



GEOSTRATEGIC PULSE

Bilingual-monthly publication of political analysis

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

Nationalism, globalism, europeanism

China and the sea in the Asia's troubled waters.

Rainbow geopolitics

Post-conflict Syria: under what flag?

The autumn of "Khashoggi diplomacy"

Saudi Arabia. The kingdom is fundamentally changing...

Recommended Reading:

Strategic autonomy and the defense of Europe: on the road to a european army?

Geostrategic Pulse Board

(in alphabetical order)



Adrian CONSTANTINESCU

PhD in international economy and Master in public international law

Scientific researcher and head of department within the World Economy Institute, permanent deputy representative and chief negotiator of Romania to GATT/OMC, various other positions in diplomacy up to that of Ambassador in the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Macedonia. Author and co-author of some 20 books.



Andrei KORTUNOV

Director General of the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)

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

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

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

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



Anton COSTESCU

Orientalist and specialist on economic international relations

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



ALBA IULIA CATRINEL POPESCU

Alba Iulia Catrinel Popescu is Doctorate in national security and intelligence of the "Carol I" National Defense University, professor of geopolitics at the Romanian-American University in Bucharest, analyst of the **SECINDEF Israel-USA International Consulting Counterterrorism Agency** and vice-president of the **Romanian Association for Foreign Policy - ARPE**. She is also member of the **Romanian Committee of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology** of the Romanian Academy.



Emilian M. DOBRESCU

Professor

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



Iulian FOTA

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



Adrian SEVERIN

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

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



Anis. H. BAJREKTAREVIĆ

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

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



Dan DUNGACIU

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

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



Dorian VLĂDEANU

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

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



Dieter FARWICK

Senior Vice-President World Security Network Foundation

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



Liliana POPESCU

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

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

Geostrategic Pulse Board

(in alphabetical order)



Maksym BUGRIY

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



Mihaiu MĂRGĂRIT

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

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



Murray HUNTER

Associate Professor at University Malaysia Perlis

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



Sergiu MEDAR

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



Vladimir SOCOR

Senior fellow at The Jamestown Foundation and Eurasia Daily Monitor

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



Marian RIZEA

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



Mihnea CONSTANTINESCU

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



Paul SÂNDULESCU

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



Simion COSTEA

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

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



Vasile DÂNCU

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



Vasile PUȘCAȘ

PhD Professor at Babeș Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca

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



Yuriy RADKOVETS

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

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

EDITORIAL

100 years since the end of the First World War and the current geopolitical situation



Corneliu PIVARIU

Motto: "Tomorrow has long ago became yesterday" – folk verse

On 11th of November, 2018, Emmanuel Macron, the president of France delivered, at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, in front of more than 70 heads of state and government, a speech marking 100 years since the armistice which brought to an end the First World War and then, together with some of his counterparts, (one notable absence was the American president Donald Trump) and heads of international organisations (UN, UNESCO, OCDE, IMF, etc) signed a joint statement on the occasion of the first session of the Paris Peace Forum (a French initiative dated January, 2018, which seems of not enjoying too great an international attention).

The end of the First World War heralded some important developments such as the end of the European empires and the emergence of the Soviet Union, the United States of America's joining the great global powers, which was a reference in the world history and which, nevertheless, contributed to triggering the Second World War. Despite the French president's desire to offer a dovish image of the world, we noticed that the struggle for the world supremacy is under way and the developments of the last years proved us that nothing of what we considered to be the pillars of the post-Second World War is any longer guaranteed but, on the contrary, the danger of the Third World War's breaking out is increasing.

President Macron stated in his 11th of November speech, inter alia, that "patriotism is exactly the opposite of nationalism", a statement we find repeated and shared by many formations and personalities who are firm believers of globalism without frontiers and which, due to considerations we do not elaborate on here, we think it is a forced one. At the same time, we mention here the speech of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Brussels, on 4th of December, at the German Marshall Fund, entitled "Restoring the Role of the Nation-state within the International Liberal Order".

In fact, the current leaders of the democratic world are not feeling well in their positions, the president Macron is confronted with a vehement opposition concealed behind the yellow waistcoats which is an uprising against globalism and against not caring at all about the situation of those with small and medium incomes, Donald Trump is further confronted with a strong political opposition backed by a great part of the American media, Angela Merkel will pass the hat after almost two decades of leading Germany, Theresa May is not feeling well either in Great Britain and the European Union's leadership in Brussels do not succeed in finding viable and pragmatic solutions to the situation they are faced with.

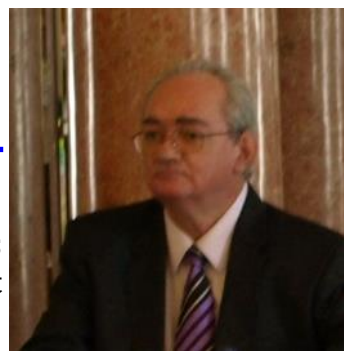
The current situation is illustrated by a publicly issued map ever since the summer of 2014 (we remind that in 2006, an American researcher published a map of the New Middle East). Some of the important changes: the emergence of New Russia (with separatist regions Donetsk and Luhansk, all Ukraine's south on the Black Sea and the Transnistrian region included); Poland's amputation by Germany and the emergence of a new Galitia state (with territories taken over mainly from Poland and Ukraine); Belgium's disappearance (Wallonia remaining only), while the Flemish region is included in The Netherlands; Italy is divided between North and South, the Basque Country and Catalunya emerge in Spain, the Greater Albania emerges as well, Turkey takes over part of South-East Bulgaria while Hungary takes part of Western Romania (Banat and part of Transylvania).

These would be some of the modifications liable to be visible yet we should not forget that globally the struggle for supremacy is waged between the states' political and military power and the corporations' political and economic power. What is more worrying is the corporations' long term policy focussed on destroying the family's, marriage and parenting traditional norms to the benefit of an individual autonomy, of devising an egoistical identity and of a life style excluding the familial commitments on a longer term. A detrimental option on a long run of those corporations.

The brightening future is not ours and it seems that tomorrow has long ago became yesterday. Nevertheless, we believe that it is up to us all to retrieve it and to find each other for avoiding a new catastrophic war.

The Current Geostrategic World-wide Outlook

RAINBOW GEOPOLITICS



Univ.Prof.PhD. Dorian VLĂDEANU

1. From Rio to Tel Aviv

May, 2018, **Tel Aviv**: the biggest gay demonstration in the Middle and Near East takes place with the participation of over 300,000 persons to whom other tens of thousands of tourists who came especially for this event have to be added, including Great Britain's ambassador in Israel. The demonstration takes place 10 years after the establishment of Gay Center in Tel Aviv and exactly 70 years since Israel's independence was proclaimed. Tel Aviv's mayor promises to overcome all legislative barriers and stereotypes related to the homosexuals' community.

Rio de Janeiro, September, every year: more than one million participants to the biggest LGBT parade in the world on Copacabana beach.

June, 12th, 2016, **Orlando, Florida**, the USA – a terrorist attack with more than 100 victims of whom 50 dead claimed by ISIS takes place at the local club Pulse Night.

May, 23rd, 2013, **Paris, Warsaw, Rio de Janeiro, Cracow, Lublin, Poznan** – hundreds of thousands of people take to the streets in the framework of huge anti-gay manifestations.

July, 15th, 2012, **Sao Paulo**: more than a million of evangelical Christians participated to the yearly March for Jesus and the normality of the human being. The organisers say that more than 4.5 million people will attend the future marches.

Charlotte, Northern Caroine, the USA – the municipal council adopted an ordinance allowing transgender persons the use of both sexes toilets in any public or private institution...

2. Some history

The fundamentals of the Franckfurt School were laid

somewhere at the beginning of the XXth century (1920-1922), as the school, which was one of the main suppliers of Marxist and neo-Marxists ideologues and who were in a deep and severe dissent with the communist, capitalist, fascist and Nazi systems. Critics of both capitalism and Soviet type socialism, the theorists of this school were and are still concerned about the possibility of an alternate way of social development.

H. Marcuse, a prominent figure of the Frankfurt School, launches the concept of the so-called **liberating tolerance**, which development could be hindered by traditional concepts such as family and moral in their classical, multimillennia coordinates.

Theodor Adorno, another representative of this school, in his "famous" book **The Authoritarian Personality** characterises "the quality of being a parent, the traditional attitudes and approaches towards family, sex, Christianity and patriotism" as **pathological phenomena**.

When **Nietzsche** launched the expression "transvaluation of all values" (meaning that all old sins such as greed, immorality, the extreme selfishness, etc. become virtues and, respectively, all qualities, the "old", traditional values, become sins and fundamental vices), the master minds of the Frankfurt School incorporated all these into their cultural Marxism so that, inter alia, the abolition of religions, too, was among the priority list of concerns of the new and old ideologues (we will revert on later on these aspects).

The permanent criticism of everything – everything but absolutely everything must be endlessly criticized, with or without reason, by

those more or less skilled in the business of governance. Thus, pressure is permanently exerted **up to obsession, then up to fatigue and later on up to abandonment** within on the public's conscience of topics of paramount importance: family, church, children, state, government, traditions, history etc. The anticipated result cannot be but the one seen far and wide on the entire planet: uncertainty, social and economic fragility, generalized relativisation, deep and extended division, a perpetual conflict from the micro to the macro social, political, military or economic structures (even if untill quite recently they were centuries-old friends); **critical theory** is the "basis of studies" for the most respectable American colleges and universities which became thus the "academic" source of political correctness.

Political correctness (another offspring "radiating" from the direction of the Frankfurt School) represents in its essence an aggregate of rules and practices permitting the inhibition of expressing certain ideas contrary to the trendy or to the popular line (not necessarily the official one) which in the end has as a result the **suppression of the freedom of expression without using from the beginning and in the open the force of coercion but a certain "strength of conviction"**.

They were and still are some of the vectors of the ideological fundamentals of the neo-Marxism emanating continuously from the abovementioned school and its master minds, older or newer, since generations either related or not...

Let us see what other important things history tells us and teaches us (when it is convenient to us)!...

History shows us that for centuries on end men and women wore quite the same type of garments. In ancient Greece and Rome, Japan, India, China, Malaysia - unisex garments were worn! The Japanese men wore kimonos (some of them still wear it today) and in the Maya culture men only were wearing jewelry.

Let us not forget that the referential country in what fashion is concerned during the entire history, France, men and women were competing

peer-to-peer in the Middle Ages to wear ribbons, laces and all kinds of flounces and furbellows. Without gender discrimination!...

3. Science and conscience

Through its concerns and personalities representing it, science was, is, and will be (we hope) a shrine unreachable most of the time for individuals with a doubtful moral and ethics yet also for those with lesser education but with many pretensions (as a rule, they are called politicians). Nevertheless, there are methods of cracking and entering the temple of science by some of its very servants. The terrifying market economy is prepared to stimulate greed and from here to the mercenary scientist, with money but without conscience, is but a step. A very small one!...

Ever more frequently, these mercenaries cover the said step with an ease coming only from the financial support backing them most of the time and from mass-media (written or audio-video). The others do not enjoy such privilege and come out on the assumed risk by some radio or TV stations (hardly ever) on time durations comparable to those dedicated to four-to-five ads for doubtful goods.

We felt the need of such a preamble because for the topic we deal with we will frequently appeal to this feature of the behavior in a field which has to, with any sacrifice and for the sake of mankind, remain clean.

The idea, supported more and more frequently by historians, sociologists, philosophers and psychologists is that the human society and civilisation would have been "much more advanced" whether women had been allowed to fully use their capacities. The idea would have gone even further whether men had not developed so many inner frustrations because of the "gender role" which had not allowed them to express their feelings.

The same "scientists" do not express any opinion of how "far" the human society and civilisation would have gone whether millennia have been passing without so many wars, without slavery, without greed, without atomic bombs

able to destroy the entire planet several tens of times, etc. Let us come back to the **gender role**, to the questions and answers related to this concept.

According to "literature addressing it" specialised", the "gender" disadvantages are totally overwhelming (!?). The surveys (!?) show that women who adopted a traditional feminine role of staying-at-home have much more cases of depressions than those who have developed a career. A direct correlation, too, has been noticed between the society's pressure in what concern the masculine "gender roles" and the increased mortality among them. A first idea coming off the "scientific" statements written and backed by the master minds of the Frankfurt School (and from other equally illustrious places) is that a postulate is merely set forth (so that no demonstration is needed), that the way of being of each individual is "independent on his native biological features"; and **The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)** in the USA is drawing attention to "the keenly felt crises related to men's mental health as a result of **gender stereotypes**".

Perhaps there is a no more popularised sociological field for the public at large than that of polling, polls which purpose is a "multiple" one (from partially revealing to totally misleading).

The LGBT associations all over the world launched a "torpedo" aimed at "sinking" all proved sociological truths **contrary to their truth** according to which the minority communities of this category would represent no more and no less than 10% of the EU population (certain state presidents advanced even 20% and nobody knows why). Surveys have been then carried out in Britain and in the United States, too, for seeing if this "continental constant" of 10% has a genuine support (the continental constant was "discovered" by **Alfred Kinsey**, biologist, psychologist, sexologist of whom the Roman-Catholic archbishop said that: "**Dr. Kinsey degraded science**").

After completing the surveys, the results were absolutely surprising: both in Great Britain and in the USA the percentage was not of 10% but

under 2% (the last such survey was carried out in the USA in 2002 and the end-results were between 1.7-1.9%).

For an easier understanding of eventual terms (unspecific, in a way, to common discussion and concerns), let us remember some definitions:

Gender represents a dynamic concept showing that, in any environment, its meaning changes through time as a result of the influence of certain specific concepts and customs of the epoch related to race, ethnicity, age, sex, social class.

Gender identity expresses the subjective feeling of the roles given by society, institution, etc.

Gender role and gender identity are, therefore, in a mutual relationship of the evolutive and constitutive process of the ego formation.

Alongside these notions, a prime size role is represented by the concept of **gender stereotype** for which there are several definitions:

Gender stereotype represents the situation whereby men and women are presented in their traditional roles conferred by the society in a certain context given by the epoch, customs and beliefs attributed to them by virtue of their characteristics and their affiliation to gender as a result of the persistence of certain opinions, perceptions and prejudices about the women's and men's roles in society and family.

More synthetically, **gender stereotypes** are those conceptions, ideas, convictions and beliefs people of a certain culture or society have in what "normal" expectations are concerned from both sexes.

A by-product of the gender stereotypes is the concept of the **gender cultural stereotype** which represents those stereotypes whereby culture has a relevant role in the way we are forming our images in what concern the differentiate roles of the representatives of the two sexes (men and women) via the cultural and educational products and activities (films, media, school, art, etc).

As a consequence of the "surveys" a series of

assymetries have been noticed in what the genders are concerned, so that:

a. Although women represent the majority of the planet's population, they are less often represented through a public image as compared to men;

b. The would-be general perception is that woman is a weak being and presence while men are active persons, seeking always to assert themselves;

c. Men are presented as leaders, women as subordinates.

The scientists dedicated to gender stereotypes have determined that not only biology sets out the features of a man but also education, culture, social class he belongs to, the sexual orientation (which is obviously true). Moreover, they consider that the traditional couples of men-women type and, implicitly, adding a dual terminology of active/passive, dependent/independent, rational/emotional, man/woman, husband/wife type, long passed and which have the ignorance and lack of education as cause... The same scientists, too, showed that psychologically, linguistically and from the standpoint of education, sizeable differences between a man and a woman are as many as those between two women or two men. How was such an evaluation possible? No one knows...

And, coming back to gender stereotypes, it is considered that the negative impact of their perpetuation in the current life is aimed at a multitude of aspects of the social life, among which the following are mentioned:

a. Maintaining the traditional gender roles for women and men, over-simplifying and directing the public opinion towards wrong judgments and exaggerations concerning human nature. More concretely, whether the expectations are that men are the promoters of the scientific and artistic progress, then the expectations for women are more lacklustre, more habitual, more commonplace, such as women's inclinations for "inspiring" and caring men. Therefore, the traditional visions will inhibit and discourage the representatives of both sexes to seek, develop

and exercise other roles, too...(?!)

b. Gender stereotypes are carriers of negative values so that women are considered less able of performances. In exchange, men are considered more capable than women in most of the activity fields and even have fields exclusively reserved to them (airline pilots, army, police, etc).

c. Stereotypes tend to turn into **self-achieving prophecies** since humans' actions are equally influenced, motivated and dependent on interests, circumstances, preferences and on the assumptions they formulate to each other, under the circumstances of inoculating certain obsolete, preconceived ideas of the kind: you are a girl and are not allowed/are allowed to do so-and-so (for boys obviously the same blocking mechanism works unconsciously). If since her infancy a girl is inoculated that she has "a man's mind" (and vice-versa), the girl will tend towards such a behavior (nevertheless we hope, in the hypothesis of a future and last world war, soldiers will not be women while men stay at home, nourish the kids, do the laundry and wipe away the dust).

d. Stereotypes exert real pressures on individuals in what concern the behavior in prescribed manners. So, whether manhood is confused most of the time with aggressivity, toughness, rudeness, then a confusion takes place (and vice-versa, womanhood is associated with pasivity, servitude, compassion, etc).

Consequently (the said scientists say) one finds out that:

a. At society level, gender stereotypes are directing men and women towards different life strategies and self-asserting modalities, which condition and determine unequal social positions for men and women (where does that leave England's great queens, the Iron Lady, Margaret Thatcher, Ms Chancellor Merkel etc. personalities escaping from such conclusions, the millions of women physicians, engineers, professors, sportpersons, jurists, researchers?!),

b. At interpersonal level, gender stereotypes impose that among men and women a type

of subordination relation emerges whereby man, due to a higher social status, exerts the leader's role and fills a dominant position.

c. The same "scientists" found out that a world where gender stereotypes are really "running wild" is the children's world, a world that has been suffering terribly since millennia due to "gender confusion". For instance:

- Many small boys would have not cried (and would have not been diseased at maturity) had their parents bought them pink teddy bears and red sandals yet that was pure and simple not possible since such objects are exclusively intended for the little girls (it is hard to imagine the pain inflicted by such a prohibition);

- "boys only play hockey, not the girls" – it is again difficult to assess how many tens of millions of girls suffer and cry every day due to gender stereotype since so many decades...;

- girls take care of dolls and clean up a pink house;

- boys do sport or play computer games;

- "boys are not allowed to cry" or "girls must be nicely and cleanly dressed".

It remains to be seen whether the girls, unclean and carelessly dressed, will diminish some of the gender stereotypes or whether the sight of thousands of boys crying uninhibited by preconceived ideas would make us diminish the suffering of millions of children who drop dead (they do not have even water!).

These nefarious gender stereotypes are manifest to the full in the ad industry, too, so that:

- men are present mostly in the ads for cars, banking products, etc, and

- women are present in the ads for cosmetics and household products.

The most popular way of presenting a woman in an ad is in her role of housewife obsessed by a stain on the husband's coat or on the tablecloth, in her role of wife and mother running out of ideas for the dinner menu.

There appears "nontraditional" examples as well which remain nevertheless gender stereo-

types; here we find the glamorous, "tease" women promoting different outfits yet mostly bathing suits (in this respect I do consider that the producers be asked whether they wish that the commercials for bathing suits – be they even for women – have as presenters one or two overweight men, of 120-150 kg each!)...We will deepen the analysis further on.

4. The six commandments

We are in 1987 in the USA where the article "**The overhauling of straight America**" is published, an article which became a milestone concerning the tactics to be used against the heterosexuals movement for imposing themselves in the American public eye (the authors of the article are two well-known homosexual activists, **Marshal Kirk and Erasates Pill – real name Hunter Madsen**). **M. Kirk**, a Harvard graduate, was a researcher in neuropsychiatrics and **E. Pill** had a PhD in social policies and was an **expert in public persuasion tactics** and social marketing (and a Harvard graduate as well).

In the article (published in the homosexuals magazine "Guide") a strategy with three basic directions is developed:

- a. the acceptance of the homosexuality by the public at large;

- b. demonizing the opponents of homosexuality;

- c. all campaigns will be based not on rational arguments but on **public's emotional manipulation**.

Later on, the article was developed by the same authors into a sort of manifesto of the homosexual movement yet much more elaborated so that, not long after, **a book was published** of some 400 pages titled "**After the ball: How America will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s**". According to this textbook, **there are three fundamental action vectors and the last one is developed in six steps (commandments)**. The brief statement of the three vectors is set forth in the following synthesis, so that:

"The first thing to be done is de-sensitizing the American public in what concern the homosexuals and their rights. De-sensitizing the public means making them look the homosexuality dismissingly, emotionless."

The strategies must be applied in such a way that the hostile public reach the stage whereby place the sexual preferences on the same level with the preferences for icecream flavors. "At first, initially, we pursue de-sensitizing the public and nothing more. We must not and cannot expect an "appreciation" or a full "understanding" of homosexuality from an ordinary person. **Forget about convincing the masses that homosexuality is something good.** Still, if you make them think this is something ordinary, if you make them shrug, then your parctically won the fight."

Mass-media is the main propagandistic vector; any campaign seeking the achievement of this change should accomplish cumulatively six purposes (commandments):

C1: Speak about homosexuals and homosexuality as loud and as often as possible.

Kirk and Pill say and write that "The principle behind this attitude is simple", since "almost any behavior begins to seem normal if you are exposed to it a long enough time and in sufficient places. The acceptability of the new behavior will depend ultimately on the number of acquaintances practicing it, ignoring it or accepting it. The manner in which we can alleviate the elementary sensitivities concerning the homosexuality is to make that many people speak about this topic in a neutral or in a positive manner." The authors say, as well, that "in the elementary stages of any campaign directed to the heterosexual citizen, the masses must not be shocked and removed through premature exposure to the social behavior per se. Instead, the sexual descriptions must be reduced to the minimum and the homosexuals' rights must be presented as much as possible as a social issue". Therefore, the authors insist and underline the importance of discussing by whatever means the homosexuals communities' issues in the visual mass-

media, movies and TV since the latter are "the most powerful image maker in the Western societies".

The authors consider in this respect that Hollywood is the homosexuals' "best hidden weapon" for de-sensitizing the public (see Will and Grace or The L World series). Not in the least, the authors point out that "**we can undermine the moral authority of the homophobic cults** by presenting them in retrograde and as backward. We have to mobilise the stronger influence of science and public opinion against the strong influence of the institutionalized religion.

Such a coalition worked well before, too, against cults in issues such as divorce and abortion."

C2: Put the homosexuals forward as victims and not as aggressive activists, so that: "In any campaign for winning the public, **the homosexuals must be depicted as victims** who need protection in a way that, out of reflex, the heterosexuals be inclined to assume, on their own initiative, the reole of protectors." And go on: "If the homosexuals are put forward as a strong and proud group promoting an unorthodox and deviant life style, then they will be seen as a public threat justifying opposition and reprisal. We have to find the middle path between impressing the heterosexuals not by our large number, on the one hand, and of not triggering their hostile paranoia, on the other hand".

Kirk and Pill pinpoint two different messages about the homosexual victim which must be mandatorily conveyed:

a. The homosexuals have been born the same way you have been born heterosexuals – they did not opt for that and therefore they cannot be judged in moral terms. What they are doing is nothing conscious – for them is something natural, marked on their DNA. This destiny could have been very well yours'...

b. Then, the heterosexuals must identify themselves with the homosexuals **as victims**. Ladies and Gentlemen "Public" must not have ex-

cuses for saying: "They are not like us". For that, the persons appearing in public campaign must be decent and neat, attracting and admirable according to heterosexual standards, must be beyond reproach."

C3: Give the protectors a right cause or fight the dogmas and traditions as being principles.

In the two ideologues' opinion (Kirk și Pill), a good media campaign is the one in which "the homosexuals are depicted as the society's victims and which encourages the heterosexuals to be their protectors. Our campaign must not request direct support for the homosexual practices, but must take over anti-discrimination as one of its themes. The right of free expression, freedom of faith, freedom of association, equal treatment and protection under the law – these have to be the aspects brought forward by our campaign. The homophobes dress their emotional reactions in the heavy clothes of the religious dogmas so that the defenders of the homosexuals' rights must be ready to fight "dogmas as principles".

C4: Make the homosexuals be thought of as good. The campaign must depict the homosexuals as **superior pillars of the society**. Yes, yes, we know – this trick is so old that it stinks!... Other minorities, too, used it in announcements which proudly proclaimed: "Did you know this great man/woman was..." But the message is vital for all those heterosexuals who see the homosexuals as some colorless strangers, lone, losers, drunk, self murderers, child assailants."

C5: Make the opponents be thought of as evil.

The two "scientists'" advices go on: "In a later stage of the campaign, after all the other homosexual ads became usual, the moment will come to approach the rest of the opponents. To be straightforward, **they must be demonized!** This way we will make the anti-homosexuals be

thought of as so ugly that the commoner want to be dissociated from such models."

What else should reach the public's ears and eyes? We'll find out soon: "The public must see the images of some noisy homophobes who might include: Klu Klux Klan members (who demand the emasculation and the burning alive of the homosexuals), bigot preachers with a hysterical hate, scoundrels, bangers and ex-convicts speaking effortlessly about the homosexuals they would kill. A tour of the Nazi camps where homosexuals have been tortured and killed would be nice. These images must be associated mandatorily with those of the homosexuals-victims through the method called by the propagandists the "paranthesis technique". That is, for instance, if a hot headed googled eyed preacher who rants and raves against the "gay satanists" is shown for some seconds and, immediately after, the image should be switched to a "victim portrait", to thrilling pictures of some gays who look decent, harmless, amiable; then we revert on to the preacher's image in order to amplify the perception of the antithesis. The contrast will be obvious and the effect – devastating."

C6: Ask for funds!

"Any massive campaign will need unprecedented spending. The first funders will be those gay families who have no families to take care of. Then, the great corporations, foundations directly related to the Democratic Party as well as (why not?!) other public financial resources!"

Two years later (in 1989), Kirk and Pill set forth again yet in a more explicit manner the plan for the mass propaganda aimed at America's converting in favor of promoting the gays' cause. We quote: "...by the conversion we understand something **much more menacing** to the American style of life and, lacking that, no major change can take place. We understand the conversion of emotions, of common man's mind and will through a **psychological attack in a form of a propaganda served to the people through mass-media.**" No comments...

Other public financial resources?!... We have to

know that one of the main "products" of the ideology whose first six commandments were presented above in short is the **sexual confusion**. This is justified as a human right (!) generating, among others, a new terminology promoted as an emergency (the urgency has been shown above) in the parliaments of several (civilized – o.n) countries and in many courts as well.

Therefore, a new vocabulary concerning the transgender persons' "rights" is being indited so that, for instance, from the "diversity of families" (a terminology that emerged once the marriages between gays have been legalised) the next step was bodily diversity and of having the right to a **gender identity chosen** by each person, a gender identity which might or might not be identical to the biological identity. According to **Bikle's** writings, we are facing an expansion of changing both the language and (especially) the body, of the human body (expanding market for changing the human body). **The sexual confusion** (or gender identity) **created a huge** and booming **market**, directly dependent on the policies of promoting the homosexuality.

The Tides Foundation is one of the big corporate organisations promoting the transgenderism so that, for instance, the first specialised clinic in treating the underage sexual confusion was set up in Boston in 2007 and the number went up to 30 in 2018, each of them with 200-275 beds and, we repeat, these clinics are dominantly dedicated to the minors affected by sexual confusion...

Alongside these clinics, specialised hospitals "curing the sexual confusion", (including through surgery procedures of changing the biological sex) have been developed exponentially. The specialised pharma companies followed obviously immediately with medicines and investments of hundreds millions and billions of dollars.

The medical professional training was to align itself with these rapid transformations so that the physicians with more than 10-15 years seniority had to specialise rapidly in order to understand and "cure" transgenderism, in order to provide the new types of surgery either for

changing sex, or for rectifying the bones system (subject to the gender requested by the customer), or for readjusting the vocal chords (for manly or womanly voice) and even for recalibrating the endocrinal glands (turning a man into a woman or vice-versa needs months or even years of work). And since the field is in full and accelerated development, it did not take long before the clinic of Baylor University (Texas) reported the birth of the first child in the world through the transplant of a natural uterus from a woman to a man who changed sex (no, no, we are not in stories with extraterrestrials...for the time being).

If we were to believe **Jenniffer Bilek** (and we do not have reasons for not believing her), **the industry dedicated to transgender movement** became an integral part of the American medical complex which, according to sources, is even bigger than the industrial military complex that it is successfully competing with. Well, it seems now we know something about what and how and especially why!...

Financing the transgender movement has on top a resounding name in the USA: **the Pritzker family**, worth around \$29-30 billion who owns medical equipment and pharma companies (not all intended to transgender). Millions of dollars went to University of Minnesota (\$6.5 million for launching a human sexuality program), to universities in Canada and Australia (Toronto and Melbourne). University of San Francisco (California) received donations worth more than \$25 million for researches regarding children dysphoria and Ohio clinics received millions for "treating" children affected by sexual confusion. The Pentagon, too, received donations worth more than \$1 million for "normalising transgenderism in the American Army (Barack Obama had as Secretary of Trade one of the Pritzker family's members and under the latter direction \$70 million (!) were spent for "researches" on transgenderism therapy and promoting specific products on the transgender market).

5. From theory to practice

On most of the continents and in many countries

(especially the "civilized" ones), the marks of implementing the six commandments are being felt more and more systematically and strongly.

a. England is one of the particular "hungry" countries to assess transgenders. The Parliament made the first decisive step without more or less exhaustive popular consultation or public discussions and legalised same sex marriages (although in his winning electoral platform, the then prime minister, **David Cameron**, had no mention of such a topic). A new portfolio was set up: Ministry (for Women) and for Equalities whose minister explained the necessity for such an institution as being given by the steps to be taken for bridging what he considered "the progress of marriages between same sex persons" (we ask ourselves, as mere observers, what kind of symphony would have Beethoven created when hearing such a news since we know that when he learned that Napoleon invaded Austria and conquered Vienna he wrote the Symphony No. 3 which first part is, as we know, the famous Funeral March)...

The "progressive" press, through **Roz Kaveney**, greeted enthusiastically immediately this change and noted that "changing sex is now as simple as changing name...".

The Public Transportation in London prohibited the classical greeting Ladies and Gentlemen (since the greeting included "heteronormative"... words – another novelty regarding new theoretical concepts adapted to the new homo...necessities). So the greeting in the underground is "Hello, all" – a neutral way of communication backed by Sadiq Khan, the Muslim mayor of London. We convey to them, in our turn, "gentle greetings"!

The students all over the country are threatened to be "marked" (not the Nazi way but in the contemporary way with bars, namely the informational marking) if they continue to use the "historically outdated" terms of she and he!

Justin Greening, the minister of Equalities, insisted on the idea that "the churches, too, must be determined to keep pace with modern trends" (what would the tens of thousands of Christianity martyrs really say?!...!). The Speaker

of House of Commons, advanced, in his turn, the idea that there could not be equal marriages except when "you can marry in a church without being necessary to fight for equality which represents your right". **Also, the devout Christians, the Jews, the Muslims, the Sikhs etc, can no longer adopt children if they remain faithful to their religion.** Besides, there is a "contest" among the British politicians, a kind of competition in the race of who is the most radical and the most original on the front of the emancipation of the "transgender" rights. Even the UK High Court ordained: "The provisions concerning equality in matters concerning sexual orientation would have to prevail".

Adrian Smith, an employed citizen with no position in Manchester was fired after he suggested that the state "should not impose rules in worship and conscience places". Subsequently, no such (backward) attitudes were manifest among the common citizens...

The SMEs pay for their shy or not opposition against LGTB. A small (bakery) Irish firm was shut down because it politely refused to decorate a cake with a pro-marriage among same sex persons message. The courts decided that "businesses' owners are **obliged** to promote LGBT causes **irrespective of their personal convictions (!)**". As a result, **the TV programs intended for 3-5 years old children** promote the "gender fluidity" (another new concept "brought out" by the movement ideologues) as a thinking, training and personality factor. The ministers denied with one voice the right of the worried parents (and they were not only a few) of withdrawing their children from primary schools.

In the mean time, the "free pedagogues" are teaching the children the... sexual positions, the satisfactions of consuming pornography and of masturbation (?!). If these are or are not the defining issues of the personality of innocent children is to be decided by each reader... And "the lessons" go on so that even the ads concerning sexual diseases and the risks of promiscuity are ridiculed as being "outdated" reflexes. The church did not escape either so **Dame Louise Ca-**

sey (a British Government Official) declared recently that "It is not normal that the Catholic schools be homophobic and against gay marriages."

b. Canada is another (civilized) country where the transgender type ideology is implemented in the day-to-day citizens' life without too many discussions and media analyses. Some of the shifts in what concern the legal norms are aimed at aspects such as:

- children could be adopted and brought up by gay couples;

- redefining the parent status and usurping the parental rights by the state in parallel with the deletion of the terminology of "natural parent" and its replacement with the neutral gender form of "legal parent";

- restraining the expression, conscience and religious rights so that, for instance, any person questioning the same sex marriage (including priests) might be considered homophobic **and liable to criminal sanctions and of losing the employment**, etc.

The defense of the LGBT rights is achieved as well by means of the newly set up Committees and Courts for Human Rights which will sanction the citizens for any form of opposition to a particular sexual behavior or to groups protected by law.

The new regulations allow for discriminatory treatments in the sense in which the law provides for the state bearing the court expenses for a LGBT person suing another person or institution with a behavior considered by the plaintiff as homophobic (the sued person has not the same right)...

The institutions of the Canadian state assumed as well the role of supervizing children's education in order to assess whether they have or have not a corresponding behavior in what concern their positioning towards transgender, including testing the appropriation of transgender speech.

Besides the legislation concerning defamation, slander etc. the Canadian legislators inserted the

"hatred felony", a felony placed under police supervision which refers to the way of addressing which could be instigating and insulting for the transgender minority.

c. The USA will not grant as of October, 2018, any longer visas to couples made up by same sex persons (unisex couples) if they are not married. Critics considered the restriction unjust having in view that there are countries that do not recognize same sex marriages.

Charlotte city (North Carolina): the municipal council just decided and adopted an ordinance which... Yes, you guessed! Which allows the transgenders to use both sexes toilets, as they please! Afterwards, the legislators of North Carolina restored the normality and common sense. Yet it did not last long. The **Obama Administration** in Washington sued immediately the State of North Carolina and threatened with suspending the federal subsidies.

The State of Alabama followed and prohibited by law the transgenders' use the toilets of the opposed sex. And again, Obama Administration threatened with the same sanctions and the law was repealed overnight!

Before long, **Target** corporation (one of the biggest retail chain) "wished" to be the first corporation in the USA which "integrates" completely and for good the men's and women's toilets and locker rooms. The conservatives and Christians adverse reactions followed suit and the boycott of the retail chain was requested. The stocks plummeted, the risk of bankruptcy kicked in a door and the "transgender" decision was repealed.

A municipal ordinance was issued in **New York** penalising with huge fines (up to \$2,500) the persons or institutions banning a man to use women toilets!...

Two "parents" filed an injunction in **Minnesota** against the nursery school attended by their daughter due to the fact that the said nursery school did not offer lessons on transgender...

