

**“CAROL I” NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY STRATEGIC STUDIES**



STRATEGIC IMPACT

No. 3-4[72-73]/2019

Academic quarterly acknowledged by CNATDCU,
Indexed in CEEOL, ProQuest, EBSCO,
WorldCat and ROAD ISSN international databases

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The hereby edition encompasses no. 3 and 4 in 2019 (vol. 72 and 73) and comprises a collection of five articles, to which is added the ***Dynamics of the Security Environment*** section, followed by *Book review*, the *CDSSS Agenda*, *Scientific Event*, and the traditional *Guide for Authors*.

The rubric ***Political-Military Topicality*** opens the journal, where one can read an analysis of *Russia - NATO* relation, *from partnership to strategic competition*, in which Mrs. Violeta Nicolescu reviews the actions of the Russian Federation that have shaped the European security context in recent years, concluding that there is a need for a clear NATO strategy against Russia's assertive actions, on the eastern border of the Alliance.

In the section ***Defence and Security Concepts***, you can find an article written by Major General (Ret.) Neagoe Visarion together with Lieutenant Colonel Silviu Borșa, that develops the subject of the *Anti-access/Area denial (A2/AD) strategy*, in an attempt to encompass it into one of the three categories: conventional war, hybrid war or asymmetric war.

The third rubric, ***Security and Military Strategy*** comprises two papers. The first, signed by Commander Ștefan Cotigă, deals with the subject of *Host nation support (HNS)* – one of the most important tasks under the responsibility of the Romanian Army, according to the White Paper of Defence. The author outlines the specific elements of granting the support of the host nation by Romania and suggests directions to be followed in modernizing HNS.

The second article, titled *The Clash of Stakeholder's Interests in the Afghan Peace Process*, developed by Lieutenant Cosmin Potolincă, discusses the evolution of the measures taken by the main actors, following the United States intention to withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan. The paper highlights the geopolitical interests exercised by these actors in Afghanistan, as well as in the Central Asian region, each making efforts to protect them and to develop them in their own advantage. As a result, the situation bespoke the attention, both regionally and internationally, and thus contributed to the drafting of a negotiation framework, with the aim of concluding a peace agreement favourable to the Afghan state.

In the fourth rubric, ***Geopolitics and Geostrategies: Trends and Perspectives***, Mrs. Lavinia Savu and Mrs. Alexandra Timofte conducted an analysis of *the situation of the Rohingya minority in the state of Rakhine*, with the use of *the Galtung method*, focusing on the interethnic conflict arising from the religious differences between them. In order to do so, they used the method of the three triangles of Galtung, which takes into account the dimension of the conflict, violence and peace.

You will also find the section ***Dynamics of the Security Environment (DSE)***, which comprises six materials, developed by CDSSS researchers, which analyse the most important evolutions of the second half of 2019, from the main interest areas for Romania. Thus, Cristian Băhnăreanu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, brings to attention *The balance of military expenditures in 2019*. Alexandra Sarcinschi, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, who presents events from the last semester of 2019 which questioned the Alliance's cohesion, offers an answer to the interrogation *Is NATO the victim of power interests of its member countries?* Cristina Bogzeanu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher explores *Europe's vulnerabilities, from Brexit to internal divergences going chronic*. Next, Mirela Atanasiu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher presents *Turkish foreign policy between East and West*, Marius-Titi Potîrniche, Ph.D. researcher analyses *Russia's situation that follows its strategic interests in a multipolar world*, and, not least, Mihai Zodian, Ph.D. Researcher, approaches the subject of *a frail diplomacy and uncertain future of North Korea*.



In this edition, through the **Book Review** rubric, we wish to bring to the readers' attention two works. The first one is the book entitled *Strategic shock – implications for the international security environment*, written by Colonel (Ret.) Stan Anton, and printed at "Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House and the second is called *Anatomy of Post-Communist European Defence Institutions. The Mirage of Military Modernity*, by Thomas-Durell Young.

The CDSSS Agenda brings to your attention the activities of the Centre for the second semester of 2019 and invites you to the 2020 edition of the *Strategies XXI* Conference, to take place in November 5 and 6. Within the section **Scientific Event**, we report on the International Scientific Conference with the theme "The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment", we organised on November 14th and 15th, under the aegis of Strategies XXI, during which, for the first time, a prize was awarded for the best scientific communication, by the "Carol I" National Defence University Graduates Association.

For those who discover for the first time *Strategic Impact*, conceived by the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies and published with the support of the "Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House, the publication is a prestigious scientific journal in the field of military sciences, information and public order, according to the National Council for Titles, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU).

The journal is being published in Romanian for nineteen years and for fourteen years in English and approaches a complex thematic: political – military topicality, security and military strategy, NATO and EU: policies, strategies, actions, geopolitics and geostrategies on the future war trajectory, information society, elements and views regarding the intelligence community. Readers may find in the pages of the publication, analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, points of view which study the impact of national, regional and global actions dynamics.

Regarding international visibility – the primary objective of the journal – the recognition of the publication's scientific quality is confirmed by its indexing in the international databases CEEOL (Central and Eastern European Online Library, Germany), EBSCO (USA), ProQuest (USA) and, in addition, WorldCat and ROAD ISSN, but also its presence in virtual catalogues of libraries of prestigious institutions abroad, such as NATO and of universities with military profile in Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia etc.

Strategic Impact is printed in two distinct editions, both in the Romanian and English language. The journal is distributed free of charge in the main institutions in the field of security and defence, in the scientific and academic environment in the country and abroad – in Europe, Asia and America.

In the end, we would like to encourage those interested to publish in our journal to prospect and evaluate thoroughly the dynamics of the security environment and, also, we invite the interested students, master students and doctoral candidates to submit articles for publication in the monthly supplement of the journal, Strategic Colloquium, available on the Internet at <http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/cs.htm>, indexed in the international database CEEOL.

Editor-in-chief, Colonel Florian CÎRCIUMARU, Ph.D.
The Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies



RUSSIA – NATO, FROM PARTNERSHIP TO STRATEGIC COMPETITION

*Violeta NICOLESCU**

The hereby article aims at reviewing the following elements: actions of the Russian Federation which have shaped the current security context in Europe, since 2014 up to present day – the WHAT; the main reason for its actions on NATO’s Eastern Flank – the WHY; and how the North-Atlantic Alliance chose to respond to Russia’s aggressive actions against Ukraine, in 2014 – the HOW, asking the legitimate question if the deterrence and defence measures taken so far are enough to provide collective security for all Allies on the Eastern Flank. With Russia’s switch from a NATO partner to a state with an aggressive position on the Allied Eastern Flank, with the aim of regaining the power it once held, as well as its actions against Georgia, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, this paper will conclude on the necessity for NATO to have a clear strategy on Russia’s assertive actions on the Eastern Flank.

Keywords: *Russia Eastern Flank; NATO; deterrence; defence; Ukraine; Black Sea.*

Foreword

Starting with 2014, Europe has known a shift from the somewhat peaceful strategic context it was used to. A new reality which was forced upon when Russia decided to take over a part

of Ukraine – the Crimean Peninsula. Even before this moment, Russia’s power politics in the Black Sea region impacted the freedom of regional states such as Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova to decide on their own external policy. One might argue that Moscow’s regional steps, such as the support for Ukrainian Viktor Yanukovich as a presidential candidate, followed, in 2004, by the Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute or the Russian-Georgian conflict, in 2008, clearly and completely fall into the Russian strategic objective of bringing back into its own sphere of influence states connected to its Soviet history.

1. Russia – the Return to Power Politics

The military conflict in Georgia, the so-called *five-day war* (08-12 August 2008), regarded¹ as *the first European war of the 21st century* was, if we are to think through the lens of the present days, Putin’s *first Crimea*. This war represented Russia’s first step to its reconfirmation as a regional power, showing the states in the region that their European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations would not be tolerated. Sadly, this show of power lead to the loss of human lives

¹ Michael Emerson, *Post-Mortem on Europe’s First War of the 21st Century*, Centre for European Policy Studies, August 2008, <http://aei.pitt.edu/9382/2/9382.pdf>, accessed on June 10th 2019.

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(Georgia – 396², Russia – 67³).

Since 2014, the Russian Federation has carried on numerous actions in the Black Sea region, which one may call at least intimidating, if not threatening – flights and maritime patrols close to the borders of particular NATO member states and partners; ample military exercises such as ZAPAD⁴, in 2017, conducted in the proximity of NATO borders, with complex scenarios simulating an attack on Allies or NATO partners; or deployment of conventional capabilities in the region – air defence systems, coast batteries and other A2/AD capabilities, in Kaliningrad and Crimea.

According to American officials, Russia's transfer of troops, military aircrafts and armament to Crimea has known a significant increase during 2018. Satellite images taken during January 2018 and April 2019, by the Planet Labs company and provided to the website DefenseOne.com, show five anti-air S-400 systems, five S-300 systems and military aircrafts stationed in four locations. Former Soviet military sites have been upgraded. Increasing its troops and military capabilities come to confirm the fact that Russia is interested in gaining even more control in the Black Sea region – the perfect location from where it can project its force beyond the region in its near

² ***, “Basic facts: consequences of russian aggression in Georgia”, URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20140813080642/http://mfa.gov.ge/files/597_13907_935483_BASICFACTS.doc, accessed on November 25th 2019.

³ Ruslan Pushkov (ed.), “The Tanks of August”, *Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies*, Moscow, 2010, pp. 130-135, URL: http://www.cast.ru/files/The_Tanks_of_August_sm_eng.pdf, accessed on November 25th 2019.

⁴ A.N.: the ZAPAD military exercise (meaning *West* in Russian) was conducted together with Belarus; official Belarus sources indicated that the total number of troops involved in the exercise did not exceed 13.000, URL: <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/details-of-belarusian-russian-army-exercise-zapad-2017-unveiled-99607-2017/>, accessed on November 26th 2019, while Western analysts were quoted as saying that as many as 100.000 Russian military might have been involved, URL: <https://www.businessinsider.com/heres-what-we-learned-from-russias-zapad-military-exercises-2017-9>, accessed on November 26th 2019. The great discrepancy between the numbers circulated lies in the fact that part of these troops were presumably simultaneously engaged in other military exercises in the region as well.

vicinity. With sanctions imposed by the US, Canada and the European Union determined by Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its support given to Pro-Russian insurgent groups in Ukrainian regions Lugansk and Donetsk, Moscow shows the same attitude in rejecting accusations as in all previous cases.

Robert Cooper observed in his “*Breaking of Nations*” that “the way in which Russia decided to behave towards the norms of international treaties, particularly the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces (CFE), will represent a crucial factor for the future, as crucial as Europe's behaviour on deciding what kind of security relationship it would share with Russia.”⁵ And, as the present is showing us, his opinion proves its validity throughout time. Thus, not only did Russia suspend the CFE Treaty implementation in 2015, but another Treaty also became subject to international debate – the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Following several tensioned months in the relations with Russia moving around the Novator 9M729 missile system (which carries the NATO designation SSC-8), in February 2019⁶, the USA suspended their obligations to comply with the INF Treaty – in a withdrawal that lasted about six months, giving Russia a last chance to resume complying with the Treaty. Russia, in its turn, chose to close a chapter – essential for the entire international community – by taking act of the US's withdrawal on August 2nd 2019⁷ and, thus witnessing to the end of a treaty which had managed to give the world, for a long time, a relative feeling of predictability. According to the US intelligence reports, Russia has started developing the missile system in the mid-2000s. Novator had reportedly been tasked with creating a weapon system very

⁵ Robert Cooper, “The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century”, *Atlantic Monthly Press*, New York, 2004, p. 41.

⁶ A.N.: in December 2018, following the Allied foreign ministers' meeting, the US has given Russia a 60-day ultimatum to comply with the treaty; otherwise, the US would abandon the INF agreement for good.

⁷ ***, “Official statements”, *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*, URL: https://www.mid.ru/en/press_service/spokesman/official_statement, accessed on November 26th 2019.



similar to missile systems still in development at the time, such as the tactical road-mobile Iskander missiles, which can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. Based on the information gathered, the US believe Russia had run an elaborate missile trial program, until 2015. And, as the INF Treaty does allow for certain mid- and long-range missile systems to be tested on land, provided they are designed for use in the navy or air force, Russia might have used this INF clause to hide the real purpose of this missile system.

Simultaneously with the accusations on Russia's developing a war-starting missile system, Washington has also asked Moscow to destroy the missile, its launchers and all associated equipment. According to both the US and NATO, Novator 9M729 is capable of hitting targets on an area ranging between 500⁸ to 1500⁹ km, yet Russian officials state that the range would not exceed 500 km. Moreover, the Russians refused to comply with the December 2018 ultimatum, accusing the US that they would not hear their arguments. Regardless of who is right, US's withdrawal from the Treaty was clearly a given fact following Russia's elliptic replies to both American and Allied calls during 2018, on transparency and compliance with international rules on this subject. And, with the INF Treaty becoming the Bible of armaments control after the end of the Cold War, its end may mean launching a new nuclear weapons race worldwide. At the same time, some political analysts¹⁰ have voiced their concerns on the INF Treaty limiting the US in favour of China, who is not part of the treaty and who develops nuclear missiles.

It is perhaps useful to think of the topicality of a theory which, for many years outdated, can challenge one nowadays to consider its potential – the Heartland theory belonging to Mackinder, who stated:

⁸ ***, SSC-8 (9M729), *Missile threat*, URL: <https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/ssc-8-novator-9m729/>, accessed on 20.01.2020.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Andrew S. Erickson, "Good Riddance to the INF Treaty. Washington Shouldn't Tie Its Own Hands in Asia", in *Foreign Affairs*, August, 29, 2019, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-08-29/good-riddance-inf-treaty>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

"Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland;

Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island;

*Who rules the World-Island commands the World."*¹¹

To understand it, one has to temporarily abandon the classic structure of the globe into continents and oceans and to operate with the notions proposed by the author – the Heartland (the territory initially occupied by the Russian Empire and, afterwards, by the Soviet Union, except for the Kamchatka peninsula), the World Island (comprising the interlinked continents of Europe, Africa and Asia). This pivot area – the Heartland, seemed to be important for the natural richness it holds and for the key position it had for connecting with various areas of the world. Thus, in Mackinder's opinion, East Europe becomes Heartland's key area, from which the land power of Russia derives. It is true, though, that in the age of modern warfare, his theory is considered outdated, as he took into account world history only in the context of conflict between land and sea powers, while in the modern world, the use of aircraft and missiles has significantly changed the ability to control territory and provide defensive capabilities. And, although his theory was never fully proven because no power in history had actually controlled all three regions at the same time, we can argue with one example – the Crimean War, from 1853 to 1856, when Russia fought for control of the Crimean Peninsula, as part of Ukraine. And then we have another more recent example – the illegal annexation, by Russia, of the Crimean Peninsula, in 2014.

In his *Grand Chessboard*, Brzezinski wrote: "Ukraine is an important space on the chessboard which is Eurasia, and a geopolitical pivot as by its very existence as an independent state, it helps to Russia's transformation. Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be a Eurasian empire. But if Moscow regains its control over Ukraine, with its population of 52¹² million people and its

¹¹ Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality. A study in the Politics of Reconstruction*, National Defense University Press, Washington D.C., 1996, p. 106.

¹² A.N.: 42,22 million inhabitants in 2018, according to EUROSTAT.



significant natural resources, as well as with the access to the Black Sea, Russia automatically regains the necessary means to re-become a powerful imperial state, spread in Europe and Asia.”¹³

2. NATO’s adaptation to the new status-quo with Russia

The year 2014 has dramatically transformed the international strategic context. The North-Atlantic Alliance had, on one hand, to rethink a series of policies and, on the other hand, to think of new ones. The Allied deterrence and defence posture was thus to be strengthened, following Summits in Newport, in 2014, and Warsaw, in 2016 – as a reply to Russia’s repositioning on the grand world stage. Another dimension, that of projecting stability beyond NATO’s borders, has also taken shape in order to manage the terrorist threat coming from the South.

Thus, besides setting new parameters for NATO’s relation with the Russian Federation, following the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the 2014 Summit set the tone for the consolidation of the Allied deterrence and defence. After suspending, in April the same year, all military and civilian cooperation with Moscow, as a consequence to Russia’s breaching Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, only preserving the possibility for the political dialogue to continue, necessity-based, at ambassadorial level and higher, NATO was to confirm the decision, including at the level of heads of states and government. As a first step in projecting the enhanced deterrence and defence policy, the Allies approved the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which was structured on two types of measures: insurance – by increasing military presence on the Eastern Flank with the aim to deter and defend; and adaptation – long-term changes of the Allied posture so as to be able to respond most efficiently in crisis situations. Thus, the plan provided for: the establishment of eight multinational force

integration units (NATO Force Integrations Units/NFIUs) in the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary and a multinational division headquarters in Romania; creation of an operational force with a very high level of preparedness for combat – the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), capable of being deployed in theatres of operations within 2-3 days since notification; increasing NATO Response Force (NRF) by raising its readiness level and size from 13.000 to 40.000 troops – all of which paving the path for the Alliance’s adaptation to the new strategic reality.

This represented, in a way, a compensation for the lack of reaction on NATO’s part, in the 2008 Russian-Georgian conflict. A relative reparation of the wording used in the NATO Strategic Concept, adopted in Lisbon in 2010 (only two years after the Russian-Georgian conflict), which stated that: “NATO-Russia cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability and security. NATO poses no threat to Russia. On the contrary: we want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we will act accordingly, with the expectation that of reciprocity from Russia.”¹⁴ Thus, Georgia was to receive more attention from NATO’s part and, as time has shown, from the Allies individually as well. The Defence and Related Security Capacity Building initiative was approved, so that NATO’s partners would be helped to increase their resilience to more efficiently tackle their security challenges. There were four customized packages within the initiative – for Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Jordan and Iraq. The support approved for Ukraine was, on the other hand, designed separately, in the form of Trust Funds on five domains: command, control, communications and computers; logistics and standardization; cyber security; military career transition and medical rehabilitation, and, one year later, explosive ordinance disposal and countering

¹³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Univers Enciclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999, p. 59.

