, plans to deploy weapons in outer space, the

presence of U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, and some other disproportions, many of which are mentioned in Russia's present National Security Strategy, approved by Putin in late 2015.

Russia's position on further steps towards nuclear disarmament resembles that of the Soviet Union in the late 1960s. It is based on the principle of "equal security," which means that all factors determining the balance of power between the opposing sides should be taken into account. This explains why in negotiations with Washington on strategic nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union considered it justified to demand compensation for imbalances in other categories of arms.

Naturally, fifty years ago, the categories of weapons subject to "compensation" were different from those of today. They did not include conventional weapons of any kind. Moscow was concerned about nuclear weapons possessed by the U.S.'s NATO allies, and U.S. forward-deployed nuclear weapons in Europe. Now Russia has taken a broader approach, focusing more on non-nuclear armaments, which creates additional difficulties in the search for mutual understanding with the United States and which calls into question the possibility of concluding new agreements.

If we recognize that Russia's concern over the effect of missile defense and precision-guided and other conventional weapons on the strategic balance is of a fundamental nature, a natural question arises: How to accommodate this concern if a political decision is made to continue the nuclear disarmament process? And should Russia agree to deeper reductions in nuclear weapons if its concern is ignored?

Needless to say, no agreement on strategic offensive arms can set unequal ceilings on the number of warheads and their strategic delivery vehicles remaining after reductions. That would be at variance with the very meaning of an international treaty, which should be based on the principle of equality of the parties and which should conform to its subject matter. Nevertheless, there are other ways to accommodate the aforementioned concerns. For example, in the

second half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union was very concerned about the SDI program and American nuclear weapons deployed in Europe. This is why a package solution was proposed—simultaneous negotiations on three issues: medium-range nuclear weapons in Europe, strategic offensive arms, and defense and outer space. Moscow put forward a condition that the three planned agreements should be signed simultaneously. Washington did not object. However, the Soviet Union did not adhere to this position for long. At first, the term 'nuclear delivery vehicles' was used to designate only land-based ballistic and cruise missiles, while aviation was excluded from the negotiations. Later, Moscow removed this category of weapons from the initial package, after which, in December 1987, the parties signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which is of unlimited duration.

For a much longer time, almost until all provisions of the START I Treaty were agreed, the Soviet Union insisted on a linkage between strategic offensive and defensive weapons, which was reflected in official statements and the structure of the Soviet delegation to the talks. Moscow sent one delegation to the talks on these two types of weapons. Negotiations on defense and outer space were conducted by a separate group within the delegation. The United States was represented by two separate delegations. One worked on START I, and the other held consultations on defense and outer space. When it became clear that the defense and space negotiations would fail and that the START I Treaty was almost ready, the Soviet Union signed the treaty but made a unilateral statement on the need to observe the ABM Treaty as a condition for implementing START I.

This experience proves that one real way to accommodate concerns is to conclude separate agreements on the most pressing security problems, including missile defense, precision-guided long-range weapons, and space weapons. The authors of *World 2035. Global Forecast*, published by the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations in 2017, admit of this possibility but consider it the

least likely of the proposed four scenarios for the development of the military-political situation in the world in the period until 2035.

Speaking of concrete ways to accommodate concerns, one should assess, at least approximately, the effect of missile defense, precision-guided weapons and space weapons on the Russian-U.S. strategic balance. First of all, let us note an interesting circumstance. When it comes to the effect of various factors on the strategic balance, Russian officials insisting that this effect should be taken into account somehow fail to mention air defense. If we follow this logic, then any weapons capable of combating strategic offensive weapons should be included in the overall balance of power, especially if they are intended to combat retaliatory systems. These weapons definitely include the aviation component of the strategic triad. Without going into further discussion, let us note that this omission of air defense issues seems to be due to some other considerations than a desire to strengthen strategic stability.

Of the remaining three categories of weapons, which, in the opinion of the Russian leadership, have an effect on the strategic balance, space weapons are the most interesting from the point of view of concluding a possible agreement. The fact is, there are no such weapons yet, as far as we know. Therefore, they have no effect on the strategic balance. It is worth recalling the Soviet Union's struggle against the SDI program in the second half of the 1980s. Many experts said then that "space strike weapons" would be created in the foreseeable future. The most skeptical participants in discussions said that such systems would appear in 20 to 25 years at the earliest. 30 years have passed since then, but this type of weapons (space-based lasers, railguns and other exotic weapons) has not come into existence so far. There are no serious reasons, either, to suggest that space weapons will be in the strategic arsenal of the United States or other countries within the next two to three decades, even if



new technologies make this possible. In this case, the following factors will come into play: cost, combat effectiveness of weapon systems, their vulnerability, and possible reaction from the domestic opposition, individual countries and the international community as a whole. These factors may not only slow down but prevent the militarization of space.

In addition, there are no commonly agreed definitions for such terms as 'weapons', which can be the subject of an agreement on space issues. Unfortunately, such an agreement can hardly be based on the draft international Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, submitted by China and Russia to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008 (and its updated version, submitted in 2014). The draft only proposed preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and made no mention of prohibiting their development or testing in space. Nor did it mention weapons deployed on Earth but capable of destroying outer space objects.

Criticisms of this document can be continued, but the main problem is whether it is possible to reach a verifiable agreement on limiting or banning space weapons, whatever this term might mean, even if all parties show real interest in it. There are more doubts than optimism regarding this possibility. Answering this question requires more than just efforts by diplomats, the military and developers of space weapons. More experts should be involved in these efforts, including scientists from countries that may be parties to future agreements.

Another interesting question concerns long-range precision-guided conventional weapons and their effect on the strategic balance. According to the majority of specialists, this type of weapons includes cruise missiles, non-nuclear ICBMs, and some weapon systems (for example, hypersonic gliders). As a rule, the degree of ef-

Analysis and discussion of legal issues
relevant to arms control



fect such weapons may have on the strategic balance is not assessed. Nevertheless, it is asserted that they can not only weaken but also undermine strategic stability. This is a doubtful statement.

If we view these systems from the point of view of strengthening the offensive capability, they are absolutely incommensurable with nuclear weapons in terms of power. Precision-guided weapons are absolutely unsuitable for preemptive strikes for many reasons. Speaking of non-nuclear ICBMs, their accuracy should by far exceed that of nuclear ICBMs. Otherwise, they won't be able to destroy hard targets (such as missile silos or command centers). According to open source data, modern ICBMs have accuracy (circular error probable - CEP) of several dozen meters, at best. Destroying a hard target with a conventional warhead requires this accuracy of not more than several meters, which is impossible to achieve at the present technological level of these systems.

But this is not the main concern. If an aggressor decides to use precision-guided weapons (conventional ICBMs) in a surprise attack to destroy a significant part of the opponent's nuclear arsenal, it will have to plan a massive attack. Such an attack cannot go unnoticed due to a missile warning system. There is no guarantee that the attacked party will not use nuclear warning systems when it receives information confirming the attack. So, it does not really matter to the victim of such aggression whether the approaching ICBMs carry nuclear or conventional warheads. The response will almost certainly be nuclear, with all the ensuing consequences.

Finally, one more important argument is that if Russia or the United States decides to deploy a great number of non-nuclear ICBMs, they will

most likely have to do this at the expense of their own strategic nuclear weapons. If the 2010 treaty remains in effect (until 2021) and if it is extended (until 2026), all ICBMs will be counted under the treaty's limits for strategic delivery vehicles (700 deployed delivery vehicles for each party). In order for non-nuclear ICBMs not to be counted under the treaty, one needs to create a new strategic delivery vehicle and prove that this weapon system is not covered by this treaty. This will be very hard to do, given the strained Russian-American relations. Unilateral actions will most likely lead to the collapse of this international agreement.

As regards cruise missiles as an element of precision-guided weapons, one important issue should be clarified above all. Under the New START Treaty of 2010, long-range (over 600 km) nuclear cruise missiles are not counted as strategic offensive arms. In other words, in the opinion of Russia and the United States, they are not strategic weapons. Each heavy bomber carrying nuclear-tipped air-launched cruise missiles is counted as one delivery vehicle and one warhead, no matter how many missiles it may carry. Sea-launched cruise missiles are not covered by this treaty at all. It does not even mention the term 'long-range nuclear cruise missile.' Simply put, the parties do not think that these nuclear weapons can undermine the strategic balance; therefore, they see no reason to limit them in the START Treaty. In this case, however, it is completely unclear why long-range nuclear cruise missiles do not affect the strategic balance between the parties, as Moscow and Washington stated in the above-mentioned agreement, whereas similar conventional weapons should undermine strategic stability, especially since some studies show that conventional cruise missiles are not capable of destroying highly pro-

tected strategic offensive weapons.

It is believed in Russia that the most serious threat to strategic stability comes from missile defense. However, there is much more ambiguity in this issue than evidence confirmed by practice. First of all, many experts and politicians follow a strange logic when talking about missile defense issues, and their logic differs significantly from the normal perception of the security problem. For example, it is claimed that the U.S. missile defense system "threatens" Russia's strategic potential. But such a threat can be translated into action only after Russia strikes with ballistic missiles. For as long as these missiles are not used, missile defense does not threaten them. Saying that missile defense poses a threat to someone's nuclear potential is the same as saying that a hard hat worn by a construction worker is a threat to a brick that may fall on his head.

Opponents of missile defense argue that it will be used after the enemy delivers a first strike against its opponent's strategic forces, thus greatly weakening the latter's retaliatory strike. It is this retaliatory strike that will have to be intercepted by missile defense. This abstract and senseless reasoning underlies the logic of missile defense opponents who denounce any programs for creating and deploying missile defense. They view such efforts as an attempt to achieve military superiority and create conditions for victory in a nuclear war. In fact, the entire concept of strategic stability is based on the assessment of the consequences of a first strike and the aggressor's ability to repulse a retaliatory strike.

Debates over the effect of missile defense on strategic stability have been going on for sixty years, so there is no need to cite here all arguments for and against, set forth in numerous publications. Let us only note that these debates were largely held in the U.S. In the Soviet Union and Russia, an overwhelming majority of experts shared the view that the development of missile defense systems undermines strategic stability, increasing the probability of a first strike in crisis situations and spurring a race in strategic arms in all areas. As a rule, the debates focused

on the assessment of effectiveness of missile defense systems and time required for the deployment of new weapon systems.

Now let's see how the United States can repulse Russia's "retaliatory strike" after its own "large-scale nuclear attack," if such plans really exist. First of all, let's take a look at the geography of U.S. missile defense systems. If the main task of the U.S. were to defend against a Russian retaliatory strike, it would deploy its missile defense system primarily along its borders and deep in its heartland. A thin defense of the country would require at least 10 to 12 deployment areas with several dozen interceptor missiles in each. As far as is known, nothing like this is happening. Such a program does not exist, and such proposals have never been submitted. By the end of 2017, 44 Ground-Based Interceptors (GBI) are to be deployed in U.S. territory (40 in Alaska and 4 in California). By 2025, the number of GBIs is planned to be increased to 56.

It should be recalled here that the most important provision of the 1972 ABM Treaty (from which the U.S. withdrew in 2002) was the limitation of interceptor missiles capable of shooting down incoming ICBM warheads. Each party was permitted to have up to 200 ABM systems in two ABM deployment areas. The Protocol of 1974 to the Treaty limited the number of ABM systems to 100 at each ABM site. In other words, the U.S. has not yet exceeded the limit set by the ABM Treaty and will not do so in the foreseeable future, which means that strategic stability, as understood by missile defense opponents, is not undermined.

Russia is greatly concerned over the proposed missile defense system for Europe and keeps an eye on programs for deploying similar systems in the Middle East and some Asian countries. But all these systems are not strategic in terms of location and performance. Of course, some modifications of the U.S. Standard interceptor missiles, THAAD and some other systems have a certain potential to combat strategic ballistic missiles. But they are not intended to perform such tasks and can shoot down ICBM warheads only accidentally. It is also important that the



above BMD systems have never been tested against strategic missiles (warheads); so they cannot be relied on for intercepting retaliatory strikes with strategic ballistic missiles.

In addition, these systems pose no threat to Russia's strategic potential due to the geography of their deployment. This will be clear if we move from a two-dimensional to a three-dimensional vision of this geography. Simply put, we should be looking not at the flat map of the world, but at the globe. Then many things will look differently. For example, we will see that the shortest way from Russia to America is not via Amsterdam or Paris, but across the North Pole.

To my view, there are no serious military-strategic obstacles to further dialogue between Russia and the United States on more reductions in strategic offensive arms. The effect of precision-guided and space weapons on the strategic balance between the parties is clearly exaggerated. In the foreseeable future, their effect will continue to be minimal, if at all.

U.S. missile defense programs are limited in terms of their impact on Russia's ability to deliver a crushing retaliatory strike, even if weakened by a U.S. first strategic strike. The latter, too, is a very dubious strategic concept, which, nevertheless, underlies many discussions about ways to strengthen security and so-called strategic stability. No sane leader of a country would rely on an unreliable missile defense system, which has failed many tests and which can be bypassed by changing the direction of attack.

As for political obstacles to new negotiations, they have piled up both in Russian-American and Russia-West relations. They are difficult to overcome, and this will most certainly take much time and effort. There is a view that negotiations on deeper reductions in strategic offensive arms are possible only after relations between the two countries more or less improve or, at least, show a clear tendency towards improvement.

But this problem can be approached from a different perspective by setting the goal of concluding a new agreement on deeper reductions in strategic offensive arms and limiting the number of strategic warheads to 1,000 for each party. If concluded, the new agreement could serve as a positive example of cooperation and give a chance to reach mutual understanding in other areas. This will be facilitated by the beginning of broad consultations on the whole range of security problems, including those that evoke Russia's concern.

In July 2018 in Helsinki Putin and Trump agreed to pay special attention to the problem of extension of a New START Treaty for the following 5 years (until the year of 2016), as well as to preserving the INF Treaty which became a subject of serious criticism during the last 3-4 years. It is obviously a positive step into a right direction. But it is not enough. Both states have quite a big potential for further reductions of their nuclear arsenals – strategic and tactical as well even without the participation of the third nuclear states in this process. This possible participation needs serious investigation and special attention of all the interested parties.



BETWEEN POTOMAC AND THE GOLDEN HORN: A CRISIS CALLED "F-35 PLUS"

Dinu COSTESCU

On June 20th, the US Senate approved by 85 votes and 10 against a bill on the allotment, for the 2019 fiscal year, of a military budget of \$716 billion and the document contains a chapter withholding selling to Turkey of F-35 fighter jets as well as a wider range of military material including Patriot missile defense systems, heavy transport Chinook helicopters, AH-1 Cobra and H-60 Black Hawk helicopters and F-16 fighter jets. The same document made the remark that "Turkey's acquisition of the Russian air defense systems S-400 increased the tensions between the two countries"; tensions already exacerbated by Turkey's repeated demands of extraditing the cleric Fethullah Gullen, accused by Ankara of being the initiator of the 2016 failed coup followed by Turkish side refusal of the request of the American authorities of liberating and repatriating the evangelist pastor Andrew Brunson, accused too of espionage and conspiracy together with Fehullah Gullen.

It is not the first time and, certainly, not the last, when on the sky of the Turkish-American bilateral relations black clouds are gathering. The withholding imposed to military deliveries to Turkey arises after the American side delivered a first F-35 fighter jet to this country, a stealth multirole jet considered a piece of jewelry of the military technology and the Turkish reactions did not delay: civilian and military officials in Ankara qualified the US Senate decision as "hostile" and invoked Turkey's sovereign right of diversifying its sources of arms supplies and of discontinuing the traditional de-

pendency on the monopoly of a single manufacturer and supplier of defense material. What irritated most Ankara was the feeling that this time the White House has exaggerated the practice of nondiscriminately resorting to penalties and tries in fact to hinder the process of modernizing and supplying the Turkish army, the field of last generation of aviation included.

The episode triggered a new "war of declarations" and the American commentators considered that once the Cold War was over, Turkey lost, in what the American doctrine is concerned, the strategic importance it had alongside the last half a century as bulwark against the expansionism of the Soviet Communism while in their turn, the Turkish officials and commentators insist that Turkey made sure once more it should not trust the credibility of the American security "umbrella". Historical reality shows, by the way, that such a "umbrella" worked practically two times, namely in the context of the post-war bipolar world and in the case of the war in Cyprus.

*

The Turkish-American military relations have their beginnings at the end of WWII when, fol-



F-35 Fighter Jet

lowing the pressures increasingly persistent exerted by the former Soviet Union for having its rights of access and presence in the Bosphorous and Dardanelle area confirmed, the Truman Doctrine was launched and implemented whereby the United States committed to grant security guarantees for Turkey and Greece, a commitment which opened the flow of a substantial economic and military assistance for the two states while the efforts of containing the Soviet expansionism set the basis of durable and long lasting bilateral relations whereby Turkey supported unreservedly the American strategy in the context of the Cold War. Under the aegis of the United Nations, Turkey participated to the Korean Peninsula war at the beginning of the sixth decade of the last century and in 1952 Turkey became a NATO member with full rights. In 1957, Ankara adhered to the Eisenhower doctrine principles and was, together with other regional states such as Israel and Iran, an active participant to the programs of encirclement and containment of the Communist camp backed by Moscow. It was the background on which on the Turkish territory the Incirlik air military base was set up and which was to play a particularly important role in most of the American military campaigns and operations in the Middle East, from the end of Cold War until the two Gulf wars. A long period of time, the political and military relations between Turkey and the United States evolved on a sinusoid trajectory where moments of acute tensions (as it was the case of Turkey's invasion to Cyprus and the occupation, in 1974, of the northern part of island) were succeeded by moments of apogee, as it happened after the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran when the White House was determined to hastily give up the policy of sanctions against Ankara and to set up an assistance fund of \$450 million for supplying the Turkish army with American made attack fighters and helicopters but also for waging the war against the separatist Kurdish rebels of the Kurdistan Workers' Party in Kurdistan (PKK).



The cyclical turbulences arisen in the political, military and security relations between Ankara and Washington have as a profound causality the deep differences existing between the manner of approaching and assessing, by each country in turn, of the concept of threat to the interests of national security. Thus, if during the Cold War, Turkey's military doctrine was based on the idea that the great security challenges and threats came from the north of the Turkish space, today the source of these uncertainties is placed with priority in the southern space where lies the "existential" threat represented by the issue of the ethnical minority of the Kurdish separatists. One may speak of a similar situation in case of the Iranian neighbour towards which, despite the economic, commercial and energy relations existing between Ankara and Tehran, the projects of the Iranian Shiite expansionism and the ambitions of regional leadership of the theocratic regime are regarded from the banks of Bosphorous as a permanent and unpredictable source of security threats.

In spite of these discrepancies of approach, the Turkish-American military relations succeeded in remaining at a dynamic and high level as the flow of American military material deliveries and the coordination in combat preparedness between the United States and the Turkish army were carried out especially during the last decade in a pace both sides appreciated publicly very highly. At the regional level of the Middle



East, Turkey ranks third after Israel and the United Arab Emirates in what concern the imports of military material from the United States and these deliveries contributed substantially to strengthening Turkey's military capacity and to projecting Turkish national army at the forefront of the most powerful military institutions globally and within NATO.