In the framework of the so-called courses of "social inclusion", the American corporations train and indoctrinate their employees for ac-

cepting the transgender behavior and precepts (ideology).

At **Stanford University** (California), the "students" launched a petition and requested a chairman/chairwoman of the university who was to be a man turned by surgery into a lesbian, of Asian race (what the American democracy and market economy mean!) Nevertheless, what could determine you to request such a transformed "architecture" of a human being?!...

We are on 16th of October, 2013, in Florence College, Colorado. A person says she is a girl and the college girls must accept him/her in their toilet. Otherwise, they will be accused of hatred and discrimination. The girls press charges of sexual harassment. Consequently, the college management informed the girls that the **boy's right of being transsexual prevails in front of the girls' right to privacy** (this is how a possible prioritisation of human rights and liberties in the framework of **rainbow geopolitics** looks like). The schoolgirls press again the charges of harassment... So did the college management and threaten with shutting down the athletic section and that if they do not calm down will accuse them of hatred and discrimination. **Pacific Justice Institute** interferes by means of a letter sent to the college management warning them against the priority of the transsexuals' rights in front of the girls' right to privacy and mentioned in the end that: "We will not sit idly by and will not let 99.7% of our students lose their right to privacy and freedom of expression in front of just 0.3% of the population with confused gender". The college management did not give in and even suggested the girls to renounce the locker rooms.

And for the social atmosphere in the USA reach the sublime, California set an example and became the first American state ruling for the girls' and boys' right of choosing whatever toilet they want irrespective of the sex they were born with (and so we triumphed over...terrorism!).

In August, 2016, the Democratic governor **Jerry Brown** signed the AB216 bill, known as "Transgender Bathroom Bill". **Pacific Institute** came back and circulated a petition obliging the



government public officials to submit the draft bill to a referendum in order to be able to suspend the implementation of the law (the fight of the great majority of Californians continued). Nevertheless, in states such as Massachusetts, Washington, Colorado, Connecticut, the disciples and students had to obey the decisions made by the college and university managements where they were learning the **policies of priority of the minorities transgender's rights vs. the rights of the overwhelming majority were already in place** (as mentioned by Pacific Justice Institute).

6. Conclusions (?!)

I was watching recently a documentary where a gazelle terrified by the prospect of being torn apart alive by the terrible African dogs jumped without hesitation in a lake full of crocodiles. It had the chance of reaching the opposite lakeside and get rid of both the crocodiles and the dogs; it succeeded in living one more day!... Other documentaries show how 10-11 African dogs make herds of thousands of wildebeest run and which, under certain circumstances, could crush the chasers in seconds.

The conclusion is simple: it is not enough to be in majority to be right or to impose your standpoint. Sometimes, you get by yourself all alone...yet not for a long time.

David Burrow, a British parliamentarian and supporter of the **Coalition of Marriage**, was aggressed in the most disgusting and decadent manner (no one knows by whom, but we may imagine) and his children received life-

threatening messages at school.

Iain Dale, a newsman, promised to reveal all British gay parliamentarians who have voted a bill which limited the LGBT minority communities requests.

Richard Page, a British citizen was fired for "serious misconducts": he supported the idea that it would be better for children if they are adopted by heterosexual couples.

Under the pretext of "protecting children and women", **the Bulgarian Government** refused to ratify **the Istanbul Convention** (as did, by the way, Poland, Lithuania, Belgium, Austria, Hungary, etc). The motivation was that "the gender ideology is stranger to the country's language and mentality".

The Istanbul Convention on preventing the violence against women and domestic violence is the international treaty adopted by the Council of Europe on 11th of May, 2011 aimed at preventing violence, protecting the victims and referring the offenders to courts. Behind its title full of good intentions, the Convention provides that tolerance and impunity for violent acts against women represent violations of human rights and forms of discrimination on gender criteria. Until August, 2016, 46 states signed it and 33 rejected it.

Among others, the signatory states have a series of obligations such as:

a. Organizing information and education campaigns concerning **the elimination of gender stereotypes, of cultural and custom (traditions) models influencing directly** "the conciliation of professional life with family life" (!?).

b. The inclusion, in the syllabi, **from the earliest age**, of notions regarding gender identity and equality.

c. The integration of gender perspective in the school books and fighting gender stereotypes among the youth.

According to the Istanbul Convention, gender is defined as a "social construct based on the gender roles a society considers them appropriate".

Therefore, whether **the Rome Statute** (issued in July, 1998) defined the gender based on the individual biological peculiarities, gender ideology (included in the Istanbul Convention) says clearly and with firmness that we are not what we are, that the gender is not the one we have been born with, but is the one "we want to identify with". Gender ideology teaches the child he is a boy because he is playing war and another child she is a girl because she received a doll as present. And not because a boy is a boy and a girl is a girl because so they were born... Stating such a thing will be an offense from the perspective of gender ideology.

Anyone is aware that, in fact, **gender ideology is an ideology of confusion**, of illusions, whereby **gender equality does not mean equality between man and woman** but the fact that each individual may equally achieve and assume a gender or another (I might be 1% woman although I am female and actually I feel being 80% man – I hope it is clear for everybody...). Therefore I may be equally of the other gender as well as I may have no kind of gender, and be a non-binary entity...

And, nevertheless, the **Universal Charter of Human Rights**, assumed by the European Union, ruled the parents' right of securing the children's education and training according to their own religious, philosophical and pedagogical convictions.

On the other hand, the Istanbul Convention sets forth (Art.12) that the state which amended the Convention **commits itself to change the social, cultural and behavioral models** based, inter alia, on non-stereotypical gender roles, as the gender stereotypes are, in our belief, falling within the attributions of a classical, traditional family. Which of the abovementioned pieces of legislation will be implemented in the future?

And yet, reverting on to the day-to-day life, one can find out that there are an ever bigger number of children with gay parents who start "to speak" and tell stories of the punishments inflicted to them if they reveal what's going on at home.

A news came recently from London according

to which there were more than 1,400 children in 2016 suffering from gender confusion (double as compared to the previous year). These children's therapy costs yearly millions of pounds (the sexual confusion is the direct and immediate result of the sexual education in the primary and pre-university education).

These aspects (as well as many others) determined the **Christian churches in Slovakia** to send to the government a protest and warning letter whereby they stated that the shifts brought by modern times emphasized **interests and personal development, individualism, avoiding and even abolishing moral and ethical perceptions**, and all these determined negative results. "We express our concern with respect to the initiatives of ratifying the Istanbul Convention by the Council of Europe. We express our anxiety that the said document will strengthen the agenda of gender theory and will fundamentally affect the natural family. We appeal to the Slovak government to withdraw its signature from this document."

The American College of Pediatrics launched, in March, 2016, a document which warns against the harmfulness of the impact of gender ideology on children, of which we quote:

a. Human sexuality is an objective biological and binary attribute: XY and XX are healthy genetical clues and not clues of genetic malformations. The normality for human being is to be conceived either as a masculine person or as a feminine person. By its intrinsic nature, human sexuality is binary. The very rare disorders of sexual differentiation are identifiable medical deviations from the binary sexual norm.

b. No one is born with a gender but all of us are born with a biological sex. Gender (the subjective and normative identification as man and woman) is a sociological and psychological concept. Not a biological one. Persons who "feel" to belong to the opposite sex or "somewhere in between" do not represent "the third gender". They remain, in biological terms, men and women.

c. A person's sensation, impression that he/she is not what he/she is biologically in what

sex is concerned reveals the existence of a confused reasoning. In what children are concerned, this confusion is called **gender dysphoria**, a mental disorder recognized and mentioned in all the treaties and textbooks of the American Association of Psychiatricians.

d. Puberty is not a disease and the hormones for blocking puberty are **dangerous** since they induce a disorder – **the lack of puberty which inhibits the growth, maturation and fertility of a child** who was before biologically (and mentally) healthy.

e. Children using puberty blockers for identifying themselves with the opposite sex will need hormones for coming back to normal sexuality in the late years of adolescence. The said hormones are associated with high health hazards (heart attacks, hypertension, cancer, lowered immunity, blocking or drastically lowering the fertility).

f. Rising the **incidence of suicide** at persons changing the biological sex through surgery procedures or using hormones for acquiring the opposite sex is from 20 to 100 times higher than for the rest of population (even in Sweden, where the degree of acceptability of transgender persons is practically 100%). Another question arises: what person and why would he/she condemn the youth to such a destiny knowingly that 88% of girls and 98% of boys suffering from sexual confusion during puberty can return to normality?!...

g. Conditioning children to think and accept adopting a way of life represents a direction that abuses both children and their parents who, in their great majority, oppose such practices.

Adopting and promoting gender discordancies by means of certain syllabi and agendas imposed by public institutions and legislation will cause children and parents confusion and their renunciation, determining them to go to "gender clinics" where blocker hormones for puberty will be prescribed.

A former transgender person stated bitterly: "I have been a woman for 8 years. Surgery did not solve my problems. It is a medical fraud which

insufficiency is proven by research and experience."

Then again, why this "transgender agenda" is pressed and insisted on all over the world? Let us synthesize and notice some of the "guiding vectors" of the transgender ideology:

a. Very publicised demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of LGTB movements' sympathisers and members from Tel Aviv to Warsaw and Rio de Janeiro.

b. Other demonstrations with another hundreds of thousands of anti-LGBT demonstrators, much less publicised and very "stigmatised" and damned by the "independent" mass-media and, obviously, by the "public opinion".

c. The crisis of Marxism stimulated the re-activation of certain elites and of problems of certain social segments which have to be extended, globalised, under emergency circumstances in order to have thus that **through dimension and aggressivity "crush"** any opposition (as it was the case sometimes back with the "proletarian fist")... The most famous representatives of those elites were H. Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Marshall Kirk, Erastes Pill, etc.

d. The science's prestige is used too, as "working instrument", alongside the "independent media" although it is about some mercenaries "complicated" by the amounts of money received as well as by their own consciences, (as much as they still have) who laid the foundations of the transgender ideology, an ideology of neo-Marxist origin well financed and well represented in the political and corporatist world.

e. "We understand the commoner's conversion of emotions, of his/her mind and will through a **psychological attack** in the form of a **propaganda delivered to the people** via mass-media! – noticed Kirk and Pill, the authors of the six commandments. It is not about an objective necessity or other arguments **justifying the normality of abnormality**, it is not about any of the human rights or other "inspiring" ideas or feelings. No! It is merely about a simple psychological attack (and again, the terror state of the

hoards of the wildebeests attacked by a group of African dogs comes to our mind...).

f. I wonder what commandments (seen, known or unseen and unknown) may determine an Administration in Washington to threat the legislatures of several American states with cutting the federal subsidies if they do not revert on, under emergency conditions, to the laws which tried, during the former short-lived exercise, to protect the normality and the overwhelming mass of citizens who requested that?... It is a question worth an answer, irrespective of efforts and risks.

g. The American College of Pediatrics raises awareness, as we have shown, in an explicit way on the fact that **transgender ideology pays a maximum importance to the most fragile, innocent and defenseless social segment: children!** How come?

h. The same institution informs us that there are scientific proofs beyond reasonable doubt showing that the use of hormon blockers for puberty induces, among other terrible and with no cure disorders, **the destruction of children's fertility** who, before the "therapy", were in perfectly good health!

Time has come to pay a little attention to a Bill Gates's mathematical formula concerning carbon emission which is expressed as follows:

$$CO_2 = P \times S \times E \times C$$

whereby:

CO_2 = global emission of carbon dioxide

P = population

S = cost of services/person

E = energy cost/person

C = CO_2 emission/energy unit

The formula was presented by the multibillionaire **Bill Gates** at the conference **Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED 2010 Conference, Long Beach, California)** and the explanations given started with the sentence: "One of these indicators must be brought as close as possible to zero". And after that he begun to explain why and how the term P must be diminished: "The

world has now 6.8 billion persons and we are about to reach almost 9 billion. If **we deal efficiently with the new vaccins, the health system, the sanitary services in the field of reproduction**, we may diminish this indicator by almost 10-15 percentage points." Bill Gates did not revert on to and did not backtracked one sentence, one word, one coma anywhere and ever!...

Who knows what the fate of a politician in an "allied" country would have been if he dropped such a theory. Certainly he would have been compared with Hitler, Stalin, Mengele and others the world seems to have already forgotten, all of them and the dramas the entire mankind went through.

And as name came up, I wonder if dr. Mengele ever made sex change surgery among other thousands terrible experiments? Yet did he deal with modifications and adaptations of the bone, endocrine systems, vocal chords?... He didn't! We...deal with!

Let us come back to the wildebeests herd and its eternal chasers and hunters. On 21st of September, 2018, The New York Times announced that **president Trump** would like to issue a piece of legislation establishing that the sex of a person is determined "by clear and objective biological elements" only. And that came after the speech delivered at the UN, when Donald Trump urged the nations **to reject globalisation and to embrace patriotism**. He was highly critical of the "globalism ideology" and said that "the United States of America must head towards patriotism and the observance of sovereignty: we reject the globalism ideology and embrace the patriotism doctrine. The United States will always opt for independence in front of global governance, control and dominance. The United States will not tell you how you should live, work or pray. We ask you in exchange to respect our sovereignty".

Did the wildebeests herds finally find a shepherd on the increasingly scorched grasslands of democracy?!... Who knows... What we certainly know is that wildebeest will be a wildebeest and the shepherd will be a shepherd! With some mi-

nor exceptions, when the shepherd can be a... wolf as well! Or an African dog! In accordance with the meridian, customs, traditions...

WINTER IS COMING



Nicolae DOLGHIN
Ph.D

The earth is getting warm, the days are still torrid, while sanctions, threats and warnings keep streaming to and from every

cardinal point. Our consolation is that none of them is meant for us and that there is no point in splitting the hairs. Protectionisms wend their way home, British airplanes play the **Battle of England** not far from Constanța, Mamaia and Neptun, billions of lei will cross the Atlantic, as a response of the Romanian taxpayer to the American one, who invests millions of dollars in their missiles at Deveselu. Putin is attending a wedding, so as to practice his spoken German and listen to Cossacks songs in Austria and so on.

The evolving security environment, connoisseurs would state, baffled by the scenery unraveling before their eyes and philosophizing with a local savor – in the absence of any references for the future world order – could be worse. Yet, above all else, winter is coming to Europe and it does so as always, unannounced and relentless.

Global warming does nothing to prevent the perspective of Siberian frost. Hydrocarbons reemerge in the pipeline for energy security and, as a result, the Western policies step down closer to the daily concerns, more worried about the need to warm the population during winter time. **Russian gas has become commodity**. In its wait for warmer times, Europe adjusts its tone for a few months. Come spring, the gas will once again turn into geopolitics, and the strongmen of Europe will resume the raising of public awareness with regards to such emotional topics as the diversification of resources, energy independence, alternative energies, etc.

Energy resources have always been included on the list of riches that have set the world in motion. World War II has brutally established the role of oil in development. In the following decades, practically the entire global military infrastructure has envisaged nothing else but the protection of oil fields and the assurance of an unobstructed oil flow towards large consumers, in formulas that have become the standard on maps and deemed taboo. Only later have other considerations emerged. A dangerous exception has recently been created, around Iran, who, due to sanctions imposed by the US, will be basically prohibited from exporting its oil. Therefore, an increase in fuel prices may be on the menu upon the winter threshold.

The impressive deployment occurring a few years back, generated by the acts of piracy of a few fishing boats against huge oil tankers on one of the most important oil fuel delivery routes still ring vividly in the public memory. Were they warning signs? Even movies on have been shot.

Oil has become the synonym of welfare and it is hard to assume that major malfunctions may occur in the near future within the established formulas. Alongside with natural gas, oil is necessary, among other things, to generate warmth in winter, and coolness during summer time. Even if global warming will provide new commercial routes, the grand scheme of things will not be disrupted. Opportunities may become available where there have been no opportunities before, and movements have already begun in order to occupy the vacancies in the front seats of Arctic Ocean, but all will be interested in considering them a chance for prosperity. Given normal situations, the only issues that may arise are caused by speculation, including geopolitical speculation, which influences the **price of commodities**, still a symbol of the free economy.

In general, the topic of energy resources is still accompanied by numerous hypocrisies, speculations, overstatements and understatements, and evermore sophisticated misleading, etc. In short, an informational war permanently raging for the purpose of concealing the dynamics of geopolitics. We are also faced with the dispersion of fig-

ures that nobody believes in, not even when people settle their invoices, yet such figures also reflect geopolitical calculations.

Beyond the reasoning provided by civilization, religion, history or strategy, the Middle East has remained for several decades the Gordian Knot of world peace and it cannot be severed, nor undone due to the fact that it rests on so much oil. There is, however, a recent example of **reverse energy-geopolitics**. Not long ago, the states bordering the Caspian Sea signed a treaty on the status of this closed sea. Negotiations had begun along after the collapse of the USSR, so a couple of decades ago. It may be a speculative coincidence, but success has only become a possibility after information started circulating on the market that the reserves in the area are far from the estimations once made, and that the natural gas in Turkmenistan has long been leased, with cash up front, to China.

It has come to **natural gas** to play its part in geopolitics, as a commodity generating serious income, but also as a vector for political combinations, as oil had done before it. For the time being, Europe is in the spotlight, as a large consumer of natural gas, and Russia is there as well, great Eurasian producer, but the rest of the world is not far behind.

In order to earn its place, oil required two world wars and numerous local ones. After extended prospecting for alternative energies, the world was convinced that natural gas remains **one of the most environmentally friendly and reliable sources of energy**, so, let's get to work! The other sources, including renewable sources, have quickly shown their limits, as nuclear energetics generates other long-term complications, dependencies and vulnerabilities not anyone can assume, and prosperity requires evermore energy on a daily basis.

The geopolitics of natural gas is manifested both within the established formulas for oil, as well as within the existing pipelines, pipelines under construction, or still in the design phase. All the hot conflict situation throughout the world today are based on the more or less stated motivation of natural gas. The most recent ex-

ample is Syria. The situation abruptly took a turn for the worse when the US realized that the only thing they can do to oppose the Russian pipelines in Europe is to generate warnings, threats and sanctions. However, we are facing a peculiar situation when the US is trying to reemerge as *The First* without subtlety, threatening to take their toys and leave a playing field primarily of their own making. Yet certain estimations state that the US are to become the main producer and exporter of natural gas worldwide, so colossal amounts will come into the fold and things become more clearer. All participants on the gas market engage in geopolitics – exporters, consumers, actual or virtual transit areas – each with their own plays, arguments and hopes.

Similar to oil, it is a geo policy done by pen, well, keyboard, measured in billions of cubic meters, taking into account concrete figures, consumptions or actual and perspective productions, investments, distances, reserves, risks, etc., mostly considered by the producer and the consumer. Misleading, informational wars, rumors are also employed, yet the figures, relative as they may be, are still ruthless, and the stakeholders are well versed in drafting differentials, beyond the propaganda, geo-strategy, ratio of forces, etc. **Natural gas can also become a hybrid threat at any point, and the situation will last until a viable replacement for it is found.** The relationship between the supplier and the customer is quite interesting. Both aim to preserve it for safety reasons, and at the same time, both talk about **diversification**, the supplier – about an outlet, so about new revenue streams, the customer – of the sources and both continue to act toward their respective end.

According to certain public information, the consumption of natural gas in Europe in 2017 recorded **510 billion m³**, of which 200 billion have been delivered by Russia, the rest from internal production and Algeria. Certain estimations show that the necessary amount will increase by 5% per year and will reach approximately

700 m³ by 2030. **The International Energy Association** estimates that, during the following years, Europe will be faced with a decrease in demand of approximately 10 billion m³, and also a decrease in internal production, especially for Norway. Moreover, the export of natural gas from Russia is facing fierce competition from the internal Russian market, undergoing serious transformation. Gazprom statistics shows that in 2016 the margin of Russian gas from the total consumption of certain European states was the following:

- Greece	-96.4%;
- Slovenia	-81.4%;
- Latvia	-76.5%;
- Serbia	-73.9;
- Austria	-70%;
- Poland	-64.2%;
- Germany	-61.9%;
- Turkey	-58.9%;
- Czech Republic	-57.7%;
- Italy	-38.3%;
- France	-37%;
- Romania	-14.2%.

Moreover, in 2016, the USA exported 500 million m³ liquefied gas into Europe, i.e. a margin of approximately 13%. The American institutions estimated an increase of exports to 45 bn. m³ by 2020, which would mean almost half of the internal production.



Ukraine was the first transit state for Russian natural gas who tried to play its European geopolitical position card. It inherited from the USSR a transport system with a capacity of approximately 100 bn. m³ per year. The terminals are located on its western border with Slovakia. Due to the long term agreements concluded, those would be the points where the final figures were generated for the exported gas, so the entire

responsibility fell to Gazprom. The gas crisis of 2009 represented a moment of warning reference for Russia. The European beneficiaries accused them of failing to observe their contractual obligations, as the terminals at the western border of Ukraine did not receive the contracted amounts. Gazprom demonstrated that their export was not decreased, thus avoiding, for political reasons, to point the finger at the one actually responsible for managing the transport system and whom, also for political reasons, was excluded from any dialog by the European beneficiaries. It was a simple issue between the buyer and the customer, no politics involved.

In short, Ukraine demonstrated its role in ensuring the energy security of Europe, but the crisis did not end without consequences, consequences for the future. Russia made a public topic out of an issue that had been known behind closed doors for decades, namely that the Ukrainian fissure was widening, and that a break was inevitable. Ukraine continued to benefit from the substantial support of Europe, who was quickly joined by the USA in all the episodes of the Ukraine-Russia relations following the events of 2014, and the situation is probably bound to last for decades to come. Ukraine still benefits from multilateral support, even if Russia remains the largest investor in Ukrainian economy, as well as its chief commercial partner. By 2015, Ukraine had ceased importing natural gas from Russia, ensuring its necessary amount via an import formula from Europe, i.e. also largely based on Russian gas, but more expensive, due to the fact that it crosses larger distances until is received again from Slovakia or Hungary. At about the same time, the US Vice President had begun prospecting for gas in their neighboring state.

However, in the field of natural gas, rapid mutations occurred after the crisis of 2009, with the massive involvement of Europe and the perspective interesting geopolitical combinations. In the beginning, there was **North Stream**, a Russian and German initiative that was quickly brought to fruition, regardless of the scrutiny to which it was subjected. It has a capacity of approx. 55 bn. m³ per year and it comes as a continuation of the

transport system in north Russia, along the base of the Baltic Sea, so outside EU jurisdiction, and into Germany. The same period coincided with the announcement of the **South Stream**, which was to deliver gas to the south of Europe, via the Black Sea and Bulgaria. Bulgaria withdrew after it had commenced the construction and also paid a few fines for failing to observe the agreements concluded. Gazprom announced they were forced into cessation of the project due to EU pressure, because it lacked the power of Germany to support it. Bulgarian officials have recently shown interest in the old project. Regardless, the Black Sea has not been abandoned, and **Turkish Stream** followed, comprising of two pipes with an approx. capacity of 15.75 bn. m³ each. Both pipes are undergoing construction, and one will deliver gas to Turkey and the other to Europe. They are scheduled to run at full capacity by the end of 2019.

However, the most intense geopolitical disturbances in Europe, far surpassing Ukraine, was generated by the Russian – German intention to double the capacity of the Baltic pipe, namely the **North Stream-2** project. All agreements have been received, except for the one from the Danish authorities. Gazprom announced that it had begun the installation of the pipes. Given the strained commercial relations between the European Union and the USA under the Trump administration, the topic quickly started to point at European security aspects. Germany supports it regardless of scrutiny, considering it as a business deal. It was also approved by the European



Energy Commissioner, subject to certain conditions related to EU regulations. The USA vehemently opposed it and threatened not only Russia, but also the participating European companies with sanctions, but to no avail. During the meeting in Helsinki, President Trump recognized the right of Germany to the business deal, but stated to the Russian president that they would provide competition for his gas on the European market with liquefied gas, and that the sanctions were not going to be lifted. Reconciliatory in the discussion with the US president, the German chancellor defended the project, but also agreed to build a second European terminal for American liquefied gas. This would be added to other terminals, not used to capacity. The project is also opposed by the Baltic States and Poland, intent on stopping Russia by any means necessary. An idea is circulating in Poland according to which the purchase of natural gas from Russia is to cease in 2022, being replaced with liquefied gas from the USA. A pipe with the capacity of approx. 10 bn. m³ per year is located in Poland. The US Ministry of Energy estimates that the US could not influence the dominant role of Russian gas on the European market in the following two decades.

It is interesting how competition will be done in terms of economy rules. Liquefied gas requires significant processing before reaching the beneficiary and is approximately 30% more expensive than gas transported by pipe. Currently, the main outlet for the US is Asia, where maximum profit is achieved. When faced with harsher winters, they preferred to purchase cheaper gas from the Russians, in order to maintain their export figures in Asia. The outlet is increasing much faster than the production. China will become the biggest importer of natural gas in the world. In turn, Russia is increasing its capacities for the production and export of liquefied gas in Asia, but does not eliminate the European terminals from the equation. Therefore, the more gas, the lower the prices will be for the end user. Or will they?

It is hard to say if Ukraine hinted at what it would unleash by playing the transit space card and how much it will contribute to the new

tendencies within the Euro-Atlantic security space, where statements foreshadowing important polarizations are heard. The US president is asking for money to remain involved and will invoke new threats in order to be more convincing, but he also stated that it seems unfair that a small state such as Montenegro should drag the USA into a war. The French president is talking about an EU reform, even invoking a **strategic partnership** of the organization with Russia for the purpose of facing future challenges. The USA believes that the EU is *worse* than China. The German chancellor has another vision for the reform but also states that the EU must obtain **sovereignty** in defense. Other players, coming from the East, provide perspectives of their own. Poland is asking for an American military base on its territory and is even willing to contribute billions of dollars to that end, Romania is advocating for increasing NATO presence at the Black Sea, probably believing that the bases on their territory are insufficient. The Baltic States, are asking the same for their area. Aspiring Ukraine renounces its neutrality and institutionalizes its European and Euro-Atlantic option, but until its acceptance, it is asking the US not just for weapons, but also for direct intervention, including military intervention in its dispute with the separatists. Up to this point, NATO has avoided expansion into spaces not stabilized in advance by political treaties and there is no sign they will renounce this principle. Russia has resorted to important strategic reconfigurations on own territory and in the east of the Mediterranean Sea and is organizing military exercises with direct reference to its western borders in the Far East. Turkey is sending Europe amicable messages, while defying the US, and its contiguity with Russia continues even with the risk of sanctions. In a short-term perspective, both Turkey and Germany could become the main distributors of Russian natural gas in Europe, without also becoming transit spaces. Therefore, the Russian-Turkish contiguity should be of no surprise to anyone, even in the strategic field, nor Angela Merkel's resorting to more moderate tones. The economic perspectives are far more tempting.

For the time being, the calculations show that the cessation of the transit of Russian natural gas via Ukrainian pipes would generate losses of approximately 3% of the GDP, about the same amount spent on defense given the more difficult present conditions. The EU insists that in order for the transit to be maintained after 2019, when the agreement expires, Gazprom declares that it is possible to transit 10-15 bn. m³ per year, if economically feasible, with the Ukrainian officials declaring that 40 bn. m³ are required for the same reason. Therefore, **three party negotiations are underway. There remains, however, the relentless background of reality that the completion of the new pipes will only provide a minimum increase in the amount of Russian natural gas on the European market, while generating conditions for the elimination, at any moment, of the Ukrainian transit, thus depriving Ukraine of an important European asset.** Moreover, the development of the pipe system towards sole recipients is also subject to vulnerabilities.

Regardless, winter is coming and, paradoxically, natural gas could provide a chance for European peace, as **the entire deployment dynamics until now is aimed at the very circulation of gas, not the stopping thereof.**

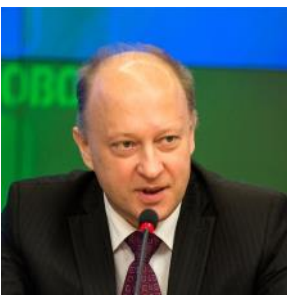
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After almost two decades of the administration in massive doses of the drug called **the new security paradigm**, the public perception has become oblivious to it. The respective model was based on flexibility, development, education, free movement, respect for the individual, pluralism, all manifested within principles of democracy. As time goes by, the world discovers that democracy died where it was invented, in ancient Athens, when the voters were left with insufficient places on the rock at the foot of the Acropolis to directly express their vote. Since then, several principles have been mixed, in the shape of a preamble to important documents, but only to be invoked by the strong. Without thinking too hard about questions, every day we witness a stream of new realities, namely the over-verified mechanisms of the power rela-

tions, based on their classical and inevitable dimension – the military one. But the conditions are completely different, at least in Europe. There are few European states truly holding credible modern military potentials, and the dynamics of their establishment are extremely different. This creates inequalities difficult to surmount and dependencies difficult to break.

The military gap between the great powers of the world and the other actors is deepen not so much due to military budgets, but to the new philosophies for generating and using military instruments in a selective, focalized and optimally effective manner. Cosmic space will reduce the number of credible military actors to just a few, they're only a handful. The others will play war games during the peace time and will be cannon fodder in times of war, but they are the very ones sounding the trumpets of war the loudest.

Politics as Continuation of War by Other Means?



Andrey KORTUNOV

Two hundred years ago, the prominent German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz proposed his famous definition of war as “the continuation of politics by other means.” This definition has not changed in any significant way since, but two world wars have made people think that politics should not actually be continued on the battlefield. Alternative, predominantly diplomatic instruments of politics gradually relegated war to the footnotes of history – or, at the very least, it appeared to many that this was what was happening.

It seems that this situation is beginning to change now. War, with its own internal logic, special mentality, principles and priorities, is beginning to penetrate the fabric of global politics with ever greater intensity. Clausewitz's formula is beginning to work in reverse, with politics being the continuation of war by other means. This



victory of war over politics and diplomacy cannot but cause concern about the direction in which the modern world is going.

On the surface, we can see that the role of the military in formulating and implementing foreign policy is growing throughout the world. Look at the key figures in the Trump administration: never before have there been so many senior military officers in the White House. Even the Brookings Institution, a purely civilian establishment, is headed by a retired general. And which has the more influence over U.S. policy in Syria and Afghanistan, the Department of State or the Pentagon?

Russia is similarly militarizing its foreign policy. I would like to be mistaken, but it appears that when it comes to influence on Russian politics, the balance between military officers and diplomats has been increasingly drifting in favour of the former over the past few years. This does not concern Syria alone, or similar crisis regions, but also many other issues of foreign policy. It is quite possible that one of the causes of the current arms control crisis is this tipping of the historical balance between the military and diplomats.

The fact that the positions of the security agencies are strengthening is not necessarily a cause for concern in and of itself: military commanders, for the most part, are known for their cautious and pragmatic behaviour because they are well aware of the dangers associated with crossing the line that separates peace from war. However, the flip side of this process is exactly what

we are observing now: the degradation of the art of diplomacy. There are, of course, professional diplomats both in Russia and abroad who excel at foreign politics. However, classical diplomacy in general is on the wane. It is often the case that the activity of a senior negotiator or envoy, their incessant tweets and posts on social media make one wonder if that person is truly a diplomat and not a blogger, propagandist or TV celebrity.

It is not about a critical shortage of professionalism. Diplomacy has always been a creative art, and creativity requires at least a modicum of autonomy. This equally applies to ambassadors and attaches. If, however, a diplomat's functions are limited to obeying their seniors' orders and serving as a mouthpiece for official statements, then there is no room left for creativity. As the saying goes, the only way a typist can demonstrate any creativity is through their typos.

All this, however, is just an outward manifestation of war infringing on the domain of politics. Much more serious is the nascent expansion of a militarized mindset into the civilian aspects of global politics. Let us consider several examples of this process.

Foreign policy is historically the art of discerning 50 shades of grey in a black-and-white image. War, for its part, does not tolerate shades. It is a zero-sum game. To quote Sergei Narovchatov: "It is the enemy's gun squad that is against our troops. There is no nature, no beauty." Now, if politicians increasingly perceive the world as a global battlefield, then they inevitably begin seeing it in black and white. Reflection and introspection are no longer an option. Nor is human empathy: "we" are always right and "they" are always wrong; "we" are allowed to do whatever we want and "they" are denied everything.

The aim of foreign policy is to find solutions to international problems, however flawed, temporary and not entirely fair they may be. The aim of war is to cause maximum damage to the adversary. Here, too, we are observing the military mentality advancing on the political mentality. The introduction of various sanctions is a classic example. It is clear to everyone that, more often than not, sanctions do not cause any changes in

the behaviour of their target, especially when it comes to unilateral sanctions. Nevertheless, the world continues to resort to them; in fact, sanctions are turning into a universal instrument in the foreign policy toolkit and are largely replacing traditional diplomacy.

Here is one more worrying trend: contemporary society imposes minimal restrictions on ways to conduct warfare. All is fair in love and war, as they say. This includes misinformation, outward lies and acts of provocation. But politics cannot be conducted this way, because politics are about reputation, predictability and reliability. The concept of reputational damage may not apply to war, but it must be taken into account in politics. It appears that the whole world, East and West, is starting to live according to the rules of wartime, in which every method is fair and a good reputation is either an unnecessary luxury or, at the very least, an expendable resource. This trend is blurring the important boundary between politics and special operations. Respect for the opponent, which was present even in the worst hours of the Cold War, is disappearing from global politics.

In a similar vein, war and politics have differing views of dissidents, alternative viewpoints and criticism of the "party line." During wartime, dissidents are potential traitors and soldiers are not allowed to question their orders. In politics, dissidents are potentially important participants in the decision-making process and criticism is key to increasing the effectiveness of the political course. It is extremely worrying that dissidence and any views that run counter to mainstream politics are becoming increasingly attacked and outlawed everywhere. We are losing important platforms for professional, ideologically unbiased and involved discussions of key foreign political problems.

One more manifestation of military logic dominating political thinking is manifested in the fact that, in recent decades, great powers usually win the wars but lose at peace. Material, political and intellectual resources for waging wars are

surprisingly easy to find, whereas peacebuilding resources are universally scarce. Humanity is prepared to bankroll wars but not peace. This was the case in Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Libya and many other places. The same fate may befall Syria. We keep falling into the same trap of having no weighted and realistic strategy for extricating ourselves from crisis situations.

Some would say to this: So what? Does the current situation in the world not justify the growing militarization of politics? Indeed, if we are to proceed from the statement that "the class struggle intensifies as we progress to Socialism," then politics will logically and inevitably turn into a continuation of war. So, let the withered leaves of traditional diplomacy fall to the ground. The coming political winter will be replaced by a new spring sooner or later, and the ancient tree of global politics will nurture the buds of a new diplomacy.

It would be great if this happened. We should not forget, however, that this fatalistic approach is likely to trigger a chain reaction of self-fulfilling prophecies, which are fraught with serious troubles for all of us. This means that the long-awaited spring will take a very long time to arrive.

Speech delivered at the session "Foreign Policy in Uncertain Times: Pursuing Development in a Changing World" at the 15th Annual Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club.