¹⁴ ***, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence, Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, NATO, 2010, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf, accessed on 20.06.2019, p. 29.



improvised explosive devices was to be added.

At the Warsaw Summit, in 2016, all these lines of action were complemented with new measures which, taken as a whole, can be regarded as the largest reinforcement of NATO's collective deterrence and defence since the end of the Cold War. Thus, 2016 marked the creation of an advanced Allied presence adapted for the NATO's eastern border, translated mainly through the establishment of four multinational battle groups deployed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, under NATO command and a multinational division headquarters in Poland, but also through dedicated measures for the Black Sea region such as: setting up a south-eastern multinational brigade in Romania, a multinational training framework, complementarity ensured by the enhanced Air Policing missions (under the RAP insurance measures) and, in the maritime field, the establishment, within the Allied Maritime Command in Naples, of a functional team for the Black Sea region, in support of coordination between the naval forces contributing to the exercises in the area.

At allied level, since the very beginning of the debates on NATO's two main lines of action towards the East and the South – deterrence and defence, on the one hand; and projecting stability, on the other hand, one could notice the tendency of the southern allies to prioritize actions related to the fight against terrorism, while eastern allies were primarily focused on deterrence and defence and Russia. The trend is still alive in 2020, taking into account that Russia's maintaining its assertiveness, the instability in the Middle East and North Africa, but also more recent challenges such as NATO's relation with China in the context of its growing influence or debates on the Alliance's relevance, direct NATO on multiple lines of effort. One of the reasons for which we are nowadays talking about a somewhat fracture of the allied unity and solidarity is the very fact that NATO finds it impossible to balance this *competition* between the east and the south, even if, politically speaking, the allies have agreed on an omnidirectional approach (the so-called approach of 360°), with the exact aim

to precisely avoid such fragmentation.

In addition to the prioritization made by the eastern and southern allies, another difference of perception of the threat and, consequently, of the proportionality of allied contribution, could be observed within the advanced presence. The difference resides in the contributions of the allies to the states in the northern segment of NATO's eastern border (the Baltic States and Poland) versus the ones in the southern part (Romania and Bulgaria), most allies considering the northern part as being more exposed to the Russian threat. Consequently, their contributions are calibrated according to their perception.

The NATO Summit in Brussels, in 2018, did not bring new measures on the deterrence and defence line, but rather a new initiative – the Readiness Initiative, aimed at increasing the operational and readiness level and at strengthening the allied deterrence and collective defence efforts and which must be viewed in the logic of the necessity to establish, within NATO, a culture of readiness, for the Alliance to always be prepared to timely and efficiently respond to a security crisis. Also called the Four Thirties, the initiative plans to ensure, by allies' contributions, 30 mechanized battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels, ready within 30 days or less since getting notified, starting with 2020.

Additional measures on the line of strengthening defence at NATO's Eastern border were, though, adopted in April 2019 in Washington, by the Allied foreign ministers, in a package meant for the Black Sea region which comprised, among others, training of maritime forces and coast guards, port visits and exercises, and sharing information.

NATO's Summit in 2019, although not named as such, but a "Leaders Meeting", was held in London, the first home of the Alliance – a location deliberately chosen as the organization has just turned 70. According to the London Declaration, *Russia's aggressive actions constitute a threat to Euro-Atlantic security*¹⁵, but the Alliance

¹⁵ ***, NATO, *London Declaration*, December 4, 2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm, accessed on December 20th 2019.



remains open for dialogue, and to a constructive relationship with Russia when Russia's actions make that possible¹⁶. Focused on new topics such as cosmic space – declared, on that occasion, as the operational domain of the Alliance; burden sharing, with a specific focus on the allocation of the 2% of the GDP to the defence and security sector, the meeting has also included on its agenda – and reflected subsequently in its Declaration (para. 7) a task determined by the debate generated by Macron's declarations, in late November, on NATO's relevance, according to which "what we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO...while Europe stands on the edge of a precipice"¹⁷. In this regard, NATO leaders, "taking into account the evolving strategic environment"¹⁸, invited "the Secretary General to present to Foreign Ministers a Council-agreed proposal for a forward-looking reflection process under his auspices, drawing on relevant expertise, to further strengthen NATO's political dimension including consultation process"¹⁹.

The talks were rather old news, in the sense that such messages had been previously delivered by the US President himself, shortly after beginning his mandate in 2017. In the light of subsequent events and of several allies speeding up the process of complying with the Defence Investment Pledge, he turned out to be one of the most fervent critics of the French President's opinion.

Conclusions

In retrospect, one could speak of an allied rhetoric that does not seem to have changed in a relevant way, if we are to read the previous communiques issued following the Allied

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ ***, *Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead*, in *The Economist*, November 2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on December 20th 2019.

¹⁸ ***, *NATO, London Declaration*, December 4, 2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm, accessed on December 20th 2019.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

Summits from 2014 and up to the present. Moreover, let us not forget that the NATO Russia-Council, an important platform for dialogue, was not, however, suspended in 2014 and neither afterwards. By June 2019, six such meetings had been held in this format, starting with April 2016, with no notable results and, most of the times, proved to be a "dialogue of the deaf".

However, important steps have been made since Zelensky's election as President of Ukraine. In September and December 2019, two prisoner exchanges took place between Russia and Ukraine, since the debut of the conflict, in 2014. The exchange of prisoners in December was a specific request of the Ukrainian President expressed during the first peace summit²⁰ on Ukraine, held after 2016, in Paris, on December 9th, 2019.

Besides Georgia and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova is another variable in this equation. Until June 2019, the pro-Russian president, in constant disagreement with what seemed to be a pro-West government, has sometimes ease Moscow's efforts to maintain this small sphere of influence with great aspirations of European integration. With Russian military presence in Transnistria, contrary to the obligations assumed by Russia at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, in 1999, and a blocked 5+2 negotiations process²¹ on solving this regional issue, including after the negotiation round in Bratislava, in October 2019, Russia still waits for a pro-Russian regime at the helm of the Republic of Moldova which will create optimal conditions for solving this matter in its interest. Following the political

²⁰ A.N.: under French-German mediation, a series of measures were announced: ceasefire consolidation; massive exchange of prisoners by the end of December 2019, withdrawal of combatants from three areas by the end of March 2020

²¹ A.N.: negotiations in the 5+2 format take place with the participation of the representatives of the parties, mediators and observers – the R. of Moldova, Transnistria, OSCE, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, the USA and the EU. The aim of the negotiations is to draw up the principles of a comprehensive regulation, based on the R. of Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity within the its internationally-acknowledged borders, with a special statute for Transnistria within the R. of Moldova.



transformations in 2019, especially the fall, in November, of the pro-European government led by Maia Sandu, this scenario seems rather realistic, at least for the short and medium term, as president Igor Dodon finds himself, again, in a comfortable position which will allow him to more easily increase contacts with the Russian partner. Another element whose importance must not be underestimated in this equation is represented by the non-NATO regional partners – Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. If NATO keeps on supporting them, this will contribute to maintaining regional stability that encourages the greater development of the whole of Europe. Any future security strategy for the Black Sea region, if there will be one, should be built upon two coordinates: credible and effective deterrence and collective defence, respectively stability and security, in non-NATO regional partner nations. The first step has already been made in April 2019, at the Allied Foreign Ministers' meeting in Washington, and consistency is one of the key elements in this equation.

In the same spirit, one should also look upon the NATO-EU cooperation which, since 2016, has intensified and developed on several domains, such as: hybrid threats, military mobility, operational cooperation, including maritime issues, cyber security, defence capabilities, coordinated exercises, or defence capacity building.

The challenge of deterring and defending the position seems to be to still be preserved on NATO's priority agenda, which includes issues such as: an emergent China; the debate on the relevance of the Alliance in the new strategic context – which has already attracted a tasking following the London Meeting, respectively, to initiate a reflection process on strengthening NATO's political role; the compliance of all allies with the pledge to allocate 2% from GDP to the defence and security sector.

And last, but not least, perhaps it is time to launch a public debate on drawing up a new Strategic Concept of the Alliance, to replace the one adopted in Lisbon, in 2010, when NATO

was, compared to challenges of the present, on a real vacation. The Allied states do not seem to be particularly attracted to such a debate, although, at the time, the last Strategic Concept was approved, the idea was formulated that the document comprised the Alliance's action plan for the next 10 years. And here the 10 years have already passed. Here we are nowadays, with a Russia that is no longer a NATO partner; with two new operational domains – cybernetics and cosmic space; with a fight against terrorism that many would say is not as efficient as it should be, despite all human and financial efforts invested for so many years; with a rather shaky transatlantic connection; with questions on NATO's relevance and the possibility of assuming a military role by the EU itself – all the ingredients necessary to a revision of the Allied Strategic Concept. A window of opportunity could arise in the framework provided by the upcoming reflection process on strengthening NATO's political role.

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ANTI-ACCESS/AREA DENIAL STRATEGY – CONVENTIONAL WAR, HYBRID WAR OR ASYMMETRIC WAR?

*Visarion NEAGOE**
*Silviu-Stelian BORȘA***

Since ancient times, people eager for expansion and rapid adaptation have developed strategies and capabilities of conquest, colonizing different areas on earth. For this, it was necessary for the respective people to develop, first and foremost, expeditionary and autonomous capabilities, with the possibility to travel over very long distances, for long periods of time. The same thing happens nowadays. There are states, that have highly developed capabilities, while employing strategies to obtain operational access in a certain area or theatre of operations, in a short time and with minimal losses. Augmenting these capabilities is extremely expensive, so that, some states, that cannot afford it or do not intend to do so, have begun to develop strategies that prevent a potential opponent from obtaining operational access into their own territory. One of these strategies, developed especially by China and Russia, is called by NATO anti-access/area denial or A2/AD.

Keywords: *anti-access; area denial; conventional war; hybrid war; asymmetric war; capability.*

Introduction

The US has had for a long time and still has the most developed fighting power projection ability, which has determined it to put into practice, without facing too much opposition. As an example, there are the events that occurred in 1990-1991, during the Gulf War, when the US and its allies accessed the operations area without any problems, for about six months, to prepare the “Desert Storm” Operation. The same happened in Afghanistan, in 2001, for the Operation “Enduring Freedom”, but also in Kuwait, in 2003, for the Operation “Iraqi Freedom”. All of these campaigns have formed a pattern of how the US and its allies proceed, to enter an area. Based on this pattern, the states that feel threatened by NATO, have developed strategies that can be included in A2/AD, to interdict the Alliance’s operational access on their own territories.

The emergence of the A2/AD strategy led to NATO’s analysis and attempt to identify strategies designed to neutralize A2/AD capabilities. At the same time, their capabilities and how they are used, causes us to ask what kind of conflict

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they belong to: conventional war, hybrid war or asymmetric war. In order to obtain the answer we must first identify what each of these terms represents and by what they are characterized, then analyse and find the common points and the resulting differences, in order, to finally frame the implementation of the A2/AD strategy in one of these types of conflict.

1. Anti-access/area denial

The term “anti-access/area denial” is initially used by US specialists¹, being adopted by NATO and implies the achievement of “anti-access” in an area or theatre of operations, followed immediately by the implementation of “area denial”. We can also find the term in the Romanian military press², respectively in the Romanian military strategies³, doctrines, manuals and regulations of the last 5 years⁴. *Anti-access operations* include those actions or tactics used to delay, prevent or forbid the movement/dislocation of forces in a theatre of operations⁵, or those actions carried out employing capabilities, usually long-range, designed to prevent the opponent forces from entering an area of operations, theatre of operations or area of responsibility⁶. For the execution of this type of operations are used the capabilities with the longest range of action, which the respective state has, in order to intercept the opponent from a large distance and influence the deployment,

respectively the projection of the fighting power in a certain area, usually, near its own territory.

Area denial refers to those actions and capabilities, usually short-range, designed not to keep the adversary’s forces outside the operational area, but to limit his freedom of action within it⁷. Once the opponent has managed to deploy his forces in the area of operations, it is time to use area denial. Their role is to prevent or delay the adversary’s forces inside the theatre of operations, which would allow him to execute the decisive operations, in order to achieve the campaign’s objectives.

Therefore, the purpose of A2/AD strategy is not to destroy the opponent, but rather to delay and weaken the opponent, so that the following operations are doomed to failure, in a guaranteed manner. The combat power of the opponent must be reduced, so that the continuation of the operations will lead to the failure to achieve the objectives of the campaign.

Regarding the capabilities used to implement the A2/AD strategy, we can mention the fact that a wide range of weapon systems are used, such as: short, medium and long range missiles; air defence systems; submarines; warships of all types; combat and attack aircraft and helicopters; satellites and anti-satellite weapon systems; electronic warfare systems; cyber capabilities; special operations forces; ISTAR⁸ systems; marine and land mines; artillery armament systems; weapons of mass destruction.

As can be seen, a wide variety of weapon systems can be used. It goes without saying that it is not mandatory to use all these capabilities, but depending on the situation, only part of them can be utilized. In order to be implemented within the A2/AD strategy, their selection is made according to the doctrines of the respective state, the capabilities available, the land on which they will be used, but, especially, the strategic effect to be achieved. For example, in recent years Russia has tilted the security balance in the Black Sea, the Middle East, in the east of the Mediterranean

¹ Michael Kofman, “It’s time to talk about a2/ad: rethinking the Russian military challenge”, URL: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/its-time-to-talk-about-a2-ad-rethinking-the-russian-military-challenge/>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

² *Military Observatory*, no. 2 (1.338) 13-19 January 2016, p.15.

³ *Romanian Military Strategy*, URL: <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/182367>, accessed on 19.10.2019.

⁴ *Defense White Paper*, Bucharest, 2017, Chapter. 1, Risks and threats, p. 14, URL: https://www.mapn.ro/legislatie/documente/carta_alba.pdf

⁵ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *Meeting the Anti-Access and Area Denial Challenge*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), Washington DC, 2003, ii.

⁶ *Joint Operational Access Concept*, Department of Defence, Washington DC, 1012, i, URL: https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/JOAC_Jan%202012_Signed.pdf, accessed on 25.11.2019.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ ISTAR – Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance.



and in the Baltic Sea, implementing the A2/AD strategy in these territories, by deploying, in 2015-2016, the S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft defence systems in Crimea and Syria. Thus, the Baltic states, almost all of Ukraine, northern Poland, Syria and parts of Turkey, fall under Russia's "anti-aircraft umbrella", created by the S-300 and S-400 systems. Also in Crimea, Russia deployed Bastion-P anti-ship systems, equipped with P-800 Oniks and S-300 PMU anti-aircraft missiles, all connected to coastal radars, but also Tu-22M3, Tu-142 and Iiyushin II-38 aircrafts, designed for the annihilation of anti-aircraft systems, being able, at the same, to transport nuclear warheads.

All these capabilities lead to a so-called protective "bubble" or "umbrella", which insure the respective state a certain comfort and stability. Strategy A2/AD is a predominantly defensive one, but offensive operations can be easily initiated under its shelter.

2. A2/AD and the conventional warfare

In order to fully understand all these terms, it is necessary to remember what a *conventional* and *unconventional warfare* means. Thus, *conventional warfare* is a form of war, carried out between two or more states, in an open confrontation, using conventional weapons and conventional combat tactics. The participating forces are well defined and fight using weapons that primarily target the opponent's armed forces⁹. The two fighting structures are known, clearly organized and they carry out military operations against the opponent's armed forces. The general purpose of conventional warfare is to destroy or capture the military force of the adversary, neutralizing its ability to introduce new forces into combat.

Unconventional warfare is the opposite of the conventional warfare. While conventional warfare is used to reduce an opponent's military ability using conventional weapons and battlefield tactics, unconventional warfare is an attempt to

gain military victory by signing an agreement, surrender, or clandestine support for part of an existing conflict¹⁰. The term *unconventional* covers a very wide range of possibilities. Examples of unconventional wars can be the informational, psychological, economic, asymmetric ones, and, more recently appeared, radioelectronic, cybernetic, psychotronic, geophysical warfare.

From the beginning, it can be observed that A2/AD strategy cannot be included into conventional warfare, because for its implementation are used unconventional capabilities, which also are not valid in conventional war.

Furthermore, the purpose of the two terms is different. While the conventional warfare's purpose is to impose the will on the adversary by destroying, capturing or neutralizing the adversary's military capabilities, the purpose of A2/AD is merely to weaken, delay or limit the use of the adversary's capabilities, using a higher percentage of unconventional capabilities than conventional ones.

The A2/AD strategy, however, has an important common point with the conventional warfare. Both are carried out by two or more sovereign states, element that is not found in the case of hybrid war or asymmetric war. Even so, it cannot be said that A2/AD could be part of the conventional warfare frame.

3. A2/AD and asymmetric warfare

What does an asymmetrical warfare or asymmetrical threat actually mean? The doctrine of the Romanian Army defines the asymmetrical threat, as "a threat arising from the possible use of methods and means substantially different from their own in order to bypass or diminish the strength of own forces, by exploiting their vulnerabilities and, thus, obtaining a disproportionate result¹¹."

Using unconventional methods, often illegal

⁹ *Conventional warfare*, in "The Free Dictionary", URL: <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/conventional+warfare>, accessed on 07.12.2019.

¹⁰ *Unconventional warfare*, in "The Free Dictionary", URL: <https://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Unconventional+warfare>, accessed on 07.12.2019.