Nevertheless, mention should be made that the American military warehouses were not accessible to the Turkish requests, at least not to the extent desired by the planners and decision-makers in Ankara. Several times the Pentagon and Washington's Western allies adamantly rejected a series of substantial deliveries requested by the Joint Chief of the Turkish army and a case making waves at that time was the refusal of the American Congress in 2014 with regard to delivery to the Turkish Navy of two *Oliver Hazard Perry* of *Perry* class frigates due to the "hostility of the Turkish regime towards Israel and its opposition to the Israeli projects of exploiting the gas and oil deposits in the Mediterranean and in Cyprus and Greece maritime perimeter". The fact that Washington and some NATO's European member states imposed and maintained years on end a severe embargo on supplying Turkey know-how and technological documentation of military nature. And such interdiction were neither stranger to Turkey's orientation towards the Russian and Chinese suppliers of military technique and technology, nor to the efforts of the Turkish government of setting up an own industry of military technique, a field where Turkey has now such an industrial

branch represented by the following military manufacturers:

1. Turkish Aerospace Industries: the main manufacturer of components and equipment for the military aviation, including fuselages, climatisation installations, optical fiber etc.;

2. Aselsan Company: producer of guidance hardware and steering the laser and infrared shooting;

3. Fokker Elmo: manufactures 40% of the fighter jets avionics.

4. AYESAŞ: the sole national manufacturer and supplier of control units, screens and warning devices for the aircraft cockpit command;

6. Kale Aerospace: manufacturer of fuselage components, landing gear and fixed pieces of the aircraft engines;

7. Havelsan: pilotage simulators and repair, testing and maintenance workshops and labs;

8. Tokestan and Tubitak-Sage: manufacturer and developer of model J-50 M air-ground cruise missiles;

9. MIKES: co-producer of avionics.

*

What was the message Donald Trump intended to convey to his counterpart in the Golden Horn through the punitive measures that triggered the "F-35 crisis" in a context when the bilateral relations between Washington and Ankara are at a low? It is clear it is not the fate of pastor Andrew Brunson, prosecuted in Turkey for espionage and connections with the billionaire imam Fethullah Gullen powerful enough to trigger a new political and military crisis between the allies on the Potomac River and the Golden Horn. Commenting on the margin of this new tense episode, TimeDaily believes that on the contrary, it was the case Brunson which was used by Donald Trump to tell Recep Teyyip Erdogan and the Turkish government that arresting and prosecuting the evangelist Andrew Brunson is seen through the windows of the Oval Office as



that the irritation of president Donald Trump is due to the fact that Ankara opted for the Russian S-400 missiles system and gave up the Patriot American system alternative. In all likelihood, the truth will be revealed sooner or later by Trump and Recep Erdogan themselves.

The abrupt degradation of the relations between Ankara and Washington is not just a tempest in a teacup as it is not fundamentally due to the "F-35 file" or to Donald Trump's concern for pastor Andrew Brunson's release. The tense situation reached is, first of all, the result of certain accumulations of political and doctrinary tensions which eroded deeply, during the last years, the mutual trust and the spirit of traditional "alliance" between the "man in the White Palace" and the "man in the White House" and the degree of depreciation of these relations was expressed by Recep Tayyip Erdogan himself who, in an August 10th interview to TimeDaily said that Donald Trump "must renounce the preposterous idea that the relations between Turkey and America are compatible with the idea of equality. Donald Trump should understand the reality that Turkey has other options of relations and alliances, too, and that America is not indispensable".

Maybe that in the end the superpresidents Trump and Erdogan will both understand that ultimately the problems existing between Turkey and America have as visible as possible names. And these names are Recep Erdogan and Donald Trump.

"arresting all Americans" (and, it goes without saying, Donald Trump's). It could be that the approach of the American daily be correct to the extent the American president accustomed his friends and foes with the tactics of finding just any pretext for justifying his abrupt and unexpected decisions. Yet such a decision cannot hide that this "jets crisis" is a new expression among many others through which the White House leader uses America's economic capacity as a pressure mechanism for determining the interlocutors to bend to the way of Donald Trump's commercial thinking and approach of the international policy.

On the other hand, according to a statement of the American Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, taken over by Bloomberg, "penalising Turkey will have negative repercussions on the American defense aviation industry, will lead to the increase of the production costs and will obstruct, at the same time, the smooth running of the already concluded US delivery contracts with other governments". Secretary James Mattis reminded the Congress that Turkey had a substantial contribution to drawing up and implementing the "F-35 program". It participated with around \$250 million to the development of this program to say nothing of the fact that a series of Turkish companies in the military field supplied components incorporated into the jet whose delivery to the Turkish side was denied.

The American mass-media underline



The New Geopolitical Environment and the Middle East: Between Fighting Terrorism and the Future of the Region

(The 2018 Bucharest Conference on Terrorism and the Middle East)

By Marcela GANEA

Organized by MEPEI (Middle East Political and Economic Institute), a Bucharest-based think-tank, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Romania, and EURISC Foundation, the 4th edition of the Bucharest annual conference on terrorism and the Middle East brought together 200 academics, researchers, officials, and embassy representatives from 14 countries. This year's conference took place at the beginning of July in Bucharest's Intercontinental Hotel.

Here are some highlights of the most pertinent policy debates explored at the conference:

"Westerners think of security in the Middle East in terms of oil and Israel. However, we are in a post-globalization world, and the concepts of power, state, and state sovereignty have changed. The security of oil must be replaced with the security of the people," declared Mostafa Zahrani, adviser to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, at the beginning of this year's conference.

Zahrani went on to stress that some threats in the Middle East are more serious than terrorism, such as corruption and the inability of leaders to properly run and organize their states. No one can predict what the future of the region holds for several reasons. For one, only Iran and Turkey are experiencing real development, while the existence of certain disrupting groups, such as the Houthis in Yemen, the Kurds in Iraq, Islamic groups, and finally the more radical groups such as al Nusra and Daesh prevent stability from taking hold across the Middle East. In terms of new elements, Zahrani emphasized that Turkey is a strong new actor in the Middle East and it has become obvious that Saudi Arabia is intervening on many fronts. In terms of old ele-

ments, he stated that the US and Israel propagate the notion of Iran as an enemy in order to get support from Arab states. They present conflicts in a sectarian manner, where the Shia-Sunni split is the cause of all problems in the Middle East, but this is not true. In addition, Zahrani believes that Trump has no clear Middle East strategy and his short-sighted focus and whimsical foreign policy prevent him from having a clear picture of what is actually going on in the region.

China is viewed as a new player in the region. Future wars in the Middle East will be a great game between superpowers, assuming that China will be the enemy of the US, and the region's energy wealth will loom large in their calculations. Russia does not have the military and budgetary potential of China, but Russia is still able to fill the vacuum in the Middle East and wants to be considered on equal footing even though the US often views Russia as a declining power.

Nesriu Kenar, head of the International Relations Department in Turkey's Sakarya University, echoed the fact that China depends on the oil from the Middle East: 57% of its imported oil currently comes from the region.

Alexander Shumilin, director of the Center for Middle East Conflicts in the Russian Academy of Sciences, pointed to several factors influencing the stability in the Middle East: "Daesh is far from being defeated, Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA puts new pressures on Iran, and two antagonistic coalitions continue to operate in the Middle East, one Russia-Assad, another one led by the US against Assad."

Russia's aim is to preserve the borders of Syria because it has considerable military and economic interests there. Whether Assad should stay in power or not – that's up to the Syrians to decide. The Astana process appears to be ineffective at the moment, and it is only a comple-



ment to the Geneva peace process which is the best chance for bringing a full political solution to Syria.

Basam Aboabdolah, head of Syria's Centre for Strategic Studies and adviser to the Syrian information minister, stressed that the war in Syria is a geopolitical conflict funded by foreign powers. Syrian scholars believe that there are a few overriding reasons for the war: Syria's independence and the desire of certain foreign powers to see Syria collapse, along with Syria's alliance with Iran and its support for the resistance movements in Palestine and Lebanon. Syria previously opted for an independent foreign policy, and it is now paying the price for that decision. The first coup in Syria took place in 1947 and was financed by the CIA. Colin Powell came to Syria in 2003 and promised President Assad he would become the "king" of the region if he gave up his support for the Palestinians. According to Basam Aboabdolah, Hamad Bin Jassim, the Qatari former prime minister and foreign minister, revealed that \$137 billion dollars were spent on attempting to destroy Syria. On the subject of terrorism, Aboabdolah pointed to the existence of well-trained armies of multinational terrorists who are acting as mercenaries. There are foreign fighters of 82 nationalities operating in Syria; they have tanks and advanced weaponry, and they receive funds and support from organizations worldwide. Aboabdolah also stressed that international institutions are too weak to fight terrorism and stabilize Syria for a variety of rea-

sons: sanctions against Russia, Iran, and Syria do not allow for cooperation in fighting terrorism, the Arab League is finished, there are doubts about the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the GCC has collapsed, the UN is an outdated organization set up after the World War II and unfit for purpose in the new world order, and the future of the EU is anything but assured.

Davood Kiani, vice president of the Institute of Iran and Eurasia Studies, elaborated on Russia-Iran relation and Russia's involvement in the Middle East. He believes the primary goal is that Russia doesn't want other powers to be able to change the game. According to him, cooperation between Russia-Iran-Turkey managed to remove ISIS from Syria, which was in Russia's interest. In the beginning, Russia did not pay attention to Saudi Arabia's concerns, but later on, Russia tried to repair its relations with Saudi Arabia, and the US, in order to gain greater flexibility in its Middle East policy.

Kayhan Barzegar, director of Iran's Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies, claimed that countries have changed their strategies for combating terrorism due to resource constraints. Iran is not big enough to stay in Syria and establish permanent military bases there. Turkey joined Iran and Russia in the Astana process because it has an interest in preserving security in its neighborhood. Russia wants to maintain the balance of power at regional and global levels. The overall logic is to keep Syria intact and Syrian state bodies operational in order for them to fight terrorism.

Barzegar also stated that Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal diminished Iran's capacity for dealing with Western countries and resulted in reduced levels of trust. However, Europe is struggling to preserve the deal in order to avoid a conflict between Iran and the US and Israel. For Iran, Europe is important to balance

relations with Russia and China. The phrase "Iran's interference in the region," which is often used by the media, is wrong, according to Barzegar, because Iran is part of the region and the security of the region is connected to Iran's security.

Gholamali Chegnizadeh, security expert from the Allameh Tanatabai University in Iran, stressed that fighting terrorism needs a collective model in the Middle East because terrorism will take on new forms, the region will see new realities, and a new regional order is slowly emerging. The discourse of the US changed dramatically from Obama to Trump, demonstrating that the greatest power in the world cannot make up its mind regarding the Middle East.

Naeem Jeenah, president of South Africa's Middle East-Africa Centre, pointed to the term "terrorist" which, in his opinion, is sometimes used inappropriately by parties to identify the other as an enemy: "In the MENA region, the identification of terrorism has become very useful for various agendas. There is no common international definition of terrorism."

Liviu Muresan, director of the EURISC Foundation, presented on the strategic importance of Romania's Serpent Island, which is located in the Black Sea and connected to China's Belt and Road (BRI) project. He stressed the growing role of Iran in the Chinese project. The Shanghai Institute for International Studies (SIIS), a partner with EURISC Foundation, proposed a China-Iran-Romania project to increase cooperation in the



energy sector and along the maritime route by developing facilities that would help facilitate Chinese trade. Romania will host the Three Seas Initiative summit in September 2018, which will analyze the synergies between BRI, the Three Seas Initiative, and the Danube Strategy.

Picture courtesy by EURISC Foundation - dr. Liviu MUREȘAN

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Russia wants a security status quo. And it gets it

Cristian UNTEANU

Ten years have passed since the NATO leaders welcomed in the Bucharest Summit solemn declaration Georgia's and Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. A very noble declaration of political intention.

Everybody was enthusiastic, except for the fact that the Russians had other information and, surprisingly for very many analysts, a few weeks after the respective event, the war in Georgia was triggered as a first successful exercise and a direct precursor, politically and militarily, of what was to happen in Crimea and, generally, in the hapless Ukraine with similar ambitions as Georgia's.

What was left was the American support for Georgia and Ukraine which was and still is important as it is a lobby so that the American Administration uses its influence within NATO for overcoming the repeated and argued reluctance of the Europeans who said it is not the time to escalate a tense situation with Russia. Yet the promise made to Georgia, for instance, had to be nevertheless honoured in order to not devaluate in any way the logic and the strength of the Joint Declarations adopted by the members of the Alliance. As a result of which, the negotiations were underway in a rather optimistic climate for those who hoped to see that, at the Black Sea, alongside Romania, there could exist another member country supporting unconditionally the USA and to move the red line towards the Caucasus and to generate thus a "claw effect" around the Russian bases in Crimea.

Things got abruptly complicated since that rationale harnessed a status of almost traditional uncertainty in what concern the status of the Caspian Sea and the possible regime granted, if required, to certain support bases established on the territory of certain states in the area. The Russians have launched, more than 20 years ago,

a campaign of negotiations with multiple means which succeeded, a very short time ago, to everybody's surprise and in the most spectacular manner, so that the leaders of 5 states established how to share the areas of influence and the access to the incredible riches of the region and, what interests us most, they decided that no foreign bases will exist on the territory of their states. The equation is closed and we will see very soon that a new security alliance emerges which will be included, integrated or in an advanced strategic cooperation relation with the Eurasian Union, playing in the general score of the security cooperation drawn up in the framework of the military dimension of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. And to make extremely clear Russia's position, prime minister Medvedev declared for Radio Kommersant that *"A possible Georgia's joining NATO could trigger a terrible conflict"*.

The escalation of positions, as a possible answer to NATO's new firm commitments during last July 12th Summit when the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg declared that "We fully support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations. It will become a NATO member... The alliance backs Georgia's territorial integrity within its unanimously recognized borders, including South Ossetia and Abkhazia".

It would have been, if the issue became serious, a real problem for the Russians, who maintain now in the two separatist regions (representing around 20% of the Georgian territory) thousands of elite troops and in 2015 signed a series of agreements with South Ossetia allowing the expansion of the control over the respective territory (50,000 inhabitants) with over 3,800 sq.km.

Consequently, Vladimir Putin stepped in in order to explain the stakes of the game and denounced in very firm terms NATO's attempts of setting up new bases and military infrastructures close to Russia's borders: "We will respond in an appropriate manner to these aggressive

measures which are a direct threat to Russia".

This is the so far balance of games. Except for everything changes after Ms Chancellor Angela Merkel who, during a visit she paid to Tbilisi University, announced Germany's decision: "I do not see Georgia's rapidly joining NATO, this is Germany's position! Things will evolve gradually". And, as a fine connoisseur of the great political games and uncertainties, she conveys a political message for whom has to listen and added, after expressing the support for Georgia's territorial integrity, that there is a certain parallelism between the situation in Georgia and the one in Donbass: *!We are discussing very diligently other issues pertaining to Ukraine and we are trying to solve this conflict. I think these conflicts are somewhat connected. Unfortunately and despite our special efforts, we did not advance, not one jot. What I want to assure you is that we do not forget this injustice and we will watch that the issue is kept on the agenda."*

I think that even if our officials are not interested anylonger in absolutely anything, this is the essential change that is being negotiated now as far as the security situation at the Black Sea is concerned and the assurances requested by and granted to Russia. The situation is changing due to the fact that the so far partners are about to reformulate the games and we might see, if not new alliances, at least a security status-quo in the area as Russia proposed years on end, a country that became, alongside Turkey, a unaivoidble security manager at the Black Sea. And, look, it obtained the assurance that Germany will resist Georgia's joining NATO, namely maintaing Germany's 2008 position when Chanchellor Merkel, on behalf of Germany, and Nicholas Sarkozy, on behalf of France, voted in this respect.

Germany's negotiations with Russia might mean not the discussion about gas

transit through Ukraine, a story that emerges periodically to lull the public opinion of several of the eastern countries. I think it is much more than that and this troubled context of the relations in the Euro-Atlantic area compels to precise security negotiations with Russia for what will be the new security guarantees. What has Georgia to do with that? Georgia is, or it might have been, an advanced bridge-head especially in the context of the crisis in the Turkish-American relations. Is that all?

Unfortunately it isn't, as there is a prophetic analysis which truth has been confirmed in time even if, at that time, in 2008, the remark made in Tbilisi by Lech Kaczynski, the then president of Poland seemed surrealistic: *!We know very well it is Georgia now, it will be Ukraine tomorrow, and the Baltic countries and maybe Poland will follow the day after tomorrow."*

What do all these mean?

For the time being, the game pieces are placed on the new game board and the partners' strength is being tested. And, in the background, the perspective of an agreement concerning a separation zone is being consolidated but the outlines are not clear yet. Due to that, Georgia's case is a textbook case. Of the old or of the new type? We will see that soon.

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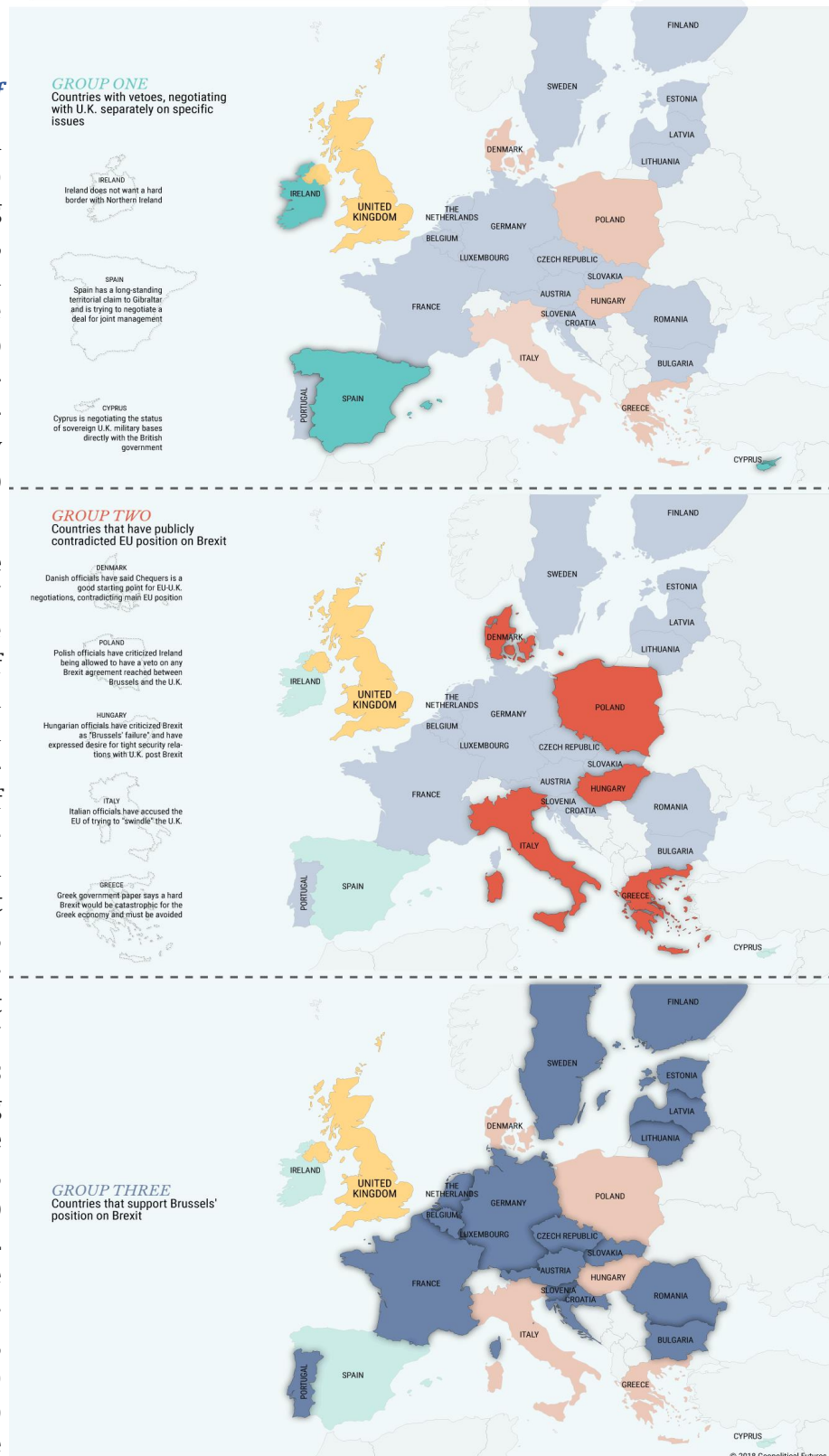
The European Union: Divided on Brexit

By GPF Staff

September is approaching, and that means kids are returning to school, the leaves are changing in the Northern Hemisphere, and Europe is returning from vacation. There is much to be done, especially as it pertains to Brexit talks. Brussels announced this week that it expects to hold an emergency summit in November to wrap up talks.