A european geopolitical concept with augmenting tensions. Intermarium

Professor Ph.D. Stan PETRESCU

The current European geopolitical bears considerable burdens: numerous crises have reached a dead, other conflicts have frozen and the current international context announces increasing tensions, which can turn into conflicts at any time. My statement is based on the fact that we are witnessing the emergence of signs of war in which we can decipher an aggressive potential. Unhindered by anyone and by anything, it carries out various offensive actions in a varied register against a state or groups of states: direct accusations, intense propaganda, manipulation, lies in the media, defamation, insult and intimidation - all unrolling continuously in order to get the consent and support of international organizations and especially of the public, on the attitude and the amount of its claims

Slowly, the great world players accuse each other without seeking compromises, contenting themselves to explain the current situation in terms of international relations.

Russia, the follower of the imperial Soviet monster, has reborn and presents itself with other observations at the Anglo-Saxon attitude and Western approach of security. They have set the start line of building security since 1950, when national security meant no weapons, no misunderstandings and prohibition of disproportionate resource mobilization. The European Coal and Steel Community - ECSC¹ was established on account of such a vision, the mutual control of coal and steel, the main raw material which stood at the basis of the course of two world wars that took place on the Christian European

territory: World War I (The War of Nations or The War of the Gentiles), from 28 July 1914 until 11 November 1918, which ended with a record of human losses² of 10,000,000 people dead and 3,000,000 soldiers missing, plus 13 million civilians dead and the World War II (The War of Ideologies), with casualties³ that stand at around 72 million lives. Of these, about 47 million were victims in the civilian population, including 20 million deaths caused by hunger and disease during the war. The material damage caused by the war was unimaginable.

Politicians agree that the complementarities do not lead to progress and it would be necessary to spread only European values, while Russia says all values are necessary and that the EU should provide more stability and penning to dialogue.

Throughout the period 1950-2018, the world has gone through a complete chaos: the end of World War II, the creation of international security organizations and military political blocs that did not lead to more security. All the security projects and intentions for one state actually mean insecurity for the others, so it would be a confusing security context whose code can be deciphered in the political balance of the powers. This balance requires a lot of trust between powers; it needs their interdependence and solid international regulations on their relations because the evident problem of international relations resides in the dynamics of the global and regional security. Weakened powers and alliances have always tried to regain the lost in-



1. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was created in 1951 (The Paris Treaty) by France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands in order to assign steel and coal resources of the member states and prevent a new European war. This was the implementation of a plan designed by the French economist Jean Monnet and made public by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. It has been intensively promoted by the US, so that the ECSC has become the basis for the European Economic Community (later renamed the European Community and at the end the European Union after the Treaty of Maastricht, which entered in force on 1 November 1993).

Source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tratatul_de_la_Maastricht

2. <https://crispedia.ro/bilantul-primului-razboi-mondial/>

3. https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierderi_omene%C8%99ti_%C3%AEn_cel_de-al_Doilea_R%C4%83zboi_Mondial

fluence by means of doctrinal and content reconfigurations. A response has been attempted ever since 1947 by creating a balanced coalition.

The balance of power is not new; it has been operating after the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which concluded the last religious war in Europe. The Treaty of Westphalia represents an international norm of law that recognized, for the first time, the principle of sovereignty. That peace ended the 30 year-war (1618-1648) and represented a historical event that influenced the development of international law by establishing a system of peace and cooperation in Europe, based on treaties between sovereign states. This moment is considered the starting point of modern international law, contributing to the affirmation of sovereignty and equality of states⁴. Each party committed by signature to respect the territorial rights of the other parties and not interfere in the internal affairs of another state. This is how Europe as a continent of sovereign states was born. The old norms of the Roman law are revived, i.e. respecting treaties in good faith (*pacta sunt servanda*).

The rule of the balance of powers is based on the ceasefire requirement and on a superpower's participation to a coalition by full compliance of the rules resulting from the treaties concluded between the parties. To do this, Russia had to increase its power at an international level, patiently regaining part of its lost influence. This is how the security environment becomes fluid and dynamic, influencing the balance of power with successive threats (see the hybrid war), coalitions of states begin to threaten nearing countries because the latter would have a different perception.

That is why NATO got too close to Russia, causing the destruction of the balance of powers, thus causing more instability, a phenomenon that has been amplified after the collapse of Russia in 1991, a doomed year that has been for the Russians, according to Vladimir Putin, *the greatest geopolitical catastrophe in their history*.

After the great Russian fall, the European lead-

ers believed that Russia would become a reliable partner in a Europe subject to change and hoped that NATO members would get an honest partner. Nobody believed in such a change of attitude after the exhausting Cold War. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for Russia to believe in the Alliance's peaceful intentions as presented in all the media channels.

The danger in the dynamics of the new threats to the international security environment is the ever discussed globalization process, which abolished economic borders between countries so that the capital transfers and economic attacks are made by a simple click of the mouse. At the same time, unclear separation lines have been created, generating new asymmetric risks and threats.

After 1990, the definition of security refers to the areas of influence and the obstruction of clear communication paths. The long coalescence of the security areas leads to paradoxical situations; a safer state means an insecure state for the individuals.

The security issue has now become an instrument of economic sanctions up to the interference with offensive cyber action. NATO has taken a series of measures on the eastern border: the prepositioning of military equipment, armored vehicles and logistical support in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and some in Germany, while the Russians took countermeasures by creating clear structures and certain highly mobile operating units, one hundred percent offensive, to act fast against precise targets in surgical attacks, after years in a row of training in a series of actions of crisis with the West, to the dismay of the North Atlantic Alliance:

1. The war in Kosovo in March 1999, when a NATO 78 day-bombing campaign forced Belgrade, an ally of Moscow, to withdraw from its former province. Russia threatens NATO with a return of the Cold War, discontinues military co-operation with NATO, the tension increases with Kosovo's declared independence on 17 February

4. Mădălina Cocoșatu, Drept internațional public (Public International Law), Pro Universitaria Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012, p. 15.

2008, unrecognized by Moscow.

2. NATO's expansion eastwards, a moment when Moscow has warned that it would not allow the accession of former Soviet republics to the Alliance. Despite these threats, those countries have joined NATO.

3. The conflict in Georgia in August 2008, in retaliation to an intervention by Georgia against the separatist region of South Ossetia, Russia bombed the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, and occupied much of the territory of Georgia, causing a deep indignation in the West. After this blitz war, NATO suspended the NATO-Russia Council.

4. The anti-missile/antiballistic shield creates great concern for the Russians, considering the interceptor missiles in Romania and Poland. Putin directly threatens countries where this terrestrial system, called Aegis, has been set.

5. The Ukrainian crisis, Moscow's annexation of a piece of the Ukrainian territory, Crimea, followed by loss of control, in front of the pro-Russian demonstrators, on some key offices and institutions in Donetsk and Lughansk, in the eastern part of the country. European and American sanctions have been implemented, but they have no serious effect. NATO suspends civilian and military cooperation with Moscow and the allies decide to place troops on alert. NATO deploys air support and land forces in the Baltic countries and Poland.

6. The Syrian conflict - Russia supports the regime of President Bashar al-Assad. Russia has participated in this war since 2015. Donald Trump ordered the bombing of a Syrian air base, which makes the Russians suspend the channel of communication with the US military on the subject of Syria.

7. Allegations of campaign interference in the US. There are suspicions of collaboration between Donald Trump's campaign team and Putin's Kremlin.

8. Allegations of poisoning on 4 March, in southern England, of a former Russian spy. The Western countries expelled 150 Russian diplomats and Moscow expels, in turn, 150 Western diplomats.

These demonstrations of force build sympathy for the Russians not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world. Russia regains its status as superpower of the world, while its rhetoric to the US becomes either firm, or ironic, indicating that "the Solitary Superpower" no longer exists. Therefore, Russia manages to defy the West, becoming an unstoppable regional power: after Crimea comes Eastern Europe, from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean Sea (Greece and Turkey). The southern flank of the Alliance, formed in Greece and Turkey, gives us the feeling of being closer to Vladimir Putin's power. We are in a moment of concentration and prepositioning of forces on both sides of a border of over 2,500 kilometers, from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

Maps and geopolitical reality bring to our mind the history of wars, when Romania and Poland were under the threat of Bolshevik Russia, an absolute and thorough reason to conclude a security cooperation agreement - actually a barrier against Soviet Russia. This is how the concept of Intermarium appeared, being first introduced by the Polish general Jozef Pilsudski after the First World War, aimed at creating a defensive alliance on the territory between the Baltic and the Black Sea, in other words a barrier that would end the Bolshevik offensive to the west, where if united with the Germany of that time, the fate of Europe would have been a red one.

In the new geopolitical context triggered after the crisis in Ukraine, the project of the Intermarium has become actual again. Russia's increasing power and its duplicitous-aggressive policy towards the European countries has changed the attitude of the West. NATO troops and equipment have been deployed at the eastern border of NATO and the European Union and the prepositioning of Western forces is pursuing a stationary line of the front starting from the north, from the Baltic states, following the borders of Poland and Romania to the south, in Bulgaria and the Black Sea. This serious redeployment of forces gives a clear warning signal to the Russians, showing that after what happened in Ukraine, the red line of demarcation and prohibition has been drawn. Once attacked, such a defensive line could bring to a significant conflict the entire

North Atlantic Alliance, severely testing world peace. From the cold waters of the Baltic, to the warm Mediterranean and Black Seas, a new historical challenge is presented to the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, backed by a strong guarantor named the US.

The security of the Alliance at the Black Sea is put to a test due to the enhancement of the strategic maritime forces in this south-eastern flank, just like the presence in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, strategic directions that are considered the main guidelines of the new "maritime doctrine" of Russia, a nation that is being reconsidered following the "unacceptable" expansion of NATO at its western border.

The Russian maritime doctrine uses collocations such as "infrastructure development" of the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, the peninsula annexed in March 2014 by the Russians.

The Russian interest for the militarization of the Black Sea and the opportunity to project forces in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean follows the model of the Russian intervention in Syria.

The control of southeast Europe is the first step towards the control of Central Europe.

We can add to this geopolitical landscape of confrontations the new challenges of the information war, which only increase the complexity of the challenges that NATO and the European Union need to deal with.

The question raised in an alliance of this size, with so many cultures and ethnicities, is the leadership of the operations, a situation which needs to clarify two issues: the reconsideration by the US of the operational system of the Cold War and a new analysis of the Intermarium strategy so as to bring more precision to the defense of the southeastern flank of NATO, backed by the US as the main security provider.

And still, these movements of troops do not eliminate the problem of mistrust, but rather augment it. Global and regional security cannot be maintained by bilateral relations or coalitions. Some small and medium-sized countries are seeking safe alliances and partnerships, that

is reliable masters and a modern diplomacy, for which the expression "strategic partnership" has been "euphemistically" invented.

Threats grow at a global level, the most important being the migration phenomenon. No doubt that it takes the full compliance with the treaties and strengthening of international relations regardless of skin color and no prejudices between cultures. The foundation of understanding is communication and trust. *There is a miraculous medicine for security and that is compromise, and the latter means dialogue and peaceful transition to a new order, not a single state for international security.* The active and proactive diplomacy of a state in relation with the neighborly relations must take account of its geographical position. This is exactly what Romania does not do. Diplomatic philosophy in managing international relations was reduced to closed windows in certain parts of the world, or, simply to embracing the policy of unexplained silence. In 28 years, Romania has had 21 Foreign Ministers. At present, in this centennial year, Romania urgently needs as much cohesion and solidarity as possible. Unfortunately, discord has covered the entire Romanian territory, suggesting the authorities in the highest positions of state and ordinary citizens, that this year they will be celebrating a Centenary of Non-union".

I hope that things will change and the geopolitical concept named "Intermarium" will enlighten the decision-makers in the Balkans at the beginning of this warm fall.

The Third Annual Summit in the history of the Three Seas Initiative was held in Romania in Bucharest on 17-18 September. President Klaus Iohannis chaired the meeting of the 12 heads of state invited to Bucharest. This Summit followed the summit in Dubrovnik (Croatia). In fact, the first summit, which was held on 25 to 26 August 2016, concluded with the Declaration of the Three Seas, and the second, which was held in July 2017 in Warsaw, hosted by President Andrzej Duda, was honored by the presence of the guest of honor, Donald Trump.

The Summit in Bucharest has contributed to strengthening transatlantic ties within the Three

Seas Initiative. The summit addressed indirectly issues related to defense and enhanced security in the Black Sea, so the Three Seas Initiative is slowly likely to take a military dimension complementary to NATO.

There are opinions according to which the Three Seas Initiative is supported by the US, but viewed with some reservations by the EU, especially Germany, which sees its influence at the continental level diminished because of possible direct Russia-US arrangements. The United States is gaining ground in the EU's eastern flank, as it is interested into cohesion for organizing the defense against the Russian threat.

These are the encouraging signs given by NATO countries such as Poland, Romania and Estonia, which have already made a commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP annually on defense.

Germany is subtly doing a double game and is still consistent ensuring substantial contribution in defense spending in NATO, but it also pays several billion to the Russians annually for natural gas and raw materials for industry, becoming not only a consolidated trading partner, but also the defender of Moscow's commercial interests in Europe.

These are just a few reasons explaining the lack of interest of the EU to support the formation of a security corridor from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

This Intermarium of Romanian design (the Baltic Sea, Black Sea and Adriatic Sea), held in Romania's centennial year, could be a serious geopolitical stake in the "extended" Romanian space and I mean here the opportunity – insufficiently exploited – to invite the representatives of the Republic of Moldova for the first time in three years. Chisinau had the unique opportunity to join a supranational organization which aims at developing a fruitful economic dimension and that could have been an occasion to draw closer to NATO.

Romania's opportunity to pursue its national interest and attract the Republic of Moldova more vigorously has been lost. In terms of its geographical location, the Republic of Moldova belongs to the European and Euro-Atlantic space more than the Eurasian one. Moldova missed the chance to join the Three Seas Initiative as the 13th invited country and was not sufficiently encouraged by Romania to do so, and thereby all participating countries followed the same attitude. The Republic of Moldova missed the historic opportunity to make the right geopolitical choice.

The main conclusions of the third summit refer to political support at the highest level, the list of regional interconnection projects for energy, transport and the digital domain. Much has been said about connectivity in all directions, but less about the connectivity of the Romanian elites and of those of the countries invited to the summit.

According to the Romanian President "the Summit of the Three Seas Initiative was an excellent reunion despite domestic political difficulties", assessing the reunion on the banks of the Dambovită river as being a "success".



Understanding Armenia's Syrian Gamble



Eduard ABRAHAMIAN

Following bilateral closed-door talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Moscow, on September 8, Armenia's interim Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan told journalists that Russia and Armenia would soon launch a "joint humanitarian mission" in Syria (Azatutyun.am, September 8). The operation, apparently requested by Bashar al-Assad's regime, will be implemented under the auspices of the Russian military command in the Arab Republic. Pashinyan specifically emphasized that the "humanitarian mission" would "lack a military component." However, such an undertaking is normally categorized as a so-called "military-humanitarian mission," particularly since Armenia's entire contribution will consist of defense ministry personnel (Lragir.am, September 9). According to Defense Minister David Tonoyan, Yerevan aims to dispatch about 100 personnel, including army doctors, de-miners and engineers, as well as a guard detachment to be stationed at an Armenian military logistics base in Aleppo (Mediamax, September 11). Yet, Tonoyan assured that this contingent would not be involved in combat operations. Prime Minister Pashinyan, meanwhile, conveyed hope that "other international community representatives [would] join this initiative as well" (Sputnikarmenia.ru, September 9).

Pashinyan's September statement in Moscow clarified similar remarks he made on August 17, in Yerevan, during a mass demonstration to mark 100 days since the "Velvet Revolution" placed him in power. At the rally, the prime minister denied

growing tensions in bilateral relations with Russia and revealed that his government and Moscow were preparing an "unprecedented humanitarian initiative" in Syria (Civilnet.am, August 17).

The asymmetric nature of relations between these close politico-military allies is nothing new. As such, the recent regime change in Armenia has further precipitated the emergence of conceptual disagreements between Yerevan and Moscow. In particular, Pashinyan's government immediately launched a comprehensive domestic anti-corruption campaign; and in response, the Kremlin explicitly began backing a number of corrupt, pro-Russian former Armenian officials, while applying "soft pressure" through Russian oligarchs of Armenian origin. Moscow is particularly worried about the future of former president of Armenia Robert Kocharyan and incumbent Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) chief Yuri Khachaturov—living symbols of Armenian kleptocracy. Concurrently, Moscow has refused to extradite former Armenian defense minister Mikael Arutyunyan (Interfax, August 31).

Elaborating more on the so-called joint humanitarian mission in Syria, Armenia will likely be deploying units of its United Nations-certificated peacekeeping brigade, which, to



Armenian troops in Syria, August 2018 (Source: insidesyriamc.org)

date, has already participated in several North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations, including in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Indeed, several representatives of this Armenian peacekeeping brigade were observed in Syria, in early August, deployed in conjunction with a separate humanitarian aid delivery mission (InsideSyria, August 7). Reportedly, these Armenian military representatives were also in the country to negotiate the details of a forthcoming engagement.

Moscow has been trying to draw new actors into the Syrian theater for years. On the one hand, Russia has sought to internationalize the support for the al-Assad regime; and on the other hand, it wishes to reinforce its efforts to oppose Western interests in the region. In the summer of 2017, for example, the Russian State Duma (lower chamber of parliament) Defense Committee's chief, Vladimir Shamanov, called upon allies "to contribute to Russia's efforts in Syria" within the framework of peacekeeping capabilities under the CSTO (Nezavisimaya Gazeta, June 26). However, Russia's CSTO allies Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan unequivocally rejected any prospect of participation, highlighting the necessity of a proper UN resolution and mandate beforehand (Tengrinews.kz, June 24, 2017).

Meanwhile, the Kremlin continues to deem Armenia to be Russia's most vulnerable and dependent "partner." Additionally, in Moscow's eyes, Yerevan possesses legitimate reasons to engage in Syria given the tens of thousands of members of the Armenian diaspora still living in this war-torn country (Armenian Weekly, December 9, 2015). Back in 2017, while discussing humanitarian aid to Syria and the refugees being hosted on Armenian soil, then-defense minister Vigen Sargsyan did not rule out that Armenian Armed Forces could be drawn into Syria (YouTube, May 12, 2017). Nevertheless, the former president, Serzh Sargsyan, managed to postpone any such decision, perhaps by pointing to the threatening chronic escalation in tensions with neighboring Azerbaijan.

Three key considerations may be driving Pashinyan's decision to take part in a joint Syrian peacekeeping operation with Russia. First is

Russia's coercive diplomacy vis-à-vis the new Armenian political elite. This *modus operandi* was previously vividly demonstrated in September 2013. Then, Armenia drastically shifted away from Euro-Atlantic integration after then-president Sargsyan refused to sign the long-negotiated agreement with the European Union, opting instead to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. In the case of Syria, Moscow might be pushing Armenia's leadership to enter the Syrian conflict by threatening to cease arms supplies.

Second, following the Velvet Revolution that brought Pashinyan to power, his interim government is now striving to appease Putin, who sees any manifestation of institutionalized democracy in Russia's near abroad as a threat to his own legitimacy at home. In so doing, Pashinyan's team perhaps opted for military involvement in Syria in order to stabilize and balance Yerevan's currently ambiguous relations with Moscow.

Third, during his recent negotiations with Putin, the Armenian prime minister reiterated his desire to re-establish the bilateral strategic relationship based on reciprocal respect for each other's national interests and non-interference in domestic affairs (Gazeta.ru, September 8). Importantly, this proposal represents Yerevan's first delicate attempt to draw red lines in its complex relations with Moscow. Specifically, Pashinyan is seeking to reshape Armenia's institutionalized clientelist relationship vis-à-vis Russia into a more balanced "major partner-small partner" association. This type of format should permit Armenia to pursue a more diversified foreign and security policy. Therefore, Yerevan's motivation to join a "humanitarian mission" may simply be a concession to win Russia's non-interference in domestic affairs. This third driver, if accurate, would suggest a rather naïve view of Moscow by Yerevan's new political elite. It seems unlikely that the Kremlin would be willing, under any circumstances, to stand idly by and watch as the corrupt and oligarchic Armenian politico-economic environment—an important instrument of Russian control over Armenia—is progressively dismantled.

At the same time, a missing piece to the Syrian humanitarian mission at present is any repatriation plan for Syrian Armenians. Such initial preparations, raised at and coordinated with international organizations like the UN, could alleviate the expected negative feedback from the West to Armenia's involvement in the war alongside Russia—particularly, since Armenia never joined the United States-led Global Coalition fighting the Islamic State. Instead, Armenia could bring into play its politically consolidated and sizeable diaspora in Lebanon and Syria. Hence, international acceptance of Armenia's self-reliant activities in Syria could bring with it military training and equipping opportunities with Western partners as well as possibly reinvigorate stagnating ties with the United States. A purely bilateral mission with Moscow is unlikely to achieve any of those side benefits. To the contrary, it would likely strengthen Russia's regional influence.

China and the sea in the Asia's troubled waters

Subtheme: Border security



Dhiana PUSPITAWATI

Abstract

The never ending disputes over a semi-enclosed sea, the South-China Sea (SCS) was culminated in the consensus between the Philippines and China in bringing the case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA). While the PCA under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982) ruled in favor of the Philippines and declare that China's nine-dash line claims are illegal, China has asserted that they will not obey the final award of the PCA. This paper seeks to analyze legal implications upon China's refusal on PCA's award to Indonesia's border security over the waters around Natuna Islands. It further proposed what should be done by Indonesia in anticipating both legal as well as political consequences of such assertive reaction taken by China.

Prior to the PCA's award, Indonesian President, Mr. Joko Widodo, commented on the matter of the SCS disputes saying that while Indonesia is located considerably near to the SCS, yet Indonesia does not have a direct interest in the SCS. However, recent development shows different position. During President Jokowi's visit to Natuna Islands recently, it was reminded that in 1996 China has recognized Natuna's waters as Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

This paper argued that while the SCS disputes so far does not have direct impact on Indonesia, yet, some areas of Indonesia's EEZ in Natuna Islands overlap with the China's nine-dash line. Since China has declared to refuse the award of PCA, Indonesia should make further legal and



policy framework in implementing its sovereign rights over its EEZ in Natuna Islands. In addition to this strong political assertion should also be taken in anticipating china's movement in the SCS through its nine-dash line claim.

Keywords: South-Cina Sea, Indonesia, EEZ, Border Security

1. Introduction

Coastal State's claim over the ocean has been accommodated by the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) though a quid pro quo arrangement, that is something for something. While Coastal States are given certain degree of sovereignty over their surrounding oceans, yet other states interests should also be respected, which include rights of navigation as well as ocean resources usage rights. While such arrangement can be seen as a 'package-deals' offered by the LOSC, however, in practice things would never be as easy as it could be. Complication arising from LOSC's arrangement varies from geographical condition of both the coastal state and the ocean itself, to broader interests of other states, in this case user maritime states. In addition to this, the problem of maritime delimitation between adjacent states poses another problem.

A never-ended problem related to maritime delimitation as well as access to ocean resources, has been the issue of South-China Sea (SCS). The SCS is a semi-enclosed sea which is surrounded by at least eight States; China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan. Such geographic location has made SCS surrounded by the land territory of many states and thus the sovereignty as well as sovereign rights of the surrounding states upon the SCS became complicated. In addition to this,

the SCS area consists of four islands, which include Pratas, Macclesfield Bank, Paracels and Spratlys. Upon such geographical complexion, China declared its claim upon the SCS based on its map known as the nine-dashed lines which encircle almost the entire SCS and within which China claims are China's historical waters over which it has sovereignty. On the other hand, other littoral states are also claiming sovereignty over small islands in the SCS, namely, Vietnam claims the Spartly Island, while the Philippines and Brunei claims the Kalayan Island Group (KIG).

While the overlapping claims remain, in May 2009 China submit a claim before the United Nations, claiming several islands, which include Spartly, Scarborough Soal, Paracel and others to be included within its territory based on the nine-dashed lines map, combined with occasional references to "historic waters." In April 2012, the Philippines Navy caught eight Chinas' fishing vessels in Scarborough Soal waters, that is 220 km off-shore Philippines. Is should be bear in mind that the Scarborough Soal is claimed by several states, namely China, the Philippines and Taiwan. In January 2013 the Philippines submit its objection to the China's nine-dashed lines to the Permanent Court of Arbitration demanding the cancelation of the nine-dashed line map proposed by China. Permanent Court Arbitration



Figure 1: China's nine-dashed lines covering vast majority of the SCS areas

(PCA) resulted on the illegitimate China's claim, China has asserted that they will not participate on the proceeding and neither obeys the final award of the PCA.

This paper seeks to analyze legal implications upon China's refusal on PCA's award to Indonesia's border security over the waters around Natuna Islands. It further proposed what should be done by Indonesia in anticipating both legal as well as political consequences of such assertive reaction taken by China.

2. The Philippines vs. China before the Permanent Court of International Arbitration

While conflict between affected littoral states over the South-China Sea remains, in 2013 the Philippines brought the case before the Permanent Court of Arbitration. The disputes concerned was on the legal basis of maritime rights and entitlements in the South-China Sea, the status of certain geographic features in the South-China Sea and the lawfulness of certain actions taken by China in the South-China Sea¹. In brief, basically there are 4 (four) claim submitted by the Philippines before the PCA². Firstly, the Philippines seek advice from the PCA to solve existing disputes over the SCS regarding the rights to occupy the SCS. More specifically, asking PCA to declare that the rights to occupy the SCS should be based on the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC) rather than based on 'historic rights'. Secondly, the Philippines seek advice from PCA to solve maritime delimitation disputes over the Scarborough Shoal and certain resources in Spratly Islands, which has been claimed by both Philippines and China. Thirdly, the Philippines asking the PCA to solve matter related to the validity of China's claim over the SCS. The Philippines required PCA to deliver award that China has conducted wrong doing upon their actions, as follows:

Intervening Philippines' rights in accordance with the LOSC with regard to fishing, navigation and other natural resources exploration and exploitation as well as the establishment of artificial islands;

Has failed to save ocean environment by giving support to China's fishermen, who has caught the endangered species as well as the use of non-environmental friendly fishing method which lead to the destruction of coral reef ecosystem in the SCS; and

Causing the damage on marine environment by the establishment of artificial islands as well as reclamation in the area of seven coral reef areas in Spratly Islands.

Fourth, that China has worsened the dispute by limiting Philippines' access to Marine Detachment in Second Thomas Shoal.

The SCS case between the Philippines and China, in fact involves various legal aspect. However, crucial aspect that worth to be discussed is the concept of 'historic rights' which has been used as legal basis by China in claiming its sovereignty over the SCS. As this turn out, PCA only used the LOSC as valid legal basis in deciding the case. PCA further stated that:

"This arbitration concerned the role of historic rights and the Sumber of maritime entitlements in the South China Sea, the status of certain maritime features and the maritime entitlements they are capable of generating, and the lawfulness of certain actions by China that were alleged by the Philippines to violate the Convention. In light of limitations on compulsory dispute settlement under the Convention, the Tribunal has emphasized that it does not rule on any question of sovereignty over land territory and does not delimit any boundary between the Parties"³.

In its decision, PCA was unanimously giving

1. See further PCA Case Number 2013-19 in the Matter of the South-China Sea Arbitration before the Arbitral Tribunal Constituted Under Annex VII to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea between the Philippines and the People Republic of China, available on-line at <https://pca-cpa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/PH-CN-20160712-Award.pdf>, accessed on 4 May 2017 at 9:56 am.

2. Read further Kristiyanto, Kristiyanto, Puspitawati, Dhiana dan Ardiansyah, Agis, *Konsep Historical Rights dalam Sengketa Laut Tiongkok Selatan berdasarkan Putusan PCA Case Number 2013-19 in the Matter of the South China Sea Arbitration between the Philippines and China*, Final Essay, Law Faculty, Brawijaya University, 2017.

3. Press Release Permanent Court of Arbitration tertanggal 12 July 2016 which giving unanimous award to the Philippines over the

award to the Philippines and declared that “the Tribunal concluded that, to the extent China had historic rights to reSumbers in the waters of the South China Sea, such rights were extinguished to the extent they were incompatible with the exclusive economic zones provided for in the Convention⁴. While the award clearly stated that ‘historical rights’ were incompatible with LOSC, it is interesting to find out the origin of ‘historic claim’ as well as analyzing whether the term ‘historic rights’ and ‘historic waters’ ever exist within both LOSC and other customary international law of the sea.

3. Legal Implication on China’s refusal upon PCA Award

Upon PCA award, Chinese Government insists on the position that it will not obey PCA Award due its absence during the trial. This position was stated clearly by China through diplomatic notes titled “Position Paper of the Government of the People’s Republic of China on the Matter of Jurisdiction in the South China Sea Arbitration Initiated by the Republic of Phillipines” dated 7th December submitted before the court and Netherlands Government. In sum, the diplomatic notes declared as follows:

“It is the view of China that the Arbitral Tribunal manifestly has no jurisdiction over this arbitration, unilaterally initiated by the Philippines, with regard to disputes between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

Firstly, the essence of the subject-matter of the arbitration is the territorial sovereignty over the relevant maritime features in the South China Sea, which is beyond the scope of the Convention and is consequently not concerned with the interpretation or application of the Convention.

Secondly, there is an agreement between China and the Philippines to settle their disputes in the South China Sea by negotiations, as embodied in bilateral instruments and the DOC. Thus the unilateral initiation of the present arbitration by the Philippines has clearly violated international

law.

Thirdly, even assuming that the subject-matter of the arbitration did concern the interpretation or application of the Convention, it has been excluded by the 2006 declaration filed by China under Article 298 of the Convention, due to its being an integral part of the dispute of maritime delimitation between the two States.

Fourthly, China has never accepted any compulsory procedures of the Convention with regard to the Philippines’ claims for arbitration. The Arbitral Tribunal shall fully respect the right of the States Parties to the Convention to choose the means of dispute settlement of their own accord, and exercise its competence to decide on its jurisdiction within the confines of the Convention. The initiation of the present arbitration by the Philippines is an abuse of the compulsory dispute settlement procedures under the Convention. There is a solid basis in international law for China’s rejection of and non-participation in the present arbitration.

Furthermore, China added more statement “[t]his shall by no means be interpreted as China’s participation in the arbitral proceeding in any form.” Upon such situation, Article 288 of the LOSC and Article 9 of LOSC’s Annex VII provide:

a. Article 288 of the Convention provides that “In the event of a dispute as to whether a court or tribunal has jurisdiction, the matter shall be settled by decision of that court or tribunal.

b. Article 9 of Annex VII to the Convention provides that “If one of the parties to the dispute does not appear before the arbitral tribunal or fails to defend its case, the other party may request the tribunal to continue the proceedings and to make its award. Absence of a party or failure of a party to defend its case shall not constitute a bar to the proceedings. Before making its award, the arbitral tribunal must satisfy itself not only that it has jurisdiction over the dispute but also that the claim is well founded in fact and law.”

It is clearly stated that in the situation whether

SCS disputes.

4. Refers to the LOSC. See further <http://thediplomat.com/2016/07/international-court-issues-unanimous-award-in-philippines-v-china-case-on-south-china-sea/>, accessed on 30 November 2016.

the arbitral have competence in deciding certain case, the authority to decide is the arbitral itself and not the parties. In addition to this, in the absence of one party in the dispute, another party have the right to ask the arbitral to continue the proceeding. Thus, it is submitted that the absence of one party cannot prevent the proceeding to be continued. On the awards on jurisdiction, PCA considered the application of Article 281 and 282 of the LOSC, which allow a state to apply other dispute resolution method outside the LOSC, if the parties agreed to. Article 281 and 282 of the LOSC read:

“If the States Parties which are parties to a dispute concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention have agreed to seek settlement of the dispute by a peaceful means of their own choice, the procedures provided for in this Part apply only where no settlement has been reached by recourse to such means and the agreement between the parties does not exclude any further procedure.

If the States Parties which are parties to a dispute concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention have agreed, through a general, regional or bilateral agreement or otherwise, that such dispute shall, at the request of any party to the dispute, be submitted to a procedure that entails a binding decision, that procedure shall apply in lieu of the procedures provided for in this Part, unless the parties to the dispute otherwise agree.”

PCA considered the application of Article 281 dan 282 upon the following documents to find out whether both parties have agreed on other dispute resolution method; (a) the 2002 China-ASEAN Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (the “DOC”), (b) a series of joint statements issued by the Philippines and China referring to the resolution of disputes through negotiations, (c) the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, and (d) the Convention on Biological Diversity (the “CBD”).

Nevertheless, PCA refused China’s argument which stated that the Document of Conduct (DOC) agreed between ASEAN and China was a political agreement and did not intended to be a

binding agreement which is applicable in disputes resolution method. Since the DOC is silent on the binding settlement mechanism, and does not exclude any other dispute resolution method, it is argued that PCA can decide based on Article 281 and 282 of the LOSC. PCA also finds out the same conclusion relating to Joint Statement mentioned in China Diplomatic Notes. In relation to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the CBD, PCA declared that while both agreements bind parties in the disputes resolution chosen by the parties, there is no binding mechanism within the agreement whatsoever. To conclude, there is nowhere in those agreements prevent the Philippines to bring the case before the PCA.

As this turn out, PCA reward the Philippines and declared that China’s Claim over the SCS with its nine-dashed lines as illegal and found China to be guilty of conducting illegal maritime activities inside the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone. Upon such award, as stated, China refused to apply the award in any cases. Furthermore, instead of moving away from the disputed area, Chinese military and non-military vessels have regularly undertaken activities to strengthen their de facto control of the area. China seems to undertaken the passive assertiveness over the area and avoiding assertive action which could lead to incident, while also expanding its movement in the SCS. This condition brings several legal implications to the neighboring adjacent states surrounding the SCS, especially to ASEAN’s member states. This includes an increase of China’s maritime power within the South Asia region, which also effect the South-East Region. In addition to this, it is assumes that China will strengthen its domestic law in claiming several areas in the SCS. This way, a potent disputes may arise between China and other claimant states, in particular ASEAN’s member states. China aggressive response to the PCA’s award might also bring further legal implication for less affected state like Indonesia. While the SCS dispute does not directly affected Indonesia at the moment, however, it might affected in the near future. As an archipelagic state, Indonesia is entitled to draw archipelagic baselines connect-

ing the outermost point of its outermost islands. Despite the fact that Indonesia does not claim any of the disputed islands located in the SCS, Indonesian has an outer island group, the Natuna Islands, which are adjacent to the SCS. These Islands are used as Indonesian basepoints. Due to Indonesia's sovereignty over the Natuna Islands, consequently Indonesia has the rights over certain areas of waters measures from Natuna's baselines in accordance with international law. From this baselines Indonesia also entitles various maritime zones established by the LOSC. This results in the fact that Indonesia has to share such ocean with neighboring states which are also claimant states in the SCS dispute, namely Malaysia and Vietnam. While agreement has been reached over delineating the continental shelf between states, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) delimitation remains unsolved. If China strengthen its nine-dashed line claim and keep asserting its military power within the area, it is possible that China and Indonesia involve in a disagreement on maritime delimitation around Natuna Islands.