¹¹ AAP-6, *NATO glossary of terms and definitions*, 2019, p. 15.



in accordance with international law, and irregular forces, some of the opponents may try to diminish the military advantage by undermining the cohesion of the alliance/coalition, the decision to act, its credibility and influence. The threat that such an adversary represents for the armed forces and civil society is an asymmetric one, because it cannot be countered by equivalent methods¹².

The asymmetric threat is defined by the following characteristics¹³:

a) the nature of the adversary, being recognized, identified and struggling with difficulty or not willing to negotiate;

b) the nature of the adversary's ideals and objectives, which collide with the widely accepted values, beliefs, priorities, legal and moral constraints;

c) unconventional methods, employed to counteract a quantitative and qualitative advantage.

The asymmetric threat can also be defined as "the wide and unpredictable scope of military, paramilitary and informational operations, conducted by nations, organisations, individuals or indigenous forces, or placed under their command, specifically targeting weaknesses and vulnerabilities in a government or an enemy armed force"¹⁴. As a result, we can say that an asymmetrical conflict occurs when one of the parties uses capabilities or actions that are unexpected or different from those normally used to eliminate, diminish or even exceed the opponent's superiority.

Compared with A2/AD, one can easily observe more differences than common points of the two terms. Thus, it is quite clear that the protagonists of the asymmetrical warfare are mainly irregular forces and not conventional forces, such as A2/AD, where these are well-defined state actors. The forces that use such

actions are usually non-state actors and not recognized states, even though behind their actions are often strong states with certain interests in the area.

Also, the capabilities used and the actions taken are mostly unconventional and, most of the times, contradict the laws of military warfare and the international laws, which, again, is not valid in the case of A2/AD.

Another difference is that, asymmetrical actions do not have a certain pattern, they are difficult to identify and counter, but in the case of A2/AD we can say that, there is a logic in the use of capabilities, so that the opponent estimates the actions that could follow.

There are also two aspects that A2/AD and asymmetric warfare have in common. Both use unconventional capabilities, and their purpose is not to destroy the adversary but to reduce his capabilities and to bring him to a point where he willingly gives up.

4. A2/AD and the hybrid warfare

One type of modern conflict is hybrid warfare. This has resulted in, among other things, the need for some states or different organizations to counteract the actions of other states or to avoid international sanctions that could be imposed by triggering a war of aggression, with less costs and forces.

To start with, it is important to point out that the difference between *hybrid threat* and *hybrid warfare* can be easily made, by stating that hybrid threat is the one that generates a hybrid war. Analysing recent conflicts, international experts have concluded that, in general, war-threatening situations can be divided into: conventional, unconventional and hybrid, the last two considered to be prevalent in the immediate future¹⁵.

The concept "hybrid warfare" has emerged over the last 15 years, through attempts, by US military specialists, to find answers and strategies to counteract forces or structures, acting in an

¹² S.M.G.-103, *Romanian Army Doctrine*, Bucharest, 2012, p. 30

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

¹⁴ Michael L. Kolodzie, "Commentary: The Asymmetric Threat", URL: <http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/JulAug01/MS628.htm>, p. 1, *apud* Petre Duțu, "Amenințări asimetrice sau amenințări hibride: delimitări conceptuale pentru fundamentarea securității și apărării naționale", p. 24, UNAp Publishing House, 2013.

¹⁵ Valerică Cruțeru, "About the concept of hybrid warfare in American military thinking", *Bulletin of "Carol I" National Defense University*, September 2014, p. 29.



extremely ambiguous and difficult to define environment, without conducting coherent operations. The term is considered to have been used for the first time by a team from the US Marine Corps, led by Frank G. Hoffman and James N. Mattis, as they were considered the parents of the “hybrid war” concept.

The phrase “hybrid war” identifies a concept that does not have an unanimously accepted definition, but subscribes to the legalities of war and is explained, in particular, by “the law of active flexibility and interdependence”, highlighting the complex character of war, under its various forms of expression, from the informational to the economic, from the threats with the use of force to the media and psychological aggression, from the insurgency and the guerrillas to the armed confrontation called “hybrid war”. It incorporates an extremely wide range of means and actions war-oriented, including conventional capabilities, tactics, techniques and irregular procedures; terrorist acts, including confusing and coercive violence, as well as criminal activities¹⁶.

In John J. McCuen’s opinion, “hybrid warfare” represents “a combination of symmetrical and asymmetrical armed conflict, in which the intervention forces carry out traditional military operations against military forces and enemy targets, while simultaneously and decisively acting to gaining control of the indigenous population from the operations area, through stability operations”¹⁷.

In conclusion, we can say that “hybrid war” implies a complex engagement in a confrontation, not declared by the states or other actors, where the one who generates the aggression seeks to achieve synergistic effects through the combined exploitation of the social weaknesses (ethnic tensions, weak and corrupted institutions, economic/energy dependence and

so on) with the military ones, but these are not explicitly assumed.

For conducting a hybrid war, conventional and unconventional components are used.

The conventional components include regular armed forces, armament systems, fighting techniques and actions whose use fall within the international norms of armed conflicts laws.

The unconventional components include weapons of mass destruction, irregular forces (paramilitary forces, insurgents, terrorists, guerrillas, mercenaries, partisans, organized criminal groups), as well as other types of means and actions such as informational, psychological, economic, radio-electronic, psychotronic, geophysical.

Analysing A2/AD and “hybrid war”, we can see that they have some common points, but also differences. Thus, the capabilities used to implement both hybrid warfare and A2/AD are extremely varied, with both conventional and unconventional elements. The difference is in how they are used. Within the A2/AD strategy, they are used in a certain order, following a well-established logic, from far to near. On the other hand, hybrid warfare does not seem to have a pattern of use, its actions are constantly adapted to new situations, so that the target is permanently misled and surprised by the actions performed. The order of capabilities use seems to be random, but of course, they are mostly used as a result of a plan.

Another common point of the two is that, the actors who implement them do not intend to destroy the opponent but to erode him, so that he alone gives up the next military actions.

Hybrid warfare is a combination of symmetrical and asymmetrical actions, unlike the A2/AD strategy, where the actions carried out within it are mostly symmetrical.

Hybrid warfare can also be carried out by non-state actors, who use irregular forces, such as insurgent groups or paramilitary organizations (e.g. the Hezbollah group in the Lebanon war in 2006¹⁸). It is a conclusive example of a state-led conflict against a paramilitary group. This aspect

¹⁶ James N. Mattis & Frank Hoffman, “Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars”, U.S. Naval Institute, *Proceedings Magazine*, November 2005, p. 2.

¹⁷ John J. McCuen, “Hybrid Wars”, *Military Review*, March-April 2008, United States Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, pp. 107 – 108, URL: https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20080430_art017.pdf, accessed on 07.12.2019.

¹⁸ Alin Onciu, “Hezbollahul libanez”, URL: <https://intelligence.sri.ro/hezbollahul-libanez/>, accessed on 08.12.2019.

is not valid for A2/AD strategy. It is implemented by certain states, usually strong ones, which allow them to acquire specific capabilities for implementing such a strategy, against other states.

Conclusions

In view of the presented arguments, it is quite difficult to fully frame the A2/AD strategy in one of the three types of conflict.

We consider that the differentiation between conventional war and A2/AD can be easily made, by asserting that conventional war is what follows the A2/AD strategy, especially if, the result of A2/AD was not an expected one, convincing the opponent to give up the following operations. Certainly, the implementation of the A2/AD strategy may involve carrying out actions that do not fall within the conventional war.

In order to make a difference between hybrid threat and asymmetric threat, we can say that, the hybrid one can include the asymmetric threat or, we can state that an asymmetric threat is also a hybrid one. Asymmetrical threat is not necessarily composed of several types of forces, means and actions. For example, the simple detonation of an IED represents an asymmetrical but not a hybrid action. On the other hand, hybrid warfare can be a combination of all kinds of actions, means and forces, and the main rule is that there is no rule to combine them. It simply adapts depending on the resources available, the reaction of the opponent, the effects etc.

If we consider the opinion of international specialists, who have agreed that the war-threatening situations can be divided into conventional, unconventional and hybrid, and the hybrid one is a combination of the other two, we can presume that the A2/AD strategy can fit into the actions specific to hybrid warfare. The range of capabilities and actions included in the hybrid war is much wider and more permissive than in the case of the other two. Although

there are some contradictions regarding A2/AD and the hybrid war, we consider that the most appropriate and closest form of conflict, in which we can place A2/AD, is the hybrid war. We can say that, as a whole, hybrid warfare includes A2/AD strategies.

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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS FOR GRANTING HOST NATION SUPPORT BY ROMANIA

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In the Romania's Defence White Paper for the 2015-2019 timeframe, it is emphasized that, for the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country, one of the most important tasks under the responsibility of the Romanian Army is granting Host Nation Support, to back up the military actions that are taking place on national territory by the armed forces belonging to allied states and NATO partners.

Throughout this article, we have dealt with the main specific elements intended for granting Host Nation Support on the national territory, namely: the goods and services that can be offered to the military within the foreign allied forces participating in military actions, the declared Romanian facilities, the data contained in the Romanian HNS Capabilities Catalogue and in the Romanian HNS Data Base and we have determined the directions of action to be followed, in order to modernize the process of granting Host Nation Support by Romania.

Keywords: *Host Nation Support (HNS); North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); goods and services; military actions; capabilities; security.*

Introduction

High-risk events that have taken place in the world in recent decades, including the continuous rise of terrorism, manifested through attacks committed in the most unexpected places, the permanent human rights violations in Libya, Iraq or Afghanistan, the tensed situation from the Balkans area and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, have led to strong political and military reactions and determined measures, both by NATO, and by NATO member states or partners.

Certain actions and measures, taken by the Alliance, were inclusively of military nature, and were directed against state and non-state actors, who are constantly trying to change the existing political and military balance globally.

It is obvious that certain current threats can be rebutted only through the use of military methods and means, but eliminating most of these threats requires the combined use of the necessary military and civilian institutional instruments.

The dangers to regional and international stability and the threats to democracy emphasize the need for a strong Alliance, capable of

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intervening, in the short term, anywhere in the world, to restore the balance that exists today.

“Currently, the strategic security environment is characterized by uncertainty, complexity, rapid changes and persistent conflict. This environment is fluid, with alliances and partnerships constantly changing, new national and transnational threats constantly appearing and disappearing”¹.

The status of NATO and EU member country, located at the eastern borders of these organizations, implies a huge responsibility and calls for our country to put into practice the most effective measures to refute the threats against national and Euro-Atlantic security.

NATO has close relations and cooperates with many states and organizations. NATO cooperation initiatives are of particular importance for the evolution of the international security environment:

1. Partnership for Peace;
2. Mediterranean Dialogue;
3. Istanbul Cooperation Initiative;
4. “across the globe” partners;
5. Cooperation with International Organizations such as UN, EU, OSCE and so on.

“Many states have been invaluable members of coalitions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Balkans and in the fight against the Islamic State. Most important, NATO should strengthen its partnership with the European Union. Partnerships with the Gulf Cooperation Council, the African Union and the Arab League could promote stability along NATO’s periphery”².

“NATO’s approach towards security in the XXI century is considered realistic, as it recognizes the importance of political, economic, social and environmental factors, in addition to the indispensable defence dimension. The common goal is to achieve a collective European security architecture in which the Alliance tries to defend peace, to strengthen Euro-Atlantic security

and stability in different ways: by enforcing the trans-Atlantic connection; by maintaining effective military capability to ensure deterrence and defence, in order to meet the full range of its actions; by developing European security and defence identity within NATO, by keeping the overall capacity to manage crises successfully, by remaining open to new adhesions; by continuing the partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other countries sharing the Euro-Atlantic security approach, especially regarding arms control and disarmament”³.

In the North-Atlantic Alliance doctrine and, implicitly, in the national military legislation, it is stated that Host Nation Support (HNS) is an important functional area of logistics and it must represent a higher percentage as possible of the logistical support granted to military members of the armed forces belonging to the Member States or partners, who participate in military actions on the national territory of another Member State or NATO partner.

Host Nation Support is defined as “the civil and military assistance rendered in peace, crisis and conflict by a Host Nation (HN) to allied forces and organisations which are located on, operating in or transiting through the HN’s territory. Arrangements concluded between appropriate authorities of HN(s) and SN(s) and/or NATO form the basis of such assistance”⁴.

Due to its importance in achieving the specific objectives of each military action, “the planning of the HNS must be carried out simultaneously with the elaboration of the operational plans”⁵.

¹ Gheorghe Minculete, *Modern approaches to logistics management*, 2nd revised and added edition, “Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 188.

² Douglas Lute, Nicholas Burns, “*NATO at Seventy. An Alliance in Crisis*”, p. 7.

³ Gheorghe Minculete, Daniela Răpan, “Approaches on Current Risks and Threats to the International Security Environment”, in *Science and Military*, no. 2 (Volume 7)/2012, Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, Slovak Republic, p. 6.

⁴ ***, AJP-4.5 (A) *Allied Joint Doctrine for Host Nation Support*, Edition B, Version 1, Brussels, NATO, May 2013, p. 13.

⁵ Gheorghe Minculete, “Host Nation Support - Priority goal of army logistics. Capabilities and logistical facilities that can be made available to NATO forces, vol. *Military logistics, transformation and remodeling*, “Carol I” National Defense University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 4.



1. Determination of goods and services which can be made available to foreign armed forces

The main element, which contributes to the initiation of the subsequent processes of providing Host Nation Support, is the identification of all categories of goods and services, which can be delivered or provided for the benefit of the military belonging to the foreign allied forces, when participating in military actions on our national territory.

It should be mentioned that, despite the fact that any kind of goods and services, that are necessary for their logistical support, can be offered or provided for the foreign military, the logistical support is granted only if, by providing it, it is not affected in any way the realization of the commitments made and the fulfilment of the outlined missions by our country's army.

The Host Nation Support process can be streamlined by developing a strategy for providing goods and services that will ensure a close correlation between the needs of these forces and the availability in the Joint Operations Area (JOA), for the entire period in which the military in the foreign allied armed forces participate in the respective military action, on Romania's territory.

During the course of a military action, it is necessary to establish, both for the logistics system intended for Host Nation Support, as well as for the other functional areas of the logistical support (material resource management, movement and transport, maintenance, infrastructure, medical assistance, campaign services, financial assurance), the specific logistical objectives for the respective military action.

At the request of the representatives of the foreign allied armed forces, the Ministry of National Defence can make available for the military within these forces, goods from its own inventory, services provided by the personnel from specialized military structures, buildings and other infrastructure elements of the military patrimony (such as facilities intended for the

storage or preposition of the technique), for rent, in accordance with the national legislation of Romania.

The terms and conditions under which these goods and services will be contracted and how the necessary assistance will be provided for their acquisition or rental by specialized structures, belonging to the foreign allied armed forces, participating in military actions on Romania's territory, are provided in Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Technical Arrangements (TAs), concluded between the respective foreign armed forces and our country.

The purpose of negotiating and signing an MOU is to establish the framework needed for granting Host Nation Support to the military from the armed forces belonging to a certain allied state or alliance, and the purpose of signing and drafting a TA is to detail the specific conditions for granting Host Nation Support, during the course of a certain military action⁶.

When the requested item is missing from the records, for an easier identification and in order to determine possible replacements of that item, it will be used the *NATO Codes from identify items and ammunition* and data from the *Interchangeable Ammunition and Explosives Catalogs*.

If our country is lending equipment and goods to the military personnel from the allied foreign armed forces, the items to be loaned are identified using the national code or NATO identification code and their own series.

When in MOUs or TAs, concluded between our country and Sending Nations (SNs), this is stipulated, these goods and services, requested by the military from the visiting foreign armed forces, can be provided *free of charge*, otherwise, the respective goods and services are made available to these military officers *on charge*.

⁶ A.N: a concrete example of such MOU, concluded between the Government of Romania and the Government of the Hellenic Republic, regarding the Host Nation Support for the execution of NATO operations and exercises can be found on the website <https://www.senat.ro/legis/PDF/2007/07L657TC.pdf>, following that for the execution of each Romanian-Greek joint operation or exercise under NATO aegis, a TA will be negotiated and signed.



Prices of goods and services delivered or rendered for the benefit of the military from the foreign allied forces carrying out military actions on the territory of Romania and the way of renting real estate or other infrastructure elements from the administration of the Minister of National Defence, as well as the calculation of the rent for these, are computed by means of formulas legislated by specific financial orders, issued by the Minister of Public Finance⁷ and the Minister of National Defence⁸, the respective values, which derive from these formulas, adding the taxes and excise duties provided by the national legislation.

2. National APOD/SPOD/ RPOD/LOC facilities

“For the transit of the territory and airspace of the HN, the latter can make available to the SNs forces: landing-boarding ports (SPOD/Es), landing-boarding airports (APOD/Es) and railway terminals of landing-boarding (RPOD/Es)”⁹.

Accordingly, the most important *specific national facilities declared*, dedicated to the

⁷ A.N.: two examples of such significant orders are: Order no. 4145 of December 30, 2015, for the approval of the Norms for the exemption from value added tax for supplies of goods and services intended for the realization in Romania of the NSIP projects provided for in art. 9 par. (1) of the Law no. 294/2007 regarding the development in Romania of the projects financed under the NATO Security Investment Program, Official Gazette of Romania, no. 14, Bucharest, 2016 and Order no. 4146 of December 30, 2015, for the approval of the Norms regarding the application of the value added tax exemption provided in Art. 294 par. (1) lit. j), k), l), m) and n) of the Law no. 227/2015 regarding the Fiscal Code and art. X and XI of the Agreement between Romania and the United States of America on the Status of the United States of America forces in Romania, signed in Washington on 30 October 2001, ratified by Law no. 26/2002, Official Gazette of Romania, no. 33, Bucharest, 2016.