To mark this last sprint to the finish line, we've divided EU member states into three groups. The first is made of countries that have individual issues with the United Kingdom that necessitate separate negotiations or even, in the case of Ireland, a de facto veto on whatever deal is reached. The second group consists of countries that have broken ranks with the EU, including Denmark, which supports the agreement reached at Chequers, even though the EU does not, and Italy, which has criticized the EU for attempting to "swindle" London. Last are the majority of EU countries, which are thus far in lock step with Brussels on negotiations. The U.K. has hoped to generate leverage with individual European states to help in the talks, but thus far it has failed to do so; even the countries in group two that have broken with the EU have not done so to an extent that it gives London any real leverage. This will be one of the many dynamics to keep in mind as the Brexit soap opera hurtle toward its

Divisions in the EU



conclusion in the spring.

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CONSIDERATION**Iraq after the parliamentary elections and beyond****Corneliu PIVARIU**

The latest parliamentary elections in Iraq, held on May 12th, 2018, designated the 329 members of the Council of Representatives – the unicameral parliament which, in its turn, would, according to the constitution, elect the prime minister and the country's president.

Initially they were to be held in September 2017 and were postponed due to the fights against Daesh. In the mean time, a referendum for independence was organized whereby 93% voted for independence from the central government in Baghdad. The government led by prime minister Haidar al-Abadi responded by closing Erbil International airport, by taking over the control of the borders between Kurdistan and the neighbouring countries, by taking over the control of all disputed territories, including the town of Kirkuk (using the militias al-Hashd al-Shaabi – Popular Mobilisation) and, afterwards, through negotiations, the results of the referendum were formally cancelled.

Reflecting the internal restlessness and the lack of political maturity, more than 200 parties were registered for the elections and at the end of the registrations on the electoral lists, 27 coalitions were to be found grouping 143 parties while the other parties participated independently. The participation to vote was the lowest since Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown in 2003, namely 44.5%. That proved the population's lack of confidence in the current Iraqi political class and, in a way, the sense of resignation to the difficult situation the country is going through.

Following certain suspicions of fraud, the parliament ordered on June 6th a manual recount of the votes but on June 10th a warehouse where about half of the ballots were kept burned down.

No party or electoral alliance acquired the majority that enables the appointment of the prime minister and afterwards forming the government and that is why during the first meeting of the newly elected parliament, at the beginning of September, not even the chairman of the parliament could have been elected. The Alliance for Reform (in short in the Arabic language *Sairun – Forward*) acquired unexpectedly good results and its main component, the Islamic Party of Integrity, (known also as Sadr Movement) led by Muqtada al-Sadr, a Shiite cleric known for his nationalistic attitude and an opponent of both Iran and the USA and who proved, over time, he was not consistent in his attitude, something he did recently when refused to back Haidar al-Abadi for a new mandate after he initially agreed to. An important role will play the Kurdish representatives who gained 47 seats and may determine which governing coalition will be. Nevertheless, their condition of lifting all restrictions imposed and Kirkuk's returning to Kurdistan administration remains in place.

The next meeting of the newly elected parliament is to be held on September 15th, yet in all likelihood it will not succeed in unblocking the situation having in mind the latest domestic developments especially in the oil rich Basra region, south of the country, where violent demonstrations and confrontations resulted in 14 dead. Prime minister Abadi visited the area and decided the creation of 10,000 new jobs and underlined the dysfunctionalities of an artificially bloated government apparatus. Nevertheless, the population have much bigger discontents related to the public services (mainly water supply), economic inequities and unemployment. 60% of Iraq's population is under 25 of whom 20% are unemployed. The subsidized economy characterizing the current situation in Iraq led to the redistribution of oil revenues to different parties which, in their turn, appointed in public positions loyal followers and not efficient specialists. Besides, Iraq is seen domestically as a failed state whereby the central government is concerned with how to steal the country's resources and not how to rule through a real sharing of power to the benefit of the common citizen.

The confrontation between the USA and Iran for influencing the process of forming the government, the Iranian general Kasem Suleimani, the head of Pasdaran actions and those of the American Envoy for the Global Coalition against Daesh, Brett McGurk are obvious signs of this dispute which should be added to this difficult domestic situation which will last for many years. Under such circumstances, Iraq's future doesn't look too well.

The Main Factors of the Middle East Situation



**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

THE GLOCALISATION OF GEOPOLITICS: THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND MENA

Preliminary considerations

Far from being recent, the particular place Russia's foreign policy grants to the geostrategical region of the Middle East and North Africa (and, in the same context, to the Mediterranean maritime space), has its roots at the beginning of an old history which was inaugurated during the period of the czarist empire and continued steadily along the decades the international order went through from the Bolshevik Revolution up to today's Russian Federation. It is not new either the reality that the politicians and decision-makers in the Kremlin, irrespective of the colors of the national flag they served, did not make any secret of or, in extremis, acknowledged more unofficially than officially that the said zone represents an area of vital importance for Russia's national political, military, economic and geopolitical strategy either in the bipolar context or, temporarily, in the monopolar context of the global order configuration.

If the post-Soviet Russia came out weakened, confused and marginalized within the concert of the world's great poles from the dramatic reversals of the last decade of the last century and the collapse of the former bipolarity of the global world, the current Russian Federation managed to succeed in promoting Russia's strategic fundamentals as former great power which has to rebuild and impose this statute and to expand its spheres of influence as a prerequisite for reconstructing, maintaining and developing this position in the contemporary world. Contrary to academic researches concerning MENA's role in the evolution of the global security climate, re-

searches emphasizing rather than otherwise the fragmentary and bilateral character of Russia's relating with the Arab and Islamic world of the Middle East, the Muscovite diplomacy managed in a short period of time to draw up a global and, at the same time, a bilateral strategy in a region affected by conflicts spilling over the national borders and in which, due exactly to this fundamental cause of this conflicted climate, every and each regional state is vitally interested in protecting its national security concerns including, or first of all, by strengthening and diversifying their own armed capacities and potentials. A concern that offered the Russian Federation one of the active leverages of regional penetration and of building some solid bridge-heads and co-operation relations of such a nature as to project Moscow's policy on attractive and influential positions in this conflicted and strategic part of the global political geography. Another, no less efficient and active, instrument used by the Russian Federation's planners and decision-makers for "reconquering the Middle East with its Mashreq and Maghreb, but also with its strategic Mediterranean neighborhood" – was the exploitation and harnessing its nuclear capacities, or, more exactly expressed, the potential and the availability of presenting a wide range of offers for achieving capacities of nuclear energy production and development in the region and, to that purpose, a series of reactors have been constructed or are on their way of being achieved or negotiated with Iran, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Jordan.

Nuclear projects carried out in the MENA's states

Then, we are speaking of the blend the Kremlin achieved between these two leverages and a third way relating to the recourse to an own sort of *soft-power* where an important role is played by the ideatic and cultural factor which mani-

fested practically by the flexibility of Moscow's Russian Federation formulates maximal projects and objectives which achievement is constantly pursued, due to the impulse of securing a weight and a role as close as possible to the "decisive" and "unavoidable" ratings in the game of global policies.

Country	No. of projects	Commissioning year	Megawatts
Iran (Bushehr)	1(2)	2011 (2016)	1.000
Egypt - El Dabaa	1	2015-2024	4.800
Algeria	1	2025	-
Turkey	1	2018	-
Jordan	1	-	-

and objectives which achievement is constantly pursued, due to the impulse of securing a weight and a role as close as possible to the "decisive" and "unavoidable" ratings in the game of global policies.

As it clearly turns out from different strategic documents drawn up in Moscow and from what president Valdimir Putin himself underlined repeatedly

diplomatic strategy of tolerance and co-existence with the Arab-Islamic partners or, in other words, of ignoring the cultural, sectarian, ideological or national differences existing between Russia and the Arab world. It is exactly this cultural opening towards accepting the otherness and of non-conditioning these relations on the nature of the relations of the partners with other powers of the world chessboard and of abstaining from the criticism and reservations that might be formulated to the address of the identity of the partners regimes and to the extent those regimes comply or not with the outlines of a certain model of democracy or with the positioning towards the fundamental democratic values such as citizenship, cultural and religious freedoms etc. Russia's cooperation offers are, from this perspective, easier to be accepted by the Arab-Islamic world to the extent they are not conditioned in any way on the availability and the opening of this world to accepting or rejecting the values of the liberal democracy, be it of American, Western or post-Soviet Russian sort.



in his public speeches, Russia perceives the MENA as a priority for its "extensive and offensive" diplomacy – a concept of foreign policy circumscribed to the idea of *self-help* in a world "that evolves irreversibly towards multi-polarity and which becomes more dangerous and unpredictable" (according to the Russian minister of Foreign Affairs Serghei Lavrov, 2016). It can be discerned that, for the Russian Federation's political thinking, the global world is seen as a chaotic mix of interests and actions of an assembly relating to a realpolitik imposing to individual states a permanent and a priority concern for self-help, on the one hand, and of promoting their own programs and paradigms, on the other hand. In this chaotic universe, the overriding threat comes, in Moscow's thinkers conception, from the rise and expansion of the terrorist phenomenon and the rapid demographic growth of the Muslim population in the neighborhood of

Approaches and strategic interests

In global terms, Moscow's international policy proved an ample opening which, with the exception of some transient periods of fluctuations, managed to manifest a solid competitive capacity in its relationship with the other main players of the global political, military and security chessboard. By continuing the tradition inherited from the Soviet period, the contemporary

the Russian Federation, especially in Central Asia, so that, from this point of view, promoting and practicing a preventive and defensive diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa region becomes a unavoidable tool for self-defence against the Islamic-sectarian radicalism.

From this perspective, one could assess that the current military campaign that Russia is carrying out in Syria since 3 years is, in Moscow's opinion, but a self-protecting measure against the expansion, at the global level, of the Islamist extremism and a gateway for its uprooting starting from the premises offered by the Syrian civil war.

Speaking of Russia's traditional state interests, they are developing in synthesis according to two essential coordinates that are in an indestructible dependency on one another. It is about assuring its own security and, to that purpose, securing the society's prosperity and economic and social development and the latter aspect could be achieved only in the framework of a multilateral cooperation with the outside world, while the first prerequisite could be fulfilled only through securing the self-help we were speaking of before. And the dependency between these two dimensions is unavoidably disproportionate to the benefit of the security sector, without which the appropriate conditions for material prosperity could not be guaranteed. That explains the fact that, speaking of the Russian Federation only, the defense industry is much more advanced than the economic and social sector which, in their turn, bring its absolutely necessary contribution to the func-



tioning of the first segment. And this thinking of the Russian planners is to be found at the heart of the National Strategy of Defense which expires in 2020, conceived for securing the platform from which sovereign Russia will have to become a global power (*mirovya derzhava*) as supreme and top objective of the entire Russian foreign policy, an objective from which devolves, too, Russia's desire of imposing itself and of being accepted as an active and permanent participant to drawing up and adopting the major decisions of the global politics and, particularly, the decisions directly related to the security issues. Thus, the Russian political elites do not hesitate to express the opinion according to which participating at the dynamics of the international political life is better than the indifference to the *erroneous* decisions the other powers may easily take to the extent there is no correcting and warning factor on the potential danger that fundamental decisions of the global security be taken unilaterally and without the involvement of all the players participating later to its implementation. Vladimir Putin himself declared, at the 2015 session of the UN General Assembly that, in the Russian Federation's opinion, it is vital for a great power to have the influence leverages on the decisions interesting the entire international community as well as, to an equal extent, the power of influencing is a basic requirement for accessing to the statute of great power.

From this standpoint, knowing and understanding the influence instruments that the Russian foreign policy has at its disposal and



understands to use without hesitation are of a major importance for understanding the manner Moscow approaches both the concept of great power and the way Russia prefigures the role it intends to play in such a position. And the reality shows that these instruments are multiple and do not lack diversity and include strategies, methods and political, diplomatic, military, security and economic tactics that can be applied either to an entire region of the global geography or individually to certain states through a process of adaptation and "glocalisation", through adapting the global factor to the individual features in relation to local specificities or to the existing status-quo or which might exist in case of the respective regions of states. And that makes it unavoidable that certain states or groups of states benefit from a higher priority than others. From this point of view, the Middle East and the North-African Maghreb have, from a Russian perspective, a vital importance to which Russia devoted ever since the end of WWII huge investments and political, material security and of another nature resources and mention should be made that both the former Soviet Union and the contemporary Russian Federation constantly considered and declared that the policy of regional regimes change - non-democratic but stable in this part of the world - represents a practice generating serious threats to the regional stability and to the balance of forces among the global players.

Conclusions

The Middle East and North Africa will certainly continue to hold a particular place and role in the framework of the Russian Federation's foreign policy due to reasons related particularly to the fact that through its political, strategic, economic and security realities it represents for Kremlin an appreciated - and close - manoeuvring ground in the global political competition for securing a visible place among the world's great players. In spite of the fact that Russia does not have yet a holistic strategy on a long run concerning the future of this region of the planet, it is

expected that the Russian influence in this area evolve on an ascending spiral due to at least three encouraging factors in this direction. First of all, it is about a non-ideological approach of the regional realities conjugated, second of all, with the continuation of the Russian Federation's involvement in carrying out certain far-reaching projects in the nuclear and advanced technologies as well as by deliveries of arms and advanced military technique for the regional states. And, third of all, it is about the perpetuation of the competitive approaches of its interlinking with the United States of America consistent with the undeclared interests of the Arab and Islamic community.

In parallel with the process of the emergence on the global chessboard of the Russian Federation after the collapse of the former Soviet Union and even during and after the "Arab springs", which criss-crossed the MENA area, Russia recorded a strengthening of its diplomatic presence and of its initiatives of economic cooperation in the Arab space, a dynamism stimulated by the effect of the economic sanctions imposed by the international community after the annexation of Crimea which determined the Kremlin to redirect to other markets its financial and economic relations for grasping alternatives to the problems it faces in its relations with the Euro-Atlantic space. It was not about turning its back to the industrialised countries, but to identify other functional outlets not only in the MENA area but also in Latin America or in Asia.

There exist difficulties and they will further ex-



ist yet what cannot be questioned now is the fact that the diplomacy that accompanied Vladimir Putin's rise managed to place the Russian Federation in a central and unavoidable position in the general context of the Middle East and a undisputed proof to this sense is offered by the file of the Syrian internal war where Moscow's positions and approaches is the bet on which depends to the greatest extent the future of peace and war.

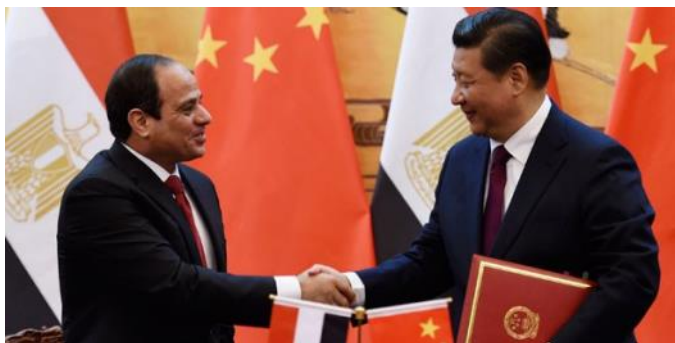
It remains to be seen whether Vladimir Putin will find the resilience resources on a long term for the Russian foreign policy and strategy in an ever unpredictable and lesser conciliatory world with itself.

TRAJECTORIES OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE ARAB WORLD

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

During July 7th-10th, the emir of the State of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, paid an official visit to China – a usual event in the practice of the inter-state relations, yet which retained the attention of the observers and commentators by the fact that the summit dialogue brought to the forefront the dynamism and the amplitude of the policy Beijing is promoting in its multiform interlinking with the Arab world of the Middle East, in general, and with the oil producing states of the Arab-Persic Gulf area, in particular.

Beyond the stereotypical phrases uttered under such circumstances with regard to the objective of the visit – that of "strengthening the bilateral relations" – it should be mentioned that the small Gulf emirate was the first member state of the subregional organisation of the Gulf Cooperation Council (a traditional ally of the United States) which established diplomatic relations with Peoples' Republic of China after it was the first of the Gulf monarchies which, in 2013, signed with Beijing a MoU for the cooperation in carrying out the Chinese project of the new "Silk Road" and of the "belt" of transcontinental transport relating to it. Kuwait's joining this



grandiose project brought about positive consequences as the country became gradually an important financial center in the north of the Arab-Persian Gulf and one of the six international economic corridors achieved so far as part of the abovementioned project. On the same background, emir Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah spoke about building in his country in cooperation with China of a "silk city" on an area equal to 10% of the surface of the State of Kuwait meant to be one of the first pillars supporting the Kuwaiti program aimed to phase out the economic dependency on oil as sole source of national income and the transition to a diversified economy integrated into the international flow of production and circulation of material goods.

The Kuwaiti project reveals just a tiny part of the ample cooperation China is carrying out in the field of its relations with the Arab world marked and dynamized by the official working visits the Chinese president Xi Jinping paid in 2016 in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran. During his tour, the Chinese leader offered special loans worth \$15 billion for developing industrial projects, \$10 billion commercial loans in the energy field and another \$10 billion with preferential interest rates. A joint fund worth \$20 billion is to be set up with the United Arab Emirates for projects in the field of conventional energy and another amounts of \$15 billion are to be invested in Egypt in the fields of energy, transport and infrastructure.

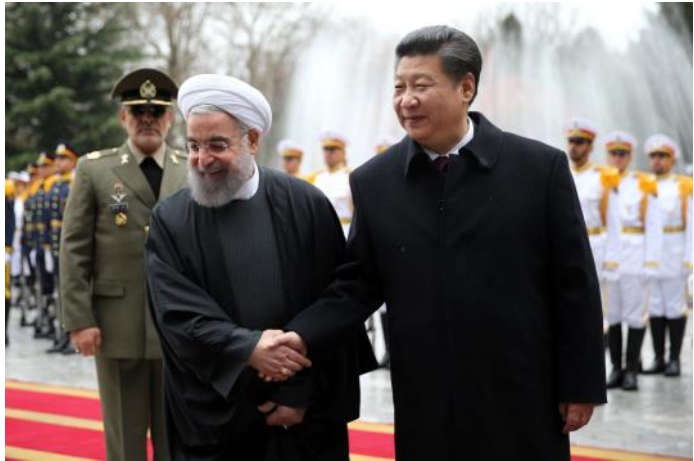
In the speech delivered on the occasion of his visit to the Cairo headquarters of the Arab League, the Chinese president informed about China's launching a strategic political dialogue with eight Arab states and signing various cooperation agreements with another five Arab coun-

tries aimed at carrying out joint projects circumscribed to the "new silk road" program.