4. Conclusion

Prior to the PCA's award, Indonesian President, Mr. Joko Widodo, commented on the matter of the SCS disputes saying that while Indonesia is located considerably near to the SCS, yet Indonesia does not have a direct interest in the SCS. However, recent development shows different position. During President Jokowi's visit to Natuna Islands recently, it was reminded that in 1996 China has recognized Natuna's waters as Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

This paper argued that while the SCS disputes

so far does not have direct impact on Indonesia, yet, some areas of Indonesia's EEZ in Natuna Islands overlap with the China's nine-dash line. Since China has declared to refuse the award of PCA, Indonesia should make further legal and policy framework in implementing its sovereign rights over its EEZ in Natuna Islands. In addition to this strong political assertion should also be taken in anticipating china's movement in the SCS through its nine-dash line claim.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: IN SEARCH OF LOST TIME

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

18 years ago, on 30th of October, 2000, the European Union and the Russian Federation signed an important document of bilateral relations whereby the signatories established a partnership in the energy field. The said moment offered the then freshly elected president Vladimir Putin the opportunity to make some statements hard to overlook due to their geostrategic and political dimension and significance, among which especially the statement that the Russian Federation does not look at the North Atlantic Alliance as a Russia's enemy and, to an equal extent, the Kremlin leader's assurance that Russia will never affirm that a certain part of the global political geography represents for Kremlin an area of national interest according to the older paradigm of the "living space". 14 years later, Russia was intervening in the Ukrainian region of Donbass and was annexing the Crimea peninsula. The "revolutionary" developments in Georgia and Ukraine as well as the expansion of NATO's military presence in Central and South-Eastern Europe and in some of the former Soviet republics entailed a deep and durable rift between Moscow and the Western community. On the map, from Turkey to northern Estonia and in the Mediterranean basin, except for about 20 km on the Bosnian sea-



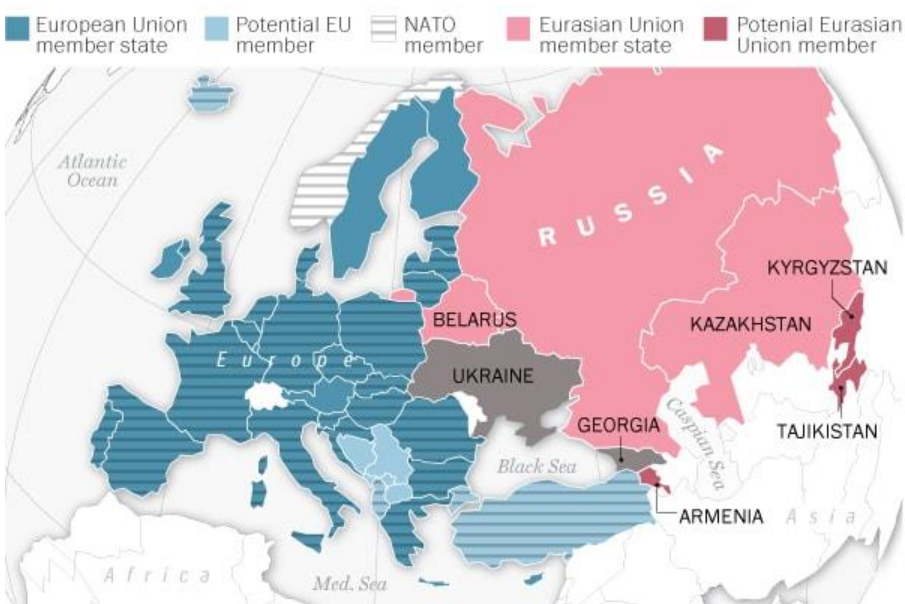
shore, all the states in the area were or became in the mean time NATO members, an organisation expanding ceaselessly towards the east while the former Warsaw Military Treaty was disbanded ever since 1991 and all these did not do anything but worsen the Kremlin's old obsession, which became a syndrome, of the "containment" and the "siege" Russia is subject to by the Western political and military world. The atmosphere of the Cold War was not only reenacted but also deepened.

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"Isn't it really a surreal situation that in which the Russian Federation and the European Union declare themselves strategic partners and yet mutually impose international sanctions?" the head of the European diplomacy, Federica Mogherini, was wondering with a false naivete during a press conference with her Russian counterpart Serghei Lavrov, in Moscow, in April 2017. The sanctions, adopted by the EU as a result of the support Russia granted to the the secessionists in Donbass and of the annexation of the Crimea peninsula were renewed for another year (until July, 2019). In its turn, the Russian Federation retaliated on July, 13th, this year, and renewed for another year, until the end of 2019, the embargo on the imports of agro-food products from the European Union states. The sanctions system applied by the European Communi-

ty to Russia is criticised not only by the European nationalistic and far-right circles from Austria, Hungary, Italy etc. but also by Western European public institutions, such as the French Senate which, in April 2016, adopted a resolution which requested lifting the sanctions. Gradually, both Brussels and Moscow are aware (and is keenly felt) the fact that this game of sanctions and counter-sanctions means for all sides involved major economic and commercial losses estimated, in 2016, at 30 bill. euro for the European Union, out of which around 11 bill. euro yearly for Germany. In the same line, EUROSTAT data show that during 2013-2015 only, the European exports decreased from 119.4 bill. euro in 2013 to 73.8 bill. euro in 2015, when trade represented the main field of the normal relations between Russia and the European area, the main Moscow's trading partner which, in its turn, is placed on the fourth place of the European Union's global foreign trade.

There are many analysts and representatives of Western political elites for whom Vladimir Putin is a politician animated by a "visceral patriotism" which paroxysmic manifestation was marked by the decision-makers' resolution in Brussels of negotiating with Ukraine an association agreement with the latter for joining the pan-European structures. The contortions and the contradictory manifestations generated by signing such a document are well-known and the most important consequences were Crimea's



annexation by Russia and triggering a secessionist war in the Ukrainian province of Donbass, generously backed by the Russian Federation. The agreement, signed on 21st of March, 2014, provided for speeding up the process of political association and economic integration of Ukraine and the European Union. Contrary to previous agreements concluded with the Central Europe and Western Balkans states, the document agreed upon with Kiev did not stipulate the express accessing

promises and conditions the other European associated states benefitted from. It was, therefore, a compromise which accepted the association without opening an accessing perspective. Yet what generated anxiety and irritation in Moscow were the document's provisions concerning an Ukraine's gradual alignment with the European Union's foreign, security and defense policies. Such an evolution would have meant, in Vladimir Putin's opinion, a first class asset for his near proximity policies. As against the ambiguous nature of the association agreement, the Kremlin opted for maintaining privileged relations with Kiev that meant practically an economic assistance of 15 bill. euro and preferential tariffs for natural gas deliveries. Those were valid enough arguments for the Ukrainian president Viktor Ianukovici to withdraw his signature from the said document. The Ukrainian issue became, from that moment on, the "Ukrainian file" – one of the most charged and complex files which continues to negatively mark the climate of the relations between Brussels and Moscow. Vladimir Putin saw in Ukraine's alignment with the European structures and policies and, eventually, with the Euro-Atlantic ones, Moscow's deprivation of an important buffer-zone and of a "safety belt" between Russia and the European flank of the Western presence and such a vision, framed within the Russian leader's near proximity policy is applicable, too, in other relatively close cases such as Republic of Moldova or the former Soviet republics in the proximity of the Asian political geography. The "Ukrainian contentious" did not come out of nothingness. It is rather the materialization of conflicted and increasingly bitter disputes between the Russian Federation and the West and brings into the light the tectonic of geopolitical plates after the end of Cold War (Maxim Lefebvre, February, 2018).

Under such circumstances, the belligerents' attachment to the perpetuation of a mutually hostile and competitive relation cannot bring out but a counterproductive waste of time which could never be recovered in an unanimous positive and constructive manner. The perpetuation of the tensions in the relations between the

Western democracies and Vladimir Putin's "visceral patriotism" can be expected to raise the not at all negligible risk that the Russian system's nationalism and its authoritarianism, backed as well by the dynamics of the president's relations with the Orthodox Church, to evolve on an ascending trajectory towards a worsened and radicalised political vision and practice of the regime led by president Putin, reinvested recently in the highest position of "Great Russia's" uncontested leader, and who could pretend it to become "greater" after the Russian military return triumphantly home from the fronts of the wars and conflicts in Syria and, in general, from the strategic region of the Middle East. The European Union should manifest that extra bit of lucidity for understanding it is an error to put the stake on the rifts between the present American Administration and the Russian Federation as an argument for supporting and escalating the fracture elements in the relations between Brussels and Moscow. Donald Trump's new shifting and unpredictable policy is far from being regarded as protective element for the European Community even on a medium term, simply because nothing prevents a change of direction of the American policy towards the Russian Federation through a simple tweeted message by the White House leader in order to direct himself towards the tower with the Red Star protecting the Kremlin fortress and... Vladimir Putin.

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The idea of bringing back the European-Russian dialogue in the sense of directing it to a more dynamic and less twisted course must not be neglected, even starting from conjuring up the older European and Russian official statements according to which "there is no European security without the Russian Federation" as well as "Russia either cannot benefit from a credible security without the European continent".

In March, 2016, the European Union adopted the five guiding principles of the relations with Moscow, namely: enforcing effectively and comprehensively the Minsk II agreements; promot-

ing more active relations with Russia's geographical neighbours; taking into account the resilience of threats that may come from the Russian Federation; a selective engagement alongside Russia in addressing issues of equal interest such as fighting the terrorist challenges; enhancing the communication among nations and peoples. These are, indeed, limitative criteria and principles and even if they are non-compliant with the spirit of a substance dialogue yet they can contribute to launching a real process of balancing the bilateral relations. For both the European Union and the Russian Federation, no serious dialogue will reach the desired finality as long as the outside security of the sides will not be the central issue. In this regard, the president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, stated in a letter addressed to Vladimir Putin that "our joint objective must be restoring a cooperating European security order", while the French president Emmanuel Macron, suggested, in the congratulation message addressed in March, 2018, to Vladimir Putin on the occasion of his re-election for a new presidential mandate "a revision of the European security architecture through a new dialogue especially with the Russian Federation".

It is the idea which, the same Federica Mogherini, when in Moscow, in the spring of 2017, stressed when she said "all of us have the responsibility of identifying a common ground of understanding and solutions, an objective for which achievement no opportunity could be ignored". The common search for communication bridges is, at any rate, more useful than the the rhetorics which search uselessly the wasted time.

NATIONALISM, GLOBALISM, EUROPEANISM

Dumitru CHICAN

I

The cyber society, the globalised economy, the emergency of post-national identities, the abundance and variety of crossborder and transnational policies, the de-culturalization and



standardization of culture – here there are but a few of the numerous new paradigms which, at the beginning of our history third millenium are as many expressions of the polyform transformations the post-modern world is subject to and which became the object of long, complex and contradictory debates about the fate and the configuration of mankind's future. A future to which descriptions that became a common thing are applied, such as "globalisation", "global village", "federalisation", "the unity of diversities" and other terms waiting for being included into the welcoming area of the political, sociological and cultural lexicon.

At the same time, more and more insistent orientations and ideological movements and more or less nationalistic policies having in common the irreducible opposition to the globalisation phenomenon are manifest in a context in which globalisation is expressing itself insistently as defender and saviour of the nation and homeland and in which the nation-state concept seems to lose attractivity and dynamism on the chessboard of the international political and economic relations.

Considered by some theorists as backward and opposed to the idea of democracy, the nationalistic thinking is assessed, in other approaches, as being, on the contrary, an eminently democratic and progressive movement and in other analyti-

cal approaches and this conceptual opposition proves not the fact that nationalism is completely contested or totally supported, but especially the reality that the on-going debates did not succeed in identifying a clear and unanimously acceptable definition of the concept under discussion and that the debates themselves are oriented and dominated by the own interests and values of the analysts and experimentalists who, in their turn, express the incapacity of distancing themselves and an objectivation from the theoretical debates in what concern the commitments and the ideological, political and partisan appurtenances of the supporters as well as of the detractors of nationalism to the same extent. More than that, today one speaks of the falsity of the discourse about a nationalism and a generic denomination for a manner of thinking and supporting the idea that it is more necessarily of speaking rather of "nationalisms" and the use of this plural is meant, from this point of view, to express the wide diversity and complexity of this concept which doesn't lack at all ambiguity.

It is accepted in general that this semantic construct is based on three fundamental principles, namely that the ensemble of the human community is, by its very nature, divided in a number of nations-entities. Second, it is about the extent to which the special character of each of these enti-

ties can be identified in an objective manner. And third, it is about the idea of self-governance that is the only viable form of managing, defending and asserting these nations-entities. Whether theorizing principles is undoubtedly modern, the very nationalist idea and feeling by contrast are not new as its putting into circulation is attributed to the German philosopher Herder and its first manifestations are to be found, for instance, in the emancipation struggle of the New World against the Spanish colonialism or in the 1789 French Revolution. From this perspective, one may say that the nationalist idea emerged and evolved in close connection with the concept of democracy as the nation-state was considered the ideal environment for the manifestation of the "democratic participation" whereby all the individual members of the nation enjoy equal rights and duties which substantiates the notion of "citizen".

Such a historical complementarity between the democratic thinking and the national feeling seems to be questioned nowadays by the contemporary forms of expressing the political nationalism which means that the democratic nationalism is increasingly aggressed by the temptation of sliding towards a racist, xenophobic, and authoritarianist nationalism, difficult to separate from another very close attitude of manifestation form, namely populism in its most various structures and purposes. For such orientations and currents, the nation is a natural *datum* of history which differs through its unrepeatable specificities in cultural, racial and even biological terms and, as such, it is an exclusivist and impervious existence to receiving and assimilating allogeneous new-comers and to cultural and social facts of extrinsic origin. By way of example, an Algerian having French nationality will never be considered as belonging to the French nation as it is defined by Marine Le Pen.

The threat of such slippages towards radicalism are the more actual as in some European countries the extremist and populist formations represent already a significant electoral force liable to, up to a certain point, dominate and direct the political debate and discourse. Another no less serious challenge from such a situation might



manifest and it is already manifest, to the extent the honest speech about the "national interest", for instance, can be discredited through false superpositions between it and the radical nationalism and, not the least, through the biased assimilation between asserting and promoting the national interest, namely of a "moderate nationalism", on the one hand, with the electoral political populism and which, in its essence, serves only the ideological interests of individuals or of party groups.

II

A retrospective look at the history the process of the European construction had accumulated sheds light on the truth that there were many who, on different ideological and political positions, saw in this experience an ideal path or instrument for overcoming the nationalism considered to be a barrier to the continental union.

How realistic such an approach was and continue to be? And what must be finally understood by the nationalism which must be rethought?

Nationalism operated in the inter-war Europe as a mass phenomenon with a formidable mobilizing potential. Looking at contemporary Europe, one may easily find out that the situation is quite different. And the signals in this respect are many and they are not minor. Patriotism feeling, the way it is classically understood, witnessed a decline period to the benefit of feeling of identitarian affiliation to the great European family. Yet this evolution towards pan-Europeanism generated, slowly but continuously, the feeling that what was to be the emergence of a European conscience became a gliding phenomenon towards the supremacy of a supranational and supraidentitarian conscience if not down-



right authoritarianist which ignored an important fact, namely that the approving enthusiasm the community unification enjoyed did not arise in its integrality from the common prospects opened by the Unified Europe but, even if not confessed, from a solid pool of national preoccupations and

interests. In other words, this statement wants to show that the current Europe continues to be placed in the nationalisms epoch still far away from the "post-nationalist" perspective which, at the beginning, generated the necessary impetus for the unifying experiment which should have achieved exactly "the liberation from the strait-jacket of nationalism".

The "deep Europe" should recognise the reality that nationalism is not any longer the social and political driving force as it was in the inter-war period and accept, at the same time, that the resilience and dynamics of this concept and feeling continue to manifest at least on three levels. First, it is about the high share of the citizens' strong adherence to national identity as it is the case with Denmark, Great Britain, Poland, Hungary but also with Greece and France who, in 1992, opposed their serious veto to the Maastricht Treaty and proved that millions of citizens were far from agreeing to give up a substantial package of components of national sovereignty. Second, it is about the fact that nationalism, and especially its radical wing, is manifesting its reaction force to the "European globalisation" in the form of an acerbic popular nationalism. And third, it is about the nationalism manifested in the form of the separatist movements and formations which should be looked at separately



from those movements campaigning for extended local rights yet within the same state. All these aspects offer as many arguments of supporting the already mentioned statement according to which Europe is still far from the

threshold of the "post-nationalist" era which, after all, is imagined, desired and expected by the currents and the rethoric of those starting from the idea that the nation-state is not any longer suitable to offer the appropriate framework for the plenary manifestation of the citizens' will. From this angle, Jurgen Habermas speaks of the perspective that Europe become the first example of democracy built above the national state, a project which, nevertheless, does not suppose the invention or creation of an "European nationalism", given the opinion of the said author that "leveling national identities of the member states and their melting in a nation called "Europe" it is not desirable, as it is not possible either".

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In spite of the rhetorics which announced, for some time, its demise, nationalism offers incessantly new evidence of resilience. The nation-state is undoubtedly affected by the globalisation and confronted with the attacks against sovereignty represented by the regionalist tendencies. When we speak of nationalism, these at-

tempts have no such a dimension. First, because as one may ascertain, the national cultures have a substantial resistance capacity to the globalisation assault. Then, the communication global networks may promote as aggressively as they can standardized symbols and paradigms for consuming material goods yet the effect will not have the decisive expected results considering that even in this field of material and spiritual goods consumption, they will be subject to a domestic indigenisation and adaptation process, a process identified by the denomination of glocalisation.

Willing or not, the world, and the European Community with it, will go through a stage in which the confrontation between the national identity and the projected global identity will be actively manifest and the chances of one or the other of these two poles triumph are difficult to be assessed in a foreseeable perspective. And if the contemporary world rhetorics was accustomed for a while with the frequent use of "post" particle, the route to entering the "post-national" universe is still long and with difficult to establish ante-factum windings.





**Ambassador prof. Dumitru
CHICAN**

AGAIN ON MULTICULTURALISM: THE CHRISTIAN WEST AND THE ISLAMIC ORIENT

It is a truth of our contemporaneity that the end of bipolarism in the world's global order had and continues to have an undisputable influence on the relations among the great human communities and that reignited the contradictory debates triggered by the theory of the American academic Samuel Huntington concerning the new division of the conflicted world not on ideological criteria and materialist-consumerist interests but on the affiliation to the spiritual and cultural identity.

The ambiguities which accompanied from the very beginning these debates made that the controversies, too, be tainted not a few times by obloquy, suspicions and mutual offences as it happens since quite a few years in the case of the relations between the Christian and secular West, on the one hand, and the Islamic devout Orient, on the other hand, and some researchers do not hesitate to speak, in the context, even of the gradual establishment of a new Cold War between the West and Islam which main operation theater become the European continent. And all these discursive constructs are built on the base of coming along between the simplistic and simplifying theories supported by the Islamist and Islamizing currents and preconceptions, which are not a few, of the Western world about Islam which is very little or too poorly understood.

Achieving such necessary and durable bridges of dialogue supposes approaching Islam from a double perspective, of its identitarian essence: it is, first of all, a *modus vivendi*, an existential state which norms and coordinates are defined by religion and, after that, it is a series of characteristics of the civilization it brought into life in its cultural and mystic dimensions. It is an ap-

proach which should not lead to the conclusion that any individual coming from an Islamic country is necessarily either an Arab or a Muslim. If we limit ourselves to the first definition of the Islamic universe, that of "state" and "means of relating to the existence", then we will ascertain that this definition, too, generates ambiguity to the extent to which it places in a steady state a civilization and a culture area – the West – and a religion – the Islamic one. However, this incongruity makes that both Islam and the West be regarded as monolithical entities and impervious to evolution and exchange of values. And that is obviously inconsistent with the evolutionist reality of any culture and hinders understanding the truth that neither the Western culture in relation with the Islamic one is reduced to Islamophobia, nor jihad, and its extreme forms of manifestation does not express in the same relation the aspirations of a world rich in its history and tradition of making itself known in value terms in a culture in a mostly Christian or secular world.

From the famous sentence attributable to André Malraux, according to which "the XXIst century will be religious or it won't be at all", the relations between religions and civilizations are on top of the agenda of the main issues animating the stage and dynamics of the contemporary international life. Samuel Huntington's very voice echoes Malraux's reflection when he announces us that "the XXIst century will be one of the clash of civilizations"¹. Did the dialogue among civilizations degenerate into a clash among them? We tend to believe that the answer is negative and stand by our assertion based on the reality that being "religious" and cultural at the same time, the century we are living in cannot be but a century of dialogue and communication as long as the culture and the religion refer to human spirit and conscience which call upon peace, living together, edification and dialectical confrontation among spirits and ideas. Today, information and

1. Huntington, Samuel : *The Clash of Civilizations and Remaking the World*, Shimon & Schuster, New York, 1996, p. 11

communication technology generously favor mutual knowledge and the change of material and spiritual values among individuals, nations and peoples.

Nevertheless, as rational beings, we are incessantly confronted with structural challenges and defiances hindering considerably our anthropological aspiration to dialogue and knowledge. And among the hindrances the individuals and the communities have to overcome on their way to encounter we do not hesitate to nominate, no matter how paradoxically it seems, the very globalisation process, a globalisation which, inevitably, levels, equalises and threatens to distort up to the disappearance what is specific, defining and unrepeatable to some cultures and civilizations among which they include the Islamic area which, we repeat, should neither be mistaken nor limited to the Arab world. It is in the natural way of things that each people want first and foremost to express their identity and to promote their long standing values built with patience during historical centuries and which offer the closest source of security and endurance. Such an assertion cannot be imposed either by colonialisation, or by xenophobic superiority or by the blood tainted tyranny of some ideologies or doctrines of the category proclaimed by the irreducible radicalism of a peripheral entity such as Islamic State.

Unfortunately, we witnessed and still witness the proliferation and dissemination of certain attitudes having nothing in common with the idea of closeness and dialogue. If, for instance in France the ban on wearing in public the veil as a distinctive token of an identitarian affiliation could provoke lively and contradictory debates, the denigratorily and loudly expressed pretense by some Islamic communities in the Western world of imposing the Islamic canonic law *shari'a* as independent, parallel and simultaneous juridical system with the system existing since centuries in the residence country or of imposing Islamic behavioral bans (eating pork meat for instance in the English schools where Muslim children learn, too) are no less detrimental. The lack of a dialogue or even of openness for understanding through communication the

realities contribute to encouraging excesses which may degenerate into brutal acts the European localities and towns are confronted with.

One of the cornerstones of any constructive dialogue is to be found in the very availability of overcoming the disputes and searching for concord and, from this perspective, rationalise and accept the importance of the idea of otherness, of the equal existence of *the other*, which is an unavoidable imperative in order to renounce to stereotypes and taboo cliches. And accepting the otherness means accepting the so much challenged pluralism and multiculturalism, too.

Included in the idea of identitarian pluralism as an environment of unrestricted expression of the spiritual and cultural entities in a society open to cohabitation and otherness, the multiculturalism is a concept devised in Canada and experimented by the Western philosophy which has fallen out of currency and – one may say – is a form of pragmatic manifestation in the Islamic world only in the discourse and rhetorics of academic researches and of the Islamic approaches of the relations among the Muslims and the Western non-Muslims. Currently, the multiculturalism, as it is understood today, defines, more than an action strategy, the relations among the traditional European societies and the alloigenous communities resulted from the migration phenomenon and, particularly, those originating from the Arab world and from areas of the Asian continent and Far East where Islam represents in demographical and geographical terms the majority religion or the national official religion. Starting from the idea that the multiculturalism is able to ensure the integration of the alloigenous Islamic elements into the receiving European communities (without that generating an "aculturation" phenomenon, namely losing the identitarian morphology – cultural, customary, religious and behavioral elements – by those invited to acclimatisation and integration), this concept, far from achieving in a significant manner any of the fundamental intended objectives, led to the emergence of a totally opposed reaction – one of hostility towards the Islamic alloigenics, of the idea that, by their anthropological structure, they cannot become anything but

what they are and they turn, therefore, into threatening factors of the very identity and cohesion of the hosting communities. The stage has been reached when political leaders of Western Europe – Germany, Great Britain, France, etc. declared bluntly that either “the Muslims are not sufficiently trained for accepting their own integration in the receiving societies”, or that they represent “a direct threat to the social identity (French, British, German etc.)”, or that, in the end, the multiculturalism “has failed”. Whether it is true that this concept could be regarded as a source of “conflict among civilisations” in the sense that part of the Islamic customary and identitarian luggage is and will remain incompatible with the Western democracy values (secularism, freedom of expression, woman’s rights, the sartorial, alimentary or behavioral traditions), it is equally true that, decades on end, multiculturalism could constitute in practice one of the operating fundamentals of the European social policies. Yet the confusions and errors emerge when this concept has different understood and applied significations in a wide diversities of forms, subject to the European place and time within which it is approached.

Regarded as a normative term, it describes the ensemble of those government policies and norms intended to support and encourage the coexistence and communication in a social multicultural environmen. And that is not a novelty in the centuries-old history of the Western-Islamic relations: Spain and Sicily under the Islamic occupation of the Omeyyad and Abbasid civilizations offered brilliant and fruitful examples in this respect. The problem appears the moment when such a multiculturalism offers the allogenic the freedom of keeping their cultural identity yet framed and included into the political, cultural and institutional norms proper to the adopting societies. Or, for the Islamic spiritual identity, the only policy and the only system of norms to which their spiritual and identities should be subject to are those emanating from the sacred scriptures of the religion – the Qur’an and the Prophet’s tradition – and the behavioral paradigms polished all along the Muslim history. Germany and Great Britain were among the Eu-

ropean states which enthusiastically adopted the multiculturalism concept. It happened that the emergence of the radical Islamist revivalism and its effects (the terrorist acts in the Western Europe capitals and towns) proved that the multiculturalist integrating policies did not have and could not have automatically the intended effect: instead of leading to social coexistence, integration and concorde, they provoked deepening the rifts between the receiving society, on the one hand, and the growth of the segragationist, populist and politicizing attitudes which turned the the immigrating communities, marginalized and deprived of a real equality of chances, into “parallel societies”, on the other hand. Multiculturalism became more and more visibly a sort of some kind of “interculturalism” which emphasizes not the unifying aspects but those which differentiate the indigenous society from the repulsive “cultural communities” with their own anthropological morphology towards integration and adaptation.

The principles of multiculturalism as they are understood and practiced are, for many analysts and researchers, outdated realities responsible for the cultural fragmentation and separatism the Western traditional societies are affected now. To a great extent, the limits of multiculturalism are very clearly noticed when the subject of debate is represented by the religious diversity and by the manner in which it can identify an accomodating and cohabitation manner with it. The issue of multiconfessionalism became unavoidable yet there were not enough arguments for covering it in an ample and objective manner so that the debate was willingly or otherwise seized by the only problem within reach, namely the rise of the Islamic conservative fundamentalism. And, following the virulent and devastating actions of the Islamic radicalism, the discussion has, in its turn, reached a deadlock and that strengthened even more the general failure of multiculturalism.

Another element with profound significances for the future of this cultural universalism that the philosophy of multiculturalism is aspiring at must not be ignored. It is about the fact that, in last analysis, multiculturalism as well as the sub-

MULTICULTURALISM



**ISLAM WILL NEVER
BE A PART OF IT**

It is understandable that, under such circumstances, the Islamic cultural area could not be compatible with what the pluralism concept implies in general and with multiculturalism, in particular. After all, the very notion of otherness (from the perspective of the opposition between Islamic man – non-Islamic man, namely a man belonging to Judeo-Christian culture) is blurred by the Qur'anic scripture and by the tradition itself which divide human community between the Muslims who represent the "house of peace" (*dār al-silm*) and non-Muslims (Jews, Christians and, in some exegeses the Nabateans, the Sabaens, the Zoroastrians) reunited in the "house of war" or "people of the Book" (of the scriptures revealed before Islam – Pentateuch and the New Testament - who are *tolerated* by Islam) as adepts of another form of worship than Islam and protected (*dhimmi*) as citizens of the Muslim state within the caliphate or in exchange of paying a "tax for worship freedom" (*giziyya*). This is the acception of the notion of "tolerance" (*tasāmuh*) in Islam which, as it can be seen, has too little or at all to do with the concept of multiculturalism and pluralism which the Islamic exegetes and theologians are

CONSIDERATION**The fragility of the Middle East's alliances as an expression of global geopolitical conflicts***Corneliu PIVARIU*

After the so-called Arab spring of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which is turning gradually into a rather gloomy winter, the alliances existing at the beginning of this century in the region have begun to alter and new elements emerged as a result not only of the regional developments, but also due to the power relations at the world level.

One of the main reasons of the current situation is represented by the absence of any long term plan of the American Administration after the 2003 Iraq's invasion as well as the mistakes it made in Iraq, Syria and Yemen both during president George W. Bush mandates but also during the president Obama's mandates (who, wishing to observe his promise of not involving the USA in any war during his office, missed many opportunities in the Middle East). Such a position increased the non-confidence of the Arab allies in Washington's capacity and desire of maintaining its position in the region. The new national security strategy of the USA, too, did not manage to define a specific role for the US and their forces in the region or to really respond to Russia's increasing influence in Syria, to China's economic influence in the region and all these made the Arab governments and the opinion-makers (research centers and media) question the American position and policy on a medium and long run in the area.

Under such circumstances, the lack of unity of the Arab world – a permanent feature of this world – increased and one of the most telling examples is the 2017 situation of the relations with Qatar and the recent decision of the government in Doha of quitting OPEC. Some sources mention that the possibility of the country's withdrawal from the Gulf Cooperation Council is being very carefully analyzed in Doha.

Since several decades, regional powers – especially Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Turkey were involved in a regional competition for maximizing the influence in the area, in a contest or alliance with Great Britain, Russia and USA. At the present time, Iraq has not such a pretention any longer as it is under a strong Iranian influence, Moscow tries to subtly recover its lost positions, Saudi Arabia has its reputation bruised after the disastrous manner it managed the conflict in Yemen and after the Khashoggi affair while Egypt has too complicated a situation, especially in the economic field, for making regional claims.

Taking into account these developments, Turkey appears at least for now and for the immediate future the great winner as it improved its image in the Middle East in comparison with Saudi Arabia. Ankara tries to gamble on both sides of the conflict in Syria in order to maximize its role during future negotiations. It is certain that the success of the American policy in Syria depends to a great extent on Turkey and Washington has to understand Turkey's regional objectives. At the same time, Iran, Russia and Turkey, involved in the conflict in Syria and which appear to form a cohesive bloc, could try to assume a role transcending the Middle East yet their interests in Syria are diverging enough to prevent that.

Russia is satisfied with what it has achieved in the Middle East and will try to preserve its position and, if it finds opportunities, to improve it.

Even if it keeps a low profile, Israel will further play a decisive role in the Middle East and when the USA will define a coherent long term policy in the area, the said role will become more poignant. The manner in which the conflict in Syria will be solved will foreshadow the future alliances in the Middle East and, why not, the seeds of a new global order.

The Main Factors of the Middle East Situation



The connection between the USMB and political activist Linda Sarsour

Dr. Alba POPESCU Ph.D.

The Muslim Brotherhood branch in the US (USMB)

In 1963, in Illinois University Campus, the *Muslim Students Association*, the first organization of the Muslim Brotherhood in the US, was set up (a very short brief about the evolution of this organization can be found in the Annex 1). Subsequently, other organizations have been founded, such as: *Council on American-Islamic Relations*, *North American Islamic Trust Council*, *North American Islamic Fund* in 1971, *Islamic Society of North America* and *International Institute of Islamic Thought* in 1981, the *Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development* in 1989, the *American Muslim Council*¹ in 1990, the *Muslim American Society* in 1993, the *Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)* in 1994², *Association of Muslim Social Scientists* etc.

In December 2001, the US authorities had banned the *Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development* as a result of its involvement in the financing of HAMAS³ terrorism⁴. Though the links between the *Holy Land Foundation* and the Muslim Brotherhood⁵ have been well document-

ed – there are on-line records showing Muslim Brotherhood's subversive activity in the US⁶ - the Muslim Brotherhood activity is still legal in the US. Simultaneously, with the development of the USMB's media and academia branches, the process of expanding its local political branch has continued.

During *Holy Land Foundation* terrorism financing trial several documents have been released, showing an extensive network that encompasses many organizations and groups controlled by a central command structure. For example:

➤ the *Preliminary vision for preparing future leadership*⁷, dated December 1988 and signed by M.A. (likely Mohamed Akram⁸), which contains MB's settlement / development strategy within the US territory. In this document there is a spreadsheet with a column called *The Apparatuses* – the name used by the central MB for its public and covert groups and organizations. With the exception of the *International Institute of Islamic Thought*, all the above mentioned organizations have been found among *The Apparatuses*. Within the same document there is a note about covert structures:

• *The Shura*, composed by 59 members led by Al-Qadi - Elkadi Ahmed, head of the U.S.MB⁹

1. ANALYSIS: *Holy Land Documents Point to Covert Muslim Brotherhood Structure In The U.S.*, GlobalMB, 29.08.2007, <https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2007/08/29/analysis-holy-land-documents-point-covert-muslim-brotherhood-structure/>, accessed at 07.07.2017

2. Robin Simcox, *The Trump Administration Must Investigate the Muslim Brotherhood's U.S. Activities*, The Heritage Foundation, 20.04.2017, <http://www.heritage.org/terrorism/report/the-trump-administration-must-investigate-the-muslim-brotherhoods-us-activities>, accessed at 07.07.2017

3. *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya* - Palestinian Islamist militant organization.

4. Scott W. Johnson, *Coming Clean About CAIR*, National Review, 22.08.2007, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/221895/coming-clean-about-cair-scott-w-johnson>, accessed at 07.07.2017

5. John Mintz, Douglas Farah, *In Search Of Friends Among The Foes*, Washington Post, 11.09.2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A12823-2004Sep10.html>, accessed at 08.07.2017

6. *Ikhwan in America*, https://www.investigativeproject.org/redirect/Ikhwan_in_American-Zeid_Al-Nomann.pdf, accessed at 07.07.2017

7. http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/1117.pdf, accessed at 23.08.2018

8. Mohamed Akram Adlouni is the General Secretary of the Al Quds International Foundation, a Special Designated Global Terrorist entity, accused by the U.S. Treasury Department of financing HAMAS. See: Thomas Quiggin, *What Is the Muslim Brotherhood?*, 08.02.2017,

<https://medium.com/@GatestoneInst/what-is-the-muslim-brotherhood-ecb35bcd43b>, accessed at 23.08.2018

(Akram appears in the document as a Shura member),

- *The Office,*
- *Security,*
- *The Sisters,*
- *Special Committee,*
- *Palestine C. (Palestine Committee – also known as HAMAS in the US) etc.*

➤ *An Explanatory Memorandum, On the General Strategic Goal for the Group in North America, 5/22/1991*¹⁰, which contains the implementing rules of the previous document, signed again by Mohamed Akram. At the end of the document there is a list of *Apparatuses* which includes the *International Institute of Islamic Thought* as well.