⁸ The most used of these orders, issued especially for detailing the way of providing the logistical support granted to the military from the foreign allied forces and the methods of compensating this support, since 2009, is L-26, *NATO Standard Procedures Manual for Mutual Logistic Assistance*.

⁹ Vasile Popa, *Host Nation Support*, Centre for Defense and Security Strategic Studies, “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2006, p. 23.

Host Nation Support and highlighted and detailed, also, in the *Romanian Capabilities Catalog* designed to Host Nation Support (Romanian HNS Capabilities Catalog - ROU-HNS CAPCAT), are:

- Aerial Ports of Debarkation/Embarkation/ (APOD/Es);
- Sea Ports of Debarkation/Embarkation (SPOD/Es);
- Rail Ports of Debarkation/Embarkation (RPOD/Es) systems, nodes and terminals;
- garrisons subordinated to the chiefs of the categories of army forces, which have the capacity to provide specific utilities for granting Host Nation Support;
- the facilities for the accommodation, feeding and recovery of the military from the foreign allied armed forces, which carry out military actions on Romanian territory;
- rifle ranges and training camps;
- spaces for storage and preposition (of armament, ammunition, equipment and materials);
- the specific facilities for the provision of healthcare etc.

In order to be useful for the purpose for which SPOD/E, respectively APOD/E were considered, these national infrastructure elements must have: storage spaces, maintenance areas, utilities for fuelling, the capability to provide medical assistance and the possibility to provide emergency medical assistance, personal means of transportation, the possibility to operate multimodal transport (easy access to railways and road infrastructures, loading-unloading detachments, specialized personnel for cargo-transfer and personnel for traffic regulations, and must be equipped with modern technical equipment), air and naval surveillance systems interoperable with those of all the Member States of the North-Atlantic Alliance, devices for the protection of the force, liaison teams, specific equipment for fire defence (FD), as well as the possibility of being easily supplied with materials from all supply classes, all of which give these POD/E an *integrated character*.



Due to membership in the North-Atlantic Alliance, the infrastructure programs designed to modernize the national economy (so, implicitly, also national infrastructure elements designated for granting Host Nation Support), can be implemented only if they are designed to operate according to NATO standards.

Nowadays, due to the fact that military actions necessarily involve the flexibility and mobility of the forces engaged, the logistical support given to the troops must be flexible and permanently adapted to the situation in the JOA and must be able to provide logistical support and transportation for the forces and techniques involved in all the requested locations, during all the stages of the respective military actions.

For the situations in which the national territory is transited, Romania can provide personal and technical transportation services between most of the cities from national territory.

In our country, the use of all categories of roads, both public and private, is accessible to all categories of individuals and legal persons, provided that the military transport is executed on the basis of Technical Agreements between the Ministry of National Defence and the specialized companies.

3. Romanian Host Nation Support Capabilities Catalogue and Romanian Host Nation Support Data Base

The designation, preparation and presentation of the facilities offered by our country for the purpose of granting Host Nation Support to the allied foreign forces, represent highly topical and important issues for Romania.

In the civilian and military sectors, the online purchase of goods and services leads to reduced costs and delivery time to beneficiaries, all of which result in a more efficient, therefore cheaper system.

Increasing transparency for those who request this data, on the goods and services that are in the record or can be provided through the representatives of the Romanian Armed Forces,

means a greater efficiency of these military actions. For the presentation of the commanders of NATO commandments and the authorities of the states participating or intending to participate with troops in the military actions planned to take place on Romanian territory, the facilities that can be offered as the Host Nation Support, have been elaborated and are constantly updated two documents, namely: *The catalogue of Romanian capabilities designed to the Host Nation Support* (Romanian HNS Capabilities Catalogue - ROU-HNS CAPCAT), which has been drafted since 2003 and the *Romanian HNS Database* (ROU-HNS DB), elaborated since 2014, through a provision of the head of the Logistics Directorate/ Defence Staff.

These documents include data on all national facilities that are intended for feeding, lodging, training, transportation, storing up all categories of materials, as well as for the establishment of *integrated* storage capabilities in peacetime.

The supply of goods and services, provided in the Catalogue of Romanian capabilities designed for Host Nation Support (CAPCAT) consists of a wide range of such goods and services that can be offered or provided for the military personnel of the participating foreign allied forces in military actions that take place on national territory.

In order to facilitate the provision of vital resources to support the specific logistical processes that take place in the JOA, this offer covers, inclusively, Romania's assuming the leading nation position in granting logistical support (Logistic Lead Nation – LLN) or of a nation specialized in providing logistic support (Logistic Role Specialization Nation – LRSN).

To find a viable solution that allows all CAPCATs to be integrated into the LOGFAS (Logistics Functional Area Services) system, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) works together with the NATO Agency for Communications and Informatics (NATO Communications and Information Agency – NCI), and, in the pilot program, designed for the implementation of the new format, eight states are involved, including our country.



Representatives from the Logistics Directorate/Defence Staff have attended, since the beginning of this pilot program, all the meetings of these NCIA working groups.

In order to know the degree of availability of the infrastructure for defence and to identify the corresponding services, which can be provided in support of the military personnel belonging to the foreign allied forces located on our country's territory, it was constituted, and is permanently updated, the Database regarding the location and the technical-tactical characteristics of the infrastructure objectives. This includes data regarding the Romanian military units and it is managed by the specialized staff, appointed within the Logistics Directorate, through the INTRAMAN network.

ROU-HNS DB was established with the purpose to be a specialized tool for the introduction, updating, centralization and transmission of data regarding all the barracks under the administration of the Defence Staff, in order to support the coordination of the designation and granting actions of the Host Nation Support.

4. Directions to be pursued in the modernization of HNS

The NATO doctrine on HNS makes it very clear that providing Host Nation Support is a determining factor in an operational scenario or military exercise. By providing this logistical support, when the condition that the available funds are used effectively is met, the countries sending troops to participate in a military action are obviously and substantially relieved of much of the logistical effort (financial and material) that they have to do in order to support their own forces in the JOA.

It is also obvious that, in terms of the planning and support processes of the host nation, "an integrative vision on procurement, material, financial and human resources, as well as the available facilities"¹⁰ is needed in order to ensure

a prompt and correct management of all the unforeseen situations that may arise, an action which, at the level of the Romanian Army, is in charge of the structure responsible for granting Host Nation Support within the Logistics Directorate of the Defence Staff.

It is important to know that for the military personnel belonging to the Allied Armed Forces the use of resources is insured, in the same way as for the military personnel from the national armed forces, of all categories of resources in the JOA, as well as the fact that, as stipulated in the Doctrine and in the NATO specific documents, Romania provides for the foreign military personnel with similar conditions in terms of accessibility, quantity and quality of this support, and demands that they follow the same procedures as those requested by the Romanian military personnel, in order to pay for the goods and services provided.

Among the directions of action to be pursued in order to facilitate and modernize the way of granting logistical support for foreign military, who participate in military actions on the national territory, it is noted *the identification* and *the availability* of specific infrastructure elements, which can be used for accommodation, feeding or training of the military within these forces.

Currently, Romania is involved in the development of programs for the modernization of some components of the national strategic infrastructure, a process that will obviously contribute to the economic development, to ensuring the national security and will facilitate the granting of Host Nation Support by our country. This process will initially follow the modernization of national ports, airports, roads and rails infrastructures.

In recent years, in addition to the goods and services already considered *classic* by granting them as Host Nation Support, there have emerged other *new categories*, which are better adjusted to the needs of the military within some modern NATO forces which have not been granted until now as this type of support, namely: the labour

¹⁰ Gheorghe Minculete, *Modern approaches to logistics management*, 2nd revised and added edition, "Carol I"

National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2015, p. 61.



force, selected from or around JOA; cleaning of linen and military clothing; repairs performed on the equipment; access to computers connected to the Internet, as well as ensuring a data flow, which is large enough for the realization of data and information transmissions between the foreign military located on Romanian territory; specific storage facilities and means of handling material goods (unloading-loading and transportation); transportation of personnel and materials and so on.

Conclusions

The main conclusion resulting from this article is that the purpose of implementing Host Nation Support concept in practice is to provide effective support to NATO military actions with the highest efficiency, by optimally using the available resources of the host nation.

We can state that, through the orders issued by the Romanian Minister of National Defence and the specialized military literature, a very good coverage of the entire range of logistical support (goods and services) is realised, which can be offered to the military from the foreign allied armed forces, while they participate in the military actions that take place on national territory. Also, the same orders cover the methods by which the compensation of the goods and services offered to these military personnel is done, as well as the procedures to be followed in order to achieve the respective compensations.

The emergence of new types of conflict, which involves the participation of the military in the member countries or partners of the North-Atlantic Alliance in expeditionary military actions, obviously, requires the modernization of granting Host Nation Support process, both through the prioritization of the strategic infrastructure elements modernization programs, and especially, by including between the goods and services offered or provided for the benefit of the foreign military personnel participating in the military actions that take place on Romania's territory, of new goods and services, which have not been granted or executed for their own use

until now, but which are necessary for the modern logistical support of these forces.

It is important to be mentioned and emphasized that the goods and services, offered or executed as Host Nation Support for the benefit of the military within the foreign allied forces, are made available to them only if in this way the capacity to continue their missions is not diminished and if it is not affected the compliance with commitments our country has made, and to be fulfilled by the Romanian Army.

Another important conclusion drawn from this paper is that, one of the first measures that should be taken, in order to grant HNS in proper conditions, is to prepare Romania's territory for defence in time of peace, which can be achieved, firstly, by modernizing the locations through which the reception and transportation of personnel and equipment (the Ports of Debarkation/Embarkation, the railway terminals, the lines of communication and road and so on), and the logistical support facilities from the respective structures or nearby, in order to ensure a rapid reception of troops and materials that will arrive on national territory and to support the movement of these human and material flows, from the landing locations to the Staging Areas (SAs), from where, after the constitution of forces, it should be possible to ensure continuity of movement of personnel and technicians to the Final Destinations (FDs).

The permanent formation and updating of the Romanian HNS Capabilities Catalogue – (RO-HNS-CAPCAT) and Romanian HNS Data Base (ROU-HNS DB), are two essential activities, strictly necessary for informing the commanders of the foreign allied forces, expressing their intention to participate in military actions on national territory, with up-to-date data regarding the facilities intended for accommodation, feeding, training, transportation and storage of materials and data regarding the availability of the infrastructure elements, made available to them, for the purpose of granting HNS to the military from the foreign allied armed forces.

Finally, it is safe to say that all NATO Member States and partners (implicitly, Romania), by



keeping in good condition and modernizing their capabilities for logistical support, can significantly ease the tasks for commanders of foreign allied forces, imposed by the implementation of a logistical support for the respective military action.

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THE CLASH OF STAKEHOLDERS' INTERESTS IN THE AFGHAN PEACE PROCESS

*Cosmin Marian POTOLINĂ**

This paper analyses the actions taken by stakeholders following the United States' alleged intention for a full troop drawdown from Afghanistan, which drew regional and international attention, thus facilitating a negotiating framework for attaining an Afghan peace agreement. Taliban Movement is the main player in brokering a political resolution to end the Afghan war; but, at domestic level, the negotiating forum needs to embody Afghan government officials and civil society minority representatives. A comprehensive and lasting Afghan peace pact demands the implication of external stakeholders which have contributed to the peace talks by orchestrating consultative summits or persuading specific actors to step into peace debates.

The paper will endeavour to outline the geopolitical interests held by these players within Afghanistan and the Central Asian region, all of them struggling to entirely preserve and expand them to their advantage. Thus, it is difficult to reach a robust Afghan peace deal that satisfies all sides.

Keywords: *Afghan peace process; political agreement; Taliban movement; stakeholders; geopolitical interests.*

Preliminary considerations

The terrorist Taliban movement initiated, in February 2018, an open letter addressed to

the American public, asking for the opening of a peaceful dialog for a political resolution to the Afghan conflict¹. The Islamist radical movement elicited direct talks with Washington representatives, because Taliban vision the Afghan government as being illegitimate.

The prospect of a fully United States troops withdrawal from Afghanistan pleased the Taliban network and encouraged negotiating talks leading to outlining a framework for a deal in which the Taliban have committed to counter and cooperate, at international level, against terrorist acts, fighters and accomplices within areas under their rule². The agreement established between the two sides represents only a chapter from the broader pact that is expected to encompass a nationwide ceasefire, terms on assistance for preventing a collapse of the Afghan government in the aftermath of foreign troop pull-out and a domestic political agreement resulting from negotiations comprising the Afghan regime's demands, adding the interests and concerns of potential political elites, public figures within the Afghan parliament, political opposition groups, plus the needs of the complex Afghan

¹ Vinay Kaura, "Understanding the complexities of the Afghan peace process", in *Observer Research Foundation*, 2018, No. 151, pp. 8-9.

² Rubin Barnett, "Everyone Wants a Piece of Afghanistan", in *Foreign Policy*, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/11/everyone-wants-a-piece-of-afghanistan-russia-china-un-sco-pakistan-isi-qatar-saudi-uae-taliban-karzai-ghani-khalilzad-iran-india/>, accessed on 14.06.2019.

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civil society³. Afghanistan's stability is mainly crippled by Taliban insurgency and awaiting internal power reconfiguration because of pending presidential elections and dealing with the external stakeholders' implications for achieving a final peace pact⁴. Participation of external powers into the peace talks has concerned some parts of the Afghan civil society and also the Ghani administration with the prospect of curtailed human rights and freedoms when envisioning a political settlement which satisfies all sides, except theirs.

Worried about a potential peace agreement settled between U.S. and Taliban, some prominent Afghan women voiced the gravity of these talks upon their country's unfortunate return to days of female abuse and oppression, as the Afghan turbulent history may depict. They have requested the U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, to facilitate a place for women at the negotiating table with Taliban, in order to assert their demands.⁵ Such situation underscores Afghan females' craving to make their voices heard and their requests fulfilled.

Considering that Pakistan has been supporting and hosting Taliban figures since they held power in Afghanistan in order to pressure Kabul, Washington and New Delhi administrations⁶, U.S. regards Islamabad regime as a central player in getting Taliban to agree upon formulating a final peace pact to bring an end to the prolonged war. But to reach an inclusive and durable peace agreement, Iran and the Afghan government need to be integrated in the forthcoming stage of

the Afghan reconciliation process.

Despite the breakthroughs achieved in the US-Taliban direct negotiations, the Afghan peace process cannot be settled excluding China, India, Russia and Iran, each exerting consistent influence in Afghanistan, all sharing the common interest of expanding their access into the Central Asian abundant natural reserves⁷. Hence, a participation of all stakeholders is paramount in drafting a final peace pact shaped by each party's geopolitical interests within Afghanistan and the surrounding area. As such, a realistic peaceful, stable and prosperous country can only be attained by partially satisfying all sides, as some may need to make compromises and abandon a few of their own interests.

1. U.S. pull-out prospects bring Afghan women on the peace process stage

Neighbouring countries vision Afghanistan as a U.S. power projection into the region. The U.S. exit makes stakeholders think about what will substitute the Afghanistan's dependency on funding, equipment, training and technology that have been continuously furnished by the U.S.. Therefore, a solution to sustain the Afghan state needs to be identified and requires a regional consensus over the Afghan peace agreement⁸. But one resolution to mitigate the Afghan dependency on international assistance would be to foster foreign trade and investment, currently repelled by nationwide violence. Regional and international mediators have to cope with Afghan government composition and structure, the type of international counterterrorism presence, international states' endorsement for the composition, role and dimension of security and defence forces and the options of integrating Afghanistan in regional and global economy.

In the U.S. drawdown scenario⁹, Washington

³ A.N.: Afghan warlords, tribal leaders, religious leaders, women figure and ethnical representatives are all necessary to achieve a sustainable peace settlement.

⁴ Shanthie Mariet D'souza, "The Limits of India's Soft Power in Afghanistan", in *Fair Observer*, URL: https://www.fairobserver.com/region/central_south_asia/afghanistan-taliban-peace-talks-india-south-asia-security-news-00081/, accessed on 18.05.2019.

⁵ Conor Finnegan, "Afghan female leaders urge Trump administration to stand up for their rights in Taliban peace talks", in *ABC News*, URL: <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/afghan-female-leaders-urge-trump-administration-stand-rights/story?id=63212646>, accessed on 23.06.2019.

⁶ Anna Larson, Alexander Ramsbotham, "Incremental peace in Afghanistan", in *Accord*, no.27/2018, Conciliation Resources, p. 150.

⁷ A.N.: Central Asian region comprises Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. See: ***, "Council conclusions on Afghanistan's Peace Process", in *Foreign Affairs Council*, 2019, Council of the European Union, p. 3.

⁸ Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*

⁹ A.N.: a full U.S. asset pull-out is improbable to occur as Pentagon highlights the necessity for maintaining a



would decrease its assistance and the September 2014 Afghan-U.S. Bilateral Security Agreement would probably transform into a Multilateral Security Agreement. Thus, either Doha debates need to concretize a regional framework or the alternative may be to diplomatically strengthen the Shanghai Cooperation Organization¹⁰. However, a multilateral cooperation mediated by United Nations (U.N.) would clash with Trump administration's "America first" foreign policy and its thirst to confront Iran, whose cooperation is essential for Afghanistan stability. Therefore, after a resolution to this sensitive and difficult situation is identified and implemented, U.N. peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan become paramount in order to monitor the Afghan peace agreement.

From all participating stakeholders, the Afghan female leaders vision U.S. as the main key actor in fulfilling their agenda, as it holds the diplomatic and military power to pressure the Taliban Movement to comply with the rule of law and respect the universal human rights of all Afghans as stipulated in the Afghan Constitution¹¹. Some prominent women declared they are in favour of the reconciliation process and desire to bring their contribution to the externally mediated peace talks for avoiding not being stripped of their human rights in a feasible Taliban rule.