The Chinese-Arab cooperation is not new, yet especially after the political changes the Arab Middle East witnessed in 2011, a "Forum of Cooperation between China and the Arab World" was set up while numerous Arab-speaking states in the area took part in setting up an "Asian Bank of Investments in Infrastructure" and several conferences and working meetings were organized in the Arab capitals of the Gulf to debate and launch numerous investments and development projects aimed exclusively to the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Mention should be made that the volume of the commercial exchanges between China and the Arab partners amounts to more than \$200 billion and Beijing and the Arab capitals are connected by more than 100 daily flights.

The experts estimate that, in perspective, Beijing will maintain its interest and the orientation towards the expansion of investment operations amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars with a special focus on developing the transportation field, on building ports and port installations, railway thoroughfares and highways to be connected to the linking system between China and the Middle East and North Africa and to the extra-regional links which will be included in the project of the transport belt pertaining to the "silk road".

This Chinese ample movement of economic and commercial expansion is carefully tracked by the United States of America and the officials, strategists and analysts of the Donald Trump Administration evaluate that this dynamics will lead sooner or later to China's dangerous strategic and military rise, a fact that, according to some mass-media commentators, explains the escalation of the strained political and economic relations between Washington and Beijing, threatened with triggering a real trade war between the two powers. The same analysts appreciate, too, that the American apprehension towards the perspective that the development by the Chinese side of the "Made in China - 2025" project perceived as a serious source of competition for



the United States and the European Union especially in the fields of "clean" and "intelligent" energies, of the industrial robotics, IT and, generally, high-tech, of space techniques, of cars powered with renewable energy, high-performance medicine, fundamental pharmaceuticals etc. and the perspective that by 2025 around 70% of the components of these products will be produced in China are at the origin of the campaign Donald Trump is promoting now.

China's rapid economic and commercial expansion in the Middle East, the Arab-Persian Gulf area and in Latin America as well are part and parcel of Beijing's reaction strategy to the current conflicted economic climate and the Chinese side orientation towards the Gulf region for instance is based on a non complicated at all principle, namely the principle of penetrating relatively stable zones, irrespective of their form of government and the doctrinary or ideological filliation of the regime in power. In the Chinese vision, the economic strengthening through investments, raising the living standard of the society and the prospects of social and economic development are guarantees of stability and, implicitly, of a long term cooperation in the respective regions and states.

There are many specialists and analysts who try to elaborate a plausible answer to the question concerning the extent to which China has the capacity of becoming a force equal or parallel with the United States in the Middle East Region. The current reality makes difficult a positive answer to this question at least on a predictable future.



On the other hand, the policy of expanding the Chinese influence in the Middle East region generally and in the Arab-Persian Gulf in particular is built on using the "soft power" even if when it is about military conflicts where China has a more recent presence and limited to logistic aspects and quantitatively reduced military deliveries, without a significant human participation on the battlefields. In other words, it is about the fact that in the Arab world, China is part of the last group of new comers in a region which traditionally and through its historical links is closer and more open to the relations with the Western world and particularly the United States. And this historical and psychological aspect could prove a factor of slowing down the pace with which China wants to become a threatening competitor for the Western strategic, security, economic and commercial interests. That does not mean that following a slower yet steady pace, the balance of presence and influence with the Western, trans-Atlantic world would not have, on a medium run, the chances that the Chinese side becomes an attractive and competitive enough player for imposing itself as an important performer on the chessboard of the Arab world of the Middle East.



OLDER IDEAS IN REFURBISHED OUTFIT: AN ARAB NATO

Reza SHAHRESTANI

The echoes of the last NATO summit in Brussels on July 11-12th, about which some analysts say that it has deeply affected the image of the organisation as an Euro-American alliance with a defining anti-Soviet and anti-Russian vocation, did not fade away when the belicose rhetorics against Iran resumed in Washington by bringing back on stage the older idea, already launched several times and several times abandoned as well due to various reasons. It is about the American project of achieving a political and security coalition between the United States and a series of Arab states (which number differed from an attempt to another). This time, the pact Donald Trump has in view is called temporarily the "Strategic Alliance of the Middle East" which is to bring together, besides the United States, the six Arab monarchies members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the Sultanate of Oman), Egypt and the Hasmite Kingdom of Jordan. Conceived as representing a low-key replica of the North Atlantic Treaty, this Arab-speaking and Sunni Muslim NATO is to be officially set up on the occasion of the next summit of the nine future members which is to take place, in principle as well, in Washington on 12th-13th October.

Circumscribed to the (for the time being) media and economic war between Donald Trump Administration and the theocratic regime in Tehran, the old initiative, refurbished and updated is obviously directed against Iran and provides for, among others, achieving a common American-Arab system of counteracting the Iranian expansion in the regional space by setting up an ample defense system against Iran's arsenal of ballistic missiles, training the partner armies in the framework of the future "Arab NATO", supplying the partners with advanced fighting technique (delivered, of course, on cash basis by the Ameri-

can defense industry), carrying out joint or common drills, fighting the terrorist phenomenon and accomplishing "other missions of diplomatic and economic cooperation". Surprisingly, the first reactions came from some Arabic-speaking analysts and experts who were shocked by Trump's Administration abrupt opening towards an alliance with a Gulf Cooperation Council which, in political terms, represents currently but a shadow of its name to which Egypt and Jordan are added and whose economies and military potentials are heavily subsidized by the American assistance.

For the Jordanian columnist Abdel Bari Atwan of the Londonese publication *Rai Al-Yaum* (The Opinion of the Day), the real objective of the project submitted by Trump Administration would not be setting up a shield against Iranian "existential threat" but mainly securing for the American Treasury and defense industry a substantial source of financial revenues, much bigger than those cashed so far after the visit paid last year by president Trump to Riyadh when contracts worth some \$200 billion were agreed upon.

The analyses drawn up by the experts on the Middle East issues and on the American-Arab interlinking show that the idea promoted by the American side is far from being promising or feasible and there are a lot of arguments to this effect.

First of all it is about the deep discrepancy existing between the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the rather metaphorical usage of NATO acronym for defining an alliance scraped up circumstantially. The North Atlantic political and military alliance was established under historical circumstances following WWII and was to a high degree an ideological and geopolitical entity based on a Western defense strategy against Soviet Russia and the Russian Federation after the Cold War was over. Or, an alliance involving nine arab states of Sunni confession directed against Shiite Iran could ignite reactions against the danger of deepening the religious sectarian conflict which drew anyway a profound fault line between Sunni and Shia at the



level of the Arab community which, confronted with such a situation, would be less ready or not at all ready to accept an alliance under Saudi Arabia command and serving its interests in the war with the Iranian Shiism for regional supremacy and hegemony. Second of all, it is about the situation existing since more than a year within the Gulf Cooperation Council, an organisation extremely weakened by the cleavage occurred between the Saudi monarchy and its Emirati, Bahraini and Kuwaiti satellites on the one hand, and the emirate of Qatar, on the other hand and of which Donald Trump himself is no stranger. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to contemplate that the virtual "Strategic Alliance of the Middle East" will enjoy the necessary economic, military and strategic cohesion when Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are in the quagmire of the Yemeni war and, on the opposite side, Qatar, which was excluded from the club of petro-monarchies yet hosts the greatest American military presence in the region.

It can be stated that the idea of the new "Arab NATO" is promoted in an extremely complicated context and climate: the rise on the power ladder of the Shiites in Iraq after the last general elections, the change of the political power equation in Lebanon where Hezbollah won the elections in the first half of this year, Iran made another step towards "reaching the warm waters of the Mediterranean" and "the provisional government in charge in Beirut led by the former prisoner of the Saudis, Saad Al-Hariri", is negoti-



ating with Bashar Al-Assad's government and with the Russian Federation the pressing issue of repatriating around 1 million Syrians displaced on the Lebanese territory, Saudi Arabia's and its satellites' atavistic incapacity of dealing alone with any foreign aggression and the questions asked in connection with Bahrain's Kuwait's, Oman's, Egypt's and Jordan's availability (more than doubtful) of accepting, for the sake of the American initiatives, an increased supremacy of Saudi Arabia over these countries and of the entire Middle East are all factors questioning the feasibility, efficiency and the durability of the illusory Arab NATO.

The current Saudi-led military "anti-terrorist" alliance on the Yemeni fronts is, in simple terms, a retouched form of the old conceptual approach according to which Riyadh bet on huge financial expenses as guarantor for solving the internal problems and regional conflicted files. Yet three years of war by proxies on the Yemeni front and the upheavals on the global market of conventional energy brought the Wahhabite kingdom a structural crisis which, moreover, is marked by the recent rapprochements – sanctioned by agreements – among Iran, Turkey and Qatar – a fact with an important potential of influencing the regional security equation. In its turn, the Russian Federation expressed already its distancing and the negative approach of the "unrealistic" and "futile" idea of setting up a "mini-NATO" in an area already eaten up by tensions and conflicts. At the same time, it cannot be excluded that once this Arabic-speaking NATO is set up prove to be not necessarily an "Iranophobe" exclusive entity only given the cir-

cumstances where the relations between Turkey, on the one hand, and the United States, Israel and Egypt (as member of an Eastern NATO), on the other hand, are on a downward trajectory towards divergencies and more and more exacerbated conflicts.

Beyond the bets and questions concerning the realism, necessity and feasibility of the project promoted by Donald Trump Administration, this summer proved to be a season of "big deals" conceived by the White House leader among which, not the last on the list, in chronological order, is that of cloning in vitro an Arabic NATO taken out from a test tube and subject to an insidious promotion campaign in a moment when the international community was following breathless the odyssey of the American withdrawal from the nuclear treaty with Iran followed by the carousel of sanctions, by the war of words which stake was the closure or not of the Strait of Hormuz and, ipso facto, the break out or not of a "real" war with the Iranian Islamic regime, a new "masterstroke" was launched by Donald Trump who took a break from the Arabic NATO and announced, at the beginning of August his availability of meeting the Iranian officials without preconditions.

In a way it was about a scenario of contradictions similar, from a filmmaking perspective, to the episodes of meetings in Singapore with the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and in Helsinki with Vladimir Putin.

Is a new "historical" summit Trump-Rohani under way?

IRAN-THE USA: FROM THE WAR ON TWITTER TO THE "MOTHER OF ALL WARS" ?

Reza SHAHRESTANI

After the president Donald Trump announced on May 18th new conjugated sanctions against the regime in Tehran and, as the "D-Day" of their coming into force is coming closer, an acerbic war of martial declarations is waged between the officials in the White House led by Donald Trump himself and the Iranian officials having as standard-bearer the president Hassan Rohani. It is a war which is carried out on social media – preferably Twitter – with a sophisticated panoply of offenses, threats, insults with diplomatic language pretension. On the Potomac banks, Donald Trump was joined by the even more prolific head of the American diplomacy, Mike Pompeo and the warlike advisor on the National Security John Bolton, making up a trio whose discourse induces the feeling that hostility and the American-Iranian tensions reached a magnitude on a brink where the words leave the arms talk.

Here there are some revealing samples of dialogue:

- Donald Trump: *"Never threaten the United States as you will have consequences very few experienced during the history"* (a hint of Hiroshima and Nagasaki wondered some commentators);

- Javad Zarif, the Iranian minister of Foreign Affairs: *"We are not impressed by threats. We have been hearing threats during the last forty years and have been hearing threats millenia on end. We witnessed the fall of many empires, the Persian empire included, yet Iran survived while*

many other states vanished";

- Donald Trump : *"We are not a country indifferent to your thoughtless declarations on violence and death"*;

- Hassan Rohani, the president of Iran: *"Do not play with the tail of the lion since you will regret that forever. America should understand that*



if peace with Iran is the mother of all peaces, the war with with Iran will be the mother of all wars";

- Gholam Hossein, general, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard: *"We will never give up the ideals of our revolution. All America wants is to destroy Iran, but Trump is unable to do anything against us"*.

Not once the exchange of caustic messages was the preamble of wars with disastrous consequences yet that does not mean necessarily that such a war of declarations is always a prelude to armed action. This acid confrontation between Donald Trump Administration and the Iranian Mullahs is not a novelty at least as far as the White House leader is concerned and the vitriolic polemic that took place between Donald Trump and the North Korean leader Kim Jong-un ended, for the time being, in a note of cordial optimism offers a peremptory confirmation in the sense of the abovementioned reality.

As it was natural, the American-Iranian polemic stirred up the interest and the comments of the

observers in the media and political science space all the more so since the public discourse of the American president did not offered credible clues in what concern the Trump Administration's strategic intentions in its networking with the Islamic Republic of Iran whose Islamist regime represents, according to commentators, a lesser Satan which should be removed one way or another.

There are also opinions according to which Donald Trump's virulent outbursts are a "diversion" he devised under the circumstances of the frustrating reactions stirred up in America and of the internal criticism towards the non-offensive or even the defensive attitude the president adopted during the "historical" summit in Helsinki with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. "Upset by the absence of a notable progress in the dialogue he had with both the North Korean leader and with Vladimir Putin, Donald Trump wants to play the tough guy and

to deflect the attention and the criticism aimed at his performances of late" assessed Aaron David Miller, a veteran diplomat and negotiator during several American administrations, who added that "whether Donald Trump's tirades, written in capital letters prove something, they simply show that the United States has no worked out policy on the Iranian issue".

After the first half of this summer witnessed the hot temperature of a throbbing "Trojan War" that took place on Twitter, on July 24th, in accordance with the well known director's script of surprises, Donald Trump used the opportunity of a meeting with war veterans in Missouri for announcing *urbi et orbi*, that, as a reminder of the famous Jean Giraoudoux's play, the Trojan War (the real one) is not taking place any more, at least in a foreseeable future. "The United States, president Trump said, are ready to conclude with Iran a genuine nuclear agreement, different to the catastrophic agreement signed

THE SECTARIAN BALANCE OF POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST



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In Iraq, Regional Players Try to Gain Influence



by the precedent Administration”.

Donald Trump did not refer to details and avoided especially an answer to the thorny issue whether Washington has in view a renegotiation without preconditions or if it starts with keeping in place the 12 preconditions imposed to Iran and announced on May 21th by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, conditions out of which no less than 10 have no connection with Iran’s nuclear programs but rather the expression of ante-factum meddling in the domestic affairs of the theocratic regime.

For the time being, we witnessed two Donald Trump’s “historical” summits – with Kim Jong-un and Vladimir Putin. Is the Trump-Rohani round following?

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST AND ITS CONFRONTATION LINES.

THE IRANIAN COMPLEX

Dumitru CHICAN

Introduction

The political, security and military situation in the Middle East region is dominated by the contradictory and menacing developments of the confrontation between two fronts represented, on the one hand, by the Iranian “file” whereby the same players, state and non-state, act according to the same ideology, and the anti-Iranian ideological and doctrinary “alliance” led by the United States under Donald Trump’s mandate and made up of a “West” witnessing an acute identity crisis especially by reference to the tradition of Euro-American values under test in what concern the very definition of the democratic “West”.

What attracts especially

the attention is the fact that during the last years this rivalry concentrated around the tensions between Iran and Washington has reached now a metastases state. The battlefields and the fault lines multiplied as did the threatening virulence of their manner of manifestation and created a situation whereby their interlinking and networking might lead to a spark which, ignited in a segment of this geographical area, has enough energy for igniting direct inter-state conflicts that much more complex to turn the region into a chessboard on which the interests of the great extra-regional players lead by the United States and the Russian Federation are confronting each other.

The Iranian challenge

An overview of the current map of the Middle East will easily highlight an obvious reality characterized by the unprecedented level of the expansion of the Islamic Republic’s regional influence during the last decades. The same reality confirms that Tehran is exercising, with different degrees of amplitude and intensity, its own control over Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen at a superior level than the one that could be registered before the invasion of Iraq and the removal from power of the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Currently, the Arabic monarchies on the western coast of the Gulf, allied by tradition with the Western world and the trans-Atlantic



institutional structures, as well as Israel, from specific security reasons, perceive Iran's ideological and military expansion as a threat to their own stability and to the regional security system. In promoting and implementing its strategy inspired by the Khomeinist doctrine of the "export of the Islamic Shiite revolution", the regime in Tehran succeeded in setting up a network of regional state and non-state allies evolving on an ascendant trajectory. In Iraq, the powerful Islamic Revolution Guard (*Pasdaran*) managed in connection with the Iraqi Shiite elites to exert an intense and generalized control over state institutions, economy and society between Tigris and Euphrates rivers. More recently, Baghdad and Tehran announced reaching an agreement on recommissioning the pipeline connecting the oil fields in Kirkuk to Iran for increasing the conventional energy exports to extra-regional consumers.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah, considered a Lebanese branch of the Iranian theocratic regime, dominates today the entire Lebanon's political and military life and represents in fact an efficient blocking factor of the decision-making and executive process of the Lebanese government, especially when four months after the last parliamentary elections, the politicized sectarianism, foreign meddling and the autocracy of the political groups and clans prevented the creation of the new government resulting from the May vote. For Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah could be considered a successful paradigm and prototype of non-state actor devoted to the interests of the regime in Tehran.

In the Syrian space, the grievances of the 2011 popular upheavals which evolved in a revolution against the regime of Bashar Al-Assad whose father, Hafez Al-Assad, was one of the closest supporters of the Iranian regime during the 1980-1988 Iraqi-Iranian war, offered a godsend opportunity for the Iranian interference and expansion. Syria's strong military, economic and social penetration by the militias and mechanisms of the Revolutionary Guard proves to be now a new hotbed of conflict which may degenerate at any moment into a conflagration with neighbouring Israel especially when the Iranian

military withdrawal from the Syrian front - rejected by the regime in Tehran and, unofficially, by the Russian Federation - seems to be a new Gordian knot in front of the process of ending the war in Syria.

On the other hand, Iran managed to maintain and even develop its relations with Turkey and Qatar and this rapprochement was fostered by the tensions that came up in the relations between Riyadh and Ankara, on the one hand, and between Qatar and the rest of the Arab Gulf monarchies, with the exception of the Sultanate of Oman.

Reactions and tendencies of confrontation

For the regional rivals, the rise of the Iranian influence represents a keenly felt threat, especially for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates which handle the dissensions with the Iranian Islamic regime from a strong religious and sectarian determination and in the light of the concern towards the influence the latter might have on the Shiite sectarian communities living on the territories of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Yemen and which can be exploited by the Iranian destabilising and undermining policy on the chessboard of the small monarchies. The same "existential" threat is perceived of coming from Iran for the national security interests of the State of Israel. It is the convergence point which explains today the dramatic change of weathervane in the regional policy of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and, less transparent, of the other petro-monarchies in the Gulf of rapprochement to Israel up to the orientation of normalising the political relations with the latter. Bringing back on the agenda by Donald Trump Administration of the older idea - adapted to the strategic imperatives of the contemporaneity - of setting up a "Strategic Alliance of the Middle East" to be made up of the United States, the six emirates in the Gulf, Egypt and Jordan meant to deploy a strategy of containing the Iranian expansion in the geography of the region is circumscribed to the same context of counteracting the "Persian threat". Typically for the manner of thinking of the states making up



The anti-Iran alliance: the Sunni-Shia ratio

the "anti-Iranian front" is the idea that the Islamic Republic of Iran's ambitions and the political, military and sectarian projects could be stopped only by resorting to the force of arms. And this conviction deepened gradually on the background of a strong encouragement and support from the new Donald Trump's Administration. This position of the Administration is backed, too, by the assessment of the new staff of the president according to whom Iran represents, after the terrorist group "Islamic State", the major threat for the regional order supported by the United States and by Donald Trump's personal estimations and who is determined to "cleanse" the American strategy and foreign policy promoted by the former president Barack Obama.