Both documents are emphasizing USMB's goal – the Islamist colonization of the US: “*The general strategic goal of the Group in America which was approved by the Shura Council and the Organizational Conference for the year (1987)*” is the “*enablement of Islam in North America, meaning: establishing an effective and a stable Islamic Movement led by the Muslim Brotherhood which adopts Muslims' causes domestically and globally, and which works to expand the observant Muslim base, aims at unifying and directing Muslims' efforts, presents Islam as a civilization alternative, and supports the global Islamic State wherever it is.*”

Against the backdrop of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in 1979, (Sheikh) Abdullah Yusuf Azzam – a Palestinian cleric and member of the Muslim Brotherhood since the 1950s, known as

the “father” of global Jihad – issued a *Fatwa - decree* in which he stated that the defense of the Muslim Lands is the first obligation of Muslims after the faith in Allah¹¹. Located, in the early 1980s, in the Pakistani town of Peshawar, Azzam has set up *Bait ul-Ansar - the House of Help*, an Islamic relief organization designed to support the jihadists' struggle against the Soviet invaders in Afghanistan¹². In 1981, Saudi entrepreneur Osama bin Laden, Azzam's former student at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah¹³, has been convinced by his professor to move to Peshawar and to finance Jihadists' training camps, most of these Jihadists being members of the Brotherhood¹⁴. In 1984, in Peshawar, the two of them have founded *Maktab al-Khidamat - the Office of Services* (also known as *Al Kifah – The Wrestling*) to coordinate and to fund the Al-Mujaahid' recruitment and training activities in Afghanistan¹⁵. *Maktab al-Khidamat* assured the funding of the 1980s Islamist groups to act in Afghanistan and other Asian states¹⁶.

In the 1980s, Azzam conducted an intense campaign of proselytism and of fundraising in states in Europe, the Middle East, and in 50 American cities¹⁷. The first American branch of *Maktab al-Khidamat (Al Kifah)* was the **Islamic Center of Tucson Arizona**, already operational in 1984. In few years, MB's network in the US comprised more than **30 branches** involved into fundraising for the Jihadists in Afghanistan. The most important US branch was the one located in **Brooklyn, New York**, known as the **Al Kifah Refugee Center**¹⁸. *Al Kifah Refugee Center* has been officially provided with a mosque, **Masjid al-Fukra**, where the “Blind Sheikh” Omar Abdel-Rahman

9. OBITUARY: *Former Head of U.S. Muslim Brotherhood Dies*, The Global Muslim Brotherhood Daily Watch, 14.04.2009, <https://www.globalmbwatch.com/2009/04/14/former-head-of-us-muslim-brotherhood-dies/>, accessed at 07.07.2018

10. <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/20.pdf>, accessed at 23.08.2018

11. Abdullah Azzam, *Document – Defense of the Muslim Lands*, 01.02.2002, <http://english.religion.info/2002/02/01/document-defence-of-the-muslim-lands/>, accessed at 07.07.2017

12. Stephen E. Atkins, *Encyclopedia of Modern Worldwide Extremists and Extremist Groups*, Greenwood Press Westport, Connecticut London, 2004, pp.35-36

13. Stephen E. Atkins, *idem. op.cit.*

14. *Terrorism: Muslim Brotherhood, idem. op.cit.*

15. *Profile: Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)*, History Commons, <http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=maktab@l-khidamar>, accessed at 07.07.2017

16. Farhan Zahid, *FOREIGN ANALYZES N°22 ORIGINS OF AL-QAEDA : REVISITING MAKTAB UL KHIDMAT AL MUJAHEDDEEN (SERVICES BUREAU FOR THE HOLY WARRIORS)*, Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement, <http://www.cf2r.org/fr/foreign-analyzes/origins-of-al-qaeda-revisiting-maktab-ul-khidmat-al-mujahedeen.php>, accessed at 07.07.2017

17. Steven Emerson, *Terrorists Among Us: Jihad in America*, 1994; Abdullah Yusuf Azzam, *idem. op.cit.*

18. *Profile: Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)*, *idem. op.cit.*

was preaching¹⁹. "Blind Sheikh" used to preach to a neighboring mosque too, *Masjid at-Taqwa*. Masjid at-Taqwa has been settled by **Siraj Wahaj**, using Saudi petro-Dollars²⁰. In the 1980s, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the USA (through the CIA) have supported, through weapons, logistics and expertise, Azzam's (Jihadists') network recruiting and training as well as its military actions against the Soviet presence in the region. In February 1989, after Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Azzam and bin Laden have decided to continue the struggle to liberate "the lands of Islam" and have set up the Al Qa'ida organization. In November 1989, Azzam was killed in a bomb attack.

In 1993, the first Islamist attack against the World Trade Center in New York has been registered. This attack has triggered *the third wave of the Islamist terrorism*. Although attackers' connections have pointed towards (MB's) **Maktab al-Khidamat Center in Brooklyn, New York**, the US authorities have not taken any significant action against the Islamist network²¹. The only remarkable action had been the arrest of the "Blind Sheikh" Omar Abdel-Rahman, whose activities had been related to the New York Muslim Brotherhood branch. *Although Abdel-Rahman has been known for his radical attitude, he has benefited from the support of the CIA*, which has facilitated his entry visa into the United States, and later, his status as a resident²².

Al-Qa'ida's attacks against the US, in September

11, 2001, were the peak of the third wave of Islamist terrorism. Since 9/11, public perception regarding the Islamist terrorism has changed. The Islamist terrorism has stopped being perceived as a collateral phenomenon of the Arab-Israeli conflict and has become a global asymmetric threat which has been, later, described in NATO's strategic concept. The global media coverage of the attack has brought to the forefront both the radical Islamism and the need for countermeasures. Public opinion attention has been captured by Al Qa'ida, by the Afghani Taliban and by the war against terrorism, having little to no interest in other Islamist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, *though 5/77 strategist, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, has been a member of the Kuwaiti Brotherhood since adolescence*²³.

All this time, the Muslim Brotherhood has strengthened its political and social wing by developing a complex and very extensive network of Islamic financial, charitable relief organizations designed to provide financial support to the organization's projects²⁴. This financial support has increasingly focused on media outlets²⁵, academia²⁶ and influential think-tanks²⁷. Thus, since 2002, Muslim Brotherhood has been rebranded by the global media (such as the TV channel Al Jazeera) as a reformist movement, which has been subjected to the repression of Arab world's authoritarian regimes and has been a firewall against terrorist organizations²⁸.

19. Bos Smith, *Held Hostage At Masjid Al-Taqwa*, Canadian Free Press, 28.04.2008, https://2005-09.newenglishreview.org/blog_direct_link.cfm?blog_id=14499, accessed at 21.08.2018

20. Bos Smith, *idem.op.cit.*

21. *Profile: Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)*, *idem.op.cit.*

22. Bill Trott, *Blind sheikh~ convicted in 7559 World Trade bombing dies in U.S. prison*, Reuters, 18.02.2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tradecenter-rahman-idUSKBN15X0KU>, accessed at 07.07.2017

23. Richard Miniter, *Secretary Mattis: Time To Get Tough On Qatar*, Forbes, 22.05.2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardminiter/2017/04/22/secretary-mattis-time-to-get-tough-on-qatar/#181d53256311>, accessed at 07.07.2017

24. The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, *The structure and funding sources of the Muslim Brotherhood*, CRETHI PLETHI, 19.06.2011, <http://www.crethiplethi.com/the-structure-and-funding-sources-of-the-muslim-brotherhood/global-islam/2011/>, accessed at 07.07.2017

25. Mohannad Sabry, *Muslim Brotherhood's media machinations*, Al Monitor, 29.07.2014, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/07/muslim-brotherhood-media-egypt-propaganda.html>, accessed at 07.07.2017; Shaimaa Ibrahim, *A Study of Official Media Outlets of Muslim Brotherhood Group and Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt*, The American University in Cairo: School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, May 2013, <http://dar.aucegypt.edu/handle/10526/3638>, accessed at 07.07.2018

26. Meira Svirsky, *Muslim Brotherhood Inside American Colleges*, CLARION project, 16.05.2013, accessed at 07.07.2017

27. Chuck Ross, *'Yikes!': Influential Think Tanks In The Tank For Foreign Governments*, The Daily Caller, 09.07.2014, <http://dailycaller.com/2014/09/07/yikes-influential-think-tanks-in-the-tank-for-foreign-governments/>, accessed at 07.07.2017

28. Bob Dreyfuss, *Al Jazeera's Muslim Brotherhood Problem*, The Nation, 10.07.2013, <https://www.thenation.com/article/al-jazeeras-muslim-brotherhood-problem/>, accessed at 07.07.2017

Linda Sarsour

Former director of the *Arab American Association* of New York, Palestinian-American Linda Sarsour has become Obama administration's *Champion of Change*, delegate to the Democratic National Convention and one of four lead organizers for the *Women's March*.

Although she has always said she has no connection with the USMB Islamists she:

- has been invited to speech at USMB organizations' conventions and reunions, such as *Muslim American Society*²⁹, *Islamic Circle of North America*³⁰ and the *Council of American Islamic Relations*³¹;

- takes photos with Salah Sarsour - a member of the *Islamic Society of Milwaukee*, former HAMAS operative³² who was jailed in Israel in the 1990s, connected with the *Holy Land Foundation*. Perhaps Salah Sarsour is her cousin, based on her statement that she has cousins jailed in Israel for HAMAS affiliation³³;

- has been arrested along with other CAIR members for civil disobedience³⁴;

- has written a "twit" in 2011, during the "Arab Spring", saying: „Yo the Muslim Brotherhood knows how to parrtrtaay! So much for radical islamists taking over! If these r - they r da coolest! #jan25 #Egypt”³⁵;

- has been publicly called “sister” by Ameri-



can Muslims for Palestine³⁶ (AMP) in a public letter aimed to support her against “Islamophobia”:

“Dear Linda:

You have become the beacon of hope for so many Muslim Americans as well as a catalyst who spurs people on to positive action. The American Muslims for Palestine truly appreciates your tireless efforts on behalf of communities impacted by racism and bigotry and for standing up for Palestinian rights. You have a major platform where you can affect much good.

We are writing to offer you our unconditional support in the face of the bigotry and attacks you're enduring currently. We know that any Muslim, particularly Palestinian American Muslims who are visible and politically active, are always targets for hatred and silencing tactics and we're sorry you are going through this right now because of your excellent work helping to organize the Women's March on Washington.

29. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFwA31RjZxM>, accessed at 07.08.2018

30. <https://www.facebook.com/isnahq/videos/linda-sarsour-gives-the-keynote-address-at-the-community-service-recognition-lun/10154538687786105/>, accessed at 07.08.2018

31. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00gwBw6CUFc>, accessed at 07.08.2018

32. “Jamil Sarsour Confession: On October 23, 1998, Sarsour was arrested by the GOI for his involvement with the HAMAS terrorist organization, specifically, for providing financial and other assistance to HAMAS fugitive and military activist, 'A1 Awadallah. At the time of his arrest, Sarsour was carrying \$66,530.00, a personal telephone book and two American passports. Sarsour was interviewed and provided information concerning his and his brother, Salah's activities in support of HAMAS over the last several years. During the course of his interview, Sarsour described his brother Salah Sarsour's involvement with HAMAS and fund raising activities by the HLFrd, in Richardson, Texas on behalf of HAMAS. Sarsour stated that some of the members of s Islamic Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and his brothers Salah and Imad are involved in raising money in the name of HLFrd that is actually for HAMAS. (Exhibit102).” – see http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/case_docs/466.pdf#page=49, accessed at 07.08.2018, p.48

33. Souad Mekhennet, *Under Attack as Muslims in the U.S.*, *New York Times*, 07.08.2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/08/us/08iht-letter08.html>, accessed at 07.08.2018

34. *Linda Sarsour arrested at Paul Ryan's office*, Al Jazeera, 06.03.2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/03/linda-sarsour-arrested-paul-ryan-office-180306103336945.html>, accessed at 07.08.2018

35. Haris Alic, *Eight of Linda Sarsour's Most Controversial Tweets*, The Washington Free Beacon,

12.03.2018, <https://freebeacon.com/culture/eight-linda-sarsours-controversial-tweets/>, accessed at 07.08.2018

36. <https://www.ampalestine.org/newsroom/a-message-of-support-to-our-sister-linda-sarsour>, accessed at 07.08.2018

37. Steven Emerson, *American Muslims for Palestine's Web of Hamas Support*, The Algemeiner, 14.12.2011, <http://www.algemeiner.com/2011/12/14/american-muslims-for-palestines-web-of-hamas-support/>, accessed at 07.08.2018

We pray for your protection and we pray that Allah SWT grants you patience and comfort during these difficult days. AMP is here for you and stands ready to support you in any way we can.

Sincerely,

The American Muslims for Palestine"

American Muslims for Palestine is a HAMAS connected organization, aiming to delegitimize the state of Israel in America³⁷. Salah Sarsour is board member of this organization³⁸ and has been seen in the close circle of Sumeyye Erdoğan Bayraktar, the daughter of Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, during her visit at *Muslim American Society* and *Islamic Circle of North America* (MAS-ICNA) annual convention³⁹.

➤ has been publicly supported by USMB - CAIR: *"The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, today called on people of all faiths and backgrounds to "push back" against an online smear campaign targeting Linda Sarsour -- a nationally-known and respected Muslim community activist -- using #IStandWithLinda"*⁴⁰.

➤ has publicly thanked her **"favorite person in this room... Imam Siraj Wahhaj, who has been a mentor, motivator, and encourager of mine"** – at a banquet organized by ICNA Relief in April 1, 2017⁴¹. According to the website of USMB CAIR Minnesota, *"Siraj Wahhaj is one of the most admired Muslim leaders and speakers in America."*

He is the imam of Al-Taqwa Mosque in Brooklyn, NY and serves on the executive committee of the Muslim Alliance in North America (MANA). He previously served on the national board of the Council on American-Islamic Relations."⁴²

➤ has "twitted" on June 25, 2011 ("Arab Spring" – time), that: "my husband was abducted by #Bahrain's military | A woman's ordeal after her husband was jailed after a military trial <http://aje.me/mvJtwl>"⁴³. Apparently, her husband, Maher Judeh (a.k.a. Maher Abo Tamer), has expressed sympathy for Fatah, HAMAS, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), George Habash, and for the Palestinian Authority police officer Amjad Sukkari "Abu Omar" who carried out a shooting attack at a checkpoint in Israel⁴⁴.

➤ openly advocates Shariah law in TV programs⁴⁵ and tweets: "You'll know when you're living under Sharia Law if suddenly all your loans & credit cards become interest free. Sound nice, doesn't it?"⁴⁶ / "@LaRebelleFleur shariah law is reasonable and once u read into the details it makes a lot of sense. People just know the basics"⁴⁷ / "Sharia Law is misunderstood & has been pushed as some evil Muslim agenda. Some Muslims r oppressors for sure <https://twitter.com/rashaddrakeford/status/719300709871706112> ..." ⁴⁸ / "Sharia is the Arabic translation of the Hebrew word Halakhah. Its also akin to canonic law. Get informed. #CounterActHate"⁴⁹ / "Read this piece on #Sharia Law from the Associate Religion Editor

38. *American Muslims for Palestine*, <https://www.ampalestine.org/about-amp/staff>, accessed at 07.08.2018

39. Chuck Ross, EX-HAMAS FINANCIER SPOTTED WITH TURKISH PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTER AT US MUSLIM CONVENTION [VIDEO], THE DAILY CALLER, 28.12.2016, <http://dailycaller.com/2016/12/28/ex-hamas-financier-spotted-with-turkish-presidents-daughter-at-us-muslim-convention-video/>, accessed at 07.08.2018

40. Council on American-Islamic Relations, *CAIR Calls for #IStandWithLinda -Push Back~Against Smear Campaign Targeting Linda Sarsour*, 07.07.2017, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/cair-calls-for-istandwithlinda-push-back-against-smear-campaign-targeting-linda-sarsour-300484682.html>, accessed at 07.08.2018

41. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DOo8-_mlzo, accessed at 07.08.2018, min. 3.15 – 3.38

42. *Imam Siraj Wahhaj*, CAIR Minnesota, <https://cairmn.com/6-uncategorised/313-imam-siraj-wahhaj.html>, accessed at 07.08.2018

43. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/84670693056331776>, accessed at 07.08.2018

44. *The Democrat/Jihadist Connection*, <https://liberalforum.net/viewtopic.php?t=25373>, accessed at 07.08.2018

45. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR3c5xGlgOI>, accessed at 07.08.2018

46. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/598327052727615488?lang=en>, accessed at 07.08.2018

47. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/116922589967949824?lang=en>, accessed at 07.08.2018

48. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/719301817771892737?lang=en>, accessed at 07.08.2018

49. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/873576800428986369>, accessed at 07.08.2018

50. <https://twitter.com/lsarsour/status/828045045433565184?lang=en>, accessed at 07.08.2018

51. *Activist Linda Sarsour Calls For 'Jihad' Against Trump Administration*, 07.07.2017, <https://thepoliticalinsider.com/linda-sarsour-jihad/?source=TPiPost>, accessed at 07.08.2018

at @HuffPostRelig. Educate yourself. [https://www.google.com/amp/m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5788f567e4b03fc3ee5_07c01/amp?client=safari ...](https://www.google.com/amp/m.huffpost.com/us/entry/us_5788f567e4b03fc3ee5_07c01/amp?client=safari...)"⁵⁰;

➤ called for Jihad against Trump administration during a speech at *the Islamic Society of North America* (ISNA) convention in Chicago⁵¹;

➤ gave the DAESH one finger salute⁵²;

➤ twitted that: "When we write the history of Islam in America, the Nation of #Islam is an integral part of that history."⁵³ – *Nation of Islam* leader, Louis Farrakhan is a well-known anti-Semite that uses to say "the Satanic Jews"⁵⁴.

Conclusions

• **USMB's goal is the Islamist colonization of the US** as part of Global Muslim Brotherhood's goal - the building of the Global Caliphate with the capital in Jerusalem;

• USMB's strategy has been the one of "small steps";

• The strategy has followed the succession: the confessional / academic wing → the finan-

cial / economic wing → the social wing → the political wing supported by the media / think-tanks / civil society wing (now, there is a militant wing, on the American soil, too⁵⁵ - the military wing was an official branch of the organization until the mid-1970s);

• Linda Sarsour and her family have strong and visible ties with USMB organizations;

• Linda Sarsour is a MB operative on US soil aiming to support the "going to be born" political wing – either a future political party or USMB affiliated politicians going to be elected in Congress/White House. In this regard, Sarsour might run in the future elections for a place in Congress or in the Senate.

Annex 1

The ultra-conservative pan-Islamic political-social movement entitled Jama 'At / Harakat Ikhwan al-Muslimeen (Ikhwan) - the Muslim Brotherhood⁵⁶ was founded in 1928 in the Egyptian city of Ismailia, by Hassan al-Bannā (1906-1949) - the son of the Hanabilah⁵⁷ imam (Shaykh) Ahmad Abd al-Rahman al-Bann al-Sa'ati.

In the approximately 90 years of existence of the organization, there are several stages of transforming the Brotherhood from a local Islamic movement into a pan - Islamic organization, as follows:

I. 1928-1938: corresponds to the interwar period, with two distinct stages:

a) 1928-1935: consolidation within Egypt by social and proselytizing activities;

b) 1935-1938: expansion within Egypt's



52. https://www.reddit.com/r/The_Donald/comments/5pk72z/linda_sarsour_muslim_brotherhoodhamas_operative , accessed at 07.08.2018

53. Haris Alic, *Eight of Linda Sarsour's Most Controversial Tweets*, The Washington Free Beacon, 12.03.2018, <https://freebeacon.com/culture/eight-linda-sarsours-controversial-tweets/>, accessed at 07.08.2018

54. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tK5UJ8Z4zps>, accessed at 07.08.2018

55. Erik Rosales, *88 Jihad Camps Inside the US? Here's the Disturbing Islamic Prophecy Behind Them*, CBN News, 20.08.2018, <http://www1.cbn.com/cbnnews/national-security/2018/august/jihad-camps-inside-the-us-heres-the-disturbing-islamic-prophecy-behind-them>, accessed at 29.09.2018

56. Fatma Ozyagli, *Hassan Al-Banna: The man who started it all*, World Bulletin, <http://www.worldbulletin.net/personage/559568/hassan-al-banna-the-man-who-started-it-all>, accessed at 29.03.2017

57. A follower of the ultraconservative Islamic legal school, founded by (Musnad Imam) Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855), who completely rejects the personal reflection, claiming the strict application of the Qur'an and of the Sunna (custom).

neighboring countries and in China.

II. 1939 – 1945: *founding of the Secret Apparatus – the militant, offensive wing, responsible for Movement's violent actions. This stage corresponds to the period of the Second World War.*

III. 1945 – 1953: *amplifying political activism and conflicts with the Egyptian monarchy. Corresponds to the period between the end of the Second World War and the proclamation of the Republic of Egypt.*

IV. 1953 – 1970: *the stage of intensifying the conflict with the Egyptian nationalist, republican, secular regime and the global expansion. Corresponds to the period between the proclamation of the Republic of Egypt (June 18, 1953) and the death of President Gamal Abdel Nasser (September 28, 1970).*

V. 1970 - 1981: *Global expansion and building the political wing. It corresponds to President's Anwar el Sadat administration, which used the Muslim Brotherhood to counterbalance the Soviet influence in the region (Syria, Libya, Algeria etc). Confronted with public opprobrium and with the risk of Brotherhood's dismantling due to the wave of atrocities made by the Secret Apparatus, the second Supreme Leader, Hassan al-Hudaybi, has radically changed the strategy of the organization. Al-Hudaybi has removed the militant wing from the official structure of the Brotherhood and has created the image of an ideological movement decided to give up the violent past. This strategy allowed the Brotherhood to survive, and later has substantiated the argument regarding Movement's exclusive ideological character. Also, 1979's geopolitical events - the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the siege of the Great Mosque in Mecca Masjid al-Haram and the Islamic Revolution in Iran have amplified MB's militancy. Thus, Brotherhood's militants joined the *al-Mujaahid**

- Jihad combatants and fought in the Civil War in Afghanistan (1979-1989) and in the Arab-Israeli Wars (1973, 1971-1982).

VI. 1981 - 2011: *President's Muhammad Hosni Sayyid Mubarak governing period that may be separated into three distinct stages:*

a) 1981 – 1991: *the development of the Muslim Brotherhood's branches in South Asia and Europe and the strengthening of Movement's political wing.*

b). 1992 – 2001: *Muslim Brotherhood's dissemination within the former Yugoslavia and the former Eastern bloc and the "breakup" between Al Qa'ida and CIA. It is delimited between the implosion of the former Soviet Empire and the 9/11 Al Qa'ida's attacks against the US.*

c). 2002 - 2011: *Muslim Brotherhood's network development in the mass-media, academia, think-tanks followed by re-branding in reformist movement; global expansion in the context the global war on terror; taking over political control in Turkey and triggering a conflict with Saudi Arabia regarding Jerusalem, the future capital of the Global Caliphate.*

VII. 2011 – 2012: *the "Arab Spring" - the wave of anarchy and insurgency that shattered the Middle East and the Northern Africa (MENA), resulting in the overthrow of Arab, secular, republican, nationalist regimes.*

VIII. 2012 - 2013: *Muslim Brotherhood's administration in Egypt; the Islamist quadrilateral Egypt - Sudan - Turkey – Qatar; the emergence of ISIL; the failure of Libya.*

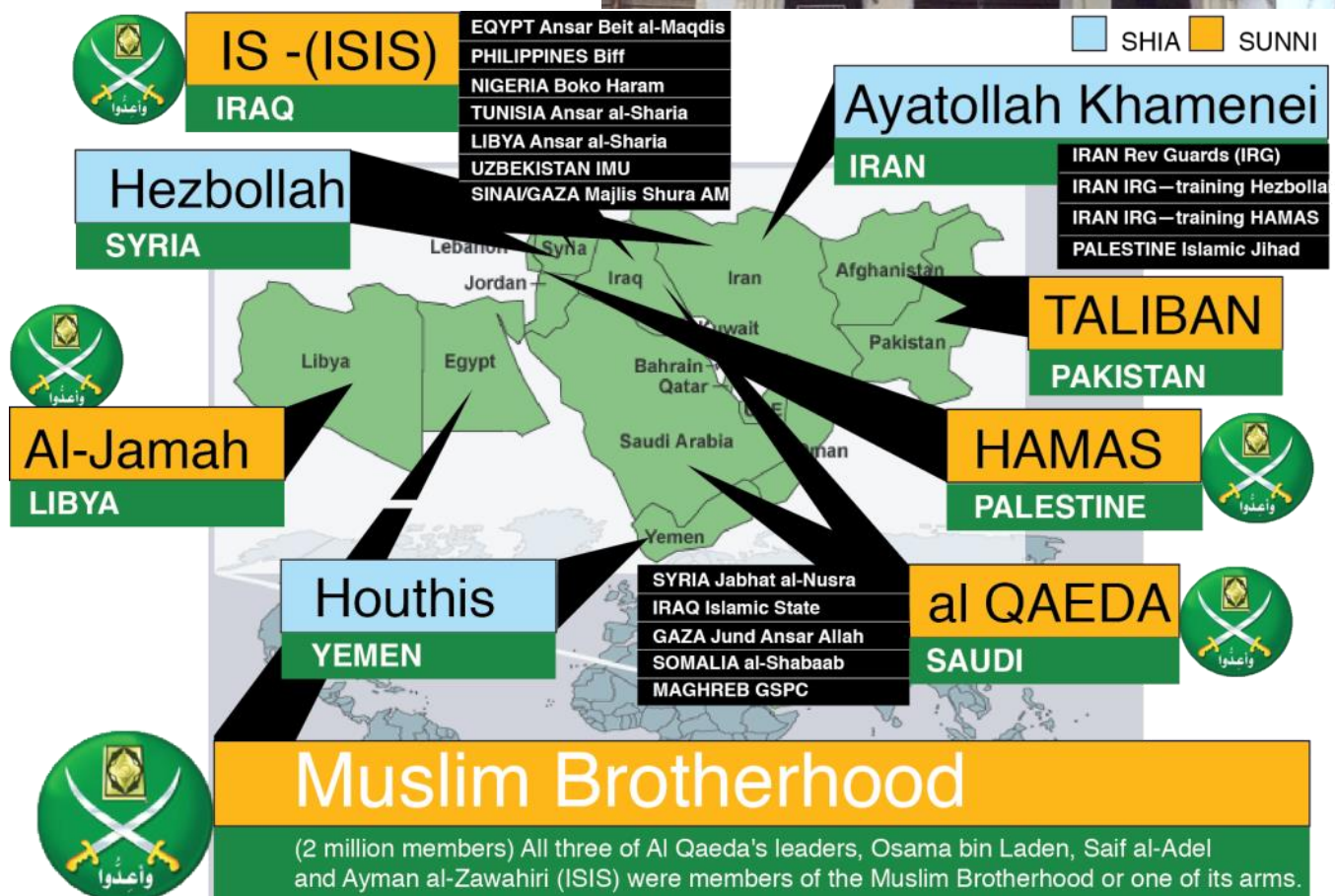
IX. 2014 – Nowadays: *the MB's regrouping in Turkey, the emergence of DAESH, the migration crisis, the Gulf Cooperation Council crisis and the allegations of terrorist organization. It corresponds to the presidency of General Abdul Fattah Saeed Hussein Khalil el-Sisi.*



Brief conclusions:

- Muslim Brotherhood's goal is to build the Global Caliphate with the capital in Jerusalem;
- Muslim Brotherhood's strategy has been the one of "small steps", originally applied in Egypt and then in all other states;
- The strategy has followed the succession: the confessional / academic wing → the financial / economic wing → the social wing → the militant wing (it was an official branch of the organization until the mid-1970s) → the political wing supported by the media / think-tanks / civil society wing;
- The global expansion of the network was carried out concentrically, around the Egyptian axis, and succeeded in encompassing almost all continents;
- The alliances with other organizations have been built around common ideological targets (anti-Semitism / anti-

Communism / anti-Liberalism / anti-Christianity - alliance with the Nazi regime; anti-Communism - alliance with CIA; anti-Christianity / anti-Liberalism - alliance with neo-Marxists / anarchists / separatists; the dispute with Saudi Arabia regarding the pilgrimage sites of Islam/the future capital of the Caliphate - the alliance with Iran).



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REMEMBER: THE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Dinu COSTESCU

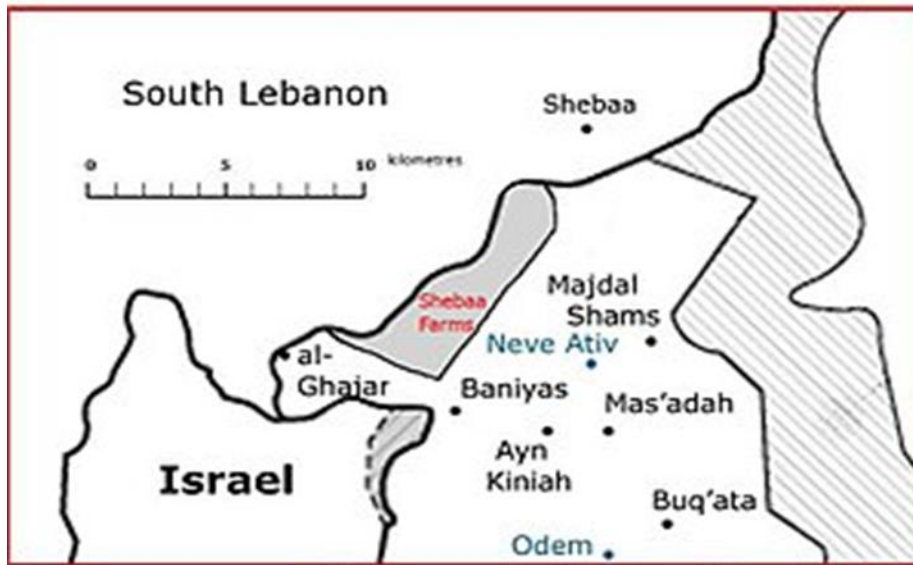
The paradigm the "Israeli-Arab conflict" with its variant called "peace process" appeared and was circulated seven decades ago in the context of the first Israeli-Arab military confrontations which followed the emergence of the Jewish state on the map of the political geography of the Middle East in 1948, offered a defining title to a strongly conflicted history whereby the regional peace was but a long succession of fleeting synopses in between the many and brutal armed confrontations between Arabs and Jews in which all belligerents and their extra-regional sponsors resorted to arms on behalf of peace. A peace which, through its absence or its frailty, could rather sustain the assertion that it was not the peace process which characterized this long history but the "war process" of the Middle East. There were two stakes and fundamental dimensions of this conflict: territorial, in case of the state confrontations between the Arab world and the Jewish state, and existential when we speak of the Israeli arguments and those of the Palestinian resistance. It is difficult to affirm convincingly enough how ardent the peace desire of the enemies really was, what did each of them understand from the semantics of this concept and, particularly, to what extent the regional conflict was not one for asserting the existence only but also, to an equally important extent, one between two histories, two cultures, two nationalisms and two manners of approaching their existence and their own place and role in history. Neither the peace treaties Egypt and Israel signed in 1979 in America at Camp David, nor the Israeli-Palestinian agreements agreed upon in September, 1993 in Oslo, nor the 26th of October, 1994 peace treaty between Israel and Jordan brought a real and durable peace between the signatories and did not evolve later on into a global peace between the Jews and Arabs. Hatred existed among the belligerents in spite of the rhetorics which both sides denied as being

the intimate driving factor of the conflagrations. Anwar El-Sadat was assassinated by Egyptian Muslim fanatics on 6th of October, 1981 and the "Arab brethren" reunited in the council of the Arab League decided to ban Egypt as member of the sole regional Arab organisation pretending to be the defendant of the unity and solidarity. For "treason" as well, the Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin fell too, on 4th of November 1994, assassinated in his turn by a fanatic Jew that time.

What has remained today from the "peace process" after 70 years of wars?

The territorial dimension of the "struggle for the liberation of the Arab territories" Israel occupied in the 1967 and 1973 wars ceased to represent a conflicted issue after the Sinai peninsula was returned to Egypt. The south Lebanese enclave of the so-called Shebaa Farms (*Mazari'a Shebaa*)- around 11 sq.km -, disputed since the French mandate in the area between the Syrian-Lebanese border and the Golan Heights serves today as pretext for the "liberation struggle" the Lebanese Hezbollah is waging on behalf of strategies devised by Tehran without that Lebanon or Syria itself having on their agendas of national and regional policies this issue while the occupied Syrian Golan Heights were annexed by Israel despite some formal and prudish protests of the international community and the existence of the Heights was reminded only in the contemporary context of the Syrian civil war and its developments. From the ceasefire following the end of the 1973 "Yom Kipur war" or "the 1973 war", a peace was established which was generally tacitly respected by Israel and the Damascus regime with almost no exchange of fire between Syrians and Jews being registered during almost 40 years at the demarcation line in the Golan Heights.

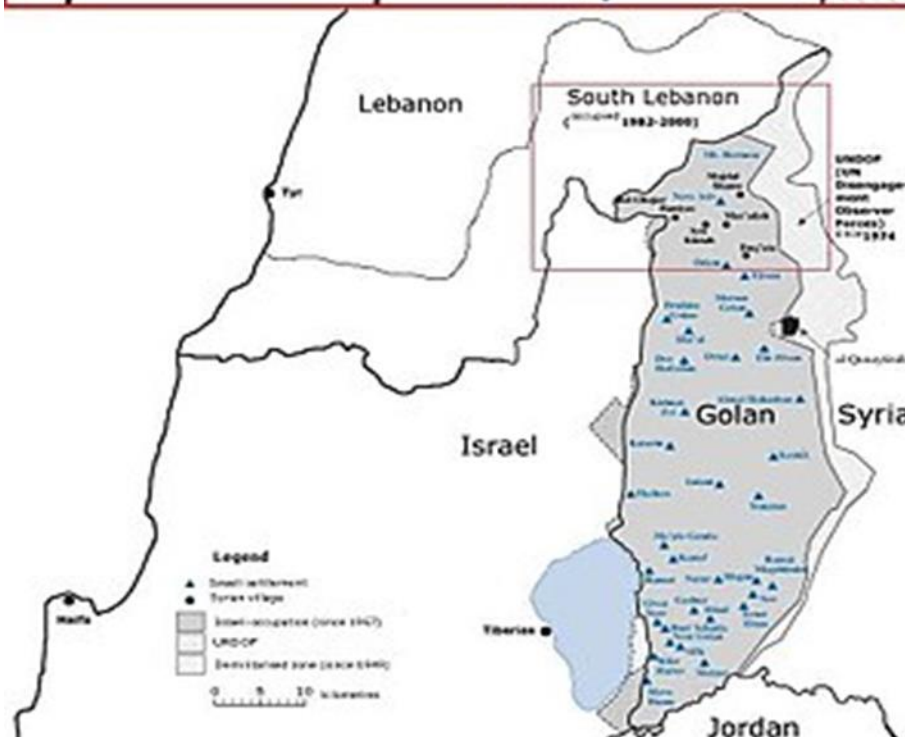
The onset of the so-called "Arab spring" in 2011, the overturn of the political regimes, mentalities, interests and coalitions it generated,



Middle East remained only the segment of the conflict between the Palestinians and the State of Israel which became, in the mean time, a "Jewish national state" by virtue of the law enacted by the Knesset. The Arab spring, the eruption of the terrorist phenomenon and the coming to White House of the Republican Donald Trump are now the criteria on which base "the peace in the Middle East" is discussed.