But currently, women are afraid the ongoing negotiations have not comprehensively brought on the table the subject of their grievances and assured protection.¹² Afghan females are anxious

they may be deprived of their hard gained and preserved rights and freedoms and they could suffer from restrictions¹³ imposed by the Taliban, if the militant network gains political power and does not adjust its views.

Women are winning more terrain in Loya Jirga as representatives¹⁴, being aware of the aftermath of an eventual peace pact arranged with the Taliban. Hence, prominent Afghan women are decided to fight for their cause until the end, believing that their participation at the negotiating panel may result into a more sustainable final peace agreement.

2. Stakeholder's contribution to fostering a peace deal

On 22 March 2019, officials of U.S., China, Russia and European Union (E.U.) held a meeting for advisory matters on Afghan peace process¹⁵. The special envoys concluded that peace is a mandatory objective, violence must cease and mutual efforts are needed to bring security and prosperity throughout Afghanistan. They emphasized that the final peace agreement should integrate the universal human rights of Afghan women, as well as of the minorities, stressing the essential factor that Afghan territory would not be used for terrorist purposes, threatening any state. The statement highlighted that U.S and E.U. would continue their close assistance for the war-torn country and urge more state actors to sustain the ongoing peace debates that require

counter-terrorism capability into Afghanistan. See: Diana Stacy Correll, "Pentagon: 'Robust' counter-terrorism efforts in Afghanistan must continue – even if peace deal is reached", in *Military Times*, URL: <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/07/16/pentagon-robust-counter-terrorism-efforts-in-afghanistan-must-continue-even-if-peace-deal-is-reached/>, accessed on 21.07.2019.

¹⁰ A.N.: the Shanghai Cooperation Organization comprises Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Central Asian countries, with Afghanistan as an observer. See: Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*

¹¹ Mariam Safi, "Afghanistan's Peace Process: Evolution, Impact and Gaps", in *Organization for Policy Research and Development Studies* vol. 3/2017, Kabul, p. 5, 8.

¹² A.N.: Khalilzad mentioned in February 2019 that some Taliban factions have adopted ideologies in favor of women treatment and relations, but some female leaders

voiced Taliban words are empty and purposefully stated only to attain power. Furthermore, girls are deprived of education in some area as they account for 60% of the rate of children out of school. See: Conor Finnegan, *op. cit.*

¹³ A.N.: girls were barred from school past 8 years old, women were denied getting a job, obliged to have their faces fully covered with burka and to be accompanied by a male relative every time when venturing out of home, adding up women's public flogging or execution for rules violation.

¹⁴ A.N.: Loya Jirga is a special mass national gathering that brings together representatives from the various ethnic, religious, and tribal communities in Afghanistan to debate subjects of national crisis and to settle national issues. See: Mariam Safi, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-5; 8-10.

¹⁵ ***, "Council conclusions on Afghanistan's Peace Process", in *Foreign Affairs Council*, Council of the European Union, 2019, p. 3.



to encompass an intra-Afghan forum, as well as reconstruction and development initiatives. The special envoys conceded Afghanistan's right to decide on its own political, security and economic dimensions.

The Taliban agreed to hold an all-Afghan Germany-mediated peace meeting in Doha, Qatar, on July 7 and 8, but with Afghan government representatives attending it in their personal capacity.¹⁶ The outcome of this forum culminated with the Taliban getting closer to attaining their alleged objective of enforcing Islamic Shari'a rule in Afghanistan, along with modelling Afghan governmental and security institutions to suit the Taliban's ideological vision. For the Afghan females, the conference underscored the Taliban guarantee of respecting their fundamental rights in accordance with Islamic principles, which revitalized the hope in the Afghan females, foreseeing a more prosperous future for them. Likewise, the parties highlighted their intent to reduce civilian casualties, showing signs of positive changes in Taliban's views towards ending the Afghan war.

U.S.

The U.S. negotiating board has been periodically meeting with Taliban interlocutors in Doha, Qatar, for reaching a consensus on each side's list of demands, getting the Taliban promise not to use Afghan territory as a sanctuary for terrorist acts or terrorist figures. Another two crucial issues are still under debate: the date for a nationwide Taliban ceasefire and the date of intra-Afghan peace dialogue.¹⁷ The Taliban refuse to meet on peace matters with Afghan officials, because the regime is regarded as a puppet of the U.S. In order not to be sidelined, Khalilzad has briefed the Afghan administration after every meeting held with the Taliban. Furthermore, U.S.

¹⁶ Ahmad Tufail, "The Doha Agreement – Paving the Way for the Taliban's Takeover of Afghanistan and Enforcement Of Shari'a-Based Governance", in *Memri Daily Brief*, URL: <https://www.memri.org/reports/doha-agreement-%E2%80%93-paving-way-talibans-takeover-afghanistan-and-enforcement-sharia-based>, accessed on 17.07.2019.

¹⁷ ***, "Council conclusions on Afghanistan's Peace Process", 2019, Council of the European Union, in *Foreign Affairs Council*, p. 2.

assures Afghan people that its own debates with the Islamist radical network aim at outlining the foundation for a peace process that will be in the Afghan people's benefit.

On 29 June 2019, a seventh U.S. - Taliban direct negotiation round was organized in Doha, amid a spike in Taliban inflicted violence to gain consistent leverage in the negotiations for ending the war.¹⁸ Most of the matters discussed remained secret, behind closed doors, but the U.S. negotiators publicly recounted that considerable progress was made toward reaching a final Afghan peace agreement, revitalizing the fate of the Afghan society. Before the inception of the abovementioned U.S. - Taliban round, the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, declared that U.S. would expect a comprehensive peace deal before 1st September¹⁹, but this statement was viewed as a component of the U.S. domestic politics aimed at acquiring a tangible breakthrough before the presidential race in 2020.

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen stated on 01 July 2019 that the radical network would involve in intra-Afghan debates once it is agreed on the NATO troop pull-out date.²⁰ This statement emphasizes that the Taliban movement is striving to stick to its agenda, and it is not easy to negotiate with them, as it resorts to various strategies in order to safeguard maximum political power within the peace framework.

In a meeting held on 22 July 2019 with the Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan, at the White House, President Donald Trump hailed Pakistan's effort in facilitating the Afghan peace dialogue, as the latter perceives a political

¹⁸ Kathy Gannon, "US, Taliban open Doha talks in fresh bid to end war", in *Washington Post*, URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/us-taliban-to-open-doha-talks-in-fresh-bid-to-end-war/2019/06/29/f6298116-9a22-11e9-9a16-dc551ea5a43b_story.html?noredirect=on, accessed on 29.06.2019.

¹⁹ Hasib Danish Alikozai, "Can US Reach Deal with Taliban by September in Afghanistan?", in *Voanews*, URL: <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/can-us-reach-deal-taliban-september-afghanistan>, accessed on 06.07.2019.

²⁰ ***, "Doha talks continue amid Taliban's attack in Kabul", in *the Frontier Post*, URL: <https://thefrontierpost.com/doha-talks-continue-amid-talibans-attack-in-kabul/>, accessed on 01.07.2019.



settlement as the utmost suitable solution to end the Afghan conflict.²¹ Therefore, U.S. approach positively shifted considering that last year Washington administration cancelled Islamabad \$1.3 billion, in annual security aid. Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund approved a \$6 billion loan for assisting Pakistan's ramshackle economy and bolstered the bilateral relationship. These are indications highlighting that Pakistan's efforts were effective in encouraging the Afghan peace debates.

Russia

Russian-Taliban relationship apparently deepened at the beginning of 2016, when the Russian appointed special envoy for Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, declared that the Taliban interests were converging with Russia's, as both vision Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as a common threat, Russia preferring a stable Afghan regime with whom it can cooperate.²² Through the aforementioned staunch tie, Moscow can foster a hard-to-obtain Afghan political agreement and further develop its link into cementing a military alliance for repelling ISIS menace.

Russia understood that U.S. would decrease its monopolizing influence in Afghanistan since it has gradually got involved into the Afghan peace debates, by initiating, in December 2017, the Moscow Process for orchestrating Afghan political talks, based on the consensus of Iran,

²¹ A.N.: furthermore, in response to the pressure applied by Washington administration, Pakistani authorities captured Hafiz Saeed a few days before the Oval Office meeting. Hafiz Saeed is the founder of Lashkar-e-Taiba and the purported architect of the 2008 Mumbai attacks. See: ***, "Trump praises Pakistan's role in 'progress' on Afghan peace", in *New Straits Times*, URL: <https://www.nst.com.my/world/2019/07/506443/trump-praises-pakistan-role-progress-afghan-peace>, accessed on 24.07.2019.

²² A.N.: thus, in February 2016 Russia furnished for the Afghan security services a military aid consisting of 10,000 automatic rifles. When it comes to Taliban arms provision, Russian officials have denied the veracity of such deeds. See: Nicholas Trickett, "Making Sense of Russia's Involvement in Afghanistan", in *The Diplomat*, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/making-sense-of-russias-involvement-in-afghanistan/>, accessed on 03.06.2019.

Pakistan, China and, of course, Russia. The invitation in the first round of the Moscow Process was turned down by the U.S., but the latter finally participated in the November 2018 round, by sending a U.S. diplomat from the Moscow embassy to that conference attended by the Taliban, Indian officials and Afghan's High Peace Council representatives.²³ Hence, Russia took overt steps toward broadening the dialogue channel for catalysing an Afghan peace framework.

The Afghan peace consultative talks between U.S. and Russia intensified after a December 2018 meeting between Khalilzad and Kabulov, in Moscow. Afterwards, in February 2019, an Afghan gathering was called in favour of a Moscow Process round consisting of Afghan residents from Russia headed by former Afghan president Karzai.²⁴ The conference enhanced pressure on officials aligned with Ghani to introduce the intra-Afghan component into the peace negotiations.

On 26 April 2019, Russia hosted a second trilateral consultation between special envoys of Russia, China and the U.S., in order to debate the ongoing Afghan reconciliation process. The three mediators agreed upon the following matters:

- the interests of the Afghan people prevail in outlining a peace deal, the Afghan people's desire for a truce is visible and efforts to contain violence are encouraged;
- the peace process needs to bring the Taliban and Afghan regime to the negotiating table and the three sides expressed their consensus for an inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace process;
- support a safe and cautious foreign troop withdrawal;
- elicit more endorsement from regional and international entities in facilitating the peace progress.²⁵

The trilateral conference better clarified the

²³ Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*

²⁴ *Ibidem.*

²⁵ Siyar Sirat, "US, Russia and China Reach 'Consensus' On Afghan Peace", in *Tolo News*, URL: <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/us-russia-and-china-reach->



turbulent Afghan peace stage and formulated directions that would be followed in the subsequent peace debates with the Taliban, Afghan regime and the rest of stakeholders.

India

India underscored its unconditional support for the Afghan regime as Afghanistan's instability directly affects India's security, this also being the case of Indian projects within the Afghan territory that may fall under the Taliban influence.²⁶ India has invested efforts for reducing violence and boosting stability into Afghanistan, endeavouring to gain goodwill of the Afghan population as a method to protect India's interests.²⁷ Therefore, India has proved to be the main regional provider of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for Afghanistan and, also, the most gratified foreign country due to the strong and friendly traditional bilateral relations, but with reduced influence over the negotiating promoters.

India's policy remained one of non-interference while permanently furnishing development assistance without any precondition, but in the absence of any tangible progress towards Afghanistan's stability. New Delhi was mindful of its little effective policy and endeavored to calibrate it by participating into a negotiating summit organized in Moscow in November 2018.²⁸ Hence, two senior retired

²⁶ A.N.: India is interested in broadening its cooperation with China especially in Afghan projects, as Pakistani sway in Afghanistan has enhanced exponentially with every process that involved Taliban. India contributed to reducing Afghanistan's dependency on Pakistan by developing the port of Chabahar in association with Iran, thus cementing an Indian-Afghan corridor which shuns Pakistan and allows New Delhi freight transports to Kabul markets. This infrastructure proved to be one of the most important breakthroughs, tightening the Indian-Afghan partnership and offering an alternate trade bridge between the two countries. See: Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*

²⁷ A.N.: it is a known fact that more than \$3 billion were directed by India for the Afghan infrastructure development, plus security training and helicopters provision. See: Shanthie Mariet D'souza, *op. cit.*

²⁸ A.N.: to augment the position of Afghan regime in the peace process and enhance its governance potential, India needs to extend the number of small development projects in remote Afghan provinces providing sustainable

Indian diplomats attended that conference, emphasizing a change in New Delhi's approach toward catalysing an Afghan peace dialog in order to draw a conflict resolution framework.

China

In February 2018 China commenced trilateral diplomatic talks with Pakistan and Afghanistan to foster the Taliban settle for a peace agreement.²⁹ Such move underscored that China was committed to make its presence felt in the Afghan peace process, unsatisfied of the neighbouring country's overall instability and determined to outline its geopolitical interests in Afghanistan. China has perceived the instability in the two countries as a menace to its Belt and Road Initiative, hence, Beijing rendered Pakistan to cooperate by refusing to bail it out of its financial crisis³⁰ and repeatedly positioning on Afghanistan side in Afghan-Pakistani bilateral disputes. China represents a major actor in attaining an inclusive and durable Afghan peace deal and plays a key role in urging Pakistan into implementing a nationwide ceasefire in Afghanistan, along with any disarmament of the Taliban within Pakistan, as China is Islamabad's utterly relevant economic associate. China is not as concerned about Afghan mineral riches as many may believe, but more interested in setting stability for enhancing its economic and strategic expansion. China stands against permanent U.S. bases in Afghanistan, but it is wary of the instability created as a result of a U.S. withdrawal.

Pakistan

Pakistan mediated, in July 2015, the first session of direct talks between the Afghan regime and the Taliban, a move that was later

basic services on health, education, irrigation services and agriculture. See: Shanthie Mariet D'souza, *op. cit.*

²⁹ Nicholas Trickett, *op. cit.*

³⁰ A.N.: Pakistan's bailout was offered by Saudi Arabia and UAE which have been interested in extending their coalition against Iran and Qatar and thus entice the sympathy of Washington administration. But UAE and Saudi Arabia are struggling inefficiently to prove that they could supplant Qatar as US's negotiation mediator with Taliban. See: Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*



to become the inception of broader peace negotiations between regional and international players. Pakistan has continued to exert pressure on Taliban leaders in order to urge them to participate into peace summits with U.S. and it also agreed to release former Taliban deputy leader, Mullah Baradar Akhund³¹, at the request of Zalmay Khalilzad. Baradar was appointed chief of Taliban hardliners and installed to the Taliban political office³², in Doha, as Khalilzad's counterpart in the peace process. Thus, Pakistan illustrated cues of commitment to mediate a dialogue between Taliban and Washington representatives and fulfilled a willowy U.S. demand by releasing a Taliban member in order to encourage a conflict resolution framework.

On 22 June 2019, Pakistan hosted the Afghan Peace Conference attended by senior Afghan politicians.³³ Hizb-e-Islami leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, expressed his thoughts in reference to the conflict management in Afghanistan, stating that ongoing negotiations between U.S. and the Taliban are not enough and the Afghans are the key player in bringing an efficient and sustainable peace pact in the war-wrecked country. Hence, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar highlighted that NATO forces need to exit Afghanistan in order to speed the Afghan political settlement, followed by a dialogue implying the Afghan regime and the complex Afghan civil society along with their grievances and demands.

³¹ A.N.: Mullah Baradar was imprisoned in February 2010 after a Central Intelligence Agency and Inter-Services Intelligence agency counterterrorism raid in Karachi. Therefore, Pakistan underscored its capacity to influence peace negotiations by preventing moderate Taliban individuals from stepping in such talks, as it was Baradar's case. Taliban co-founder Mullah Baradar is believed to still hold extensive sway over Taliban fighters and it has been regarded as one of the Taliban leaders most willing to accept a peace settlement. See: Rubin Barnett, *op. cit.*

³² A.N.: US government was in favor of the Taliban political office opening in Doha on June 2013.

³³ A.N.: including: former Balkh governor Atta Mohammad Noor, second deputy chief executive Mohammad Mohaqeq and presidential candidate Abdul Latif Pedram. See: ***, "Afghan Peace Conference Begins in Pakistan", in *Tolo News*, URL: <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/afghan-peace-conference-begins-pakistan>, accessed on 23.06.2019.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, highlighted at the inaugural ceremony that Pakistan supports the transformational cause Afghanistan undergoes and hopes for a stable, peaceful, unified and prosperous neighbouring country. He added that a bilateral relationship must be built on non-interference, mutual respect, trust and common interest³⁴, all of these being in Pakistan's interest due to the sufferings of Pakistani people inflicted by Afghanistan's persistent instability and widespread violence. Shah Mahmood Qureshi's statement appeared to give hope to Afghan nation in an attempt aimed at his country being perceived as an ally in building a more prosperous neighbouring country.

The Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan stated on 22 July 2019 he would endeavour to encourage Taliban candidate in the subsequent Afghan presidential election in order to set the necessary climate for Afghan people deciding their own future.³⁵ Imran Khan's promise enhanced that Pakistan prefers a stable neighbouring country comprising a wider political sector with Taliban interlocutors part of it. The statement suggests that Afghan nation may prefer to be led by a Taliban regime.

Iran

Craving for a full U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, Iran gradually intensified efforts for reaching a peace agreement in the neighbouring country. In June 2018, Tehran encouraged a temporary ceasefire between the Taliban and Afghan governmental forces and urged both sides to resolve the conflict through dialogue. Furthermore, Iran welcomed the Taliban in Tehran, in late December 2018, in a peace-

³⁴ A.N.: Qureshi regards a politically brokered settlement as more effective to the war-torn country than a military solution. See: ***, "Qureshi Says Pakistan Supports Peaceful, Stable Afghanistan", in *Tolo News*, URL: <https://www.tolonews.com/afghanistan/qureshi-says-pakistan-supports-peaceful-stable-afghanistan>, accessed on 24.06.2019.