From the point of view of the Gulf Sunni Arab states, the rise to the White House of an Administration made up of "hawks" and headed by a "hawk" personified by president Trump represents an opportunity which cannot be missed for "containing" radically the Iranian ambitions which was not possible under the former Ameri-

can administrations. To an equal extent, the White House considers that achieving a common consolidated anti-Iranian front may provide an opportunity for making rapid progresses towards the normalisation of the relations among the Gulf Sunni Arab states, for restoring the internal cohesion of the Gulf Cooperation Council as well as between the group of these states, on the one hand, and the Jewish state, on the other hand, which, in

its turn could facilitate accomplishing, in accordance with the American approaches, of the "big deal of the century" of solving the chronic Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Yet mentions should be made that this convergence of interests and approaches of the relating to the Iranian regime is not sufficient in itself for the "American-Arab-Israeli strategic alliance" leading automatically to piece together a coherent, strong and workable anti-Iranian front.

It is true that both Israel and some Gulf Arab states such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates manifest more or less openly the orientation towards a rapprochement to Israel around the same idea of opposition to the Iranian project of yet it is equally true the fact that these states could reach too soon together the cohesion meeting Tehran's high ability of promptly mobilizing the resources, the allies and the non-state franchises into actions of preventing the operational capacity of an Israeli-Arab "axis". On the other hand, if the anti-Iranian approaches of the regimes in Riyadh and



The south-west Syrian front and the Golan Heights

Abu Dhabi are intersecting with the Israeli interests, one questions the extent to which and up to what limits would the Arab monarchies advance in normalising the relations with Israel when the steps concerning the statute of Jerusalem or the recently adopted "law of nationality" in Israel, for instance, a too insistent rapprochement to Israel could be met with hostility by the aggregate Sunni world and, so much more, by the Muslim Siite sect.

The fact that the Gulf monarchies, Saudi Arabia included, do not dispose of and will not dispose in the foreseeable future of the ample human, technological and logistic resources the Israeli state disposes of is no less important. Besides, such a step towards Israel could generate, at least in Saudi Arabia, dangerous internal reactions for the very stability and remanence of the monarchic regime which is seriously affected by the repressive steps which, driven by his ambition of absolute power, the crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman has adopted against some members of the royal family, the clergy, of the big businessmen or against the military and officers caste.

Last, but not the least, a Sunni anti-Iran alliance is lacking a Sunni rearguard securing through territorial in-depth and political, logistic and economic backing in case of a major conflict. The

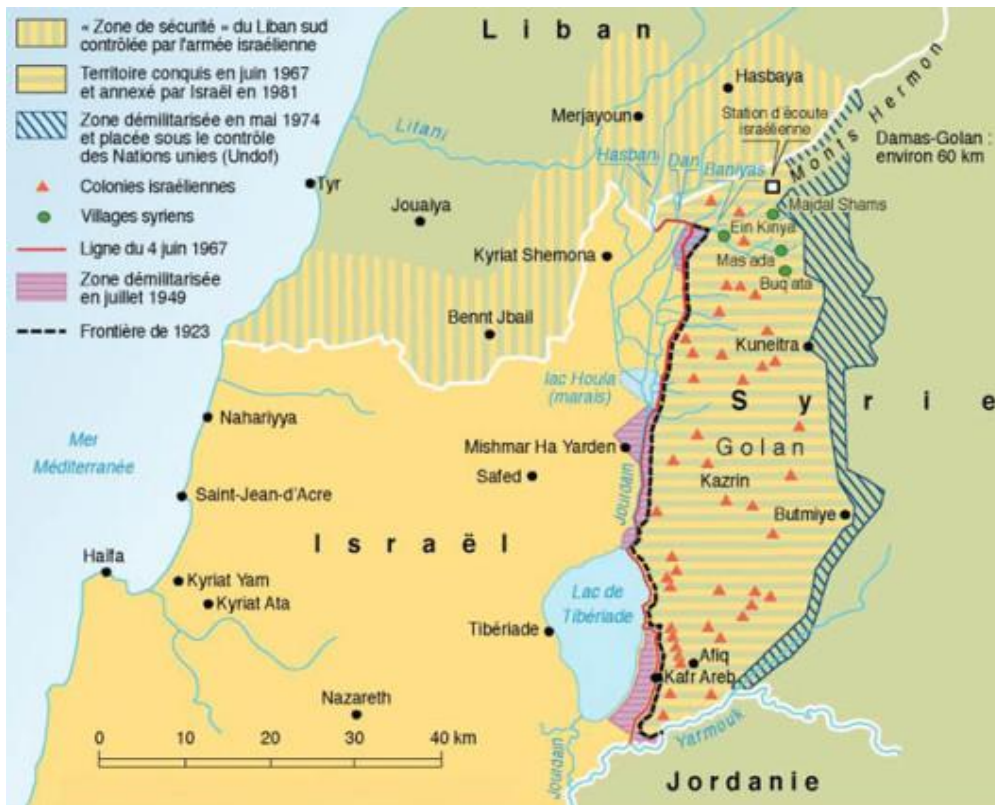
key actors, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel have rather the interest of annihilating the Iranian threat within their near proximity – be it their own territory or the conflicted grounds where they are involved (the Saudis and the Emiratis in Yemen, the Israelis in Syria and Lebanon) than achieving a unitary and workable union. In spite of the substantial financial aids received from Saudi Arabia and the United States, Egypt is in the same situation and is not ready to engage in adventures which, for the time being, are based not on real possibilities and guarantees of success but rather on wishes.

So far, none of the camps have proceeded with implementing measures suggesting an active preparation for a future inter-state war in the Arabic-Persian Gulf. However, both camps are favourable to implementing such steps. "Our region will not calm down if we continue to be inactive, a Gulf official declared and added that "the Arab regimes have no intention of sharing with Iran this region of the Middle East".

SYRIA: THE RETURN TO QUNEITRA

Maher NABOULSI, Syria

During the last 10-days of July and after a relatively short offensive, the Syrian army retook under control from the armed opposition formations the country's south and south-west regions, namely Daraa, Soueida and Bosra districts at the border with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In a series of territorial reconquests including Aleppo and Rakka in the north, Homs, in the center, and the entire Ghouta oasis around Damascus, the loyalist forces managed, with the



background of the attacks of the Islamist militias, particularly Al-Nusra Front (the Syrian Al-Qaida) and Islamic State (Daesh). The UN observers forces are to resume their mission at the buffer zone in the Golan as soon as the appropriate conditions are secured, after the confrontations in this perimeter of the Syrian internal war come to an end. (Note: On August 6th a first echelon of UNDOF troops resumed the patrolling missions in the Golan and the first missions were carried out together with the Russian military police. According to general

The red triangles represent the Jewish settlements in the Syrian annexed Golan

same support from the Russian Federation and with the agreement (not sanctioned in official documents) of the United States and Israel, to come closer to ending the military file of the Syrian internal war following the capitulation of the Islamist forces of Al-Qaida and the redeployment in the district capital Quneitra and alongside the armistice line between the Syrian side and the annexed part of the strategic Golan Heights as it was established by the Ceasefire Agreement after the October 1973 war.

The military arrangements among the directly involved actors and agreed upon including during the last summit Vladimir Putin – Donald Trump in Helsinki, have explicitly provided for the advance of the regime forces up to the armistice line and the provisional taking over the control by the Russian military police in this area, including the portion where from 1973 until 2014 was covered by the international observers forces supervising the ceasefire, multinational forces that acted under the name of *United Nations Disengagement Observer Forces* – UNDOF which withdrew temporarily on the

Serghei Rudetskoi, of the Russian general staff in Syria, the missions carried out by the Russian Military police will be taken over by the Syrian national army in the forthcoming period).

The implementation of the "Quneitra Agreement" started short time after the summit in Helsinki between the presidents of the United States and the Russian Federation when the two agreed upon the necessity of "uprooting terrorism" in the south-west of the Syrian national territory and, to that sense, to reactivate the provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement concluded between Syria and Israel which entered into force in May 1974, after the fourth major Arab-Israeli conflagration and both Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin insisted that coming back to the situation existing in the Golan Heights before the Syrian upheavals broke out in 2011 offers, at least under the current status-quo reality, the only leverage meeting the Israeli security interests and to secure the calm at the Israeli-Syrian demarcation line in the Golan Heights. A telling proof in this sense – the two heads of state agreed upon – is the fact that during more

than 40 years since the end of the October 1973 war, no worth mentioning incident took place in the Golan Heights.

The Arab-speaking media outlets did not hesitate to consider that the "revival" of the 1974 Ceasefire Agreement and the transfer of the Syrian part of the Golan Heights, not occupied by Israel, under Damascus's authority offers in principle as well the perspective that, after the end of the Syrian internal conflict, political and diplomatic initiatives be launched for resuming peace negotiations between Syria and the State of Israel including in what concern the future statute of the Golan Heights. A conflicted issue which solving prospects relates more to fantasy as long as all Israeli governments since 1967 to the current Benjamin Netanyahu cabinet declared bluntly that "the annexation of Golan is final and irreversible" and Israel carried out in this territory ample programs of economic, touristic, real estate and agricultural development and it is risky to think it will ever give them up.

Were the last developments on the southern and south-western fronts of the Syrian national territory to be evaluated in terms of "winners and losers", the conclusion that can be drawn is that Bashar Al-Assad's regime and its allies are in the winners camp. The Damascus regime's attempts to reconquer the enclaves and the sites held by the opposition close to or within the Golan district are not recent. They started in 2014 but failed regularly due to the fact – as the Syrian officials state – that the fighting opposition militias benefitted each time from a substantial military, logistic and information support from Israel and its military and security institutions. One may say that taking the southern and south-western districts under control and mainly Deraa, Soueida and Quneitra regions, cumulated with the previous progresses the Syrian army registered in Homs and the Damascene Ghouta as well as securing the control over the national frontiers with Lebanon and Iraq, are as many elements for strengthening the government position in the future peace negotiations with an opposition which, in their majority, laid down its arms and is limited to find shelters where they can possibly return to a civilian life waiting for

other negotiations and for other "agreements" agreed upon by others.

A retrospective look at the picture offered by the Syrian opposition during the seven years of war highlights the reality that, from its very emergence or, better said, from its creation in foreign labs or chanceries, the opposition, in the entirety of its political and military structures, exhibited with a pride unjustified by deeds, another kind of "opposition" which proved counterproductive, namely the rejection and resistance to the concept of criticism, no matter how friendly and sincere the latter proved, and their smaller or bigger leaders stucked obsessively to a single idea which gave the essence of their doctrinary and political program: Bashar Al-Assad's removal from power exclusively by force and with the help of foreign forces. It was an idea which attraction power was not limited to the political formations and to the fighting squads of the opposition but was also in vogue among the intellectual and philosophical circles. The bet on the military potential and foreign assistance proved delusional yet that did not bring about either a critical analysis or a coherent attempt of combining the power factor with the advantages of dialogue and diplomatic negotiations among the opposition circles. Today, after rigidity and intolerance proved their lack of efficacy during all the episodes when the opposition lost, beginning with the battle for Aleppo, passing through the battles for Rakka, Homs, Hama up to the failures in Ghouta, Qalamoun, Daraa and south-west of the country, the obvious conclusion to be drawn reconfirm the truth that the Syrian opposition was not, from the very beginning, and did not manifest itself as a natural and energetic fruit of the upheavals and protests of the Syrian society. All these determined the different echelons of the opposition – secular, sectarian or of other color – to engage in an acerbic internal struggle for "monopolising" the Syrian revolution not to the benefit of the victimised Syrians but to the benefit of their own illusions, pride or obediences to the foreign interests and patrons.

Today, the opposition lays down the arms and recognises that it ended lamentably its role on

the contorted chessboard of the Syrian "revolution". It is left only with the late meditation about the errors and the causes that produced them.

And, maybe the future generations of Syrians will accept a lesson which, even if it has a bitter taste, it is life generated: that the revolutions waged with money, arms and benefits received from foreigners and to the prevailing interests of foreigners will be nothing but what the Arabic folklore names by the adjective "orphan".

SYRIA: THE KURDISH CONNECTION, FROM "ROJAVA" TO THE SYRIAN DECENTRALISED STATE

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

After the September 2017 failed referendum for Iraqi Kurdistan's independence, followed by a series of adverse developments on the Syrian front war where the Kurdish ethnics were engaged in offensives meant to secure an extension of their presence area and to proclaim the so-called Rojava as entity with state autonomy features on the two banks of the Euphrates River, which failed as well as a result of the opposi-

tion encountered from both the Syrian regime and the Russian Federation, Turkey and the United States, the Syrian Kurdish minority and their claims resurfaced in a surprising manner on the political and military chessboard of the Syrian conflict. The surprise came on July 26th, through a meeting of direct negotiations between the representatives of the regime and the "Syria's Democratic Forces".

The event took place on the background of the important territorial advances gained in the country's south and south-west by Bashar Al-Assad's army who is preparing for conquering the last rebels' strongholds concentrated mainly in Idlib and Deir Ezzor, situated at the western and eastern extremities of the line separating the territory controlled by Kurds and considered territory of the forthcoming Rojava state (30% of the national territory) from the "workable Syria" which territory is under the control of the loyal army supported by the Russian, Iranian allies and Hezbollah.

It resulted from the few press statements made by the Kurdish participants to the meeting with the regime's representatives that this first official reunion of substance (after the Syrian Kurdish ethnics were systematically marginalised

and practically excluded from all the phases of the Geneva, Astana and Sochi political process), the sides agreed upon setting up a joint working committee for "developing the bilateral dialogue and continuing the negotiations for drawing up a road map leading finally to the agreement upon a democratic and decentralised Syria". The term, used for the first time in the tortuous process of Syria's



In orange, the territory controlled by the Kurdish minority in June, 2018

pacification, has a significance directly related to the future form of of state and political and administrative organisation where the "decentralisation" term replaces the "federalization" sintagm and that assumes a wide system of extended autonomy for the Kurds, which principles and nuances are to be agreed upon later through negotiations.

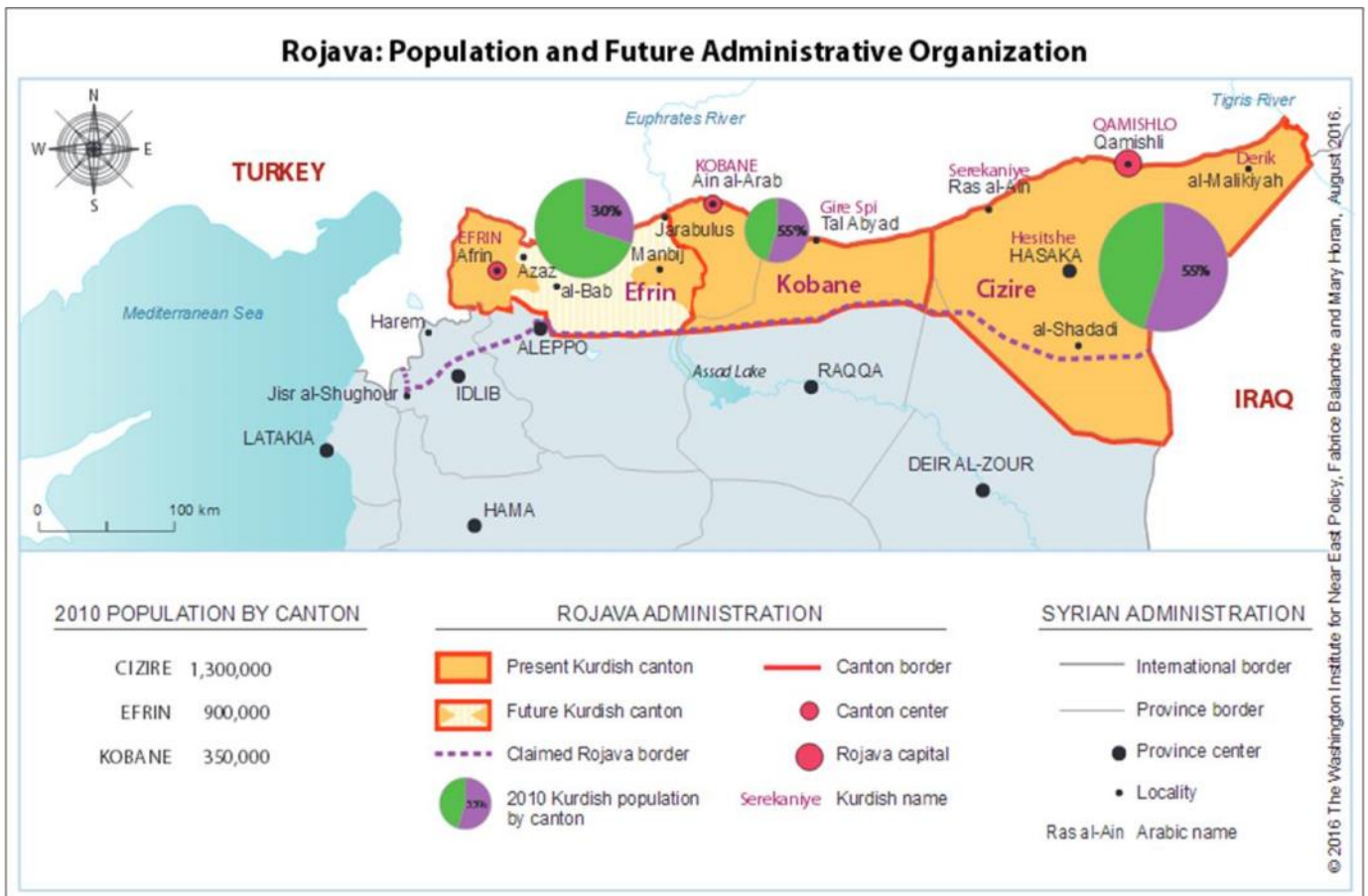
In spite of the fact that there are numerous diverging points between the Syrian Kurdish community and the regime in Damascus, in approaching this issue convergent points are found which allowed this fundamental change of strategy of both sides.

Geographically and militarily, QUSD Kurdish militias are placed second in the hierarchy of non-government rebel forces with an increased territorial control especially after 2012, when the Syrian army withdrew gradually from the northern and north-eastern areas adjacent to the borders with Turkey while the Kurdish formations succeeded, with the United States' military and political support, in expanding eastward to the majority of Rakka district (the for-

mer fiefdom of the terrorist organisation Islamic State), the quasitotality of Deir Ezzor district as well as to the administrative districts of Hasakeh and Qamishli where they proclaimed temporarily the autonomy of Rojava entity. In the north-western extremity of the territory, following the operations launched by the Turkish army code-named "Olive Branch", the Kurdish enclave Afrin passed under the control of the Turkish expeditionary army and the militias of the Free Syrian Army, an enclave which the Kurdish political leaders hope to reconquer in the future either through peace arrangements or the arms way.

How can this rapprochement between the Kurdish separatists and the Syrian regime be understood at a moment where there are many signals, from the foreign actors involved in the conflict as well, with regard to the perspective of reaching a consensus on the termination of the conflict, the transit to Syria's pacification and raising the issue of the return to the country of the Syrian refugees?