Whether until a decade ago the peace of this region remained a nice and persistent dream, even if it was situated in a time horizon rather inertial and comfortable, the following developments contributed substantially to turn this dream into a chimera.

It can be said that the contemporary equation of peace and war in the Middle East witnesses a profound reconfiguration as compared to the situation existing at the end of the last century and the element through which the new status-quo we are seeing now refers particularly to some obvious realities:



Shebaa enclave and the Golan Heights

accompanied by the rise of the Islamic radical phenomenon and the mobilisation of the joint resources of the international community for confronting this scourge seized the Oriental chessboard up to the highest degree where the Middle East was not any longer an area of the traditional Arab-Israeli conflict and of the traditional regional slogans but a front where fighting the Islamist terrorism became the cornerstone of the competitive geostrategy of this beginning of millennium. The issue of the occupied or claimed territories is not any longer a problem while in the morphology of the conflict in the

of the territorial dispute between the Arab world and the Jewish state and, consequently, the substantial diminishing of the states' role as players of an armed conflict. Of the complexity of the "Middle East conflicted file", it is only the Palestinian component which did not lose its relevance yet it became during Donald Trump Administration a target of choice of a programed offensive of marginalisation and weakening through the series of initiatives and "deals of the century" aimed at imposing a "solution" and of a biased "peace", out of balance and built overrid-

1. The practical disappearance

ingly on the criteria the United States and the Israeli government take into consideration.

2. The movement of the regional conflict from the Arab-Israeli paradigm to confrontations carried out within the Arab body and manifested either in the form of civil wars, as it is the case in Syria, Libya, Yemen, or as disputes among state actors through the so-called proxy wars such as it happens in Yemen. It can be said, to an equal extent, that for the Arab community the "common enemy" is not Israel any longer but the theocratic regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

3. The emergency and assertion of new regional powers with programs inspired by expansionist interests and strategies – Turkey, Iran, the Gulf Arab monarchies in particular and which, by this very fact, make that those domestic conflicts and civil wars drag state and non-state actors, reach regional dimensions and turn into destabilising hotbeds for the entire security system of the Middle East.

4. A process of "internationalisation" of the regional conflicted status in the region through massive involvement, including militarily, on the Oriental fronts of the great global powers headed by the Russian Federation and the United States of America. Under such circumstances, the geostrategic and geopolitical region of the Middle East represents a chessboard, too, on which the conflicted and competitive interests and strategies of the global powers are confronting with direct impact on the perpetuation of the conflict and pushing farther the horizon of peace. A horizon which is and continues to be blurred by uncertainties and obscurities as long as, on the one hand, the Arab world will not succeed in overcoming its deep identitarian crisis and in reconciling with itself in an increasingly conflicted world and, on the other hand, as long as the sources of tension, conflict and instability will further remain active and detrimental. And among these sources of destructive energies as far as the regional peace is concerned, the Palestinian issue imposes itself in particular. It was used, decades on end, by the Arab regimes who, behind the smoke screen of hypocrisy, exploited

the aspirations and expectations of the Palestinian people for promoting their nationalistic projects and for maintaining the tools of power, this "Palestinian cause", undermined by the rifts and vainglorious disputes that grind the cohesion of the political elites and the entire Palestinian body lives its own loneliness of which the the Arab and international communities are less and less interested expecting the "Big deal" licensed by Donald Trump's strategy – a "Big deal" which effect is on its way of extending, discreetly but continuously, all over the Middle East.

SYRIA: FROM SOCHI TO THE NEW ISKENDERUN?

Maher NABOULSI

After a failed summit which, on the 7th of September, gathered in Tehran Vladimir Putin, Recep Teyyip Erdogan and Hassan Rohani with the aim of finding a compromise for avoiding the implementation of the plan to reconquer through an ample armed offensive the Idlib town and district, the last bastion of the Syrian rebels and jihadist groups, on the 17th of September, a new, this time bilateral, dialogue took place in Sochi, on the Eastern Black Sea shore, between Putin and Erdogan which ended with the conclusion of a common memorandum which provided for establishing a de-militarized buffer zone by the withdrawal of the military presence in Idlib to a 15-20 km distance from the separation line between the Syrian army, backed by Russia, and the oppositions formations backed, in their great majority, by Turkey. The dead-line for implementation of this article was set for the 17th of October. As a result of the Turkish side initiatives, a great part of the rebel formations observed the provisions of the memorandum, while other Islamist-jihadist formations and small groups backed by the regime in Ankara rejected the Russian-Turkish initiative exactly two days before D-Day and the salvos of artillery and rockets resumed. Idlib, which re-taking over by Bashar Al-Assad's regime was devised as termination point of the war and moving to the political transition period, remained on a bleeding

wound with a confused future depending decisively on the capriciousness and the haggings among the regional and extraregional powers engaged politically and militarily in the Syrian civil war.

The armistice imposed on the 17th of September and the establishment of the Idlib demilitarized zone did not do anything but delayed temporarily a Syrian-Russian military action which the regional and extraregional actors led by Turkey disavowed ante-factum, under the otherwise real pretext of avoiding a new humanitarian catastrophe and a new massive wave of refugees and displaced persons. Far from bringing the "Idlib problem" closer to a horizon of solving it peacefully, the steps arduously agreed upon by Vladimir Putin and Erdogan brought to the forefront new difficulties, disagreements and divergent positions or claims between the Russian Federation and Turkey.

There is no agreement at all on a definition and differentiation of what is understood by "moderate opposition" and the radical one as there is no clear consensus on their status and fate in preparation of a post-conflict transition stage. Turkey claims with an ever louder voice its support for the Syrian rebels and jihadists as it is asserting openly and emphatically its "national interests" in Syria in general and in the Idlib district in particular.

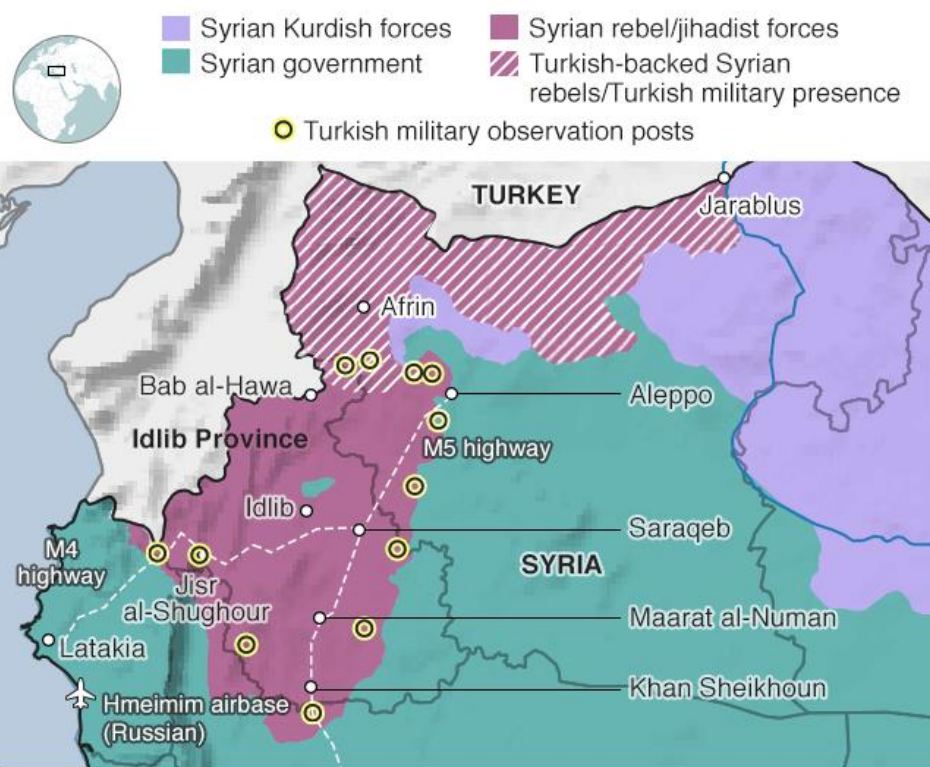
After the Turkish authorities released the evangelical pastor Andrew Brunson, the relations between the United States and Turkey moved abruptly from "very tense" to "excellent" according to statements made by president Donald Trump himself. And that means an implicit reassurance for Recep Teyyip Erdogan's strategy and his expansionist projects in the

Syrian space under the cover of curbing the Kurdish separatism at Turkey's south-eastern frontiers. In fact, Turkish ambitions are not singular given that, in different forms, the same plans and projects – with different names and arguments – are considered by all great regional and global powers involved in the developments of the Syrian domestic conflict – the Russian Federation, the United States of America and Turkey and Iran in particular.

After seven years of war, Syria is prisoner of an undeclared and unlegislated colonialism in which the new empires share the spheres of influence and control the the weathervane of the evolution directions of this country where the indigenous government and the Syrian society are barely consulted when capital decisions concerning essentially tomorrow Syria's future and configuration are made. Syria remains a country which scission became a state of affairs lacking only the legal consecration.

During the partition process of the Ottoman Empire defeated in WWI between the great French and British colonial powers, Paris decid-

Idlib province



Source: IHS Control Monitor, 3 Sep 2018; ISW; Suriye Gündemi

BBC

ed to "crumble" the former vilayet of Syria into five state entities, namely the State of Aleppo in the northern half of the territory, the Alawite State, on the Mediterranean coast, the State of Damascus, in the southern half, Jebel Druze State (the Druze Mountain) as autonomous state entity of the Druze confession in the south-western extremity and the Great Lebanon State contiguous to the north with the Alawite State which will become the current Lebanese Republic. As a "consolation" for the Turks defeated in the war, the former sandjak of Syrian Antioch (Alexandretta, an old center of one of the five autocephal churches of the Orthodoxy) was annexed to Turkey constituting, today, part of the Turkish province of Hatay and a permanent subject of territorial conflict between Syria and Turkey.

Today, after the death of the former Syrian leader Hafez Al-Assad, the issue of Alexandretta as well as the conflict for sharing the hydrological resources of the Euphrates River were moved to history liability, as Recep Teyyip Erdogan's Turkey seems to repeat the experiment applied by the French colonialism in Syria and the stake of this scenario is represented by the Idlib town and district. The de facto and even de jure annexation of the Syrian province to the Turkish sphere of influence represent a topic insistently revisited during the discussions between Putin and Recep Teyyip Erdogan. For the Kremlin leader, it would not be, in the end, too great a sacrifice for a present for his Bosphorus ally for the services the latter rendered in order to "solve *à la russe*" the Syrian Gordian knot. Neither Donald Trump has insomnia provoked by an eventual breaking up or a carve-up of the Syrian territory. As far as Bashar Al-Assad is concerned, it is difficult to assume that he has any more resources for promoting the Baathist ideals of "unity, liberty and socialism" after he has put Russia exclusively in charge of Syria's political and geographical identity.

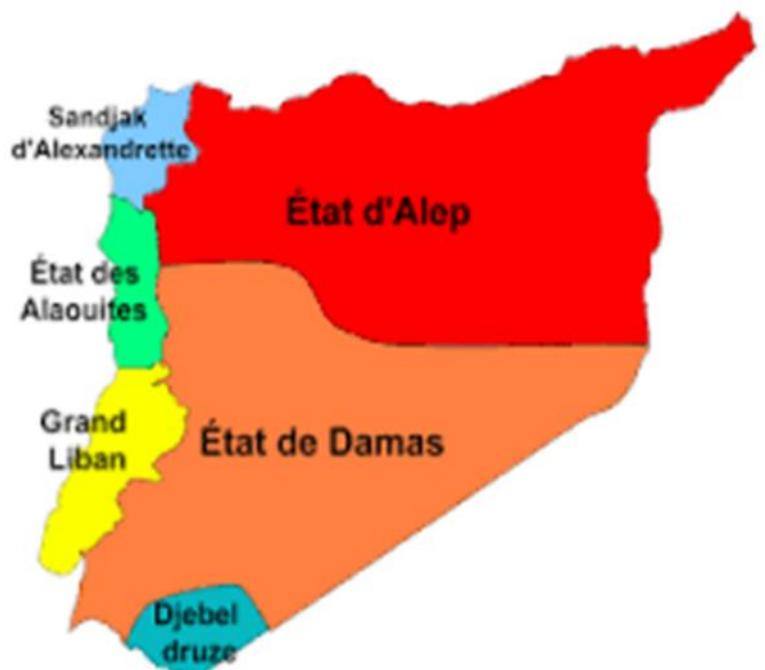
And, from the perspective of history, this state of affairs is not lacking precedents and we have in mind the French mandate

established in Greater Syria in the first half of the last century when, based on the famous Sykes-Picot agreements, the French tutelage power decided arbitrarily to carve-up the former Syrian Ottoman province in five ethnic-sectarian "states" and to annex to the post-war republican Turkey the province of Antioch (Antakya, in Arabic with the Latinised name Alexandretta, known as Iskenderun, in Turkish, which became part of the current Turkish Hatay province.

POST-CONFLICT SYRIA: UNDER WHAT FLAG?

Lamya FOUAD, Beirut

The latest developments of the Syrian civil war were marked by an increased confrontation against the clock whereby the stake was more substantially expressed in the sense of an way out, as far as possible in a political way, from the trajectory the crisis was stuck into during seven years. The regime in Damascus got substantial progress in recovering the national territory from the control of the secular rebellion, of the Islamic religious radicalism formations and from a political opposition which is affected, at the end of this year, by erosion and is splitted de-



Syria's "states" under the French mandate

pending on ambitions, vainglory and especially the interests and directions conveyed by the foreign powers which sponsor it and which are involved politically, militarily, informationally and even socially in the meanders of this regionalized and internationalized war. The great players on the fronts of the conflict – Russia, Turkey and Iran, on the one hand, the United States and the Western community, on the other hand, continued to shoot themselves mutually in the foot with the argument equally invoked of pacification and concern about Syria's territorial integrity and Syrians' national identity who succeeded to survive the seven years of violence, destruction and suffering. From the ruins this country, its culture and civilization were turned into, a question begun to be heard, at the beginning frail and hesitant, then more clearly and obsessively, a question which was not worded until the fall of this year and which seems to have aroused interest almost all over the current political geography: which will be the portrait and the morphology of that "independent and sovereign" Syria which will have to reintegrate itself in the regional and international community and attend the debates about the great issues of the contemporary world? In other words, how reconciled with itself and how much freedom will it have in its decision making this post-conflict Syria on which ruins foreign flags flutter today among which with the naked eye one may notice the colors of a multinational of actors – the Russian Federation, Turkey, Iran, Hezbollah's yellow pennant, the black banners inscribed with the sentence "There Is no god, but God (Allah)", the United States and other flags coming from the democratic Europe corners. Will a post-conflict regime established in Damascus be able to recover the flag accepted by all Syrians and to avoid the imported colors, be it Russian, Iranian, Turkish or of Western type?

Hectic and contradictory discussions are taking place in connection with what will happen with the Iranian military presence in Syria – although most of the times such discussions take place between two camps, namely the Russians and the Americans – as it is known that maintaining, by the future regime in Syria, of alliance rela-



tions with the theocratic regime in Tehran will have serious consequences in the regional and international context:

- The perpetuation of the Iranian presence and influence in Syria will question a future normalisation of the relations between Damascus and the regional capitals from its immediate proximity but also with the Arab Gulf monarchies led by Saudi Arabia;

- Such a perspective would represent a difficult to overcome barrier on the path of the future Syrian state's integration in the Arab community, including gaining again the quality of founding member of the League of Arab States;

- The continuation of Iran's presence, even blurred, in the Syrian space would mean the Western industrialized states led by Donald Trump Administration will have major objections to their economic and financial participation to Syria's post-war reconstruction, a process the Russian Federation and Vladimir Putin keep on promoting on the international stage;

- Not the least, it would be difficult to accept the existence of a Syrian state which duplicates Iraq's experience after Saddam Hussein's removal from power when, as it was so often repeated, "the 2003 American invasion and the arbitrary measures implemented by the American governor Paul Bremer did nothing but offered Iraq on a silver plate to Iran". To say nothing of the situation when a Damascus' orientation towards Tehran would offer Israel arguments for "surgical" military interventions in Syria which in reality will mean an implicit perpetuation of

instability, insecurity and of the tensions hotbeds in the Syrian and in the regional environment.

At the last edition of Valdai Forum, president Vladimir Putin declared that "the issue of Iran's leaving Syria has nothing to do with Russia. It must be discussed and agreed upon between Tehran and Damascus". The Russian president made similar assertions during the meetings he had in Moscow with John Bolton, the National Security Advisor of the United States: "The Iranian interests (in Syria) do not converge with the Russian Federation's interests. Personally, I would be glad if the Iranian forces in Syria withdraw to their country".

Even if such statements of the Kremlin leader were meant to be an "amicable" message addressed to those wishing the removal of the Iranian presence, one thing is clear and should be submitted to an open discussion sooner or later: as long as the rhetorics of the main actors on the stage of the Syrian war do not economize words when referring to the future "independent, sovereign and free" Syria: future Syria's full and actual independence and sovereignty will not become a functional reality unless all foreign troops, militias and factions leave Syria!

Unfortunately, the acerbic struggle for influence and strategic benefits under way in Syria demonstrate an as obvious and simple reality as possible, namely that Syria of the end of 2018 is not any longer and will never be, no matter the circumstances, Syria which existed until the spring of 2011. Even under the assumption that Bashar Al-Assad stays in power in post-war Syria, he will not be able to govern the country as he

did during the ten years when he succeeded as president his father, the former president Hafez Al-Assad. As head of state, he is not the product of the seven years of war and he did not either recover the territories taken under control of the rebels as a result of the bravery of his own loyalist army but thanks to the decisive intervention of the Russian Federation and Iran that came to his assistance. And Russia's armed intervention was not stranger to strategic considerations with old traditions in the relations between Moscow and Damascus. Under Hafez Al-Assad's leadership, Syria was aligned to the socialist bloc led by former USSR, its army technicians and commanders were trained in the Soviet institution of military education, equipping the own national army was based almost exclusively on military supplies delivered by the former Soviet Union. For Vladimir Putin, the "Syrian Arab spring" was the valuable opportunity for Russia's resuming its presence and influence on the eastern Mediterranean shore. Yet this was not the only justifying argument of the Russian military intervention in Syria. Vladimir Putin sought – and secured – a permanent military presence in Syria and the prevention of a regime change in Damascus sought by the United States of America. Three objectives which were positively welcome by both the political and military decision-making circles in Syria and the ayatollahs in Tehran, who benefitted from the older relations established with Syria since the days of general Hafez Al-Assad.

"The Devil hides behind details" an old saying goes and the civil war in Syria abounds in such details about which the politicians, analysts and military commanders speak little or at all. So, it is little-known that Russia's involvement in the armed conflict three years ago was favourably received by the majority of Syrians not because the Iranians came to Syria upon the government in Damascus request but due to the worry vis-a-vis Tehran's predatory offensive and the invasive infiltration of the Persian element not only in the state's institutional leverages but also in the very demographic composition of the society and many of the Syrian localities including Damascus were invaded by Iranian

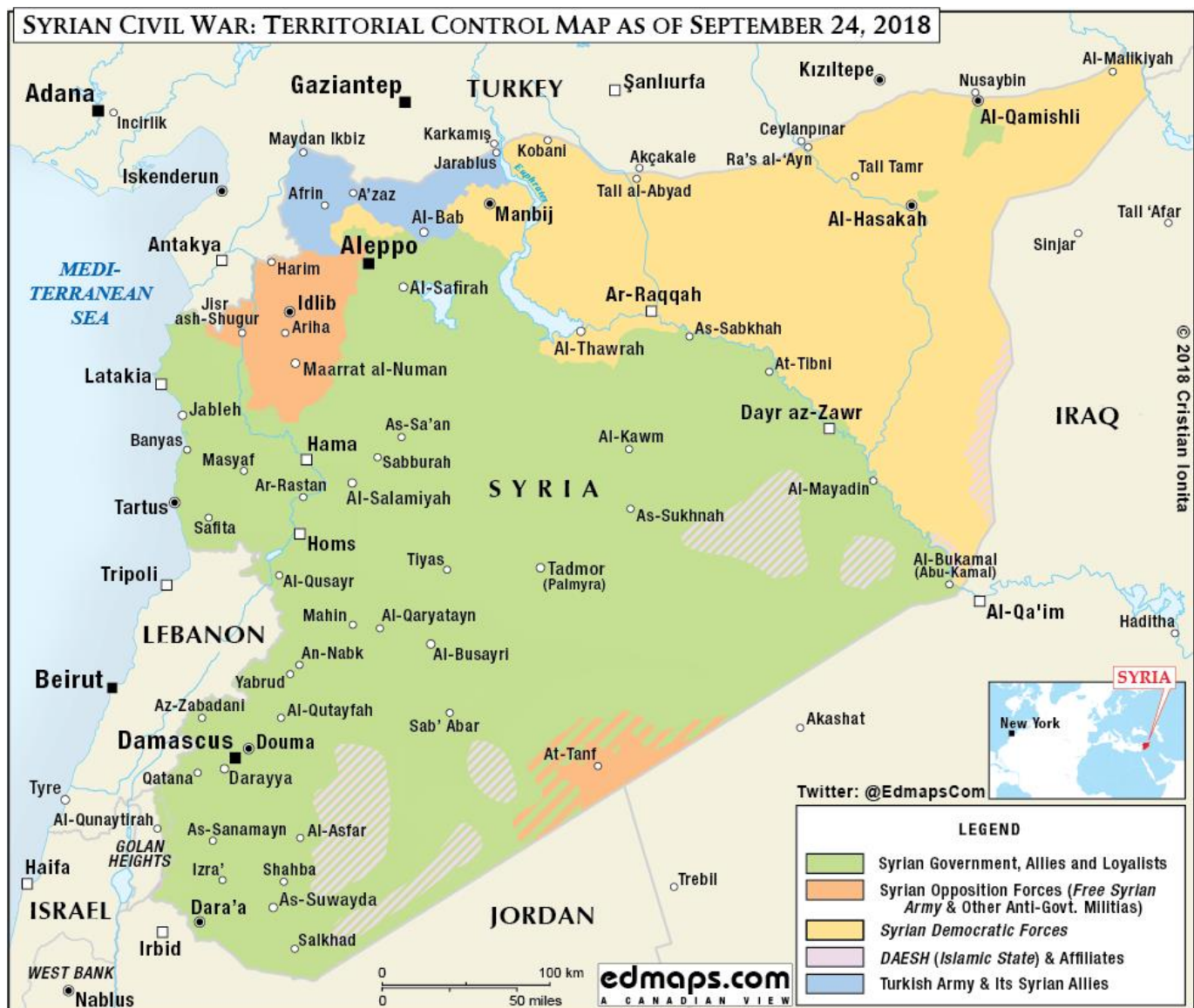


Waiting for the future...

symbols to a greater extent than that achieved by Hezbollah in West Beirut and South Lebanon. And as the Guards of the Iranian Revolution (Pasdaran) started to fight, they considered the Syrian Army as an appendix of the "allies" coming from the east of the Persian Gulf and the Shiite conversion of the society reached such dimensions that determined the Russian Federation to bring in Syria a military police made up of Sunnis from Russia's Asian vicinity – Chechens in their majority – with the mission of ensuring the security in towns such as Hama and Aleppo and to bring to an end the arbitrary behavior of the Iranian "guards". And when, during "the offensive for Aleppo", Pasdaran militias imposed a severe embargo on the city for preventing the civilians' leaving the locality, the Russian avia-

tion resorted to bombardments on Kafraya and Fawa, localities with Shiite majority and controlled by the Iranians, in order to impose on the Pasdaran troops the observance of the already agreed upon armistices for the Aleppo city and district.

On the background of the Syrian civil war, the relations between the Russian Federation and Iran may be described as having, at the same time, a cooperative character, of complementarity, and a contradictory, non-convergent one. On the one hand, Moscow's and Tehran's approaches meet in the common agreement on maintaining Bashar Al-Assad's regime in power and foiling the American and Western initiatives and programs for a systemic "reform" of the Syrian state in accordance with the criteria taken into





account by Washington.

On the other hand, the paths followed by Vladimir Putin and ayatollah Khamenei drift apart when the strategic objectives of their intervention in Syria are at stake. Thus, for the Iranian regime, a triumph on this chessboard equates with a substantial progress towards strengthening the so-called axis of "resistance" on the conflicted chessboard of Middle East and also for disseminating its own influence not only in Syria but also in the neighbouring Lebanon and on the Mediterranean shore, including by consecrating a political and military "supply corridor" for Hassan Nassrallah's Hezbollah. From this perspective, the final goal of the Revolutionary Guards is not limited to dominating and controlling the Syrian state institutions but it is aimed at, on a long run, to integrate them into the institutional system and criteria of the Iranian regional project.

As far as the Russian Federation is concerned, control over future Syria means securing a solid bridge-head for the Russian influence at the "warm waters" of the Mediterranean and that assumes mandatorily that the future Syrian regime in Damascus will not be hostile to the Russian interests, let alone one close to the American project.

This is the reason explaining Moscow's persistence for setting up as soon as possible the joint committee for drawing up Syria's future constitution with a membership that avoids a serious involvement of the opposition whose factions and "platforms" pursue rather than otherwise the introduction in the fundamental law of certain provisions suiting the interests of the powers commanding and supporting politically and

financially those factions.

The coming year appears to be a turning point towards the end of the war and will lay the foundations of the future Syrian identity. Between the foreign flags offering "protection" and the national flag, on the other hand, the Syrians are the ones who must decide.

Yet it remains to be seen if they will be consulted.

SYRIA: THE ENVOYS ARE CHANGING, AREN'T THEY?

Dinu COSTESCU

Hinted several months before and confirmed on 17th of October, the withdrawal of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan De Mistura, became effective at the beginning of December. This diplomat, with an aristocratic allure, with a neat discourse and, not a few times blamed either for biased attitudes or for diletanteism had nevertheless the merit of being the longest-serving dignitary entrusted with one of the most ungrateful mission, where he resisted for four years (July 10th, 2014 – November 30th, 2018) during an extremely complex crisis of the Syrian civil war after his predecessors resisted much less chronologically, namely the Ghanaian Kofi Annan – half a year between February 23rd, 2012 – 2nd of August, 2012 and the Algerian Lakhdar Brahimi, two years, between 17th of August, 2012 and 31st of May, 2014.

A diplomat with a vast experience, speaking fluently no less than seven foreign languages, with a high multicultural profile (descending from an Italian father and a Swedish mother, with roots in an old Dalmatian family in Croatia),



Staffan de Mistura

a former member of several governments in Rome and familiar with some "hot missions" in Iraq, Afghanistan and not only, Staffan de Mistura was assigned by the former UN General-Secretary, Ban Ki-moon, with moving forward the mission of pacifying Syria. As it was the case with his predecessors, he did not succeed and that determined some analysts to assess that "Staffan De Mistura mission was one "for nothing". He, himself accepted and confessed that the mission entrusted to him was "an impossible one", yet no one contested his sincerity with which he tested all possible ways and, some times, impossible ones, in order to determine the end of the war and resuming peace and stability in Syria.

The objectivity obliges to recognize, at the same time, the fact unlike other numerous representatives of the European, American and Arab diplomacies who inertially practice a Manichean vision built on an automatic demonization of the Russians and Iranians and on the the oblivion of the confused game the regional Sunni Arab capitals play, Staffan de Mistura cannot be accused for the sake of accuses to have sinned through his bias and programed alignment to one or the other of the camps engaged in the Syrian crisis.

During the four years he dealt with the Syrian file, the international mediator was permanently in a conflicted status and was confronted with dismissal attitudes not only from the Syrian actors involved – Bashar Al-Assad's regime and the political and military opposition and, to an equal extent, confronted with the disagreements between them and the allied powers, on the one hand, and the UN, on the other hand, as the latter turned out to be powerless in imposing its role of peacemaker it was invested with ever since its inception. This state of affairs made that Staffan de Mistura's mission be practically poached by other factions which insisted on taking the mediation and negotiations process out of the UN and Security Council auspices in order to be hijacked by other two processes, namely the one in Astana, Kazakhstan, and the other in Sochi, both initiated either by the Russian Federation or in association with Iran and, more recently, in agreement with Turkey which imposed itself on the

Syrian chessboard by resorting to the armed intervention of the two operations code-named "The Euphrates Shield" and "The Olive Branch".

The international diplomat never wavered in his endeavour of initiating a dialogue with all parties to the conflict – the regime in Damascus, the Syrian opposition, the Russian Federation, Iran, Turkey, a fact that was not always favourably received in Washington or in other European capitals.

By the end of 2014, at the height of the Syrian war, it was Staffan de Mistura who launched the idea which, unfortunately was not taken into account by anyone, even if later on it prevailed and was applied but under other auspices – Russian, Syrian, Iranian, Turkish. It was about instituting a ceasefire in Aleppo enabling the civilian population's evacuation and establishing through dialogue a solution which will bring gradually to an end the bloodshed on all sectors of the Syrian front.

When Randa Kassis, a member of the leading Syrian opposition political fora stated that the end result of Staffan de Mistura's mission can be placed somewhere close to nil, her assertions were probably harsh yet did not lack realism to the extent that after nine rounds of the negotiations process in Geneva, the UN had too few and insignificant concrete achievements on the road to peace in Syria.

Nevertheless, the same realism compels acknowledging the fact that not all failures that were and are reminded must be connected to the international mediator Staffan de Mistura having in mind the overwhelming contribution brought by another undeclared war waged in the background among the great actors involved in the Syrian conflict and, in this framework, the persistent policy promoted by the Russian Federation in agreement with the Syrian regime's other ally – the Islamic Republic of Iran – for taking the political process of peace out of the international authority and auspices represented by the "Geneva process" and singling it out in the form of the Russian "umbrella" represented by the so-called negotiations rounds in Sochi and Astana. One must not ignore as well the fact that

the Syrian political opposition is extremely divided in interests groups modestly called "platforms" in accordance with the will of the backing powers - "Russia platform", "Cairo platform", "Istanbul platform" or "Riyadh platform" which represent as many disrupting and inconsistency elements in front of a substantial and sustainable dialogue.

Contrary to his predecessors Kofi Annan and Lakhdar Brahimi, Staffan de Mistura was tactful enough and did not invoke the "impossibility" of a solution in Syria as reason for his withdrawal from the mission of international mediator and spoke instead of personal problems and, first of all, of taking care of his two daughters from his first marriage.

Following the consultations with the permanent members of the Security Council and the government in Damascus, the Secretary-General of the UN, António Guterres, has announced, at the end of November, the new special envoy for Syria, Geir Otto Pedersen, a career diplomat with an impressive CV.

Born in Oslo, in 1955, the fourth international envoy for Syria carried out an extensive diplomatic activity with both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo at decision-making level and at the diplomatic missions abroad, alternating with diplomatic missions of international dimensions as a diplomat with the United Nations. In 1993, Geir Pedersen was the head of the Norwegian delegation during the confidential negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation which ended with the conclusion, in September 1993, of the famous Oslo Agreements. After two years spent in the central of the ministry as chief of staff of the minister of Foreign Affairs and as General Director of the Department for peace and humanitarian issues, he was, be-

tween 2005-2008, the UN special coordinator for Lebanon and, between 2012-2017, Norway's permanent representative at the United Nations and, after ending this mandate, he took over as ambassador the Norwegian diplomatic mission in China. Geir Pedersen is married and has five children.

His taking over, from Staffan de Mistura, of the relay as international envoy for Syria happens in the last month of the year, in a quite customary period whereby the situation in Syria evolves on a tightrope and on an accelerated pace of oscillating between the prospect of dynamizing the political process and the hazard of its failure, everything called into question due to the bitter disputes between the advocates of the "Geneva process", endorsed by the United Nations, and the advocates of the solutions promoted by "Astana-Sochi axis". The new international mediator takes over, as well, from his predecessor, a package of problems which, although not so bulky, is very complex if not even more difficult in an immediate prospect. Identifying a workable consensus for moving to the transition period, conditional on setting up the joint working group who is to agree upon a viable draft of the new constitution of the Syrian state, strengthening the de-escalation zones and keeping calm of the fighting fronts, the issue of the Syrian refugees' and displaced persons' return to their homes are but a few challenges Geir Pedersen



Geir O. Pedersen

will have to face in such a manner as to ensure, at least from the perspective of the official diplomatic rethorics, that the United Nations Organisation was not defeated in its confrontation with the reality of the history on the move.

For the time being, let's say, according to diplomatic nicety, "Good Bye, Mr. de Mistura, Good Luck, Mr. Pedersen!"

ISRAEL: THE POLITICAL CHESSBOARD AND "THE DEAL OF THE CENTURY"

Munir SALAMEH, Ramallah

If, until the middle of this year, the discourse about the Israeli-Arab peace process and, in this framework, the initiatives of solving the thorny file of the conflict between the Palestinians and the Jewish state were maintained within the limits of hope of an effective unlocking of the political demarches, today, those hopes seem rather than otherwise connected to the realm of fiction. The recognition, by Trump Administration, of Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital and the transfer of the American Embassy to the Holy City, followed by the blood-tainted "march of return" organised as a protest by the Gazan Palestinians, an ample demonstration against which the Israeli army launched reprisals leav-

ing behind 60 Palestinian dead and more than 2,800 wounded, were perceived as a negative turning point in the political process of solving the Palestinian file.

Several months before these events, president Trump made public his intention of launching a new peace plan that the former entrepreneur called it in business terms the "big deal" or, more commonly, "the deal of the century". As far as this deal is concerned, speculations abounded all the more so that the American official circles kept the essence of the "deal" secret and that prompted the ironies of the mass-media columnists and analysts for whom the "deal of the century" was comparable with Loch Ness monster: everybody speaks of, some hundreds are ready to swear they saw it, and some pretend they have irrefutable evidence that the monster exists and, in all likelihood, the monster never existed!

The majority of the Arab and international mass-media commentaries appreciated that the "deal" devised by president Donald Trump and promoted by Jared Kushner, son-in-law and advisor of the president, together with Jason Greenblatt, the special envoy of the White House, aims at identifying and implementing a "final" solution to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute so that the Administration in Washington may focus its energies on some priority files connected to the Middle East regional security and, among them, uprooting the terrorist phenomenon, the isolation of the theocratic regime in Tehran and building up a system of strategic security and defense alliances in accordance with the objective stipulated by the new strategic vision adopted by the current



White House Administration. Whether for the White House leader the "deal of the century" represents a major historical prerequisite for a durable pacification of the Middle East, the Palestinian public opinion and elites consider the American project another new "nakba" (calamity) the Palestinian people is suffering during the last 70 years, as it is synonymous, by its consequences, with the "final" liquidation of the prospects that the Palestinians may benefit from the elementary rights of living freely in their own sovereign state. For the prominent Palestinian militant Dr. Hannan Ashrawi, several times member of the Palestinian government and national parliament, "this last deal is not designed to offer a solution, but rather for reinventing the occupation as system of military dominance unrestricted by any control form (www.theguardian.com).