³⁵ ***, "Trump praises Pakistan's role in 'progress' on Afghan peace", in *New Straits Times*, URL: <https://www.nst.com.my/world/2019/07/506443/trump-praises-pakistans-role-progress-afghan-peace>, accessed on 24.07.2019.



talk meeting³⁶, aimed at identifying solutions for an eventual political settlement that would satisfy all stakeholders and, ultimately, bring an end to the war. Iran is one of the pillars of stability in Afghanistan and its leverage focused on facilitating negotiations between the Afghan regime and the Taliban.

3. Stakeholders' interests in Afghanistan

U.S.'s interests in Afghanistan

U.S. holds vast geopolitical interests, in Afghanistan and the surrounding region, that have been expanding over the years, since the inception of its invasion into the country. These stakes include a broad spectrum, most of them are within security, military, political and economic sectors and, purportedly, crippled mostly by Iran, Pakistan and China.

Beneath are described some of U.S.'s interests in Afghanistan:

- discouraging terrorist attacks and organized crime³⁷ – U.S. entered Afghanistan for preventing and deterring homeland terrorist attacks; U.S. is present in the country for approximately 18 years and high scale terrorist attacks ceased to occur within U.S. territory; furthermore, U.S. presence has also been aimed at prohibiting terrorist safe havens and curbing terrorism and other forms of insecurity, including narcotics trafficking, within the Afghan territory;

- safeguarding the geopolitical interests of the U.S. and its allies³⁸ – U.S.'s presence will last until a guarantee for preserving U.S. and its allies' geopolitical interests is reached;

- thwarting China's ascending political and economic influence in Afghanistan, as well

as in Central Asian economic and energy areas³⁹ – U.S. has been taking measures to contain Beijing's influence in the region within economic and natural energy realms, as China is perceived as being the utmost regional economic threat to U.S. expansionist strategies⁴⁰;

- urging China to cancel its development projects within Balochistan province, Pakistan⁴¹ – U.S. views such constructive projects as an indication of U.S. failure to secure Afghan borders from cross-border radical groups;

- staging military assets in vicinity of Iran to calibrate Tehran internal affairs according to U.S. interests⁴² – U.S. military presence in Afghanistan represents one of Washington's coercive diplomatic tools aimed at adjusting Iran's domestic affairs and invading the country should circumstances be critical;

- curtailing Iran's natural energy resource influence in the region⁴³ – U.S. has attempted to restrain Tehran's sway over the natural energy exploitations from the Caspian Sea so that Iran would become more financially dependent, and thus forced to change its approach with the U.S.;

- mitigating Islamabad political and economic influence in Afghanistan by gaining Afghan regime's sympathy⁴⁴ – U.S. has perceived Islamabad's influence over the Kabul regime as a threat to both Washington's strategy and Afghan administration;

- cautiously swaying Islamabad's internal affairs in accordance with US's interests⁴⁵ – for instance, U.S. has worked on persuading the Islamabad hardliners deny safe havens to

³⁶ ***, "Iran says Afghan Taliban were in Tehran for peace talks", in *Dawn*, URL: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1454745>, accessed on 05.03.2019.

³⁷ Clayton Thomas, "Afghanistan: Background and U.S. Policy in Brief", in *Congressional Research Service*, 2019, p. 12.

³⁸ Karl Mueller, Becca Wasser, Jeffrey Martini, Stephen Watts, "U.S. Strategic Interests in the Middle East and Implications for the Army", in *Perspective*, RAND Corporation, 2017, p. 7-9, 12.

³⁹ M. Idrees and K. Anwar, "Afghanistan a Battle Ground for the Interests of Super Powers: A Special Reference to USA", in *Journal of Political Sciences & Public Affairs*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2017, p. 2.

⁴⁰ A.N.: placing itself on India's side consists one of the U.S.' strategies employed against China's economic menace. See: Iram Khalid, "The New Great Game in Afghanistan: Role of India (A Pakistani Perspective)", in *South Asian Studies*, 2011, p. 252.

⁴¹ Afifa Kiran, "Indian Quest for Strategic Ingress in Afghanistan and its Implications for Pakistan", in *ISSRA Papers 2009*, p. 20.

⁴² Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴³ Nicholas Trickett, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.



terrorists within Pakistani territory;

- monitoring Pakistani intentions toward its nuclear assets and other strategic capabilities⁴⁶ – U.S. has been monitoring Pakistani nuclear assets in order to determine their eventual course of action and prevent any such threats;

- expanding access and sway in oil and gas pipeline projects within Afghan territory and Central Asian natural energy reserves⁴⁷ – at the beginning of the Afghanistan invasion, US foreign policy concentrated on fostering close strategic links with regional states for diversifying its oil supplies by placing multiple pipelines, one of them being the U.S. sustained Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline with high development potential for Kabul administration;

- persuading Afghan regime award contracts in favour of U.S. mining companies for mine resource exploitation⁴⁸ – U.S. has gained full leverage over the Kabul regime in order to exploit the earth riches that would bolster U.S. economy and compete against China's leading position in rare-earth minerals market;

- maintaining security over foreign mine exploitations and over connecting adjacent road and railway routs in order to encourage foreign investment growth⁴⁹ – U.S. has been

continuously providing overall security throughout Afghanistan, including over the mine exploitations for preventing any mining site fall under the control of the radical groups, securing the physical integrity of company workers, as well as, guarding any adjacent transport links for ensuring freedom of movement;

- promoting U.S. – Indian common interests in Afghanistan and the region⁵⁰ – U.S. has highlighted reciprocal interests and concerns with New Delhi administration, especially within Afghanistan, as India is the most cherished foreign country within Afghan territory and, as such, U.S. aimed at nationwide expanding its Afghan sympathy.

Russia's interests in Afghanistan

Russia regards Afghan territory of strategic importance for Moscow's expansionist aspirations in the region, with U.S. posing the main threat due to its troop presence and steadfast influence at Afghan governmental level. Russia expects to fill the void created by the U.S. withdrawal from the country, in order to satisfy its own benefits.

Some of Russia's interests in Afghanistan include, but are not limited to:

- expanding influence and power projection⁵¹ – Russia has endeavoured to set control over Afghanistan since its invasion in 1979, yet Moscow's influence persisted at some level in the region and Russia has been striving to amplify it so as to become the dominant one over any other state or non-state actor's, especially after a U.S. troop pull-out scenario;

- fostering a stable and unified Afghan state to negotiate with, on investment aspects⁵² – it does not matter for Russia what entity reaches governmental power, as long as it installs a stable Kabul administration with whom Moscow regime can develop economic links for reciprocal benefit;

- strengthening Tajik-Afghan border

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ Manoj Kumar Mishra, "Why Peace Process in Afghanistan Will Be a Complicated Exercise – Analysis", in *Eurasia Review*, URL: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/12012019-why-peace-process-in-afghanistan-will-be-a-complicated-exercise-analysis/>, accessed on 04.04.2019.

⁴⁸ A.N.: mines including copper, iron, mercury, sulfur, asbestos, potash, graphite, coal, gemstones, molybdenum, gold, silver, marble and lithium. See: Antony Loewenstein, "Peace in Afghanistan? Maybe – but a Minerals Rush Is Already Underway", in *The Nation*, URL: <https://www.thenation.com/article/afghanistan-war-peace-talks-minerals/>, accessed on 03.07.2019.

⁴⁹ Richard Weitz, "Is China freeloading off the U.S. military's work in Afghanistan and Iraq?", in *Huffpost*, URL: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/china-military-afghanistan-iraq_n_927342?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2x1LmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAxEwMgRmKMFAnAwMGF-fc6KKDI_zOELcI_CZE11ZiuzNj2dh7O528WePhI714iRnauI7D3f6E10zsEHf5ULiwmvT2kadXvBMQd1IjwEJ4NNp91MJbPlhF5ywGZHrpy3eyCuLDrpmP02wXu-5JZcmP7finDEQdj6QU6WzAfcAea, accessed on 03.07.2019.

⁵⁰ Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵² Kaneshko Sangar, "Afghanistan's significance for Russia in the 21st Century: Interests, Perceptions and Perspectives", Vol. 12, No.1, 2016, in *Politics in Central Europe*, p. 68.



security⁵³ – Russia has set its efforts on the Tajik-Afghan border in order to safeguard the region from threats aimed at Moscow’s economic and natural energetic interests within Afghanistan and the Central Asia, including through Russian-Tajik training exercises in Gorno-Badakhshan region, Tajikistan;

- avoiding ISIS threat at Russia’s porous borders⁵⁴ – Moscow has resorted to various tactic in order to marginalize ISIS operations from spreading outside the Afghan territory, as Russia intervened in Syria and, thus it anticipates a feasible ISIS threat propagating in vicinity of its borders;

- curbing U.S. influence in the region⁵⁵ – Russian administration has perceived the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan as a constant menace to Moscow’s geopolitical interests in the region and employed a variety of measures to curtail U.S.’s sway within Afghanistan and the Central Asian region; therefore, the U.S. troop presence jeopardized Russia’s power projection and influence, not only in Afghanistan, but also in the entire region;

- undermining U.S. strategy efficiency in Afghanistan⁵⁶ – Russia has made consistent efforts to determine an early U.S. troops withdrawal from Afghanistan by discrediting Washington’s strategy efficiency in Afghanistan⁵⁷;

- expanding construction investments⁵⁸ – Russia has been interested in broadening its economic influence within Afghanistan, hence competing against Indian, Chinese and U.S. constructive projects, one example being the building of Zarang-Dilaram trade corridor.

India’s interests in Afghanistan

India has been continuously intensifying its economic investments in Afghanistan and succeeded due to its strategy of enticing population’s sympathy and admiration. New Delhi races against China for enlarging its access into the economic and energy sectors within Afghan projects, as well as, in the Central Asian region. While striving to conserve and amplify its sway over the Afghan administration, nonetheless India has endeavoured to undercut Pakistan’s and China’s political and economic influences in Afghanistan.

Some of India’s interests within Afghanistan include:

- building a prosperous climate for New Delhi’s goods transports and business projects⁵⁹ – New Delhi has manifested economic aspirations within Afghanistan, its investment projects and freight commerce have experienced an exponential rate over the last years;

- protecting constructive economic investments that will further stabilize the country⁶⁰ – India does not have security troops stationed in Afghanistan for defending its economic investments and, as a result, New Delhi administration modelled its strategy and resorted to various means in order to ensure the necessary level of security;

- building an alternate bridge to Central Asian oil, gas and hydrocarbon resources⁶¹ – India sees the Afghan territory as a bridge to access natural energy resources within Central Asian region;

- accessing and swaying in oil or gas

⁵³ Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁵⁴ Ekaterina Stepanova, “Russia’s Afghan Policy in the Regional and Russia-West Contexts”, No.23, 2018, in *The Institute francais des Relations Internationales*, pp. 22-24.

⁵⁵ Kaneshko Sangar, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁵⁶ Nicholas Trickett, *op. cit.*

⁵⁷ Lara Seligman, “As U.S. Mulls Withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russia Wants Back in”, in *Foreign Policy*, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/31/us-mulls-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-russia-wants-back-in-taliban-peace-talks/>, accessed on 24.06.2019.

⁵⁸ Marek Menkiszak, “Russia’s Afghan Problem. The Russian Federation and the Afghanistan problem since 2001”, No. 38, 2011, in *Centre for Eastern Studies*, p. 30, 31 and 33.

⁵⁹ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, “India’s and Pakistan’s Strategies in Afghanistan”, in *Center for Asia Pacific Policy* 2012, RAND Corporation, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁰ A.N.: some constructive investments include the Afghan parliament building, cold fruit storage facility in Kandahar, 220 KV line over the Salang pass, transmission lines and sub-stations in the Northern part of the country, the Salma Dam and road networks. See: Naseema Akhter, Arif Hussain Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

⁶¹ Naseema Akhter, Arif Hussain Malik, “India’s Involvement in Afghanistan: An Analytic Perspective of Current Interests and Future Prospects”, Vol. 4(8) 2016, Srinagar, in *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, pp. 89-90.



pipeline projects within Afghan territory⁶² – India stands at the table with Russia, the U.S. and China for battling over natural energy projects within Afghanistan;

- a stage for addressing China’s increasing political and economic influence in Central Asian economic and energy realms⁶³ – India has viewed Afghanistan as a site for countering China’s growing political and economic role in Central Asian region, with whom it races over access expansion and leading position within economic and energy realms;

- determining China to relinquish its development projects within Balochistan Province, Pakistan⁶⁴ – New Delhi administration’s intentions are focused on pursuing China to cancel its development objectives within Pakistan, concerned that the Islamabad administration may thus become more stable, secure and prosperous, which could potentially affect New Delhi’s stakes;

- garnering Afghan nation’s sympathy, investments and political support⁶⁵ – India has been continuously preoccupied in winning the Afghan hearts and minds in order to thwart Pakistani political and economic influence exerted over the Kabul regime; New Delhi administration succeeded and has permanently strived to get investment projects within Afghanistan and heighten the Afghan political endorsement for India;

- cautiously swaying Islamabad’s domestic affairs in accordance with India’s own interests⁶⁶ – as Pakistan has proved to be the main regional threat, India has endeavoured to calibrate Islamabad internal affairs to suit India’s satisfaction;

- supervising Pakistan’s intentions toward its nuclear assets⁶⁷ – India has concentrated its attention over identifying Pakistani intentions that may seriously affect New Delhi administration, territorial integrity or geopolitical interests within

Afghanistan and the region;

- promoting Afghan-Indian common interests in the region⁶⁸ – India has continuously been looking to improve its ties with the Kabul regime, especially for curtailing Pakistani influence and to identify and promote common objectives towards bolstering the bond and fulfilling each state’s common aspirations;

- addressing Islamist extremism in order not to weaken Indian border security or amplify violence in Kashmir⁶⁹ – even though India does not have security and defence forces present on the Afghan ground, India’s objective in Afghanistan is also to counter surrogate groups so as not to allow them get close to Indian border and weaken its security.

China’s interests in Afghanistan

China is a player that cannot be neglected in the Afghan economic, political and security realms. Beijing intends to foster cooperation with Kabul regime whilst isolate U.S. sway over the Afghan territory and the Central Asian region.

Some of China’s interests within Afghanistan are outlined below:

- safeguarding Tajik-Afghan border by financially endorsing the deployment of Tajik border outposts⁷⁰ – Beijing administration has been highly concerned about the Northern Afghan border with Tajikistan, where attempts to augment the security climate have concretized into setting up border outposts in Gorno-Badakhshan region, Tajikistan, for protecting Sino trade routes and investment projects, thus sending an indirect message to the U.S. that could underscore its security inefficiency;

- thwarting cross-border radicalized militant threat affecting Xinjiang security by financing military base constructions⁷¹ – Beijing administration has been wary of the extremist menaces at Xinjiang border and took

⁶² Naseema Akhter, Arif Hussain Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

⁶³ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁵ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁶ Naseema Akhter, Arif Hussain Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem.*

⁶⁸ Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, pp. 13,14, 20.

⁶⁹ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁷⁰ Nicholas Trickett, *op. cit.*

⁷¹ Zhao Huasheng, “China and Afghanistan. China’s interests, stances and perspectives”, in *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Islamabad, 2012, pp. 3-4.



the necessary measures by erecting military bases in Badakhshan province and, additionally, providing training to the Afghan police;

- curbing U.S. influence in the region⁷² – China is affected by the U.S. presence in Afghanistan⁷³, as the latter competes against China on the influential game, both striving to occupy the dominant role;

- increasing access and investment in mineral and raw materials mine exploitation and develop the necessary infrastructure for goods transports to China⁷⁴ – Beijing administration has kept a constant eye on the earth riches mines within the Afghan territory, investing in mine exploitation projects, along with improving the transport routs leading into Chinese territory;

- expanding influence and invest in natural energy resource exploitations in Afghanistan and Central Asia⁷⁵ – China is highly interested in natural energy investments within Afghanistan and Central Asian region, permanently trying to broaden its influence towards accessing such projects; China has built an energy pipeline delivering natural gas from Turkmenistan and crossing through Uzbek and Kazakhstani territories;

- amplifying economic growth of the Xinjiang region through investment projects in Afghan natural resource sector⁷⁶ – China relies on Afghan natural resource investments in order to enhance Xinjiang's economic progress;

- protecting and expanding the Sino-Afghan trade⁷⁷ – Beijing administration has always been looking to identify means for bolstering the Chinese-Afghan commerce, as

tangible proof shows that in the 2002-2010 period, Beijing export volume ascended from \$19.91 million to \$704 million;

- intensifying Chinese reconstruction projects in Afghanistan⁷⁸ – China has been competing against India over winning bids to restore building within the Afghan territory;

- fostering political stability and economic growth in Afghanistan⁷⁹ – China desires a politically stable Afghan administration to negotiate with on economic projects that are meant to bring reciprocal economic progress;

- developing Sino-Afghan border railroad infrastructure to facilitate access in Eurasia⁸⁰ – Beijing regime's interest fluctuated in broadening access in Eurasia, viewing the Afghan territory as a potential bridge to fulfil such aspiration by paying its attention into the development necessity of the Chinese-Afghan railroad infrastructure.

Pakistan's interests in Afghanistan

Pakistan is especially interested in fulfilling its interests in Afghanistan and the region, by using Taliban network as a proxy actor in achieving its geopolitical interests. India and the U.S. are the main states that delay Pakistan from attaining its aspirations. Pakistan has been namely focusing on preserving and expanding trade with the Afghan government.