As far as the Kurds are concerned, there is no



doubt that the dream of proclaiming a state entity (Rojava) shattered for a long time, at least having in mind Turkey's hostility and Ankara's insistence on keeping its armed presence on the Syrian territory and even to extend its military measures for preventing the emergence of a Kurdish "state" alongside the border with Syria and then diminishing up to the termination of the logistic, military and moral assistance the United States granted to the Kurds rebels.

Donald Trump's repeated contradictory declarations about the United States intentions to withdraw "very soon" from Syria, then the fears of a possible procedure of surpassing the dissensions between Washington and Ankara, the future of the Syrian Kurdistan included, the reservations maintained by president Vladimir Putin in collusion with Donald Trump in what concern the Syrian Kurdish ethnics independentist projects are but a few of the elements generating fears among the Kurds that under such confused circumstances they risk losing abruptly the support, while it is still, from all those who granted it them so far, to be isolated and caught between the Turkish hammer and the Syrian regime's anvil, namely to take the risk of new conflicts with unpredictable ending and, most probably, with adverse effects to the Kurdish desires of having their own "state".

By all appearances, the "Turkish factor" represents a cause for concern not only for the Kurdish opposition but also for the Syrian regime especially after the Syrian and Islamist militias backed by Turkey occupied positions lately in the rural areas north of Aleppo city and president Recep Teyyip Erdogan declared, at the same time, the availability of extending the operations area of "Olive Branch" towards the north-eastern districts of Hassake and Qamishli.

After the recent successes acquired against the opposition formations south and south-west of the country up to Quneitra town on the

Syrian-Israeli demarcation line in the Golan Heights, the loyalist army is focusing its efforts towards Idlib district and town where the opposition formations of the freed areas joined together or were deployed after they agreed to lay down arms in exchange of their lives or of the possibility of joining the power structures of the Syrian army and security services. "Cleansing" Idlib area and taking over the Syrian state institutions (mainly the army and police) in the Kurdish areas of the Syrian north-east would mean for Bashar Al-Assad's regime a new victory with important political significance as it is about regions with important economic, agricultural, hydrographic, energy and mineral resources.

On this background, the Kurdish delegation for political negotiations with the regime was established on July 17th during a meeting of Kurdish local councils in Tabka, close to the great hydroelectric dam on the Euphrates, and was interpreted by the regime as a compromise from the Kurdish minority which must be harnessed having in mind they manifested their availability of accepting a decentralisation of the government competences eliminating the concept of absolute and totalitary sovereignty of the single-party. A proposal which, in its turn, the government in Damascus is ready to accept on the criterion convenient to both sides according to which "the Syrian peace will be achieved by patient dialogue carried out not in Geneva but in Damascus".

According to declarations made to the media by some Kurdish officials participating to the dialogue with the Syrian regime the initiative was, if not suggested, then at least encouraged and backed by both the Americans and the Russian Federation.

It remains to be seen whether the thorny and bloody Kurdish issue will succeed to turn into a standard-bearer for the Syrian peace which the Syrians, before others, are waiting for.



“AMERICA FIRST”: THE SICK MAN OF...THE MIDDLE EAST?

Dinu COSTESCU

In the contemporary historiography of the Middle East and especially in the works of the researchers claiming to belong to the Western European orientalism, the 1956 second Arab-Israeli war, known as “the war for the Suez Canal” or the “tripartite Israeli-Anglo-French aggression” against Egypt led at the time by the Arab unionist Gamal Abdel

Nasser, is frequently referred to as the fault line which brought the irreversible end of the Anglo-French colonialism in the Middle East. After a long regional tutelage over the territories between the east of the Mediterranean to the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, in Mesopotamia, that ended with the creation in 1948 of the State of Israel when the two metropolises withdrew for making room for a new “world order” and for a new actor on its chessboard – the United States of America.

If at that time one could speak of the “end of an epoch” in the chronicle of the region, today, after 70 years marked by a contorted evolution and by a permanent conflicted state, it seems there are enough reasons to sustain we are in front of a new epoch of the Middle East and of the Arab world which some researchers identify by the syntagm of “post-Americanism” and a question is formulated which answer – if it is ever found – will prove equally debatable as the essence itself of the question: are we, therefore, witnessing a possible “exit” of the United States from this region which emblematic feature was feeding a permanent geopolitical turbulence in this sensitive and complex part of the political geography of the planet?



President Roosevelt and king Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, 1945

The modern beginnings of the United States’ foreign policy were based on “the Monroe Doctrine” according to which America was to abstain from any interferences and acts of force outside the national territory and, in exchange, proclaimed the determination of not allowing any foreign aggression or provocation against its social peace and national security. It was about, one could say, a “positive isolationism” which lasted approximately one century and witnessed a progressive erosion that imposed the necessity of adaptation to the conjunctural evolutions which had two peaks represented by the two world wars that ended with the collapse of the great colonial empires among which the Turkish Ottoman one known, during the last part of its existence, as “the sick man of Europe”, on the one hand, and with severing the world order into the two ideological blocks – the western one led by the United States of America and the block inspired by the materialist Marxist ideology of the “socialist camp” dominated and led by the former Soviet Union, on the other hand.

On the background of the acerbic competition in all fields between the two great camps, the concept of “encirclement” and “containment” was devised and that meant for the United States

an ample mobilisation of energies for containing the Communist expansionism and, ipso facto, of the Soviet Union's doctrinary projects, while a similar conception animated the Kremlin's foreign policies. The hectic arms race with mass destruction arsenals, the involvement, on diametrically opposed positions, of each of the two great powers in regional conflicts such as the one in the Sino area of the Asian continent, the Cuban missile crisis, supporting different "democratic revolutions" and "movements of national liberation", the establishment, in 1949, of the political and military alliance of the North Atlantic and the establishment, in response, of the Warsaw Pact in 1955, were just a few of the forms of pragmatic manifestation of this climate set up from the post-war beginnings of the Cold War.

Under such circumstances, the Middle East region could not be overlooked by either of the great actors of the Cold War and that not only due to military and strategic reasons but also from the perspective of the advantages brought about by the discovery of the crude oil and its industrial use.

Under the slogan of "assisting the free peoples", the Arab World and the Middle East area will rapidly become the privileged ground of waging the confrontations between Washington and Moscow. In 1945, soon after the famous Yalta Conference, the American president Roosevelt had, aboard the "Quincy" cruiser, a "historical" meeting with the Saudi monarch Ibn Saud with who agreed and signed a cooperation treaty based on the principle "protection in exchange of oil" which would mark the effective beginning of the infiltration of the American influence in the region and whose provisions are promoted, in their general coordinates, by the current Administration of the president Donald Trump as well.

Ten years later, an anti-Soviet "roadblock" is set up by the creation, in 1955, of the Baghdad Pact later called "The Central Treaty Organization" (CENTO) and "Middle East Treaty Organization" (METO) where, alongside Pakistan, another three main regional states - Iraq, Iran,

Turkey - entered the orbit of the American influence in the Middle East, already substantiated by Washington's strategic relations with Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The reverse side of this advance materialised as well and the Soviet Union was no stranger and was to prove that not only Communism was - as the American strategists believed - the single irreducible enemy of the American policies and projects, but also another current that disseminated rapidly all over the Arab world of the Middle East. It is about the Arab nationalist ideology known currently as well as "pan-Arabism" whose spiritual father and theorist was the Egyptian colonel and president Gamal Abdel Nasser. Under the influence of the Nasserist ideas, the Syrians Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar established, in 1947, the Baath Arab Socialist Party which will take over the power in Syria (1963) and Iraq (1968) with branches spread practically in most parts of the Arab world. This anti-American camp was joined by the Palestinian liberation movement which representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, was recognised in 1964 by all the Arab states as sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, beginning with 1979, by the virulent anti-American "revolutionary" Islamism instituted in the post-monarchic Iran by the ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeiny's "revolution" which, among others, was to remove from the stage the so-called secular currents and movements on which the American strategy betted for setting up a "moderate Arab axis" in the region.



Under such circumstances and in the middle of the Cold War, another miscalculation affected the American geopolitical projects related to the Middle East geopolitics and its territorial extensions. It is about the bet the American strategists made with the Islamism in which they saw a possible ally and instrument usable against the Soviet Union engaged in a bloody war of occupation in Afghanistan. The Russian failure against the Afghan rebels was to prove a misleading coin and a double-edged sword since after the Red Army's lamentable withdrawal from Afghanistan, the same rebels got rid of Uncle Sam's protection and chosed to be the only decision-makers in their own country. From this discord, the germ of what turned rapidly into Ossama Bin Laden's effigy and into the Islamist terrorism which was to bloody Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, America, Europe and to become the nightmare of the entire international community.

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the Communist camp which was "herded" by Moscow for half a century meant, first of all for the peoples who witnessed directly the totalitarianism at work, but also for other nations of the third world to which the Arab world of the Middle East is circumscribed, a turnaround dominated by the belief that, from now on, America will be the only power able secure an enlightened management of the world and its advancement towards a globalisation of the equality and of a prosperity equally distributed. Yet, one could find that from that very moment of expecting a brave foreign policy and really animated by the true values of liberalism and democracy, the administrations that succeeded one another to America's leadership and to the monopolar world engaged themselves and went stubbornly on the way of contradictory, volatile and erratic strategies depending on subjective judgements which lacked a clear perspective on a long run.

If under George Bush Sr presidency America's foreign policy was marked by the Gulf war



which, beyond its justice feature of liberating Kuwait from the army of Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime was, to a great extent, brought about by the desire of restoring the trust of some petro-monarchies in the Gulf which historical memories kept alive the rapidity and lightness with which the same America looked at the fall of the Iranian monarchic regime, namely one of the most loyal Eastern regimes and supporter of the State of Israel. His successor, Bill Clinton brought a ray of hope for the peace between the Arabs and the Jews by the finalisation of the 1993 Oslo Agreements between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation which proved to be a "crippled peace" which dramatic results persist to our days.

Once George W. Bush came to the White House, the American foreign policy was shaped according to a new paradigm dominated by the tragedy of the terrorists attacks of 9/11 materialised by the launch of the "crusade" against the terrorist phenomenon, by America's engagement in two costly wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and by the triumph of the neo-conservative thinking, a fierce supporter of the militarist interventionism. George W. Bush's successor in the Oval Office, Barack Obama, a follower of the "realpolitik" concept, distanced himself radically from "Bush's paradigm" and started his mandate by his "historical" visit to Cairo, in June 2009, where he "lended his hand to peace with the entire Arab-Islamic world" and greeted, after two years, the temporary taking over of power



in Egypt by the "Muslim Brotherhood" and, in case of the civil war in Syria, the ante factum laureate of Nobel prize proclaimed a non-combat policy and suggested, in a wider scheme, a possible transfer of the American interests from the Middle East towards the temptations of the Asian continent yet that did not mean leaving behind his conviction that the export of the American democracy was a cure for the problems of the contemporary world. It is the American administration of the post-war period when Barack Obama's two mandates were marked by serious dissensions and tensions in the relations between Washington and Tel Aviv and also between the Administration and the monarchic regime in Riyadh which was losing, to a great extent, the aura of America's privileged regional ally.

As of 2016 and Donald Trump's taking office as the 45th American president, the sinusoid of the United States foreign policy and networking will witness, as some commentators notice, not only an abrupt rupture from the American "style" of doing top policy but also a genuine seismic quake due to causes pertaining to the extravagances and instabilities of the decisions made by the current American leader such as those related to the Jerusalem issue and of the "deal of the century" Donald Trump proposes as an ideal step for achieving the conciliation between the Palestinians and the Israel-



is or the protectionism and individualism promoted in its foreign relations under the slogan "America first" but, to a no lesser surprising and sensitive extent, due to the fact that, for the first time in the White House's long chronicle the president is confronted with a visible anti-presidential rebelliousness manifest even within the Administration.

Whether these political convulsions cannot, of course, undermine America's place and role of superpower on the global geopolitical chessboard, they threaten instead to affect the credibility capital of this superpower especially when on the stage of the Middle East emerged, especially after the "Arab spring", new ambitious actors aspiring to the status of America's regional competitors. China's expansion under economic and investments cover and the Russian Federation's involvement in dealing with the conflicted files in the area are accompanied by the aspirations of a great power the neo-Ottoman Turkey manifests, by the regional projects of the Saudi Wahhabism as well as the older political, ideological, strategic and security dispute between the United States and the Shiite Islamic Iran.

It would be risky that, for the sake of speaking metaphorically, apply to today's America the label of "sickman" be it either of the world or of the Middle East, a label applied to Ottoman Turkey on the background of WWI due to totally different historical, social, internal and international causes.

Under Donald Trump Administration, the American foreign policy seems to be out of touch and unable to respond to events through a rational and credible adaptation. And this state of affairs could be looked at not rather as an impasse of diplomacy but as the expression of an identitarian crisis this Administration goes through and which has all the chances of overcoming it by coming of age and a objective evaluation of the weight and place America has to have in the concert of world's nations.

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The Currency Crisis of 2018?

Jacob L. SHAPIRO

It's not too early to consider whether what's happening in Turkey is simply a Turkish matter.

What do the Turkish lira, the Iranian rial, the Russian ruble, the Indian rupee, the Argentine peso, the Chilean peso, the Chinese yuan and the South African rand all have in common? They've all declined steadily this year, and some have depreciated dramatically in the past two weeks alone. But this isn't the whole story. The whole story is that each of these countries is sitting on a ticking time bomb of U.S. dollar-denominated debt. This story has been long in the making. In the 1990s, many countries began to accumulate large amounts of debt denominated in U.S. dollars. It was an effective way to kick-start economic activity, and so long as their own currencies remained relatively strong against the dollar, it was fairly risk free. From 1990 to 2000, dollar-denominated debt tripled from \$642 billion to \$2.17 trillion. The problem may now be coming to a head. Dollar-denominated debt has ballooned. In its latest quarterly report, the Bank of International Settlements found that U.S. denominated debt to nonbank borrowers reached \$11.5 trillion in March 2018 – the highest recorded total in the 55 years the bank has been tracking it. Meanwhile, the dollar has strengthened amid a tepid global recovery from the 2008 financial crisis. As the currencies of indebted

countries weaken against the dollar, it is becoming harder for some countries to pay their debts. This could be a bubble waiting to pop, especially if vulnerable countries don't have the monetary policy options to protect themselves.

Turkey Isn't Alone Such was the case for Turkey, which is particularly susceptible to the vagaries of currency depreciation. The value of the lira had been declining for some time, but it dropped dramatically late last week. At nearly \$200 billion, almost 50 percent of Turkey's gross external debt is denominated in dollars. (Turkey's General Directorate of Public Finance, which, unlike BIS, accounts for financial borrowers, puts that figure at nearly 60 percent.) The situation became progressively more dire through a combination of political uncertainty, unorthodox monetary policy and, most important, U.S. interest rate hikes. Turkey's dollar-denominated debt is now almost twice as much as its total foreign reserves. But Turkey isn't alone. A number of emerging market currencies that were already down on the year nosedived as the news of the lira's demise began to circulate. The starkest decline was the Argentine peso, whose value against the dollar dropped 9.5 percent in just a week, and the South African rand, which fell roughly 8 percent. Other currencies have been affected too – the Chilean peso, for example, has fallen 3.4 percent in the past week, while the Indian rupee hit a record low on the dollar during trading on Aug. 14. What these countries have in common is that they are all on a 13-country list released by the Bank of International Settlements. Together, they constitute 62 percent of all dollardenominated debt held by emerging market economies. Turkey was one of the most vulnerable on the list, but there are four

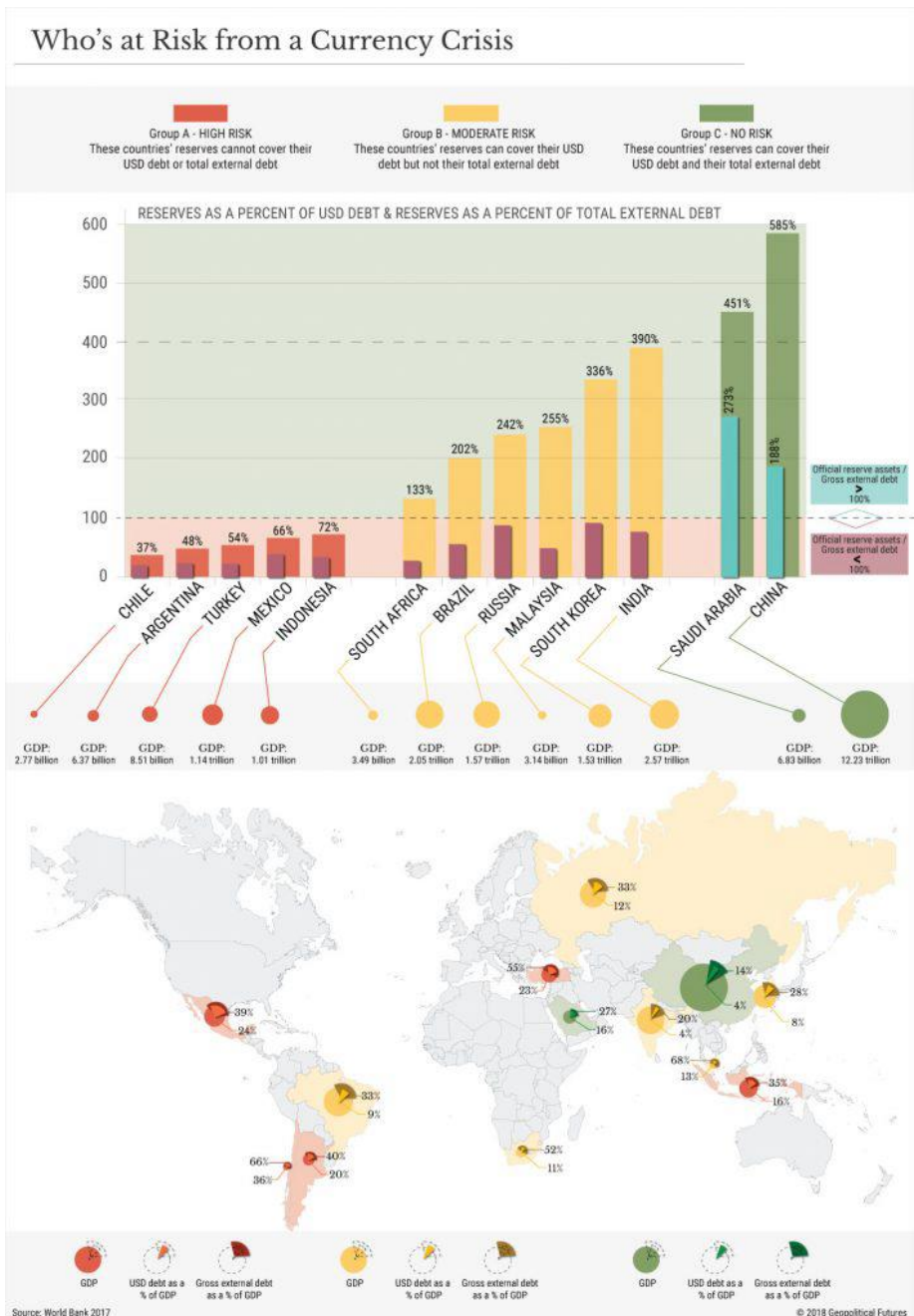


other countries facing similar challenges: Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Indonesia. Argentina's peso is already in free fall. The government announced on Tuesday that it would sell \$500 million worth of reserves and raise interest rates to stop the peso's fall. Then there is Mexico, which, at \$271 billion, holds more dollar-denominated debt than any other country on the list except China. This far exceeds Mexico's official reserves. As with Turkey, dollar-denominated debt is a disproportionately large share of Mexico's gross external debt, at roughly 60 percent. (For perspective, Mexico's gross external debt to GDP is 39 percent, so the dollar's influence over Mexico is particularly strong.) So far, the Mexican peso has held steady; it is slightly up on the year, and down just 0.3 percent in the past week. But if the Mexican peso begins to weaken on the back of tougher-than-expected NAFTA negotiations, political instability surrounding the new president or any other contingency, Mexico could be as bad off as Turkey is now.