From the perspective of the Israeli political chessboard and of its principle position in connection with the issue of reconciliation and peace with the Palestinians, one may ascertain that when the "Madrid process" was launched in 1991 and led to the conclusion, in September 1993, of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements known as "Oslo Agreements", there was no measurement criterium of taxonomic framing the formations of the Israeli political stage, all the more so as even approaching the issue of the equation of peace and war in the programs and platforms of those formations was subject to a continuous series of changes, reconsiderations and reevaluations which witnessed a more accelerated pace on the occasion of the Knesset elections in May, 1996, and in May, 1999, which emphasized a clear sliding of the domestic political stage towards the center of the political-ideological range, a phenomenon which included, to an equal extent, both the right wing formations led by the Likud Bloc, categorically opposed to giving up any part of the territory of "great Israel", as well as the left camp formations under the uncontested leadership the Labor Party, a fluctuant supporter of "two state theory" - Palestinian and Israeli coexisting within recognized and guaranteed frontiers. The political color of the governance witnessed moments of al-

ternance, first of all by the return of right wing parties followed, in 1996, by a new triumph of the left headed by the general-cum-politician Ehud Barak. The taking over of the government was considered both in Israel and in the Arab area a historical opportunity for unlocking and a possible positive finalisation of the peace negotiations with the Palestinians. It was a temporary hope as the second Palestinian intifada (*Intifada Al-Aqsa*) erupted on the 28th of July, 2000, up until now, the left segment of the Israeli political chessboard, known as "the pacifists camp" went persistently over the dark side to the benefit of the right wing and extreme right formations.

Mention should be made that many times a confusion has been made between the concept of the "Israeli political left" and the "peace forces" which, in their organisational and militantist morphology, are a component part of the left which supports generally the idea of the withdrawal to the June, 5th 1967 existing frontiers or incorporating the "territories" into Israel in exchange of *de jure* and *de facto* peace. No less important for defining the concept of "peace forces" in Israel is the mention that, since the 5th of June, 1967 war, all the governments succeeding each other at the leadership of the State of Israel promoted a peace discourse with the Palestinian and yet they proceeded, at the same time, with implementing a sustained policy of Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories so that, since 1967 to 2018, Israel built 151 settlements inhabited by 530,000 Jewish settlers out of whom 180,000 are living in 26 settlements around Jerusalem. Such an ambiguous situation makes the discourse about the peace concept in the vision of the Israeli political class difficult.

During the more than 25 years that have been passing since the Oslo Agreements, no worth mentioning progress has been recorded for solving this conflict and so much less towards the horizon of the Palestinian rights and of the peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. And, under such circumstances, the question whether the president Donald Trump is a providential "deus ex machina" bringing a too long delayed peace is quite natural.

THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES AND THE "DEAL OF THE CENTURY"

Munir SALAMEH, Ramallah

Ever since the emergence of the "Palestinian problem", after the creation, in 1948, of the Israeli state and, thereafter, alongside the entire history of the so-called "Palestinian-Israeli conflict" and of the initiatives of solving it through political and diplomatic negotiations, the issue of the Palestinian refugees return to their homes represented, alongside the juridical statute of Jerusalem and the creation of a sovereign, independent and lasting Palestinian state was one of the most thorny topics of the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israelis recorded on the agenda of all stages the process of negotiations, public, secret, bilateral or mediated went through, no minimal consensus was reached after 70 years of efforts as far as the fate of the Palestinian diaspora is concerned.

If, for the Palestinian side, the refugees' return was a fundamental component of what it is understood by the sintagm of "legitimate rights", Israel, on the contrary, steadfastly backed the American administrations, and, indirectly, by a series of Arab regimes, did not spare any effort for marginalising and even excluding this issue from the package of topics under negotiations. The declarations of prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, according to which the existence of UNRWA is no longer actual are circumscribed today to this context and was followed by Donald Trump Administration decision of ceasing the American contributions to financing the humanitarian, social and



educational activities for the Palestinian refugees.

From the Israeli government standpoint, the definition given to the concept of refugee, which could be eventually taken into account in the framework of negotiations, is applied only to those Palestinians who effectively inhabited Palestine before 1948, so that their descendants – children and nephews – who are the majority in the diaspora, cannot be included in the refugees category.

The Palestinian side has a fundamentally different definition of the refugee notion. Thus, all Palestinian persons who were forcefully expelled from the historical Palestine until 1948 have the statute of refugee. The statute of refu-

The regional-territorial repartition in 2018

Location	Numerical	Remarks
West Bank and East Jerusalem	809,738 19 refugees camps	Statute of permanent residents
Gaza	1,348,536 8 refugees camps	Palestinian citizenship
Lebanon	463,664 12 camps	Ambiguous statute of temporary residence
Syria	543,000 9 refugees camps	More than 300,000 exiled or displaced persons due to the civil war
Jordan	2,175,490 10 refugees camps	They represent around 70% of the Kingdom population
Iraq	around 4,000	No civilian rights
Egypt	Between 50,000-80,000 including 10,000 refugees from	No civilian rights. They are considered foreign residents
Libya	around 6,000	No rights, foreign residents statute
Kuwait	around 80,000	No civilian rights. Foreign residents statute.

gee is transmissible to the descendants of the "1948 generation". According to the criteria of the Palestinian authorities, there are three identifiable groups in the overall population of refugees according to the historical moment they became refugees:

- Persons who became refugees in 1947-1949;
- Persons who became refugees or were expelled on the background of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war;
- Persons who were expelled from the historical Palestine in other circumstances than the Arab-Israeli wars.

The Israeli side approach according to which Israel could eventually discuss in principle the return of the "true refugees", namely those of the 1948 generation, would mean that their return is applicable only to Palestinians with ages over 70 and who, in around 10-15 years, will disappear biologically. And the "refugees problem" would be considered solved!

In 1948, the UN General Assembly decided that "it is appropriate that the Palestinian refugees who want that, be allowed to return to their homes as soon as possible. To those who do not want to return, payment for compensating the goods and properties lost as a result of the exodus will be secured". Such a resolution has never been taken into consideration and the international community manifested too little interest for solving this problem. If in what concern the humanitarian actions, the UNRWA was established in 1949, no significant UN political demarche was recorded so far and the text of the 1993 Oslo Agreements deliberately ignores any reference to this thorny issue.

The coercive measures adopted against the Palestinian side and launching the "deal of the century" surrounded by ambiguity could not quench in the Palestinian collective memory the nostalgia for the return to origins while further perpetuating the existing situation will do nothing

but complicate up to failure the process of seeking negotiated solutions leading to normality and peace.

THE AUTUMN OF "KHASHOGGI DIPLOMACY"

Ambassador prof. Dumitru CHICAN

I. The chronicle of a too late announced death

The crisis stirred by the disappearance of the Saudi journalist Jamal Ahmad Hamza Khashoggi as a result of a horrifying political assassination attributed to the top circles of the regime and the royal Saudi family, to the ambitious heir of the throne in Riyadh, the prince Mohammed Bin Salman, which broke out on October the 2nd at Saudi Arabia Consulate in Istanbul and which took the lead of the regional and global media news and of the higher level of the focus and priorities of the presidential and government cabinets all over the world, the "Khashoggi question" developed into a hallucinating fictional construct neighbouring the epic paradigm of the "cloak-and-dagger" which turned the autumn season into a thriller scene, a perfect source of inspiration for Agatha Christie or for Sherlock Holmes's literary father.

How can this "Eastern odyssey" be understood and who was its hero-victim?

The family name Khashoggi – a perfect anonymous one for the public opinion until the fatidical day of 2nd of October – has its roots in the



Turkish word *Kashik*, written in Arabic *Khashuq*, whereby the final consonant *q* is pronounced in the dialectal speech *ğ*. To this word, which means “spoon”, the Turkish suffix *gi* was added whereby an occupation, a profession is designated and thus the word *Khashoggi* resulted as denominative for “spoon maker”, “the craftsman making spoons”, with the Turkish method of writing *Kaşıkcı*.



The great-grandfathers of the ill-fated journalist, well-to-do people with Chechen origins, would have settled, during the Ottoman Empire, some 300 years ago, in the Saudi town of Medina where they performed the pilgrimage at the holy places of Islam.

In his genealogy, Jamal is the nephew of a Mohammed Khaled Khashoggi, the personal physician of the King Abdelaziz Ibn Saud, founder of the Saudi Kingdom and, to an equal extent, of Adnan Khashoggi, a well-known businessman (in arms trade especially) who was considered in the 1980s as the richest businessman in the world. He had bloodline relation to Samira Khashoggi, the Egyptian Dodi El-Fayed's mother, the owner of Harrods luxury department store in London.

Nevertheless, the future editorialist of the American daily *The Washington Post* was not a familiar of civil society or a supporter and promoter of the progressive and reformist ideas and, quite on the contrary, he evolved as a person intimate of the “seraglio”, serving either as a journalist with loyal publications to the regime and supporter of it (the well-known dailies *Ukkaz* and *Al-Watan* - Homeland), or advisor and intimate of prince Turki Feissal, former head of Saudi espionage services, or in the entourage of the billionaire prince Walid Bin Talal.

After he settled in America, in September 2017, he brought criticism to the King's son, Mohammed Bin Salman, after the latter was rapidly appointed Crown Prince and factotum of the Saudi

domestic and foreign policy was not and should not be understood as an opposition act and ideological, national, patriotic and political dissent, but rather than otherwise as an expression of personal rancour towards King Salman&Son and of the long lasting rivalry between two clans placed under the dome of the same ultraconservative and authoritarian regime – Al-Saud and Al-Sheikh. Khashoggi positioned himself not against the monarchic, but fundamentally against its representative persons, King Salman and his son, Prince Muhammad.

Jamal Khashoggi's brutal assassination stirred vivid international reactions generated not by the means used by the pillars of the Wahhabite regime for getting rid of inconvenient critics – and this case is not the first or the last of this type in the tenebrous history of the totalitarian regimes – but by the global negative consequences in terms of image and the possible decrease of the figures of the bilateral bills which an involvement of Mohammed Bin Salman could provoke.

Saudi Arabia is involved in an unfortunate and costly war by proxies with Iran on the South Yemen front where the arsenals Riyadh uses have Western origin inscriptions and also on the wider front of the regional confrontation for sectarian leadership between the Sunnism, represented by the regime in Riyadh and the Shiism which leader the theocratic regime in Tehran hopes to become. At the same time, the future possible Saudi monarch, Prince Muhammad, as-

sumed the ambitious role of opening as wide as possible the doors towards the international community and its modernity, of breaking up with the rigorous Wahhabite sectarian conservatism and of turning the kingdom into a realm redesigned according to futurist criteria if not exclusively designed for the "dreamers" (synonymous in the Prince's oneiric to eccentric wealthy man). For "Vision 30", as this project was baptized, supposes colossal investments Saudi Arabia is more and more devoid of. Or, in this perspective, any obstacle to his raise to all leverages of the absolute power, no matter from where it comes, will be promptly uprooted by all possible means. And the outside reactions and the way they unfolded after Jamal Khashoggi's disappearance, show once more, if such were needed, how friable the principles and values of diplomacy are when they are confronted with economic and financial interests as well as with the conflicted competitions for power and influence among the great actors of the international contemporary policy for whom the death of the Saudi-American journalist became a valuable bargaining chip and an efficient instrument of pressure, blackmail and psychological warfare whereby each actor is overbidding its interests and its own approaches.

II. The monkey's triple position

If, on this background, the Arab world community adopted the monkey's triple and classical position which, "when needed", doesn't see, doesn't hear and doesn't speak – except for Qatar Emirate for which the neighbouring monarchies are the bearers of all causal responsibilities for the crises of all types the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Middle East and even the entire international community witness – in exchange, for Turkey which, through the voice and vision of president Erdogan, aspires to turning the country as rapidly as possible into the new Sunni pole of regional economic, political, military and sectarian lead-

ership in competition with the King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud's Wahhabite regime, the Khashoggi episode serves out of the best the regional and global interlinking objectives of this project.

An as elaborate as possible discourse in parcimonious and as diplomatic as possible phrases came from Tel Aviv, echoing the concern of not generating counter-reactions from Riyadh to the possible critical accents concerning the Khashoggi affair. Such positioning is easily understandable if one has in view the publicly and officially expressed orientation of the Saudi monarchy of normalising the relations with the Jewish state and the explicit support for a "final solution" to the Palestinian problem, according to the recipe prepared behind the scenes by Donald Trump Administration under the redundant name of the "deal of the century" and which, in the end, will give the Palestinians what Benjamin Netanyahu identified as "something less than a state and something more than an autonomy". "The Palestinians, the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman said, when referring to this subject, should stop wailing and sit at the negotiations table". It goes without saying that at the political and diplomatic stock market, Mohammad Bin Salman's quotation is astronomically higher than that of a dead Khashoggi who became viral by its own death.

In the roller-coaster of contradictory declarations made by the officials in Riyadh concerning Khashoggi's brutal death, on the one hand, and



Donald Trump's tweeted messages, equally contradictory, with regard to the same topic, the White House has to opt between singing needless requiems for an "anonymous death" and the huge commercial and financial advantages worth billions of dollars of the relations, especially in the military field, with Riyadh where the future king, an America's active friend is, at the same time, a loyal friend and listener to Jared Kushner, the main advisor and son-in-law of the Oval Office tenant. The stake of the relationship is too high for being shadowed by an "incident" which will be soon transferred to the dust archive of other similar deaths. In fact, what would have meant applying sanctions and embargoes especially on military deliveries and investments against Saudi Arabia? Nothing much except, maybe, since the dead do not return from the tomb and the Wahhabite regime, having in its ethnogenesis the old and acute feeling of vendetta, could direct itself towards – and it did in similar occasions – the East where it is expected by no one else but by the pacifist Vladimir Putin. And that is equally true in case of the the European threats of rigour concerning suspending military deliveries to the holy places of Islam.

A personal note in all this story was given by Turkey's president, Recep Teyyip Erdogan who, in several stances, declared and reiterated his irrevocable resolution of doing everything in order to shed light on the truth about Khashoggi's death and on the true decision-makers and the executors of this political killing. After several rounds of talks between the authorities in Ankara, including a visit in Turkey of the general prosecutor of the Kingdom, the Turkish leader announced publicly his own conclusion, not at all surprising, that the entire affair is "a play staged by the Saudis for rescuing a certain person" (a reference indeed to the Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman).

There were many analysts in the region and outside it who advanced the idea that the Khashoggi file will bring about profound changes on the Saudi domestic chessboard, including questioning the monarchic future of Mohammed Bin Salman. Yet taking into account the history

of the kingdom and of the Wahhabite ruling family, it will be easily understood that as long as the Saudi rulers will continue to be deeply dominated by the feeling of impunity and by the belief that money can buy anything, including human lives, Saudi Arabia will remain the same petrified state whereby an ambitious prince allows women to drive or attend shows in public arenas – a concession which, for the time being, remains the only "reform" – the Wahhabism displays with the same nonchalance with which they deny their own deeds when they did not match the initial calculations. With such a continuity, the "Khashoggi autumn" will be followed quietly by other inertial seasons as long as both the common Saudis and the "geostrategic allies" on the geopolitical globe will continue to accept silence, deafness and blindness learned from our anthropoid relatives.

III. Beyond JK journalist : the acerbic confrontation between two Sunni regional powers: Erdogans neo-Ottomanism and MBS's Wahhabism

Until recently, namely until the figure of speech called the "Arab spring", the context of the centuries-old sectarian conflict between the Muslim Sunnism and Shiism was dominated, oriented and designated undeniably by the Sunni Egypt and its religious symbols and institutions led by the famous University Al-Azhar in Cairo. As soon as Anwar El-Sadat visited Israel, in 1977, followed by the conclusion of the first peace treaty between Jews and Arabs at Camp David, in 1979, the Muslim Sunni world became multipolar and pluralist in what concern the violent manner of manifestation of such pluralism. The chronicle of this violence and of the intra-Islamic sectarian war is well-known and we do not intend to linger on this issue.

The Khashoggi affair, generated by the atrocious assassination on the 2nd of October of a journalist exiled in America with the crime scene a diplomatic mission subject to the Vienna international convention, namely the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, is, since the beginning of this autumn, the epicenter not only of media specu-

lations reaching, many times, the apogee of fantasy, but especially an explosive load threatening with most reckless consequences and, on this background, one can speak without fear of exaggeration of a genuine and old war breaking out in the day light between the Sunni regional powers and among them, on the one hand, and the interests of the great extra-regional global actors, on the other hand. And the star actors of this scenario are Turkey, through the voice of president Recep Teyyip Erdogan, and the power edifice of the Saudi Wahhabism – both waging an acerbic war difficult to be hidden by diplomatic rhetorics – for the regional political, spiritual, sectarian, military, security and, why not, cultural supremacy to the extent that both Riyadh and Ankara are proclaiming themselves to be the ideal paradigms of the evolving way in the future of the Arab world and of the Islamic community. Whether a few months ago, Recep Teyyip Erdogan was in a defensive position in relation with Donald Trump's America, now the Turkish

leader seems to have raised to the conductor place of the current and future developments of the Middle East.

Khashoggi's death, about which the media circuit circulated the most phantasmagoria "news", including of surgical nature, triggered an open war between Turkey and Saudi Arabia which stake is seizing the regional leadership of the Muslim Sunnism and of the state and ideological paradigms both Ankara and Riyadh fiercely promote. And it is not the case to circumvent the reality that Recep Teyyip Erdogan has in view, as final objective, the equation and regime change in Riyadh, an aspiration for which Khashoggi's assassination represents a lead currency and the essence of the scenario concocted on the shores of the Golden Horn. And, to the same extent, on the arid foothills around the "two holy mosques" of Mekka and Medina.





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Economic Horizon

SAUDI ARABIA.

THE KINGDOM IS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGING...

Edith and Emilian M. DOBRESCU

The oil-based economy has long ceased promising a tempting economic growth. If in 2011 Saudi Arabia had an economic growth of 10%, with 671.2 billion dollars GDP, this growth has become increasingly reduced year after year, getting to an increase of only 1, 7% and a GDP of 644.9 billion US dollars in 2016. In 2017, the GDP got to 683.8 billion dollars, but the economists of the IMF predict a strong growth in 2018, up to 748 billion dollars.

The most developed economy in the Arab world, which has the second largest oil reserve in the world, is ranked first in the export of fossil fuels. Saudi Arabia has won the title of energy superpower and it will soon become the largest oil producer in the world in terms of renewable energy.

The kingdom is continuing its program of social and economic reform. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman aims to transform the economy based on fossil fuels into an economy based on technology and services, to lead a country that begins to give more rights to women and allow, if not even want, as many tourists in the country as possible¹.

The biggest producer of solar energy

The newest project announced by Saudi Arabia in cooperation with SoftBank is a solar power installation estimated at 200 billion dollars, which will produce a total capacity of 200 gigawatts of power.

Eliminating corruption in the Kingdom

In early November 2017, Saudi Arabia began the process of eliminating corruption, targeting some of the richest and most influential men in the country. All bookings made at the Ritz Hotel were canceled and travel agencies were told that the building was reserved for government use. Among the "guests" of the hotel were billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, 10 other princes, four ministers and several dozens of officials and businessmen. In November 2017, the Ritz-Carlton became the prison used by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who is a successor of his father, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud.

The new Saudi leader previously served as Minister of Defense from the age of 29 to the age of 31. His ambitions can only be surpassed by the dependence of the Saudi economy on the "black gold", considering that Saudi Arabia is a state with strong economic roots in the oil industry. However, the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia has put up 45 billion dollars in the creation of the Vision Fund, initiated by SoftBank. The Vision Fund, which raised over 100 billion dollars, aims to invest mainly in start-ups and large projects in the renewable energy sector.

The emancipation of women

One of the social reforms that reflect the impact of global ideological trends in the region is that women have the right to drive cars. The announcement came following a royal decree signed in September 2017: more women cam-



1. The following ideas are mostly taken and adapted from the article of Alex Ciutacu, *Saudiții și petrolul – un capitol încheiat?*, (*The Saudis and Oil – A Closed Chapter?*), in *Ziarul Financiar*, 57 July 2018

paid and demonstrated for the right to drive, but most were arrested for defying the ban. This development tries to give women a greater role in the economy, given that only 22% of women are active in the economy. This strategy of the Saudi Crown Prince is called "Vision 2030" and it aims at raising the percentage to 30%.

In addition, women will be allowed on stadiums for sporting events. Access will be allowed on the stadiums in major cities. The General Authority for Sport, the body ruling in sports, announced in October 2017 the change: until then, Saudi men and women have been separated in public places, but now they can sit together at cultural and sport events. Salman Al-Ansari, Chairman of the Saudi-American Public Relations Committee said that "the most notable reforms will be related to women rights. In fact, I would not be surprised at all if we see a woman appointed to the position of a minister".

Listing "Aramco"

"Aramco" is the largest oil company in the world with oil reserves of about 265 billion barrels, representing 15% of the world oil reserves. The Saudi authorities intended to list 5% of "Aramco" and the offer was expected to generate 100 billion dollars. According to authorities, this listing represents a focal point in the government's plan to transform the Saudi economy by attracting foreign investment and implementing diversification.

The Saudi officials have repeatedly said that they wanted to sell a stake in Aramco by the end of 2018². If this happens, the sale will be the largest ever stock market listing. Officials have said they wanted to list Aramco at about 2 trillion dollars, if markets agree, and sell 5% of the company, which would be 100 billion dollars.

In January 2018, the executive director of "Aramco", Amin Nasser, said that the initial public offer of "Aramco", a group owned by the state, is planned for the second half of 2018, but the government has not yet decided what international stock exchange will be listing it. Nasser

said at that time: "The company is ready to be listed in 2018, when the decision on the stock exchange listing it will be made. We want to establish if there would be a listing on another market than the Saudi one, at Tadawul. There is a committee that examines this and the company is ready to implement the decision whenever it will be made." According to the foreign media, the stock markets under consideration are London, New York and Hong Kong.

"Aramco" plans to buy a controlling stake in the manufacturer of petrochemicals "Saudi Basic Industries" (SABIC) and it is likely to take over the entire share of 70% owned by the Sovereign Fund of Saudi Arabia. According to sources, the original intention of "Aramco" is to buy the whole package owned by the Public Investment Fund, but if it fails to do so, it will take over a package of more than 50% of SABIC, becoming the majority stockholder. SABIC, a company listed in Riyadh, is the fourth largest producer of petrochemicals in the world and has a market capitalization of 385.2 billion riyals (103 billion dollars).

"The decision to cancel the initial public offer was made some time ago, but no one can reveal it yet, though the company's statements will gradually move in this direction. First there will be an announcement about a postponement, then about the cancellation", said a source close to the Saudi listing plan. At one point, the Saudi Minister of Energy, Khalid al-Falih, denied that the initial public offer of "Aramco" would be canceled. Khalid al-Falih said: "The government remains committed to the initial public offer of Aramco, under the circumstances and at the time chosen by the Government". He added that the Saudi authorities have taken steps to prepare the listing and that the timing will depend on factors such as the favorable market conditions and a planned downstream acquisition (distribution of oil) in the coming months.

The mega-cities of the future

At the end of October 2017, Prince Mohammed

2. Alina Vasiescu, *Listarea "Aramco" anulată, (The Listing of Aramco Cancelled)* in Bursa, 68 August 2018



bin Salman announced his intention to build an entirely new city called NEOM, on the northern coast of the country³. The city will operate independently of “the existing governmental framework”, on an area of 25.9 thousand square km, near the Red Sea. The project will be supported by over 500 billion dollars, money coming from the Saudi government, the sovereign fund, but also from local and international investors. “The city of NEOM will be built from scratch, on green fields and it will have the unique opportunity of being different from all the other places that have been built and developed over hundreds of years” said Mohammed bin Salman.

The NEOM project supporters say that this is a bold initiative to transform the country: one of the strongest initiatives in the current project is that it would fully operate on renewable energies. According to Yahoo Finance, NEOM will be 33 times bigger than New York, the world's first independent area which will cover territories of three Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Jordan). The city will be focused on the energy industry and biotechnology: “All the services in the city will be fully automated, with the aim of transforming NEOM into the most efficient destination in the world” announced the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia.

The first part of the city could be ready in 2025. There will be a lot of emphasis on technology, many drones and high-speed wireless free inter-

net. According to the Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund, “all services in the city will be fully automated, with the aim of transforming NEOM into the most efficient destination in the world”. The project will be supported with funds of over 500 billion dollars from the Saudi government, the sovereign fund, local and international investors. NEOM will be focused on energy, biotechnology, water, food and entertainment. NEOM will run 100% on renewable energy. NEOM will become – in about 10 years - one of the largest cities in the world that operates without fossil fuel⁴.

Another mega-city projected by the Saudis for their new economic model is KAEC (King Abdullah Economic City), the first city listed on the stock exchange in the world. “We are now in the business of building cities” said Fahd of Rasheed, Managing Executive Director of KAEC, at the World Economic Forum in Davos this year. “We are talking about moving towards a service-based economy, post-oil based, and I think these mega-cities will be the next hot spot of the Saudi economy”.

KAEC is part of the plan to reform the external trade relations of Saudi Arabia, being one of the projects that were initiated by the father of the new ruler of the country, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who founded this city in 2006. CNBC writes that according to estimations, Saudi Arabia's population is expected to double by 2050 and the economy is expected to get to 1.5 billion dollars. Thus, the officials believe that the Red Sea region will become one of the most important regions in the world for the global economy.

The fallen economic model

Energy Minister Khalid al Falih said that the Kingdom was “transformed” in economic terms, referring to the ambitions of Crown Prince to

3. Taken from http://www.mediafax.ro/life-inedit/arabia-saudita-va-construi-un-mega-oras-de-33-de-ori-mai-mare-ca-new-yorkul-cat-costa-neom-si-cu-ce-vrea-sa-cucereasca-lumea-16788472?utm_source=projectagora&utm_medium=contentdiscovery_gandul, posted on 26 November 2017, retrieved on 3 November 2017, at 6:46

4. The biggest city of this type in the US is Burlington, Vermont, which operates 100% on renewable energy. There are cities in Island and Norway that are also very close to operating care completely on renewable energy.

distance himself from oil: "Our message to investors is that the Kingdom has transformed and we are serious about the change. We must not only be prepared for the future, but we must build the future through initiatives that go beyond our traditional strengths - oil and gas - and also by building new industries, factories with advanced production processes, tourism and, at the same time, social reforms. These are the new coordinates".

By the end of 2018, life in Saudi Arabia will be very different. First, the natural gas prices will rise: state-owned Aramco, the largest oil producer in the world, has increased the pump prices by 127% since 1 January 2018. Prices are up to 2 US dollars per gallon. This initiative will reduce consumption and will enable the transition to a non-oil economy. The Saudi citizens now pay more for consumer goods and services, after the Kingdom has implemented a new tax of 5% on them.

The society of pleasure

Saudi Arabia is investing 64 billion dollars in the entertainment industry in the period 2018-2027, as told by Ahmad bin Aqeel al-Khatib⁵, the Supervisor for General Entertainment, who said that the amount would be provided by the government and private sources (5,000 events are scheduled to run in 2018). "We are building the infrastructure", Khatib added, noting that the foundation stone for an opera hall has already been laid. He also added: "You will see a real change in the sector by 2020".

One of the steps towards ideological liberalization is the fact that cinemas are back and are open to the public. After 35 years of prohibition, the government began issuing licenses for commercial cinemas. Adam Aron, CEO of AMC, one of the largest US cinema chains, believes that the film

industry in the Kingdom can generate over one billion dollars.

Tourism – a new development axis

Saudi Arabia plans to convert hundreds of kilometers of the virgin coast of the Red Sea into a global tourist destination, aiming for international standards in the project named the Red Sea. The new tourist resort will be built starting in 2019 and would be a semi-autonomous region, governed by independent laws and regulations within a sophisticated regulatory framework managed by a private committee. The 34,000 square kilometers project (larger than the surface of Belgium – our note) will be located between the existing cities Umluj and Al Wajh and it will include at least 50 islands, beaches and a number of dormant volcanoes. In terms of its economic impact, the project will generate 35,000 jobs.

Prince Sultan bin Salman, who heads the Tourism Commission in Saudi Arabia, announced that the Kingdom will issue the first visas for tourists in 2018. So far, visas were granted to those who arrived in the Kingdom on business or on religious interest. The Kingdom proves that it relies on tourism, aiming both by its mega-cities and the resorts that it builds as well as by its legislation to reach 30 million visitors annually by 2030, from 18 million visitors in 2016.



5. Taken from <http://www.businessmagazin.ro/actualitate/arabia-saudita-va-investi-64-de-miliarde-de-dolari-in-industria-de-divertisment-17028695>, posted on 22 February 2018, retrieved on 23 February 2018, at 6:42

The Secret Services of the 21st Century and Security Issues

Dr. Octavian DUMITRESCU

AMPLE REFORMS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

The concern and ambition of China's political leadership to achieve an ever higher level of development is recognized all over the world and the current global players closely follow the developments taking place in all areas of the social and economic life, including security and national defense. The US is giving special attention to China since the two states are competing for the first place in various domains, including the military one. This competition seems fierce because China wants to build a modern military establishment with modern, efficient and flexible combat capabilities, adaptable to a wide variety of combat conditions that can create significant geopolitical and geostrategic advantages, including political ones. According to the index **Global Firepower** (GFP) for 2018, China is ranked third after the US and Russia on the combat capabilities with 2,693 million troops - of which 2.183 million active troops and 510,000 reservists, 3,035 aircraft, 7,716 tanks, 9,000 armored combat vehicles, 714 naval assets - of which 1 aircraft carrier, 50 frigates, 29 destroyers and 73 submarines. According to the same source, China's 2018 defense budget for the maintenance and training of this army is 151 billion US dollars.

The overall aim of the Chinese military and political leaders' actions is to reach a higher combat capability level than the current one, allowing China to implement global interests around the world, exceeding its current limits. In the context of this competition, the US Defense Department pays adequate attention to the development of the Chinese military, materialized in an annual report of the Office of Secretary of Defense to the US Congress on the **Military and Security Developments Involving People's Re-**

public of China in 2018. Some of the data and information in this report served as a source for this article.

At present, **China's People's Liberation Army** (PLA) subordinates, at the highest level, to the **Central Military Commission**, headed by a Chairman - the Chinese President Xi Jinping - supported by two vice-chairmen and four members. Strategic direction is provided by **six departments** - the Joint Staff Department, Political Work Department, the Logistics Support Department, the Equipment Development Department, the Training and Administration Department and the National Defense Mobilization Department. Also, at the same level of command, China has **three commissions** - the Discipline Inspection Commission, the Politics and Law Commission and the Science and Technology Commission, and **five offices** - Administration, Audit, International Military Cooperation, Reform and Organization and Strategic Planning. These strategic leadership structures constitute the **Ministry of National Defense** of the People's Republic of China. Generically, the leadership structures and the proper armed forces constitute People's Republic of China's **People's Liberation Army** (PLA).

China's armed forces are currently subordinated, in terms of territory, to **five theaters**: Eastern, Southern, Western, Northern and Center, being organized in **six services and support forces**: Army, Navy, Air Force, Rocket Force, Strategic Support, Joint Logistics Support. There are also the **military schools**: the Academy of Military Science, the National Defense University, the National Defense of Defense Technology and the **paramilitary forces**: People's Armed Police, China's Coast Guard and the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (they can be either under civilian or PLA command). The combat essence of the PLA resides in the services and sup-

port forces since they include most of the forces and means of combat. As such, this article will briefly present the current situation of the combat capabilities and their short-terms and medium-term prospects as evidenced by the plans to modernize and develop the Chinese armed forces included in the US Department of Defense report.

CURRENT CAPABILITIES OF CHINA'S PLA

The PLA Army has been going through the most radical reform since 2017 by turning *the division and regiment structures into brigades and battalions*. 5 of its 18 group armies have been dissolved and most of the forces have been restructured into combined arms brigades, the divisions and regiments have been realigned under corps-level bases, while the Marine Corps has been tripled. As such, the Chinese Army, the largest standing force in the world, undertook a massive transformation of operational and tactical units in order to create a more mobile, modular, lethal ground force, capable of being the core of joint operations and able to meet the directive of President Xi Jinping to "*fight and win wars*". The units subordinated to the 57 armies consist almost entirely of combined arms brigades, artillery brigades, an air defense brigade, a special operations brigade, an army aviation brigade, an engineer and chemical defense brigade and a service support brigade. The subordinate service support brigades provide group armies an integrated ability to set a command network and organize battlefield transportation and equipment repair for the tactical units. The modernization of the Chinese brigades and battalions also included placing non-commissioned officers in positions traditionally held by officers and including into this echelons the necessary combat capabilities that would provide the projection of forces, firepower and reconnaissance, thus enhancing the independence, mobility and efficiency of these combat capabilities on the battlefield.

The PLA Navy is the region's largest navy with more than 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious and patrol craft. The Chinese NAVY

has rapidly replaced the single-purpose platforms with multi-role ships, equipped with advanced anti-ship, anti-air and anti-submarine weapons and sensors. The objective of the Chinese military and political leaders is to expand distances from the Chinese mainland where the navy can carry out operational missions by using long-range, multiple-mission and robust defense platforms that would enhance the sustainability level.

One of the most significant measures was to change the structure of the PLA Navy Marine Corps: it previously had, in 2017, 2 brigades, approximately 10,000 personnel and was limited in geography and mission. By 2020, it will consist of 7 brigades, may have more than 30,000 personnel and will expand its mission to include expeditionary operations on foreign soil. The Corps will include an aviation brigade that will provide an organic helicopter transport and attack capability, increasing its amphibious and expeditionary warfare capabilities.

The modernization of China's submarine force – which currently operates 4 nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines, 5 nuclear-powered attack submarines and 47 diesel-powered attack submarines – will significantly increase the number of submarines - between 69 and 78 - by 2020. After having purchased 12 Russian KILOS submarines in mid-90s, China managed to construct 10 nuclear submarines equipped with ballistic missiles in 15 years, so that it acquired maritime deterrence capability.

The surface ships of the PLAN are also undergoing a serious reconstruction process. China produces new guided-missile frigates which would provide a significant upgrade to the air-defense, anti-ship and anti-submarine capabilities that will provide a significant upgrade of the air defense, anti-ship and anti-submarine capabilities, allowing the PLA Navy to expand operations six times more than the reduced range of the current air defense systems. For example, the new guided-missile cruisers have multi-purpose vertical launch systems capable of launching anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles and anti-submarine missiles. China is also construct-

ing a larger cruiser equipped with 055 Type guided-missiles, guided-missile frigates (it has already built a fleet of 24 such ships) and anti-submarine corvettes to be used in shore battles, so as to replace the current frigates and patrol ships and numerous other means in the navy.

The amphibious warfare ships are extremely important for the Chinese Navy since they provide flexible capabilities in operations at a distance. For example, the amphibious transport docks can carry several ships and at least four helicopters. Another significant achievement of the Chinese Navy refers to the first *aircraft carrier* built in 2017 and named *Liaoning*. It already carries a fighter (J-15) and it has already completed its second training exercise and a visit to Hong Kong. The carrier has also completed its first night flight exercise. Experts say that the Chinese carrier is less capable than the US carriers due to the lack of necessary catapult for the aircraft when taking off and the limited number of flights available to the fighters. China may have started to build a new carrier in 2018, which would have solved all these deficiencies.