Some of Islamabad's interests in Afghanistan are comprised beneath:

- curtailing U.S. influence in the region⁸¹ – Pakistan has always hoped for an early U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan as its sway over the Kabul regime constantly decreased since the U.S. intervention and, as a consequence, it employed measures to contain Washington influence projection in the region;

- encouraging a foreign troop pull-out to remove their influence over Afghan

⁷² Raja Muhammad Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

⁷³ Shamil Shams, "China and Russia want US out of Afghanistan", in *DW*, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/china-and-russia-want-us-out-of-afghanistan/a-39250894>, accessed on 14.06.2019.

⁷⁴ Sanjay Badri Maharaj, "China and Stability in Afghanistan: China's Afghanistan Strategy", in *Scholar Warrior*, 2016, p. 46.

⁷⁵ Alireza Nader, Ali Scotten, Ahmad Idrees Rahmani, Robert Stewart, Leila Mahnad, "Iran's Influence in Afghanistan", in *National Security Research Division*, RAND Corporation, 2014, p. 43.

⁷⁶ Richard Weitz, *op. cit.*

⁷⁷ Noor Rahman Tahiri, "Afghanistan and China Trade Relationship", in *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, Oruj University, Kabul Afghanistan, 2017, pp. 8, 10, 11.

⁷⁸ Raja Muhammad Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

⁷⁹ Stuart Kenny, "Instability in Afghanistan: Why Afghanistan matters and what Australia can do to address the causes of instability", in *The Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies*, Australian Defence College, 2016, p. 3.

⁸⁰ Raja Muhammad Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6.

⁸¹ Naseema Akhter, Arif Hussain Malik, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.



administration's domestic affairs⁸² – the Afghan government is perceived as being illegitimate in Pakistan's vision and, as a consequence, Islamabad favours Taliban as the rightful entity to lead a Pashtun-majority country; therefore, Islamabad regime desires to curb the foreign influence by getting involved in the Afghan reconciliation process that would hopefully lead to a NATO troop withdrawal;

- supporting the Afghan Taliban as partners in expanding Pakistan's security interests⁸³ – Islamabad hardliners consider the Taliban movement as an extension of Pakistani forces, in achieving Islamabad security agenda by furnishing housing, training, munitions, supplies, funding and diplomatic assistance;

- contributing to the Afghan reconciliation framework to intensify its intra-regional trade⁸⁴ – Pakistan hopes its intra-regional commerce to be positively impacted as a result of Islamabad decision to foster the Afghan peace process and, thus expecting to increase trust with Kabul and the neighbouring countries;⁸⁵

- expanding trade corridor and natural energy access to Central Asia via Afghan territory⁸⁶ – Islamabad perceives Afghanistan as a bridge for intensifying its commerce and investments within Central Asia, using trade routes other than Iran's Chabahar port or the Indian-built Zaranj – Delaram road and, thus decreasing Afghanistan's dependency on these corridors;

- maintaining a weak Afghan state⁸⁷ – Pakistan desires a dependable and controllable Afghan regime to lower the threat of a staunch Afghan-Indian partnership;

- minimizing New Delhi's influence into the Afghan internal affairs and weaken Indian-Afghan relationship in favour of Pakistan's

security interest⁸⁸ – Indian influence over the Afghan political elites, as well as within the complex Afghan civil society, has always represented a threat for Pakistani administration for which Islamabad regime responded through Afghan terror militants by targeting Delhi's embassy in Kabul, on 07 July 2008 and 08 October 2009;

- exacerbating tensions in Kashmir by supporting Afghan jihadist surrogate groups to fight Indian forces⁸⁹ – Pakistani-Indian tensions over Kashmir region have experienced sinuous levels and Islamabad hardliners may rely on Afghan Islamist militants to calibrate the extremist violence within Kashmir region.

Iran's interests in Afghanistan

Iran is a central player in the Afghan reconciliation process and its interests in Afghanistan and the region need to be considered in order to accept an Afghan final peace agreement that would be durable and inclusive. U.S. is considered the main threat for Tehran's security and economic development in Afghanistan and the region. For this reason, it has backed Taliban network in an attempt to counter U.S. influence and also pursue a U.S. troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.⁹⁰

Some of Iran's interests within Afghanistan are outlined below:

- strengthening Iranian security by endorsing the Taliban⁹¹ – as Tehran is surrounded by U.S. military assets, Iranian administration has perceived the extremist group as an Iranian proxy for targeting U.S geopolitical interests and countering the ISIS threat;

- destabilizing and, ultimately, toppling the pro-US Afghan regime by assisting the Taliban⁹² – Iran has taken measures to jeopardize the efficiency of the U.S. strategy in Afghanistan, repeatedly attempting to produce more drastic

⁸² *Ibidem*.

⁸³ Mariam Safi, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁸⁴ Riaz Khokhar, "What Pakistan Will Gain in Peace in Afghanistan", in *The National Interest*, URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/what-pakistan-will-gain-peace-afghanistan-43922>, accessed on 12.04.2019.

⁸⁵ Riaz Khokhar, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28, 31.

⁸⁷ Nicholas Trickett, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 29.

⁸⁹ Larry Hanauer, Peter Chalk, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27.

⁹⁰ Alireza Nader, Ali Scotten, Ahmad Idrees Rahmani, Robert Stewart, Leila Mahnad, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-16.

⁹¹ Manoj Kumar Mishra, *op. cit.*

⁹² Manoj Kumar Mishra, "Iran's Changed Perception Concerning its Role in Afghanistan Following Soviet Disintegration", in *Afro Eurasian Studies*, vol. 1, 2012, p. 92.



instability within the Afghan regime, inflicted by the Iranian sponsored Taliban movement;

- exerting pressure against the U.S. to address U.S. imposed sanctions⁹³ – Iran has resorted to Taliban support in order to apply pressure against the U.S. in an attempt to undercut the U.S. imposed sanctions;

- intensifying trade and expanding construction investments in Afghanistan⁹⁴ – the commerce between the two countries has gradually increased. Iran has been frequently exporting oil products, construction materials, carpets and home appliances, while importing from Afghanistan nuts, agricultural products and manufactured goods; when it comes to constructive projects, Tehran created a bridge over the Helmand River, a transit route connecting Milak, Iran, to Zaranj, Afghanistan and the construction of the Khaf-Herat Railway;

- maintaining and encouraging the Afghan workforce in Iran⁹⁵ – Tehran regime needs the Afghan workforce to amplify its economic growth;

- enhancing access into the Central Asian region through Afghanistan territory⁹⁶ – Iran has perceived Afghanistan as a land gateway to access Central Asian natural energy and economic resources.

Conclusions

Since a NATO military approach in Afghanistan is not feasible into cementing a comprehensive and sustainable peace, the only identified viable solution would be brokering an inclusive peace agreement that would earn public support, legitimacy and consensus on national, regional and international stage. For building a realistic common ground, each side's

interests and concerns need to be represented and included, if necessary, even convincing some actors to pursue peace by enticing them through incentives – political, economic, security or identity-based. Hence, besides Taliban representatives and the U.S., the negotiating panel needs to embody Afghan warlords, tribal leaders, religious leaders, Afghan women figures, Afghan political opposition parties, the Afghan government and definitely, regional and international stakeholders.

The Afghan peace process was even triggered by the Taliban who thereafter participated in direct dialogues with the U.S. negotiating team in an attempt to end foreign troop occupation of Afghanistan, as the Islamist group concluded that violence in the country could not be brokered with Kabul regime, which is perceived as falling under Washington administration's hegemony. The prospect of a fully U.S. troops drawdown from Afghanistan encouraged the Taliban to meet U.S. on negotiating matters, most of the progress has remained secret, but it was publicly alleged an essential breakthrough about Taliban committing to thwart terrorist acts, threats and individuals within areas under their rule. But another two crucial demands are still under debate: a nationwide Taliban truce and agreeing on the date of intra-Afghan peace talks.

An entire U.S. asset withdraw is not feasible to occur as Washington would not tolerate Afghanistan completely falling under the influences of China, Pakistan, Iran or Russia. Interestingly, Russia managed to build a common ground about Afghanistan with China, Iran and Pakistan, all sharing a mutual view on ending the U.S. presence and influence in Afghanistan, but in a way that would not jeopardize their strategic stakes and would set a stable climate for their investment projects. Such stakes need to be secured from transnational terrorist menaces by ensuring Afghan border control, which is overtly comprised in Russia and China's foreign policy interests.

Regional stakeholders contributed more or less to facilitate a regional dialogue on the Afghan

⁹³ Alex Vatanka, "Iran's Bottom Line in Afghanistan", Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, in *Atlantic Council* 2017, p. 5.

⁹⁴ Afifa Kiran, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁹⁵ Laurence Norman, "As Afghan War Drags On, EU Offers Greater Role in Brokering Peace", in *The Wall Street Journal*, URL: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-afghan-war-drags-on-eu-offers-greater-role-in-brokering-peace-11554812428>, accessed on 29.05.2019.

⁹⁶ Manoj Kumar Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 98.



reconciliation process. Russia, Pakistan, Iran, China and India orchestrated peace consultative meetings or fostered such meetings for reaching a final peace agreement. All of them want to expand their influence, but curb the adversary's. These state mediators struggle to limit national vulnerabilities, strengthen border or domestic security, compete for natural resources and provide a safe climate for their investments. Some want regional stability to enhance economic and strategic expansion, having a stable Afghan government to cooperate with on such aspects, while others want to maintain a chaotic and instable state.

It is vital for the negotiating forum to open an intra-Afghan dialogue for understanding governmental grievances. However, the external mediation of the peace talks alarmed different levels of the Afghan civil society, foreseeing the unfortunate scenario of state powers arranging some agreements that would protect their own geopolitical interests, but neglect Afghan people's demands, leaving the country with confined universal human rights and freedoms which they have fought for in the past 18 years. The most concerned part of the civil society is represented by female individuals, who expressed their grievances towards avoiding their country's return to female abuse and oppression by asking to make their voice heard at the negotiating table with the Taliban.

It is difficult to reach a peace agreement that will bring peace, security and prosperity throughout Afghanistan as long as stakeholders want to preserve all their strategic stakes within Afghanistan and the region. These parties need to abandon some of their own interests and make a compromise for the sake of an Afghan peace settlement that needs to be succeeded by reconstruction and development initiatives.

After all players understand that a peaceful outcome is more beneficial than a violent and chaotic nation, a functioning judicial system needs to be designed by the transitional Afghan government in order to support the rule of law for augmenting the social change of subsequent generations. Since the peace agreement comes

into force, additional measures need to be implemented, such as: international security presence, economic investments, demilitarized zones and conflict management techniques based on negotiation and mediation.

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AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROHINGYA MINORITY SITUATION IN THE RAKHINE STATE, USING GALTUNG'S METHOD

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Regional security issues generate more and more concerns in the international community. The increasing interdependence on the international arena makes it impossible to ignore security issues its actors are confronting with. One of the regions that deserves a thorough insight is Southeast Asia, especially Myanmar, due to the events that have taken place here lately. We will primarily focus on interethnic conflicts resulted from religious differences. For the paper's scientific consistency, we will use the method of the three triangles of Galtung that deals with the dimensions of conflict, violence and peace. Avoiding, at first, to emphasize the security issue, Galtung proposes a different approach than his contemporaries, arguing in favour of improving relations between the parties. This new method is based on the development of links between the actors involved, focusing on conflict resolution. The paper will encompass three perspectives of analysis, respectively: the first focuses on contradictions, attitudes and behaviours, during the conflict, the second deals with the three dimensions of violence – direct, structural and cultural – and the third triangle examines the possibilities for solving the conflict through peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

Keywords: *conflict; peacemaking; peacekeeping; peacebuilding; violence.*

Introduction

The history of the world's continents differs substantially depending on how the events have made their mark on the territories in question. If Europe was marked mostly by the Two World Wars, the African or Asian continents were profoundly influenced by the decolonization phenomena. Once the colonial empires disappeared, a great number of states have appeared on the international arena. This is also the case of Southeast Asia, the region in question for this analysis.

Including Burma, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore, East Timor, Southeast Asia had a sinuous path. Before colonialism, this area had been influenced by the regional disputes that took place, some of the most important actors in this dynamic being India and China. However, the Chinese influence was a political one, while India was seen as a source of religious

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ideas¹. Subsequently, the region has reached the sphere of influence of Western states that have colonized the Southeast Asian territories. Netherlands has mastered Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore; France overtook Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam²; Spain controlled Philippine³; Portugal – East Timor⁴, and Great Britain extended its influence in India and Burma⁵ (Myanmar)⁶. Thailand is the only state that was not included in any colonial empire⁷. Western presence in the region can be seen starting with the first half of the nineteenth century when the colonization process has started. This conquest and colonization process ceased in the second part of the nineteenth century, but the foreign rule of the territories had maintained until the end of the Second World War. During the War, Japan showed interest for this region, the territories of the colonized states being a space of contention between the two great alliances: The Allied Powers and the Axis.

Each new power that played a role in the region brought something new that overlapped with the existing ethnic and religious diversity. Noteworthy the fact that the Western states that have imposed their power did not bring changes connected eminently with the Western values. For instance, Great Britain has transferred in Myanmar Muslim groups, from India, because they needed workforce. This has led to a widening of divergences within the state, creating a *mélange* of ethnic and religious groups and, subsequently, has determined significant interethnic disputes. Myanmar's independence did not represent a resolution of these disputes. As we can see, the events have grown even larger, and the need to explain the actions and decisions of such situations has led to the emergence of various methods of conflict analysis and resolution. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the situation of the Rakhine state of Myanmar, starting with

the fifties, by using Galtung's triangle method.

Considering the suggested method, the analysis will be multidimensional, dealing with the actions of the Government, those of the ethnic groups involved, and also the actions taken by the important international organizations.

1. Conceptual dividing lines

In order to better understand the current situation of Rohingya minority, we deem that the process of defining the main concepts is an important one. Thus, in the following pages we will explain and define the following concepts: conflict, interethnic conflict, ethnic cleansing.

In terms of conflict, this concept is a widely used one in the field of International Relations and not only; it is considered an important feature of human existence and cohabitation. It is not a surprise that, internationally, we do not have a consensus on defining this term, but we can outline the main features by analysing the most important definitions, as it follows:

➤ “The conflict is represented by objectives perceived by the involved parties as incompatible and their expectations to control each other's choices. The conflict refers to a variety of empirical phenomena that can be identified or characterized by the presence of four conditions: a) the existence of two or more parties; b) a situation where the resource or position deficit occurs; c) the presence of behaviour that is directed toward or injure the other; d) mutually incompatible objectives.”⁸

➤ “The conflict is a struggle between values and status claims, power and resources, where the goals of the opponents are to neutralize, crash or eliminate the rivals.”⁹

➤ “Conflict is a dynamic, manifested process characterized by stages such as initiation, escalation, controlled maintenance, disassembly

¹ Arthur Cotterell, *A history of Southeast Asia*, Marshall Cavendish Editions, Singapore, 2014, p. XVIII.

² *Ibidem*, pp. 241-254.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 226.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 224.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 241.

⁶ A.N.: the name of the state was changed in 1989.

⁷ Arthur Cotterell, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁸ Ho-Won Jeong, *Understanding Conflict and Conflict Analysis*, Sage, Los Angeles, London, Singapore, 2008, p. 6.

⁹ Lewis A. Coser, *Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict*, Free Press, New York, 1967, p. 6.



and closure.”¹⁰

The three aforementioned definitions help us understand the main features of the conflict: conflicts have a starting point, the causes that can be political, religious, economic, social, ethnic, racial; conflicts involve at least two parties with different interests and identities and distinct ideas to obtain the desired resources; in the escalation process they reach a peak and, after a period of time, they go through the de-escalation process; the last component of the de-escalation process is the cessation of conflict and the entry into the post-conflict reconstruction phase.

The conflict situation is normal for human nature itself, and we should be concerned with the possibility of escalation and the strategy used to acquire power (the use of violence). Under these conditions, the conflict is becoming difficult to manage and, on medium and long term, its effects can be devastating. However, the definition used in this paper will be the one formulated by Iulian Chifu: “conflict is a situation that invariably involves the existence of two or more parties who, at the same time, want an element of power – authority, resources or prestige/status – and who have resources, are ready to spend it on the element they want”¹¹. We consider that the definition is appropriate for the current analysis, due to its flexibility, simplicity, on the one hand and, its comprehensiveness, on the other hand: it identifies the actors involved, as well as the stages of the conflict. Since the research is intertwining theoretical aspects with empirical data, this definition seems to be appropriate, leaving little to no dimensions unaddressed.

The analysis considers a specific type of conflict, namely: the interethnic conflict. After the end of the Cold War the share of intrastate conflicts has increased. The SIPRI Yearbook of 1993 is providing us relevant data: out of 30

conflicts analysed, 29 were intrastate conflicts¹². In this context, the researchers identified a series of divergences with focus on interethnic confrontations. These ethnic confrontations are the result of several factors among which we can recall the decolonization process and the division of territories made without regard to religion, race or ethnicity. Based on historical divergences, interethnic conflicts are complemented by “land tenure and homeland issues, religious differences, perceived differences between groups, stereotypes, and ethnic identity, language differences”¹³. The chances of triggering interethnic conflicts is greater if the following situations are encountered: “there is little or no equal status contact between the groups, such contact is discouraged by the societal institutions (as we will see in the case of Myanmar), and there appears to be little common interest between the groups”¹⁴. Keeping in mind these features, in the case of these conflicts there is an ethnic dimension of the stakeholders’ objectives, which are still perceived as being in direct opposition. In this way, regardless of the reasons that led to conflict, at least one of the parties will claim that its different ethnic identity is the reason why the group it belongs to cannot accomplish its objectives¹⁵. Therefore, interethnic conflict can be defined “as any struggle or disagreement occurring when, or in part, because one opponent perceives another to be of differing ethnicity in terms of language, race, religion, tribe, kinship, and/or culture”¹⁶. In many cases, the interethnic conflict does not stop at the level of struggles and disagreements, but rather turns into violent confrontations.