The story is similar for Indonesia and Chile. Of the two, Indonesia is in slightly better shape. Its gross external debt is 35 percent of GDP, and 47 percent of that is denominated in dollars. But Indonesia doesn't have a lot of reserves, and its currency has been showing signs of weakness, down almost 10 percent against the dollar this year. Chile's percentage of dollar-denominated debt as a proportion to GDP is the highest of all BIS reporting countries – a whopping 36 percent. Chile's gross external debt-to-GDP ratio is 66 percent. Most concerning, however, is that Chil-

ean reserves totaled just \$37 billion in June 2018, equal to about a third of its total dollar-denominated debt of \$100 billion.

Different Problems Though these countries are the most vulnerable to a stronger dollar, six others – Brazil, India, South Korea, Malaysia, Russia and South Africa – face different but related problems. South Africa, for example, isn't particularly indebted. The government insists it won't intervene to stop the rand's decline, but that's only because it doesn't have nearly enough reserves to cover what debt it has. (Its \$50.6 billion in reserves could pay off just 28 percent of



gross external debt.) The five other countries are in a better position when it comes to reserves. Though they hold larger amounts of dollar-denominated debt, they have plenty of reserves. The issue for these countries is larger external debt. A strong U.S. dollar won't cripple these economies, but it could put enough pressure on them to compel monetary intervention. Particularly well insulated from the budding currency crisis are



China and Saudi Arabia. China's currency has been under pressure in recent weeks, but so far China has chosen not to let the yuan slide too far. China holds \$548 billion in dollar-denominated debt, but that makes up just 4 percent of China's GDP, and China's gross external debt to GDP is 14 percent – the lowest of the countries on this list. China also has a war chest of \$3.2 trillion in foreign reserves that it can deploy.

Saudi Arabia has the benefit of ample foreign reserves too – and it will certainly have to use them. The Saudi rial is pegged to the dollar. This offers stability but comes at a price: Saudi Arabia has to buy and sell reserves to maintain the peg. Though Saudi Arabia has more than enough money to play around with, it has less than it once did. Indeed, it's been burning through its reserves in recent years – \$233 billion since 2014 – to fund its adventurism abroad and its government deficit. Riyadh has no shortage of problems it needs to solve. But the currency crisis likely isn't one of them. This is hardly an exhaustive list. The economies surveyed by BIS

make up just 37 percent of total dollar-denominated debt held worldwide, meaning there is another \$7.2 trillion in such debt in the global system to account for. What started in Turkey may well spread to other countries excluded from the BIS report. Again, Turkey was uniquely susceptible to this sort of thing. The country has low savings rates and high inflation rates and all but refused to make the politically unpopular decision to raise interest rates before it was too late. We will investigate whether the other countries identified in the BIS report have similar structural problems that could aggravate their exposure to a stronger U.S. dollar. As for Turkey, most of the policies that created its economic problems are still in place, even though investors were somewhat encouraged by the central bank's promise to pump as much liquidity into the system as necessary. Turkey's economy will get worse before it gets better. The more important question now is whether that will spread to other vulnerable countries. The most worrying at this point are Argentina, Mexico, Indonesia and Chile. It's too early to call a fullblown global financial crisis, but it's not too early to begin to consider whether what's happening in Turkey is simply a Turkish matter.

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The Secret Services of the 21st Century and Security Issues

Systematization of the Main Threats to the Information Security of a State

HVOZD V. I. Ph.D. in Military Sciences

Over the past few years, Ukraine has faced other countries' building up information influence. In this regard, relevant is the issue of identifying and systematizing threats to the state's information security, as well as ways to counteract them. The article identifies and systematizes the threats to the country's information security and proposes the main directions of counteracting them.

Key words:

information security, information support, information war, military security, security and defense sphere, telecommunication systems, threats, Ukraine

The Problem in general. The security issue at the beginning of the 21st century has become universal. In addition to the traditional military and military-political spheres, it has permeated the spheres of social, economic, legal, cultural, environmental and information relations.

Over the past few years, Ukraine has faced other countries' building up information influence. Unfortunately, our state was unable to adequately respond to threats in the information sphere. This has led to a significant reduction in the level of national and, in particular, military security of Ukraine.

However, despite the growing information pressure, we still are not paying enough attention to building up our own military information potential, development of information means of military policy and strengthening of the information component of the security and defense sphere.

In this regard, relevant is the issue of identifying and systematizing threats to the state's information security, as well as ways to counteract them. Lately, researchers in other countries, in particular in Russia [1–4], and our domestic scientists [5–7] have been paying great attention to the issues of information struggle, detecting and counteracting the threats in the information sphere. However, the subject-matter of identifying (systematizing) the threats and ways of counteraction has not been completed yet, especially in the light of the events of the past three years.

Therefore, **the objective of this article** is to identify and systematize the main threats to Ukraine's security in the information sphere, as well as the main directions of counteraction them.

Presenting the main material. In the modern world, the role of the information component during the political and military confrontation of the states has grown significantly. Ukraine, almost since the time of independence, has been under the powerful informational influence from Russia and the West, which are trying to achieve their own geopolitical goals in the region. Therefore, ensuring information security, which determines the military and national security of the country as a whole, is a very important task.

For the fulfillment of the vital task of the state — to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, it creates forces, means and bodies capable of fulfilling this task by joint efforts. Their work, united by common goals, tasks and methods of implementation, is based on a single legal basis and general principles of ensuring national security and is carried out in a unified strategic management style.

The combination of these forces, means and bodies creates a *system for ensuring Ukraine's*

military security. It is the most important and the only state mechanism designed to implement the country's conceptual views and doctrinal guidelines in the sphere of military security. This task is realized through the coordination of activities of the executive and legislative authorities, local self-government bodies, public associations, and individual citizens in accordance with the current legislation.

The main role of the military security support system in the structures of state power and management lies in the system's strict tying the national interests, values and goals of Ukraine with the political course of the state, all sorts of threats of a military character, and the forms and methods of their implementation mainly with the help of political-military and military methods.

The military security support system can have external and internal aspects. From the point of view of the external aspect, this is first of all the ability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, other military formations and bodies, military infrastructure and intelligence, counter-intelligence, information and other security support systems to contain (prevent) an open military aggression against Ukraine and its allies.

From the point of view of the internal aspect, it is the creation and development of a military organization of the state ensured by real economic capabilities of the country.

The military security support system covers virtually all areas of the functioning of the society and state, most important of which, according to military experts and scholars, are:

- the military sphere (the issue of improving the military organization of the state, defense planning, operational and combat training of troops and forces);
- military-political sphere (issues of collective regional and global security, peacekeeping activities);
- military-economic sphere (issues of economic and resource support to military building, maintenance of activities of troops and forces at the level providing the required degree of com-

bat readiness and combat capability, the issue of forming a military budget and allocating budget funds);

- military-social sphere (issues of the spiritual and ethical preparation of the population to the resolving defense tasks, ethical and psychological problems of military collectives, social problems of military servicemen);
- military-technical sphere (development of fundamental science for the benefit of the defense of the country, studies and applied researches, basic military technology, issues of the creation, modernization and utilization of samples of weapons and military equipment, training of specialist, scientific and technical personnel);
- military-technological sphere (development of basic military technologies for fulfilling operational-strategic, operational and operational-tactical tasks — improvement of intelligence and command and control systems, intelligence-strike systems, etc.);
- the legal sphere (arms and disarmament control);
- sphere of military-technical cooperation (export control, formation of the nomenclature of exports of arms and military equipment, system of training personnel and other types of support);
- sphere of normative and legal support of military building (improvement and development of the relevant legal framework).

The military security support system ensures a combination of centralized and decentralized management of forces and means in accordance with the unitary system of Ukraine, hence a clear division of powers between the state authorities of Ukraine, its subjects and local self-government bodies.

At the same time, of special importance in ensuring military security is the process of preparing and taking forward-looking decisions to protect national interests.

Since any decisions, especially in the sphere of ensuring national security, is based on infor-

mation, it is on the state of the information support to the military security that its general level depends.

In our opinion, the *information support to military security* is a complex of measures for collecting, accumulating and analyzing the information necessary to identify the current state and forecast of the development of military security and decision making in the sphere of defense of Ukraine's military security.

In turn, the system of identification (assessment) of the state of military security is a hierarchical set of interrelated indicators and criteria that allows to get a comprehensive characteristics of the current state, identify sources of real and potential threats, and forecast the development of military security.

Ensuring the safety of a person, society, country and the environment is closely linked with the identification of a set of factors, assessment of their negative effects and comparing the influence of different factors on the objects of security. So, military security should be based on a system of criteria that let draw conclusions about the degree of danger of a particular influence.

The military security criterion is a comprehensive comparative assessment of the state of military security of the country in terms of the most important processes, phenomena, parameters that reflect its essence. The criterion is a qualitative assessment, on the basis of which the level of military security is adequately determined.

The security criteria require choosing certain indicators of the military security of the research object. But for assessing the safety status, important are not the indicators themselves, but their limit values.

Limit values — the upper and lower limits, non-compliance of which interferes with the normal development of a person, society, country and the environment and leads to formation of negative, destructive trends.

The concept of dynamic stability is closely related to the mechanism of homeostasis, the mechanism of preserving the invariance of some

essential characteristics of safety systems, regardless of external influences. Therefore, the first necessary step of any systemic studies of national security should be the definition of the limits, that is, the critical values of the parameters of different security spheres. The second step of research should be to study the reaction of the system to its deviation from the homeostatic limit. Thus, the relationship between safety indicators and threshold values should be considered in dynamics, and in case of significant deviation from them, they should be carefully studied.

The mechanism of homeostasis determines the conditions for a safe existence of the country as a whole. After all, it is the understanding of security as a situation where vital interests of a person, a society, a country are protected against all sorts of threats, that needs determination of limit values of negative influences on objects of security that would not lead to their death or degradation. Without knowledge of the limits of safe living conditions, the protection of vital interests of security objects is impossible.

Each system has parameters that are essential and vital for it, the parameters on which depends the answer to the question whether the system itself exists. The homeostasis of the system preserves exactly these parameters and thereby supports the existence of the system. There are two types of homeostasis: systemic (general), which ensures preserving integrative (integral) quality, and partial — by its separate component.

Taking this into consideration, the safety of complex systems should be seen as the phenomenon identical to homeostasis of the system. By the latter is usually meant such a state of dynamic stability of complex self-regulating systems, which is intended to keep the most important for preserving the system parameters within the permissible limits.

The indexes (indicators) of military security, through which the limit values are determined, form a system of indicators of military security. The highest level of military security is achieved where all military security indicators are within

the permissible limits of their limit values, and the limit values of one indicator are achieved without detriment to others.

Thus, the level of military security can be assessed through a system of its criteria and indicators.

So, the improvement of the system of monitoring Ukraine's military security by introducing indexes (indicators) of military security, collecting, processing and analyzing information on the development of the situation in different spheres of military security by the determined indexes (indicators) of its state, assessing the situation, forecasting its development and possible negative consequences remains the most urgent issue in the system of information support to Ukraine's military security.

Without the development of appropriate indicators and criteria it is impossible to objectively assess the state, let alone make a forecast for the development of Ukraine's military security. As a result, it is virtually impossible to work out well-grounded proposals for the military-political leadership of our country in adopting forward-looking decisions to protect national interests in the military sphere.

In order to substantiate the above-mentioned proposals, a system of the *information support to military security* should be established in the country under which it is proposed to understand the totality of the relevant governing bodies, subunits of ministries and departments, non-state institutions (with information and analytical capabilities for analyzing the threats to military security of the country in the military sphere), with functions, established by regulatory legal acts, for the search, collection, analysis, processing, accumulation and transferring of information to government bodies authorized to conduct state policy in the military security sphere.

One of the functions of the information support to military security is taking measures to maintain information security.

Given the rapid formation and development of the information society and the global infor-

mation space, the widespread use of information and communication technologies in all spheres of life, and also taking into consideration the military-political situation that has developed in Europe as a whole and in Ukraine, in particular, the problems of information security are becoming more and more important.

As a result of the lack of an effective system of the support to information security in Ukraine's national information space, there are a number of negative phenomena that create real and potential threats to the information security of a person and citizen, society and the state.

As you can see, the importance of the information component is growing and it is becoming one of the most important elements of ensuring military and national security. Information space, information resources, information infrastructure and information technologies have a significant impact on the state's ability to counter military threats.

Therefore, it can be stated that the level of development of the information space and its security actively influence the state of political, economic, defense and other components of the national security of Ukraine.

Thus, information security is an integral part of each of the spheres of national security, in particular — of the military one.

That is why the maintenance of an appropriate level of military security of the state is possible only if a proper level of information security is maintained.

The analysis of theoretical foundations of the phenomenon of information security (given modern conditions and prospects of the development of Ukrainian statehood), as well as the results of the historical development of the society, suggest the following conclusions:

1. Information security of the country is a conditions of the state institutions and society, which provides a reliable protection of the national interests of the country and its citizens in the information sphere.

2. The duty to provide information security as

an integral part of national security relies on the information organization of the state.

3. The information organization of the state should be the guarantor of the information security of the state and its institutions, society and citizens, stability of the political regime in the situation of globalization processes, growing threats from international terrorism, escalation of the activities of extremist and separatist movements and organizations both within the country and outside it.

4. An urgent scientific and practical task in the sphere of ensuring information security of Ukraine is to achieve a unified approach to determining optimal models and ways of ensuring information security of the state on the basis of determining the most important qualitative and quantitative properties and parameters of this phenomenon.

Information security is a prerequisite for the existence of individuals, states and society as a whole. Therefore, it is expedient to highlight the following levels of information security:

- level of a person;
- social level;
- state level.

From the point of view of ensuring military security, of greatest importance is the state level on which are conducted:

- information and analytical support of state bodies;
- information support of internal and foreign policy at the interstate level;
- measures to protect the information with restricted access;
- counteracting violations in the information sphere;
- counteracting computer crimes.

It is worth noting that the main task of all measures, aimed at maintaining information security, is minimizing the harm from the following factors: falsity, delay in getting or incompleteness of information, and dissemination of

information illegally [8].

The main tasks in providing information security include [9]:

- creation of conditions for securing information sovereignty of the state;
- participation in improving the state regulation of the development of the information sphere by creating regulatory, legal and economic prerequisites for the development of national information infrastructure and resources, introduction of the latest technologies in this sphere, filling the internal and world information space with reliable information about Ukraine;
- creation of conditions for active involvement of the mass media in the struggle against corruption, overuse of the office and other phenomena that threaten Ukraine's national security;
- ensuring a strict observance of the constitutional right of citizens to freedom of speech, access to information, prevention of unlawful interference by public authorities, local self-government bodies, their officials in the activities of the mass media, discrimination in the information sphere and witch-hunt for journalists for political positions;
- taking comprehensive measures to protect the national information space and counteracting monopolization of Ukraine's information sphere;
- ensuring information security of all constituent elements of the public administration system;
- supporting the information-analytical potential of the country;
- realization of state policy of information security;
- conducting active intelligence, counterintelligence and investigative activities in order to provide information security for the development of strategic, tactical and operational decisions in the sphere of public information security management and development of mecha-

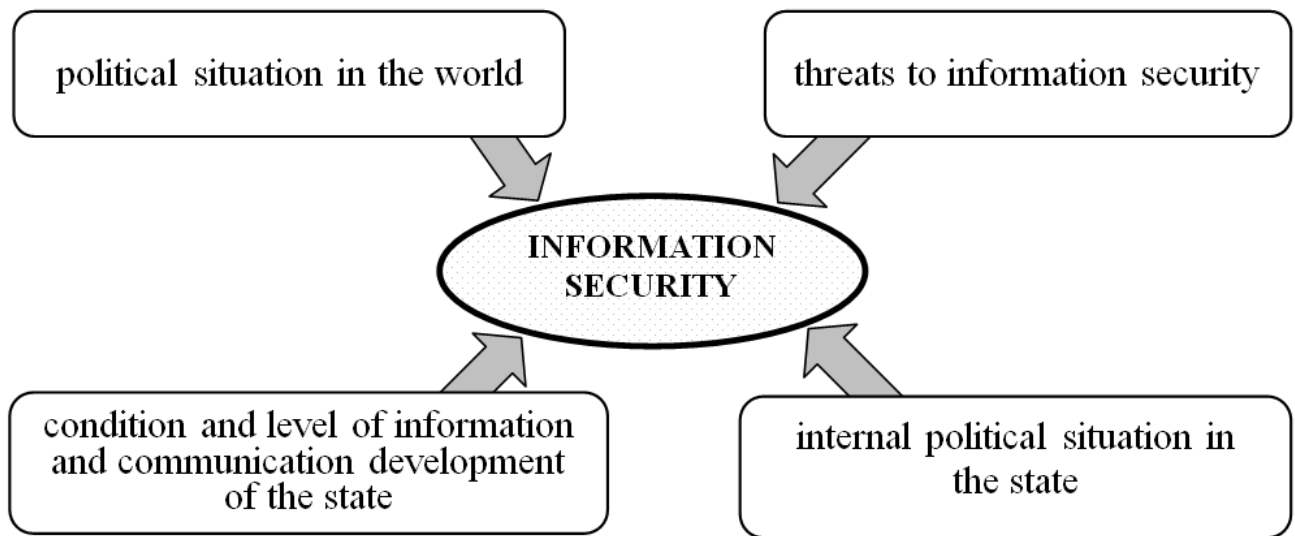


Figure 1. The main factors influencing the information security of a state

nisms for their implementation;

- exposure, prevention and suppression of intelligence and other activities of special services, as well as individuals or organizations, aimed at threatening the information security of Ukraine;

- exposure, prevention and suppression of information terrorism and other activities aimed at undermining the functioning of the public administration system;

- monitoring (observing, assessing and forecasting) the state of information security in connection with the influence of threats and dangers both from the inside and outside of the public administration system;

- counteracting technical penetration into information systems of public administration bodies for the purpose of committing crimes, conducting sabotage-terrorist and intelligence activities;

- prevention of possible illegal and other negative activity of the subjects of the national security support system from the inside of it;

- securing the system of guarding state secrets;

- organization of democratic civilian control over the functioning of the public administration

system, etc.

The implementation of these tasks requires identification and reciprocal systematization of the *threats to information security of the state*. To this end, this approach is proposed.

As mentioned in [10], the information security is a complex, systemic, multilevel phenomenon. A number of factors have a direct influence on its condition and prospects of development, the most important of which are shown in Figure 1.

We propose to systematize threats by the following characteristics:

- direction of the origin (external, internal);
- orientation;
- sphere of manifestation (influence).

- *External* threats to information security include:

- conducting an information war against Ukraine;

- negative external influence on the information space of Ukraine;

- formation by foreign media of a distorted informational picture of the world instead of the real one.