PLA Air Force and PLA Navy Aviation represent the largest air force in the region, being the third largest in the world, with more than 2,700 total aircraft (not including unmanned aircraft) and 2,000 combat aircraft (including fighters, strategic and tactical bombers, multi-mission tactical aircraft), as mentioned in the report of the US Department of Defense (the numbers differ from the Global Firepower index due to the different criteria). The reforms of the Air Force aimed at the combat structures as well, so that six new air bases have been built and the previous regiments have been transformed into brigades subordinated to the new air bases. Similar restructuring has been applied to the PLA Navy Aviation. Moreover, the Chinese Air Forces have redeployed and re-subordinated certain units to the theatre headquarters and have reorganized the 15th Airborne Corps, being officially assigned as the PLA Airborne Corps.

China continues to acquire fourth generation aircraft (at present being about 600), which will become a majority in the following years as well

as fifth generation J-20 and FC-31 fighters and other types of aircraft of the same generation or even more advanced ones. China's *bomber fleet* is an important component of the PLA, including different models of the H-6 BADGER bomber, the newest being H-6K with an extended range of action and a more efficient engine. These bombers can carry 6 cruise missiles for land attack, which gives the PLA the possibility to carry out high-precision air-to-land attacks. The H-6G bomber can carry four anti-ship missile pylons to support maritime missions.

China's *special mission aircraft*, H-6 and H-6U as well as a small number of IL-78 MIDAS purchased from Ukraine, allow the PLA Air Forces to conduct aerial refueling operations of some of the indigenous fighters, thus increasing their operational range. This service also includes airborne early warning and control aircraft, able to detect, track and target threats in varying conditions, in larger volumes and at greater distances. The Chinese industry is making significant progress in this domain by delivering a large transport aircraft, Y-20 and the largest seaplane, AG-600, which will contribute to China's extension of air transport capabilities.

China gives a lot of attention to the *Unmanned Aerial Vehicles* –UAVs, whose development, production and implementation continues to grow via the invisible, near-space and long-range vehicles destined to reconnaissance and the unmanned fighters equipped with similar characteristics.

China's *air defense and missile defense* possesses one of the largest forces of advanced long-range surface-to-air missile systems in the world. This force consists of a combination of S-300PMU1 missile battalions, including 2 Russian-sourced ones, with CSA-9 missile battalions produced in China, allowing Russia to enhance its air defense distance. On the other hand, China is domestically developing HQ-19 missiles in order to provide bases for a defense capability against ballistic missiles.

The PLA Rocket Forces include China's land-based nuclear and conventional missiles and are responsible for their training, equipment and

Some of China's mis-siles	Type	Range
CSS-6	Short-range ballistic missile	725 - 850 km
CSS-7	Short-range ballistic missile	300 - 600 km
CSS-11	Short-range ballistic missile	Over 700 km
CSS-5	Medium-range ballistic missile	
CSS-5 Mod 5	Anti-ship ballistic missile	1,500 km
DF-26	Intermediate-range ballistic missile	4,000 km
CJ-10	Ground-launched ballistic missile	
CSS-4, Mod 2 (DF-5A)	Silo-based intercontinental ballistic missile	
CSS-10, Mod 1 and 2 (DF-31 and 31A)	Solid-fueled, road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles	11,200 km

operation. The long-term modernization plans of these forces aim at *enhancing China's strategic deterrence capability*. Several new variants of missiles have been developed and tested in 2017 as well as some methods to counter ballistic missile defense. China's strategic missile arsenal includes a wide variety of models, from the short-range ballistic missiles to the intercontinental ballistic missiles that can attack targets located 11,000 kilometers away, which means that there is a possibility of targeting objectives on the US territory or in the seas and oceans neighboring China. This arsenal includes silo-based missiles and mobile delivery systems, as well as fixed and mobile land-based launching installations. Some examples are provided in the table below. According to the US Department of State Report, China has 75-100 intercontinental ballistic missiles.

China is developing and producing new models of ballistic missiles and is upgrading the existing models. China presented at the parade organized on the 90th anniversary of the PLA the DF-26 intermediate-range ballistic missile, which can conduct conventional and nuclear precision strikes against land and naval targets in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, as well as in the South China Sea. On this occasion, China presented the DF-31 AG intercontinental ballistic missile, an

upgraded version of the previous DF-31A, with a more mobile and secure launching installation, being one of the missiles that can target the US territory.

PLA Strategic Support Forces represent a category of forces that guide the PLA's space, cyber and electronic warfare missions. During the 2017 parade mentioned above, an electronic reconnaissance formation was presented, being meant to provide mobile, integrated, flexible and various informational capabilities, which can considerably enhance the capacity of control over the battlefield/space. China rapidly continues to develop and upgrade its space capabilities in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) by launching communication and research satellites. In 2017, China launched 18 space launch vehicles (SLV), though two of them have been unsuccessful, which launched 31 small satellites on orbit for communication, navigation, ISR and testing. In 2017, China launched its first space refueling installation, testing the necessary technology for the long-term maintenance and operation of *a future Chinese space station* that could be launched on orbit in 2019. The Chinese specialists focus on developing counter-space capabilities like directed-energy weapons and satellite-jammers or anti-satellite missile systems (already tested in 2014), which are be-



ing developed in numerous science projects in various schools and academies.

The PLA cyber capabilities achieved in recent years indicate the importance that China gives to cyber space as a new domain in national security. According to the new concepts like space deterrence, the PLA's mission at peace is to defend the electromagnetic space and the cyber-space. Chinese experts consider that China is prepared to use cyber operations in case of an augmented conflict, saying that cyber operations represent a cheaper deterrent. The American experts consider, as mentioned in the US Department of State Report, that the creation of the Strategic Support Forces is the first step in the process of creating a cyber force that would create efficiency by combining cyber research, attack and defense in a single organization.

OBJECTIVES AND TENDENCIES IN THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA'S PLA

China's military modernization program is comprehensive and aims at transforming the PLA into a "world class" military establishment by 2049. This program includes improving the military capabilities so that they would provide nuclear deterrence, conduct anti-access and area denial operations (the so called A2/AA concept) and power projection operations beyond the first line of islands in the proximity of the Chinese territory, in other regions and in particular in the Pacific Ocean. At the same time, China will continue to develop capabilities for cyber operations, space operations and electronic warfare, as the US Department of State Report indicated. We will briefly present several of the **capabilities**

necessary for the achievement of a world-class army that China aims at.

1. PLA capabilities necessary for the implementation of the A2/AD concept (*anti-access and area denial operations*). China wants to develop capabilities to dissuade, deter or, if ordered, to fight against a third-party intervention during a large-scale theatre campaign. The Report mentioned above brings into the attention of military experts several categories of capabilities by which China aims at achieving its objectives, including:

a. Long-range precision strikes. China intends to acquire the ability to target objectives in the West Pacific, as proven by the flights conducted in this area by the Chinese bombers H-6K, able to use DF-26 missiles and conduct air precision strikes, either conventional or nuclear, against terrestrial targets. In addition, the logistical means and the forces projection means of the PLA are extending the possibility of striking regional air bases, logistic and port facilities, communications and other ground-based infrastructure.

b. Ballistic missile defense. In this domain, China is developing HQ-19 exo- and endo-atmospheric interceptors, based on kinetic energy, in order to have defense capabilities against the medium-range missiles (3,000 km), ground and sea-based, as well as JY-27A, JL-1A radars designed to address with the ballistic missiles higher precision. Moreover, China has the possibility of using the tactical surface-to-air missiles SA-20PMU and S-400 in its anti-missile defense, since they have the capacity of intercepting ballistic missiles.

c. Surface and undersea operations. China continues to build a variety of offensive and defensive capabilities that could allow the PLA to achieve sea control within the first line of islands, the Kuril Islands to the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and South China Sea, in particular by projecting limited combat power at great distances – the anti-ship ballistic missiles and the torpedoes launched from CSS-5 submarines (1,500km), usually destined to attack carriers, and a variant of the DF-26 anti-ship intermedi-

ate-range missile. At the same time, the PLA is making gradual progress to install undersea surveillance systems and obtain more information on the situation in this domain.

d. Information operations. The Chinese military experts say that the Chinese means of controlling the information spectrum in the modern battle space is an essential element, if not a fundamental prerequisite for the ability to counter a possible intervention and achieve information dominance, as said in the US department of Defense Report. China invests in advanced electronic warfare equipment and systems, in space combat weapons and in cyber operations, combining them with traditional forms of information control like propaganda, denial or opacity.

e. Space and space combat. China continues to enhance its military space capabilities, in spite of the public statements that it would be against the militarization of space. Space operations are assessed as a factor that consolidates the combat capabilities, even if the PLA doctrine does not stipulate them as a separate form of confrontation. China is making efforts to develop its C2 capabilities in joint operations, implement a surveillance, research and warning system in real time and it also increases the number and capacity of its space systems – communication and information satellites and the Beidou navigation system. The counter-space capabilities of the possible opponents include kinetic missiles, terrestrial lasers and space robots launched on orbit as well as new capabilities that could monitor objects all over the globe and in space.

f. Cyber operations. China hopes that by building powerful cyber capabilities, it could provide the protection of its cyber networks and can achieve cyber superiority, by means of offensive cyber operations that are to deter or degrade any cyber actions taken against China.

g. The Integrated Air Defense System (IADS). China has a solid integrated air defense system that integrates all systems specific to this field, covering its own territory and up to 300 nautical miles of its coast. It includes an extended net-

work of early warning radars, fighters and several types of surface-to-air missiles, plus radars and defense systems in the South China Sea, which extends the IADS capabilities. Moreover, China uses points of primary defense for the defense of its strategic targets against attacks conducted from air-mobile platforms, it increases the number of modern long-range surface-to-air missiles type CSA-9, S-300PMU and S-300PMU1 and two Russian ones in order to protect against aircraft and low-flying missiles. China will introduce the S-400 Triumph long-range surface-to-air missile system in a few years as well as more sophisticated radars, while using several long-range surveillance radars for air surveillance, including certain models that can support defense against ballistic missiles or other models that can detect invisible aircraft. China is also expected to introduce the KJ-2000 and KJ-500 systems, which would enhance the ability to counter the long-range strikes beyond the possibilities of the ground-based radars.

h. Air operations. By developing a fifth generation fighter force including J-20 and FC-31 fighters with high maneuverability, low observability, modern avionics and advanced technology sensors, China acquires enhanced warning capabilities and upgraded radars for tracking and targeting. The features of the air-to-air missile motors will be upgraded as well as the striking capabilities of the J-20, continuously increasing the capabilities of the bomber fleet by introducing the H-6K bomber (which can carry up to 6 CJ-20 high-precision air-launched ballistic missiles). The air-refueling capabilities will also increase with the use of the H-6 aircraft. Some of these advanced capabilities have already been used in the West Pacific and the South China Sea. In addition, there is also China's increased ability to use UAVs in combat, which can operate at a high altitude and have a long range of action, some even being invisible. China has successfully tested the AT-200, the first cargo UAV which can carry up to 1.5 tons, being also suitable for 200-meter improvised runways, and destined to provide logistic support to the combat forces.

2. China's conventional precision strikes



against possible enemies represent the second category of combat capabilities destined to transform the Chinese armed forces into a world class army. In order to conduct these strikes, the PLA could use:

a. Short-range ballistic missiles (744-1,000 km). China has about 1,200 such missiles and continues to upgrade the features of earlier generation missiles.

b. Medium-range ballistic missiles (5,444-3,000 km). China has approximately 200-300 such missiles to conduct strikes against the land and maritime targets beyond the first line of islands.

c. Intermediate-range ballistic missiles (7,444-5,000 km). China has introduced nuclear and conventional road-mobile missiles of this type, which increases capacities for near-precision strikes far from the first line of islands, at the same time introducing over-the-horizon radars, which can be used in conjunction with the reconnaissance satellites to locate targets at great distances from China, thereby supporting long-range precision strikes, including the employment of anti-ship ballistic missiles.

d. Land-attack cruise missiles. The PLA con-

tinues to field 200-300 air and ground-launched YJ-63, KD-88 and CJ-20 missiles for precision strikes as well as infrared electronic guidance capabilities with a 1,500 range of action

e. Anti-ship cruise missiles. China deploys a wide range of advanced YJ-63 missiles, mostly on ships and aircraft, the YJ-18 torpedo launcher, capable of a supersonic terminal sprint, installed on submarines, while also developing the YJ-12 anti-ship cruise missiles used by the H-6 bombers.

f. Ground-attack munitions. The PLA has a small number of tactical air-to-air missiles and satellite-guided capabilities, lasers, optical, electronic and infrared capabilities. China is also developing or adapting a series of small anti-ship missiles and guided bombs to the combat UAVs.

g. Anti-radiation weapons. Following some imports of UAVs and anti-radiation weapons from Israel and Russia in the 90s, China began in 2017 to integrate the YJ-91 model and the anti-radiation drone ASN-301 into its fighter-bomber force.

h. Artillery delivered high precision munitions. Long-range artillery missile systems are used for long-range precision strikes. For exam-

ple, the PHL-03 (the Chinese variant of the Russian-made multiple launcher) can launch 12 missiles at a distance of 150 km, and an advanced version of the combat load can use vertical penetration elements and fusion-sensor munitions.

3. PLA power projection. It is well known that China, respectively the PLA, has combat capabilities that allow it to address regional and global security objectives, as we have briefly presented in the previous pages. To this purpose, China is constantly improving capabilities in all categories of forces; it is implementing modern strategic and tactical concepts as well as advanced intelligence, surveillance and research technologies and efficient cyber systems, based on national research and industrial resources. There are also significant reforms both in terms of modernizing the structures of the PLA and in terms of upgrading their weapons and equipment.

The PLA Navy power projection provides the ability to operate beyond East Asia and the Indian Ocean as well as in the Pacific Ocean, while the latest naval platforms and the carrier, along with the planned follow-on carriers, once operational, will extend air defense coverage beyond the range of coastal and ship-based missile systems. Two new ships, which are under construction, will provide support for the long-distance carrier, including in missions other than war. The construction of these platforms will lead to the creation of new units in this service, while the RENHAI cruiser (10,000 tons) will carry an array of anti-ship cruise missiles and long range surface-to-air missiles and it will probably be able to launch anti-ship missiles and cruise missiles for the ground attacks. This cruiser will be the premier carrier escort in blue-waters operations.

At the same time, China continues to build multiple new large ships for force projection operations, including amphibious transport docks, large logistical support ships, specialized auxiliary ships such as high-capacity intelligence collection ships.

The PLA Air Force and PLA Navy Aviation

force projection capabilities will be able to conduct attacks, air and missile defense, strategic mobility operations and early warning and reconnaissance missions, having an essential role in the A2/AD. The Chinese military and political leaders have called the Air Force to become a truly strategic force, able to project power at long distances and support the Chinese national interests wherever they extend. To this end, China is producing a new generation of long-distance bombers of fifth generation (a range of action of 8,500 km), able to use both conventional and nuclear weapons. At the same time, China is also building new runways and hangars in the South China Sea; it has completed the naval base in Djibouti and continues to produce the transport aircraft Y-20, which can perform additional missions of aerial refueling and early warning and control missions. China is also developing the large amphibious seaplane AG-600 (orders for 17 such seaplanes have already been placed), which has the ability to take off from the sea and can travel to 4,500 kilometers in order to support operations at a far distance from the mainland.

PLA Rocket Force provides, by excellence, the projection of force, considering the nature of this type of armament that does not require closeness to the targets. Precision strikes against targets located at a distance can be conducted with the ballistic and cruise missiles of the PLA, in all categories of forces. The table on this article shows the ranges of some of the PLA missiles. We need to mention that a large part of these means can be placed on large platforms (carriers, ships, UAVs) and thus brought closer to targets so that the strike precision would be enhanced and the flight time would be reduced as much as possible, at the same time impeding their identification and interception.

We must say that alongside the PLA armed forces presented above, there are also **civilian and paramilitary maritime capabilities**, which significantly contribute to China's maritime capabilities. They are either involved in the support of the specialized military forces, or they contribute to the military operations. The report of the US Department of Defense indi-



cates that China's Coast Guard and the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia have a significant contribution to the PLA maritime operations. **China's Coast Guard** has been rapidly extending and modernizing and it currently operates 130 patrol ships (over 1,000 tons), equipped with helicopter facilities and 30-76mm cannons. The **People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia** is a component of the national militia and a reserve force for PLA. It has patrol ships that conduct surveillance, logistical, fishing protection and search and rescue missions.

4. Advancements in the informatized military establishment. According to the report of the US Department of State, the PLA would become a system of systems able to collect, transmit, process and use the necessary intelligence needed in conducting combined military operations on land, at sea and in the air, in the extra-terrestrial and cyber space, as well as in an electromagnetic field in case of a possible conflict. We can say that at the request of China's political leadership, China's People Liberation Army must become a complete, perfect, efficient and ultra-visible military organization. This objective is to be achieved with the **modernization of the command, control, communications and intelligence systems (C4I)**, the use of **electronic warfare** and **cyber war**. In this context, we also underline the considerable resources allocated by China to maintain and modernize its

armed forces, armament and equipment.

5. Nuclear deterrence. China has a system able to use nuclear weapons, a triad including **the Rocket Forces, the Naval Forces and the Air Forces of People's Liberation Army**, which can resist a first nuclear strike and respond with sufficient force. The numerous components of the Chinese armed forces, many of whom have been presented above, have the ability of using both conventional and nuclear munitions, which enhances China's credible deterring capacity. At the same time, **China says that it maintains its policy of not using nuclear weapons**, but it maintains its nuclear capabilities that would provide corresponding responsiveness in case of an attack.

China currently possesses an arsenal of approximately 75-100 intercontinental land-based ballistic missiles (in silos, road-mobile). China also has maritime platforms capable of implementing nuclear deterrence due to the duality of much of their weaponry, which can be used both for conventional and nuclear strikes. The ballistic missile submarines are also a modern category of nuclear weapons, highly efficient and precise, which contributes too at nuclear deterrence.

6. PLA underground facilities. China continues to implement an ample and technologically advanced underground facility program. There are thousands such facilities that provide en-

hanced protection to the armed forces. These facilities include C2, logistic, missile and naval forces and they increase in number year by year. China also modernizes the existing facilities in view of increasing efficiency and extending the range of action.

All the PLA reform and modernization measures are supported by ***China's significant military expenditure***, which was more than 190 billion US dollars in 2017. It is difficult to accurately calculate these budgets due to a poor transparency of the issue. According to Jane's Defense Budgets, China's defense budget is expected to get to 240 billion US dollars by 2021. China's gross domestic product might slow down the increase from 6.8% in 2017 to 3% in 2028, which will only reduce the speed in China's defense budget, so that it could exceed 240 billion US dollars by 2028, being the highest military budget in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

In conclusion, China is forecasting an ample reform and modernization process of its People's Liberation Army (PLA), which will ultimately transform these armed forces into an efficient military establishment, one of the strongest in the world and definitely the most

powerful in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean region. Due to this process, China can become the second security global player in the world, after the US. The recent Russian-Chinese military exercises can contribute to the extension of the PLA strategic and military experience, but they cannot decisively contribute to a change in a global ranking of the military powers, considering the traditional, cultural (educational) and technological differences between the two forces, Russia and China, even if the weapons and equipment are rather similar in terms of generation. Moreover, in this case, Russia would be ranked third in the world and that would be unacceptable for it.

What is essential in the evolution of the PLA is the domestic effort and developments, the will of the political decision-makers to allocate sufficient funds for the defense budgets and, of course, the mobilization and devotion of the Chinese military personnel, all of whom are more visible than in many other countries. China's balanced foreign policy is an important factor for the country's future development as a global security player.





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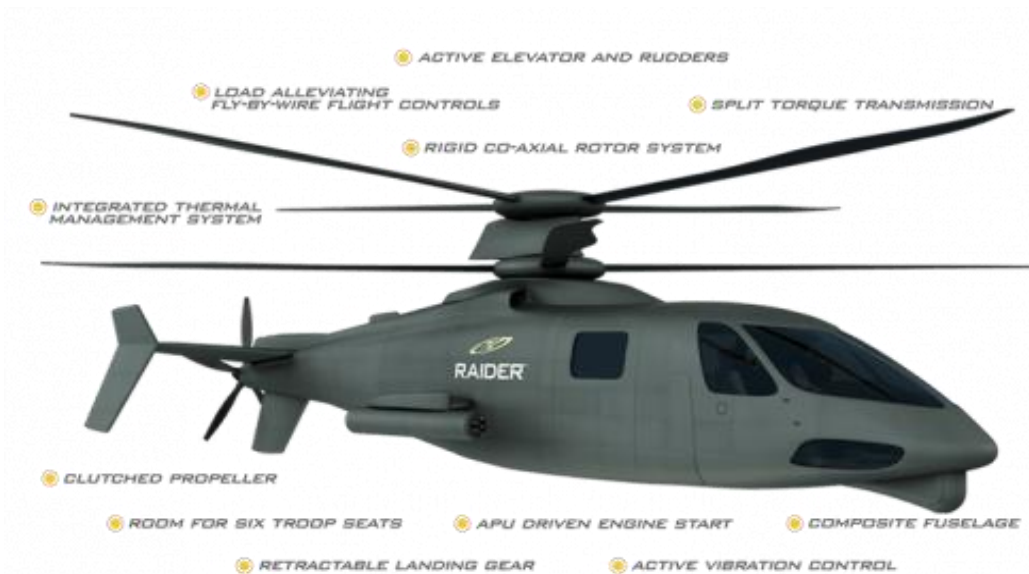
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Military Technology and Equipments, New Weapon Devices

Sikorsky S-97 Raider



Sikorsky S-97 Raider is a high-speed scout and attack compound helicopter under development by Sikorsky Aircraft. The program was launched on 20 October 2010 and the S-97 maiden flight took place on 22 May 2015.

The first Sikorsky attempt was a fast helicopter with stiff coaxial rotors that flew in the 70s, but the program was cancelled. The following attempt was named Sikorsky X2.

Two prototypes have been built for the tests: one for flight testing and the second as demonstrator. The flight prototype was completed and flew a complete test on 22 May 2015, while the second was completed and presented to the public in October 2015. The tests continued and evidenced a difficult landing on 3 August 2017.

The S-97 is propelled by a compound of two stiff coaxial rotors and a variable-pitch pusher propeller. This type of rotor is efficient when hovering and at low-speed handling, being relieved of rotor propulsion and providing improved maneuverability since the rotors can tilt either together or differently and because of the differential torque of the upper and lower rotors, which allow turning maneuvers, as com-

pared to classic helicopters where such maneuvers are possible with the anti-torque rotor and the propelling rotor at high speed. The S-97 has a single 3,000 HP engine and the selection of the

engine is related to the objective of setting the cost of a flight hour at 1,400 dollars and the cost of one aircraft at 15 million dollars. This means that neither the avionics nor the weapons system will be very complex.

Specifications:

- low acoustic signature;
- exceptional hover capability;
- high cruise speed;
- high agility, acceleration, deceleration and maneuverability, superior to previous classical models;
- internal auxiliary fuel tank for extended range;
- aerial refueling capability;
- six seat cabin suitable for six troops equipped for combat alongside the two pilots;
- high lift capability and speed due to the two coaxial rotors;
- Length: 11 m; Maximum weight: 4,990 kg; Rotor diameter: 10 m; Propeller diameter 2.1 m; Cruise speed: 407 km/h; Maximum speed: 444 km/h; Range: 308 km, with auxiliary tank 570 km; Service ceiling: 3,000 m; Armament: 30 mm gun with 500 rounds or STAR/80L rockets or other anti-tank versions.

Presented by Cornel VAID

Stryker Dragoon Armored Vehicle



The Stryker Armored Vehicle entered the American service as part of the “Objective Force” plan issued in October 1999, which would have the army adopt a new, more flexible doctrine that would allow it to deploy quickly in any part of the world and be equipped for a variety of operations. It has been considered an “interim armored vehicle”, destined to fill the capability gap between the M2 Bradley and the lightly armed Humvee. In November 2000, General Motors – General Dynamics have received the 8 billion dollars contract to produce 2,131 vehicles of a variant of the Canadian LAV III. On 27 February 2002, the vehicle was renamed Stryker, after two American servicemen who posthumously received the Medal of Honor: Stuart S. Stryker and Robert F. Stryker.

In November 2003, 311 Stryker vehicles were deployed in Iraq where they had some limited success, since they were not designed as combat vehicles against the insurgents. The slat armor provided protection against the reactive grenades, but it added 5,000 kg to the weight of the vehicle, which reduced its mobility and excluded the possibility of transporting it by C-130.

The vehicle was further upgraded with a more robust suspension, a v-shaped structure for bet-

ter protection of the personnel against IEDs, additional armor for the sides, blast-absorbing mines resistant seating, wider tires, a better fire control capability allowing it to fire on the go.

After the Afghanistan experience, the v-shaped design was doubled and the driver's seat was extended since there was difficulty releasing the seat to extract the driver.

By August 2012, 4,187 Stryker vehicles were included in the fleet with 10

flat-bottom variants and 7 v-shaped hull designs.

A program for technical upgrades has also been implemented, with a more powerful engine – 450 HP, which replaced the old 350 HP engine, a new in-vehicle network to improve data and video sharing.

The new configuration of the vehicle, named Dragoon after the 2nd Cavalry Regiment permanently stationed in Germany, will have to fight combat vehicles equipped with heavy weapons in the context of the enemy's air supremacy and the massive use of drones. Therefore, the Stryker vehicles have been further upgraded: the 12.7 caliber machine gun was replaced with the Kongsberg MCT-30 weapons system, a remote controlled turret equipped with a 30 mm gun and a 7.62 mm coaxial machine gun, tubes for Stinger or Longbow Hellfire missiles, a multi-mission hemispheric radar, a tracking system of friendly vehicles, periscopes for the driver and commander, night/day thermal imaging devices so that the commander has almost 360-degree field of vision and the driver a little more than 90 degrees.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Leading Articles, Studies and New Analyses

The Pentagon's Brain**An Uncensored History of DARPA, the America's Top-Secret Military Research Agency****Author: Annie JACOBSEN****Publishing House: Litera, Bucharest - 2018**

Annie Jacobsen is the author of three highly exciting books, including the bestseller „Area 51” in 2011, about the most secret US military base; „Operation Paperclip” in 2014, about the secret program that brought Nazi scientists in the US and the current volume. The author was editor of the Los Angeles Times Magazine and she is a graduate of the Princeton University. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and two sons.

In order to write the fascinating story of the most secret, powerful and controversial military research agency, Annie Jacobsen has used insiders, exclusive interviews, written correspondence, private documents and declassified memos, outlining the image of „The Pentagon's Brain”, from its beginning in the Cold War period in 1958 to the present.

There are more than 550 pages in this book about military research and secrets that illustrate developments in weapons and sophisticated equipment that the human mind could conceive.

The volume is divided into five chapters: “The Cold War”, “The Vietnam War”, “Operations Other than War”, “The War against Terrorism” and “The War of the Future”. The chapters of the book are preceded a “Prologue” and followed by “Acknowledgements”, “Notes”, “List of Interviews and Written Correspondence”, “Bibliography” and “Index”.

In “The Pentagon's Brain”, where human intelligence works hand in hand with computers, nothing seems impossible.

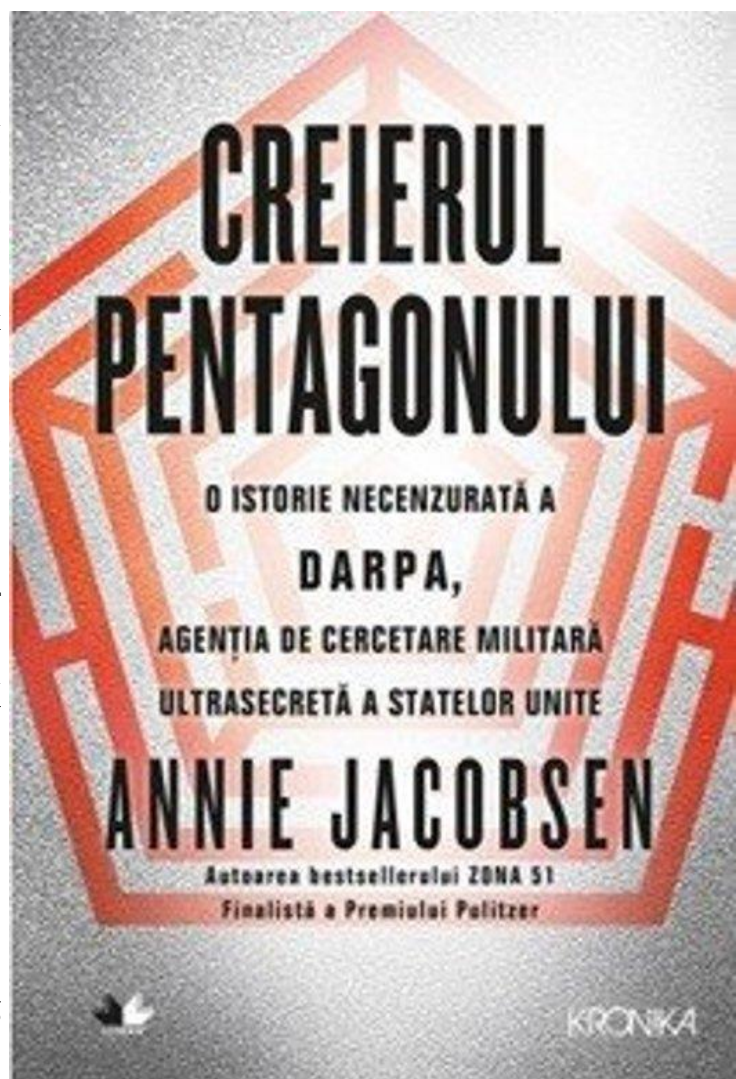
Robots, cyborgs and bio-hybrids working together with scientists at the DARPA top-secret and pioneering military scientific pro-

grams, permanently provide up to twenty-year advancements to the American technology as compared to the public technology.

This is the essential book about DARPA - an impressive story about the clandestine point of intersection between science and the US military and the often stunning, futuristic and frightening results of this meeting.

“A fascinating and sometimes uncomfortable exploration of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency”. Washington Post

“A thoroughly documented account of a small but powerful government agency, whose military research is severely affecting the world stage”. The Pulitzer Prize Committee.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA

Strategic Autonomy and the Defense of Europe: On the Road to a European Army?

Authors: Hans-Peter BARTELS

Anna Maria KELLNER

Uwe OPTENHOGE (Hg)

The authors said the idea for this book came in early 2016 with the onset of the conflict in Ukraine, the increase tensions with Russia, the mounting crisis of the refugees and the exacerbating civil war in Syria, when in fact, the European Council instructed the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini to draft a new European Security and Defense Strategy.

There have been attempts for common defense since the European project in 1950, the French Prime Minister Rene Pleven proposed a plan to integrate defense, including the establishment of a European army and the appointment of a European Minister of Defense. After two years of negotiations, the six members of the European Coal and Steel Community signed a treaty establishing a "Community of Defense", which provided for the establishment of a joint army including 40 divisions with 13,000 troops each, with a common uniform, joint military institutions and joint military procurement. In 1954, the treaty was ratified by Germany and Benelux, but France opposed the project and therefore it was cancelled.

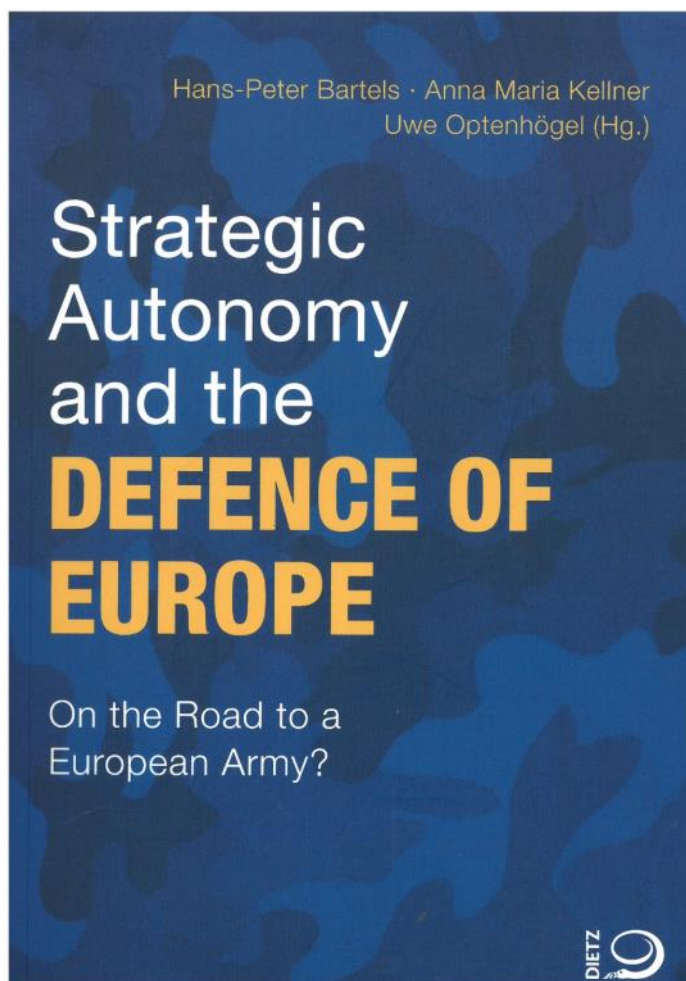
Over the last decade, the European Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) was less considered in the European integration actions in the context of uncontrolled defense budgets, while the political actions have been almost entirely directed towards the euro crisis.

The attitude to European security and defense has changed especially after the report of the Center for European Political Studies (CEPS) in early 2015 and with the new global strategy (2016), with its package of implementation, so that the EU institutions have opened the door to European defense, even towards establishing a European army.

In this book, the authors have selected experts from each EU member and raised questions such as: Is the CSDP discussed in their country and which is the attitude towards a European army? What is the current situation in defense spending and which are the perspectives? What is the situation of the national armies: strength, equipment? How have these forces been reformed or which are the reform plans to be implemented? Has there been any multilateral cooperation with other European countries in national security?

The book provides not only an insight into the political, academic and public debate on the CSDP, but also data and tendencies on defense spending, modernization and cooperation for each member state as well as the identification of national and European forces that can implement national and the European security and defense policies.

Presented by Cornel VAIDA





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

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



Dumitru CHICAN

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

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



Dr. Octavian DUMITRESCU

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



Cornel VAIDA - Director INGEPO Consulting

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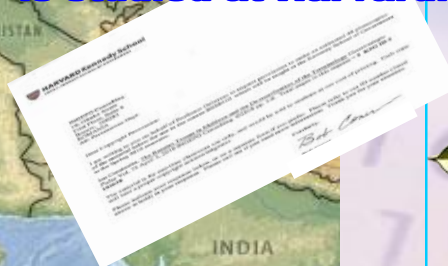


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