- *Internal* threats are as follows:

- lack of a comprehensive communicative policy of the state, national strategy for the development of the information society in Ukraine and a plan of action for its implementation;
- insufficient amount of competitive national information product;
- critical condition of information and computer systems security;
- vulnerability of objects of critical infrastructure and state information resources to cyber attacks;
- lack of coordination of public and private sectors' efforts to effectively use available resources;
- insufficient development of the regulatory framework of the information sphere;
- a low level of state support for the production of informatization means, software tools and introduction of information and communication technologies;
- physical and moral obsolescence of the system of guarding state secrets and other types of information with limited access.

In its general direction, the threats to Ukraine's information security can be divided into four types (Figure 2).

The following factors can threaten constitutional rights and freedoms of a person and citizen in the spiritual life and information activity, individual, group and public consciousness, spiritual revival of Ukraine:

- adoption by the state authorities of normative legal acts limiting the constitutional rights of citizens in the sphere of spiritual life and information activity;
- squeezing out of Ukrainian news agencies and media from the internal information market and increasing dependence on foreign information structures;
- creation of monopolies on forming, getting and spreading of information in Ukraine, including with the use of telecommunication systems;
- unlawful use of special means of influencing individual, group and public consciousness;
- non-compliance with the requirements of Ukrainian legislation regulating relations in the information sphere;
- unlawful restriction of the citizens' access to open information resources, archival materials, other socially important open information;
- disruption and destruction of the system of accumulation, preservation and protection of cultural values, including archives;



Figure 2. The main threats to the information security of a state

- manipulating the information (misinformation, concealment or distortion of information).

Threats to the information support of the state policy of Ukraine can be:

- low efficiency of information support of the state policy of Ukraine due to the lack of skilled personnel (especially in intelligence agencies), lack of a system in formation and realization of state information policy;

- monopolization of the information market of Ukraine, some of its sectors by domestic and foreign information structures;

- blocking the activities of state mass media to inform Ukrainian and foreign audiences.

Threats to the development of the national information sphere can be:

- counteracting Ukraine's access to the latest information technologies, mutual benefit and equal participation of Ukrainian manufacturers in the global division of labor in the industry of information services, means of informatization, telecommunications, information products, and creating conditions for Ukraine's increasing technological dependence in the sphere of modern information technologies;

- displacement from the domestic market of Ukrainian manufacturers of information technologies and telecommunications;

- skilled professionals' leaving the country.

Threats to the security of information and telecommunication systems on the territory of Ukraine may be:

- illegal collection and use of information;

- violation of the technology of information processing;

- equipping the hardware and software with components fulfilling functions not provided for by the documentation on these products;

- development and distribution of programs that violate the normal functioning of information and telecommunication systems, in particular information security systems;

- destruction, damage or radio-electronic suppression of means and systems of information processing and telecommunications;

- influence on password-key protection systems of automated information processing and transmission systems;

- compromising keys and means of cryptographic protection of information;

- leakage of information through technical channels;

- interception of information in data networks and communication lines, decryption of this information and imposing false information;

- unauthorized access to the information stored in banks and databases;

- violation of legal restrictions on the dissemination of information.

Information threats can occur in many spheres of national security. Below we will outline the main ones.

In the foreign policy sphere:

- dissemination of distorted, inaccurate and biased information in the global information space that harms Ukraine's national interests and creates a negative image of Ukraine as an unreliable partner for international relations;

- low level of Ukraine's integration into the world information space;

- acts of cybercrime and cyberterrorism threatening the sustainable and safe functioning of national information and telecommunication systems;

- external destructive information influences on public consciousness through the mass media, as well as the Internet;

- use of information space for interference in Ukraine's internal affairs.

In the internal political sphere:

- opacity of political and social activity, which creates preconditions for restriction of freedom of speech, manipulation of public consciousness;

- imperfection of the system of public admin-

istration in the information sphere;

- dissemination of false and biased information to discredit state authorities and destabilize the socio-political situation, which greatly complicates a political decision-making;

- the government, local authorities, media owners, influential public and political figures and businessmen's interference with editorial policy.

In the economic sphere:

- lagging behind of domestic science-driven and high-tech industries, especially in the sphere of telecommunication means and technologies;

- a low level of informatization of the economic sphere;

- unauthorized access to national information and telecommunication networks and systems that could disrupt the work of enterprises, strategically important for the economy, and the safe functioning of the banking and financial system of the state;

- a low level of development of national information infrastructure;

- trends for concentration of ownership and monopolization of segments of the domestic information market, in particular in the sphere of television and radio broadcasting.

In the social and humanitarian spheres:

- destruction of the system of public values, negative changes in their target guidance, harmful impact of information on the mental and physical health of the person;

- Ukraine's lagging behind the developed countries by the level of informatization of social and humanitarian spheres;

- non-observance of human rights and citizen's access to information;

- imperfection of normative legal and technical protection of personal data;

- possibility of unauthorized access to personal data, including in state information resources, their illegal collection, use and distribu-

tion;

- weakening of socio-political, interethnic and interfaith harmony in the society, opposing the idea of national unity and unity of the state.

In the scientific and technological sphere:

- decrease in the scientific potential in the field of informatization, communication and information security;

- outflow of scientific personnel and subjects of intellectual property rights abroad;

- insufficient protection against unauthorized access and cyber attacks on information and telecommunication systems;

- uncontrolled expansion of modern information technologies;

- growing advancement of a number of countries and their building up the capacity in counteracting creation of competitive Ukrainian information technologies.

In the environmental sphere:

- concealment, untimely provision of information or provision of inaccurate information to the public about emergency ecological situations or emergencies of anthropogenic and natural character;

- insufficient reliability of information and telecommunication systems for the collection, processing and transmission of information in emergency situations;

- a low level of informatization of governmental authorities, which makes it impossible to carry out operational control and analysis of potentially dangerous objects and territories, advance forecasting and response to emergencies.

Conclusion. In general, in order to counteract these threats, the activities aimed at ensuring Ukraine's information security should focus on a constructive combination of actions of the state, civil society and a human in four main directions:

informational and psychological — ensuring the constitutional rights and freedoms of man and citizen, creating favorable psychological cli-

mate in the national information space for the establishment of universal and national moral values;

technological — development and innovative upgrading of national information resources, introduction of the latest technologies in the information's creation, processing, dissemination and protection in information and telecommunication systems;

protection of information — ensuring its confidentiality, integrity and accessibility in national information resources;

speeding up the development of information technologies — improving the state's ability to protect against information attacks by third countries, as well as conducting information operations.

So the identified threats to information security and the proposed approach to their systematization will allow in the future to conduct more substantiated research on issues of ensuring information security of the state, in particular, to substantiate the basic requirements for an advanced system of information support to Ukraine's military security.

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Military Technology and Equipments, New Weapon Devices

The French Suffren (Barracuda) class submarine program



The Suffren-class (also known as Barracuda-class) is the next-generation SNA (Sous-marins nucléaires d'attaque - Nuclear Attack Submarine). Much like their predecessors, Barracuda-class SNA will have an anti-submarine and anti-ship warfare role, with the ability to launch cruise-missiles. They will primarily be tasked with ensuring the safety of the Strategic Oceanic Force, conducting carrier group escorts and power-projection.

The payload of 20 tube-launched weapons will comprise a mix of future heavyweight torpedoes, cruise missiles and SM39 anti-ship missiles. Barracuda-class SNA will be armed with cruise-missiles planned for future Multi-Missions European Frigates (FREMM), the future heavy torpedo (FTL) which will replace the F17 torpedo, the SM 39 anti-surface missile (exocet family), and the FG 29 mine.

The Barracuda-class SNA will be, like the Rubis-class SNA it is meant to replace, nuclear-powered. The powerplant will be built by Technicatome. The nuclear reactor is derived from the models used on the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier and SNLE submarines. It

is meant to allow for a sustained speed of 22 knots for more than 20 days.

Barracuda-type SSNs will replace the current Rubis/Améthyste class between 2017 and 2028.

DCN has primary responsibility for the design and construction of the Barracuda-class submarines. The hull and final component integration will be completed at the Cherbourg shipyard. Propulsion work will be conducted at the DCN's factory at Indret while combat systems will be overseen at the Toulon plant.

The Barracuda-class submarines are meant to eventually replace the Rubis-class submarines once these start reaching the end of their useful life between 2012 and 2023. The future attack-submarine program was launched by the French Minister of

Defense on 14 October 1998. The design-phase of the Barracuda-class SNA program began in June 2002 with the start of the development phase expected to begin in 2005.

Six submarines were expected to be produced, with delivery starting in 2015. Production of six Barracuda-class submarines was expected to begin around 2012 with a rate of production of one submarine every two years. As of late 2006 the first Barracuda SSN was scheduled for delivery in 2016.

As of mid-2010, the expected cost of the *Barracuda* program was of 7,9 billion Euros (€).

As of 2012, the first submarine, named Suffren, is expected to be delivered in 2016 and commissioned in 2017. In 2015, the commissioning of the first in class [Suffren] was postponed to 2018 as a result of budget difficulties. Commissioning of FS Suffren, originally planned for 2017, is now set for 2018. The realization launched in 2006 should lead to the delivery of the first vessel in 2019.

Presented by Cornel Vaida

Barracuda for Australia

due to the lack of an indigenous nuclear industry in Australia and public opposition to nuclear technology.



In 2009, the Australian Government's Defence White Paper announced that a class of twelve submarines would be built. The selected design was to be built in Australia at the ASC Pty Ltd shipyard in South Australia, but, if a company other than ASC was selected to build the submarines, they would be granted access to the government-owned facility. Concept work was to start in

The **Future Submarine Program (SEA 1000)** is a future class of submarines for the Royal Australian Navy based on the *Shortfin Barracuda* proposal by French shipbuilder DCNS to replace the *Collins*-class submarines. The class will enter service in the early 2030s with construction extending into the late 2040s to 2050. The Program is estimated to cost \$50 billion and will be the largest, and most complex, defence acquisition project in Australian history.

The Program to replace the *Collins*-class began in 2007 with the commencement of the Defence Department acquisition project SEA 1000. Australia's unique operating environment (including significant variations in ocean climate and conditions) and rejection of nuclear marine propulsion had previously driven it to operate in the *Collins*-class the world's largest diesel-electric submarines, capable of transiting the long distances from HMAS Stirling to their deployment areas.

In the early phases of the replacement project, four design options were identified: purchase a Military-Off-The-Shelf (MOTS) design, modify a MOTS design for Australian conditions, design an evolution of the *Collins*-class, or create a new design. Nuclear propulsion has been ruled out

2009, with a winning design to be identified by 2013 and design work to be completed by 2016, enabling the construction of the first submarine to be completed before 2025. However, there were significant delays in implementing the project, with meetings to define intended capabilities not occurring until 2012, which pushed the start of construction beyond 2017.

By the end of 2014, operational capabilities had still not been defined, amidst increasing speculation that the Australian government would purchase *Sōryū*-class submarines directly from Japan, skipping any tendering processes and ignoring previous commitments to build the boats in Australia. However, in February 2015 the Abbott Government announced a "competitive evaluation process" between competing Japanese, French, and German designs.

On 26 April 2016, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced the *Shortfin Barracuda*, a conventionally-powered variant of the *Barracuda*-class nuclear submarine by French firm DCNS, as the winner.

Presented by Cornel Vaida

Leading Articles, Studies and New Analyses

Nihil Obstat: Elements for a Theory of Nation and Nationalism**Author: Dan DUNGACIU;****Publisher: Libris Editorial, Braşov, 2018**

Dan Dungaciu has been Professor and PhD Coordinator at the Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, University of Bucharest (Department of Sociology) since 2009. He is the coordinator of the Master of Security Studies and Intelligence Analysis at the University of Bucharest (Faculty of Sociology and Social Work), the oldest master of the kind in Romania. Since 2011 he has been the Director of the Institute of Political Science and International Relations of the Romanian Academy "Ion I.C. Bratianu". He has been Chairman of the Black Sea University Foundation under the aegis of the Romanian Academy since 2013. He has been involved and coordinated numerous national and international projects. He is the author of dozens of expert studies and reports and of over 25 books in the field, among the most recent being: *Is Bessarabia Romania?; Identity and (Geo)-political Dilemmas in Moldova* (2011); *Elements for a Theory of Nation and Nationalism* (2012); *Seven Fundamental Themes for Romania* (2014); *Encyclopedia of International Relations* (2015) etc. In 2015 he joined the Romanian Academy team of draft-coordinators of the *Development Strategy of Romania for the next 20 years (2015-2035)*, under the overall coordination of the President of the Romanian Academy, academician Ionel-Valentin Vlad.

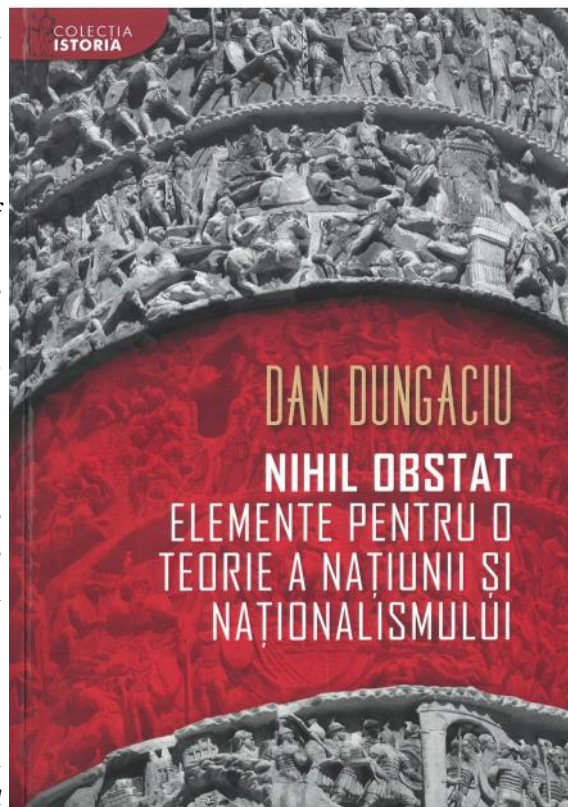
This is the reprinted, revised and enlarged version of the book *Elements for a*

Theory of Nation and Nationalism, published in 2012. Unlike the previous edition, an addition was made to the title and a new chapter has been added: *The Perfect Storm in Europe. Towards a New Model of Understanding the European Crisis* and a new section has also been included: *At First, There Was History. The Avatars of the Speech...About, about* from the book written by the author together with Mircea Malita, *History through the Eyes of the Diplomat*.

Nihil Obstat - Nothing gets in the way are the famous words inscribed by the Catholic censorship on the reverse of the title page of the volume considered to be approved after being cleared of the moral or theological errors, so that nothing could stop it from spreading or manifesting itself.

In the present volume, the significance and hints of the phrase refer to the unexpected resurrection of events that have been considered extinct, especially the nation and nationalism in its varied aspects, but also to the challenges created by the European identity.

By comparing the Euro-barometers of 1992 with those of 2017, it is indicated that after all the extensions, market growth and prosperity, European flag and anthem, European President and "Foreign Minister" and even European army in 26 years, the "Europeans" have fallen by two percent, the nationals have increased by three percent, the author noting that: "It is as if the whole European process has been carried out – next to or beyond - the identity concerns and adhesions of the population on the old continent".



Presented by Cornel VAIDA

The History of Terrorism: from Antiquity to Daesh

Authors: Gerard CHALIAND, Arnaud BLIN

Publisher: Polirom, 2018

Gérard Chaliand is an expert in the political and strategic problems of the contemporary world, especially guerrillas and terrorism. Visiting Professor at Harvard, UCLA and Berkeley, he also taught at the École Nationale d'Administration and at the Collège interarmées de Defense and led the European Center for the Study of Conflict. Above all, he has been present in various areas of conflict in Asia, Africa and Latin America. He is the author of numerous works, including Atlas du nouvel ordre mondial (Robert Laffont, 2003), Les Guerres irrégulières: XXE-XXIe siècle. Guerillas et terrorismes (Gallimard, 2008), Anthologie mondiale de la stratégie. Des origines au nucléaire (Robert Laffont, 2009).

Arnaud Blin, an expert in international relations and strategic studies, has studied at Georgetown and Harvard universities. He is now leading the Forum for a New World Governance and the association Modus Operandi. He is Research Fellow at the Institut Français d'Analyse Stratégique and particularly the author of volumes such as Tamerlan (Perrin, 2007), Les batailles qui ont changé l'histoire (Perrin, 2014) and, together with Gérard Chaliand, Dictionnaire de stratégie militaire (Perrin, 1998) or America is back (Bayard, 2003).

With the help of other experts in the field (Francois Gere, Rohan Gunaratna, Olivier Hubac-Occhipinti, Ariel Merari, Philippe Migaux and Yves Ternon) the two authors are analyzing terrorism in all its complexity, describing the different types of terrorism that mankind has faced in time, from antiquity to the modern era.

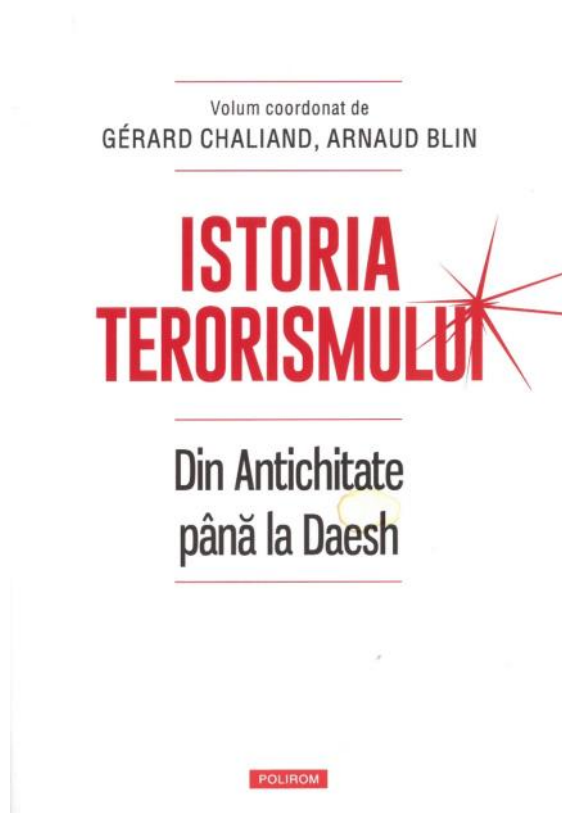
In Washington, in 1998, at a conference on terrorism, the head of the US Army Intelligence Directorate entered without any hindrance in the conference room, masked and armed with a M16 and two grenades, showing them how easily a terrorist could enter the building and annihilate the US counterterrorism experts. He told the

stunned audience: "One day, some terrorists will attack a building like this in Washington or New York. They will kill hundreds of people and they will create an unprecedented psychological shock. The problem is not to know if such an act will take place on the American soil, but when and where will it happen. The security of our land is in your hands". Three years later, 19 terrorists were killing 3,000 people by attacking Washington, New York, the Pentagon and the military intelligence directorate headquarters.

The book is structured as follows: The Authors; Introduction; About Terrorism as a Strategy of Insurrection; Four parts: Part One – The Prehistory of Terrorism; Part Two – The Modern Era, from 1789 to 1968; Part Three - Contemporary Terrorism from 1968 until Today; Part Four – The Writings of Terror; Bibliography and Index.

By reading this book we will understand the roots and the emergence of radical Islam in al-Qaida, the suicide operations, jihadism during Daesh, but also the attitude and speeches of those considered the main terrorists, from Bakunin and Ayatollah Khomeini to Osama bin Laden.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA





Corneliu PIVARIU - Director and Editor-in-Chief of the *Geostrategic Pulse*
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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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