In the gathering information process, a popular concept, describing the situation

¹⁰ Dennis J.D Sandole, “Typology”, in *Conflict. From Analysis to Intervention*, by Sandra Cheldekin, Daniel Druckman and Larissa Fast, Continuum, London, 2008, p. 43.

¹¹ Iulian Chifu; Lavinia Lupu, *Analiză de conflict*, RAO, Bucharest, 2015, pp. 73-74.

¹² Ramses Amer, et al., *Major Arm Conflicts, SIPRI Year Book: World Armaments and Disarmament*, University Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 81.

¹³ Dan Landis, “Interethnic Conflict Theories and Models”, in *The International Encyclopedia of Intercultural Communication*, 2017, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Iulian Chifu, Lavinia Lupu, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹⁶ Zachary B. Massey; Claude H. Miller, “Case studies on interethnic conflict: A theoretical integration”, in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 2018, p. 131.



of the Rohingya minority, is that of *ethnic cleansing*. The term was used in the context of the disintegration of Yugoslavia, in the Balkan region, but its roots are well anchored into history – from Assyrians and Babylonians to Azeri and Armenians¹⁷. According to Bell-Fialkoff, ethnic cleansing implies “the expulsion of an undesirable population from a certain territory, due to religious or ethnic discrimination, political, strategic or ideological considerations, or a combination of these”¹⁸. Noteworthy that ethnic cleansing comprises also policies initiated during the peace time that affect the targeted population. It should be mentioned that *ethnic cleansing* and *genocide* are not interchangeable, as the first term refers to the action of moving or removing an ethnic group from a certain territory, while the second term, as it is defined by UN in the Convention of Prevention and Punishment of Crime of Genocide, describes the “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group”¹⁹. Having this in mind, throughout this research it will be used the term *ethnic cleansing*.

2. Methodology

This research is using a micro level method of analysis, focusing on the internal components of a state (the individual, relations). In this regard, for understanding the status and the situation of the Rohingya minority, this paper is using Galtung’s triangle method. Given the micro level of analysis and Galtung’s triangle method, as resources that will be at the basis of the research, we mention the qualitative resources, such as books, articles, reports, news, and other useful and relevant materials. These documents will be analysed and compared in order to identify important aspects

for the present study. The research will also be based on historical data to better understand the roots of the present situation.

In the analysis of international conflicts there are three phases that help the researcher have a comprehensive approach:

- a. Pre-conflict phase: events that lead to hostilities;
- b. Conflict phase: the unfolding conflict;
- c. Post-conflict phase: the attempts to stop hostilities, to find a solution and to begin the state of reconstruction.

Over time, a lack of attention was observed in connection with the last phase, while the first two phases have been showed more interest; noteworthy that the last phase is particularly important in order to end the conflict²⁰. As a result of the latest developments, the researches directed their attention to the last phase – post-conflict – developing tools, such as Responsibility to Protect (R2P), designed to create a stable state.

Since the Cold War period, researchers have tried to find the optimal model for conflict analysis, such as the following: Galtung’s methods regarding conflict, violence and peace; escalating and de-escalating conflicts; the divergent lens model; addressing conflicts: looking at oneself or the other; win-win, win-lose, lose-lose results; Abel’s satisfaction; prisoner’s dilemma and evolution of cooperation; positions, interests and needs²¹; Conflict Mapping; Conflict Transformation; Game theory; The Graph Model for Conflict Resolution²², etc.

For the analysis of Rakhine state, we will use the first method – the three triangles of Galtung on conflict, violence and peace. In 1969, he proposed a model that focuses on the relationship of conflict, violence, peace, the novelty of the approach being the focus on peace and the relationship between the parties, not

¹⁷ Erin K. Jenne, “The causes and consequences of ethnic cleansing” in *Routledge Handbook of Ethnic Conflict*, by Karl Cordell and Stefan Wolff, Routledge, New York, 2011.

¹⁸ Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, “A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing”, in *Foreign Affairs*, St. Martin’s Press, 1993, p. 110.

¹⁹ ***, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, United Nations Human Rights, United Nations, New York, 1951, art. 2.

²⁰ Barbara J. Hill, “An Analysis of Conflict Resolution Techniques. From Problem-Solving Workshops to Theory”, in *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, no. 96, 1982, p. 110.

²¹ Iulian Chifu, Lavinia Lupu, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

²² D.M. Kilgour; K.W. Hipel, “Conflict Analysis Methods: The Graph Model for Conflict Resolution”, Vol. 4, in *Handbook of Group Decision and Negotiation. Advances in Group Decision and Negotiation*, by Eden C. (eds) Kilgour D., Springer, Dordrecht, 2010.

specifically on security; he said that the focus on security does not bring an improvement in relationships, exactly what we need in a conflict²³. He has developed an entire process, from the transformation of the conflict to the objectives of the parties, trying to develop a common and transcendent approach. Galtung has started with a serial of prerequisite questions: “In what kind of process are we? Who are those that triggered the conflict? Which is the key context?” arriving to “What happened before the aggression? But before polarization?”²⁴.

The present analysis starts from the assumption that the security dimension of the Rohingya crisis cannot be addressed as a first issue because this brings only short-term positive results. Instead, the problem of this minority must be approached according to the model proposed by Galtung, where the relation between the parties involved - based on trust building - is more important for a long-term solution. As a consequence, this research

will engage in a step by step analysis of three dimensions corresponding to the triangles proposed by Galtung. The main question that the research will attempt to answer in order to test the hypothesis will deal with *How can one built trust between conflicting parties without considering security as a first problem?* For this, two subsequent questions will be used: *How deep one must go to identify the sources of rivalry between the parties?* and second *What are the elements that contribute most to the intensification of the conflict?*

Galtung first proposed a model for conflict analysis and resolution, starting from the image of a triangle containing contradictions, attitudes and behaviours. In 1990, he developed a second triangle consisting of direct violence, cultural violence and structural violence²⁵. In completing the model, he also developed a third triangle containing three complementary concepts to conflict resolution – peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding.

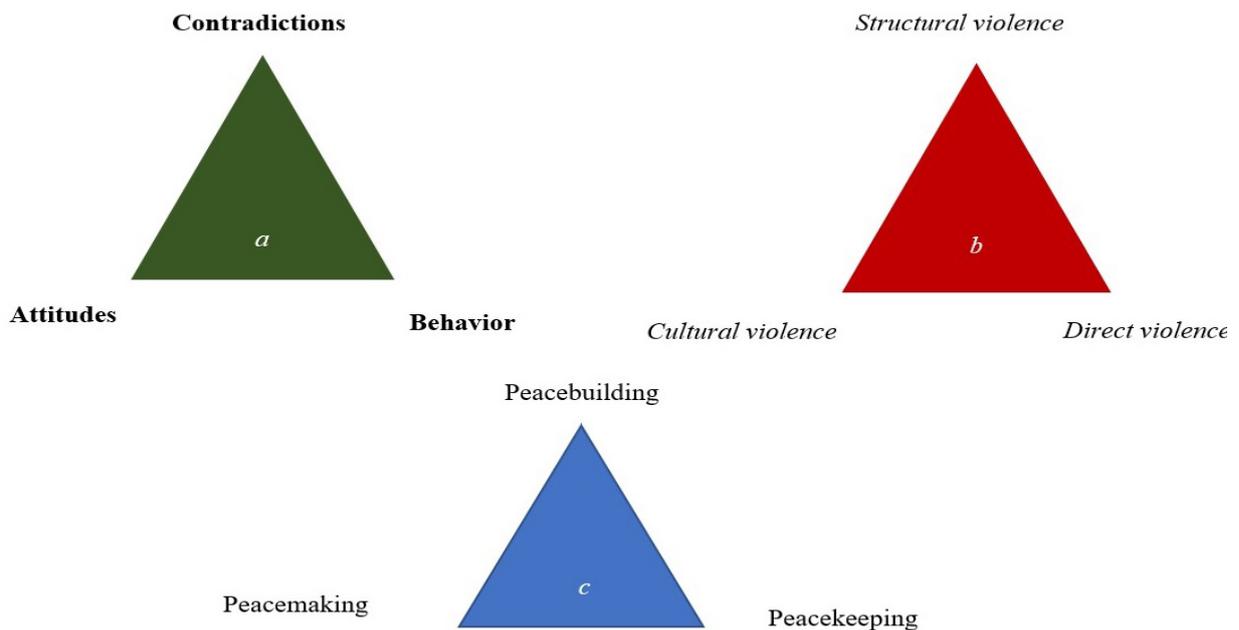


Figure no. 1: Galtung’s triangle model²⁶

²³ Johan Galtung, “Introduction: Peace by peaceful conflict transformation - the TRANSCEND approach” in *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, by Charles Webel and Johan Galtung, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, New York, 2007, p. 14.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

²⁵ Johan Galtung, “Cultural Violence” in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 27, no. 3, 1990, pp. 291-305.

²⁶ Oliver Ramsbotham; Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution – The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 10.



At first, the triangles will be only sketched while the full description will be done when the Rakhine state conflict will be analysed.

Galtung's research and outputs have not escaped criticism over time. One of the critics was made by Peter Lawler, who references to the simplicity of the model and the exclusion of political and economic elements²⁷. The model is based mainly on cultural and social elements rather than on issues such as economic status. In order to have a holistic approach, these domains should be included and integrated, so the outcome will be a comprehensive one. Another issue, raised by a group of authors, brings into attention the component of structural violence. In Galtung's model it can be identified only one element from the second triangle that is visible – the direct violence; the other two components, according to Galtung, are invisible. Yves Winter considers that the structural violence was not invisible to begin with, but it suffered transformations during time; in fact, Winter argues that the structural violence was visible and became invisible, by repetition, over several generations²⁸. Following the same line, he added that the concept of structural violence is "broad and vague"²⁹, thus causing a neglect of specific differences and historical variations of other types of injustice: slavery, sexism, class domination, racism and colonialism, all become sides of the same coin.

Even though Galtung's approach has been challenged, it is still considered a landmark in the field of Peace and Conflict Studies; the criticism around his model can be regarded as a positive example since it caught the eye of other researchers. And, as mentioned earlier, the model benefited of important improvements, transforming it in a more complex one. Thus, for

²⁷ Peter Lawler, "A question of values: A critique of Galtung's peace research" in *Interdisciplinary Peace Research: formerly Pacifica Review: Peace, Security & Global Change*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1989, p. 45.

²⁸ Andrew Dilts; Yves Winter; Thomas Biebricher; Eric Vance Johnson; Antonio Y. Vázquez-Arroyo, and Joan Coaks, "Revisiting Johan Galtung's Concept of Structural Violence" in *New Political Science*, Vol. 34, no. 2, 2012, p. 193.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 195.

the purpose of this paper, Galtung's framework is providing the tools needed for a detailed and in-depth analysis of a conflict situation with possible perspectives for a lasting resolution.

3. The historical context

In 1948, Burma (Myanmar) gained its independence from the British Empire, under whose rule was partly from 1828 and, under which it had the status of a colony for 62 years (in 1886 Burma was transformed into a province of British India).

Myanmar history together with its ethnic and religious diversity, conducted to a turbulent evolution. Its internal structure is complicated, the state is divided into states, regions, districts, townships, cities and villages which in turn are subdivided into other subcategories, as can be seen in Figure no. 2.

Regarding the ethnic diversity of the state, this is well known, with UN documents talking about 135³⁰ ethnic groups and, according to other statistics, at least five religious minorities: Christians, Muslims, Animists, Hindus and others³¹.

The state that is going to be analysed in this paper is Rakhine – a state situated in the West part of Myanmar – which has had a delicate situation, based on ethnic and religious clashes in the region. The two ethnicities that have collided since the beginning of the 20th century are Rakhines (predominantly Buddhists) and Rohingya (predominantly Muslims).³² The rivalry between the two ethnicities dates back to the British occupation, when the metropolitan population

³⁰ ***, *Memorandum concerning the situation of human rights in Myanmar*, United Nations, in *51st Session of the Human Rights Commission*, 1999, p. 6.

³¹ ***, "Myanmar", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Myanmar/Languages#toc52575>, accessed on July 20, 2019.

³² ***, "Ethnic nationalities of Burma", Oxford Burma Alliance, URL: <http://www.oxfordburmaalliance.org/ethnic-groups.html>, accessed on July 21, 2019.

³³ ***, Ministry of Home Affairs, *General Administration Department*, September 2019, URL: http://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Administrative_Structure_2008Constitution_16Sep2019.pdf, accessed on November 03.

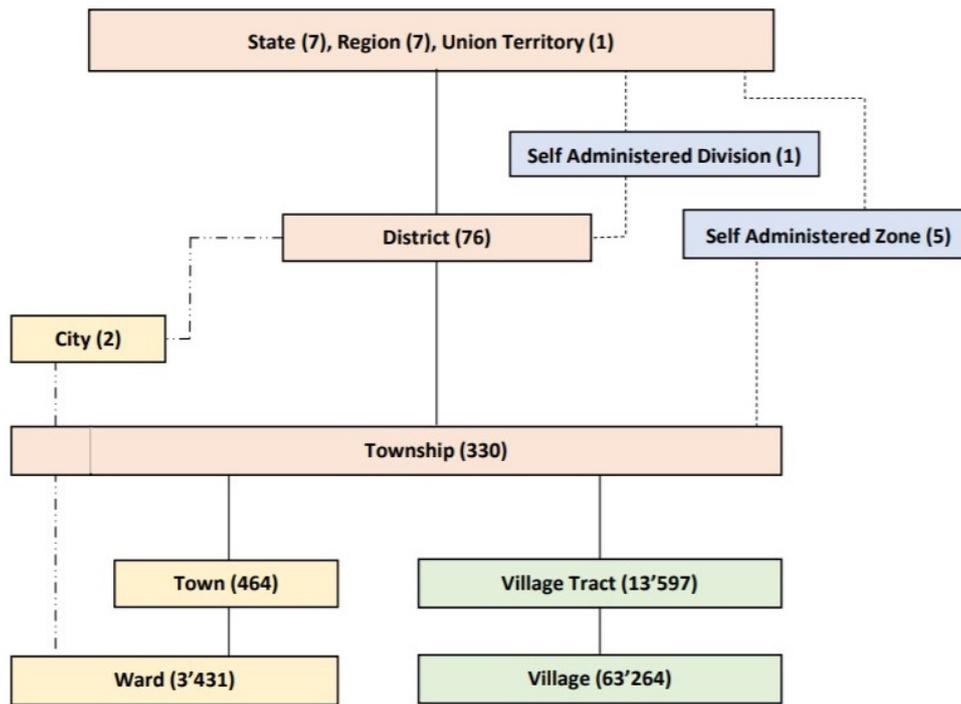


Figure no. 2: Myanmar administrative organization³³

encouraged Indian migration in the region³⁴, and continued after 1948. The differences were perpetuated as a result of the developed sympathies in the twentieth century among those two ethnicities to the British colonialists and the Japanese invaders. As a consequence, the roots of misunderstandings between the two ethnic-religious groups reached their peak in the eve of the Second World War, when the Muslims supported the Colonial British, while the Buddhists were pro-Japanese invaders³⁵. It might be a subject of debate the extent to which the differences between these two ethnic groups could have been diminished by the emblematic figure of Aung San, the person considered to orchestrate the independence movement of Burma. Even if he was pro-Japanese at the beginning, he switched sides, in March 1945, and joined the Allied forces³⁶. However, his

³⁴ ***, "Burma/Myanmar", *The International Observatory on Statelessness People*, URL: <http://www.nationalityforall.org/burma-myanmar>, accessed on July 21, 2019.

³⁵ Alireza Arashpuor; Alireza Roustaei, "The investigation of committed crimes against "Myanmar's Rohingya" and the invoke necessity to "The theory of responsibility to protect", in *Juridical Tribune*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2016, p. 385.

³⁶ ***, "Myanmar", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, URL: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Myanmar/Lan>

strategy can hardly be connected with the long ethnic disputes from Burma, being regarded as rather opportunistic and the relation between the two ethnic groups having a deeper connection and being much more intricate³⁷. Thus, began a new and toilsome road of confrontations that persists today, and which, unfortunately, could not be solved for a number of reasons that are going to be exposed with the application of the Galtung triangle method.

Even if Myanmar had its differences, the desire for independence was stronger than the ethnic-religious confrontations at that time. Thus, for the state of Myanmar, the aim of becoming an independent state was reached in 1948, but it seems like the internal disputes did not cease to exist, the system of repression of violence being perpetuated³⁸. Right after 1948 followed a period of peace and quietness that was guided closely by the democratic principles, but it came to an end after the 1962 coup d'état, when the state

³⁷ James Fennell, *Rakhine State Conflict Analysis*, August 2012, p. 18

³⁸ Alexandra Elena Timofte, "The perpetuation of violence: a perspective on the Rohingya minority crisis", in *The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, 2018, p. 60.



entered a period of dictatorial rule. General Ne Win had a key role in the coup d'état organizing the state around the socialist party who was also the single party on the political scene³⁹. On this ground, the tensions between the government and Rohingya escalated, especially after the Socialist Party took over the power by dismantling the social and political organizations of the ethnic-religious groups.⁴⁰ In 1977, the army registered all citizens before a national census, later explaining that they had to exclude Rohingya and, therefore, more than 200,000 people had to flee to Bangladesh, in 1978⁴¹. The massive departures of about 200,000 people⁴² were also determined by the army that lifted these abuses to a new level of brutality, launching a murder, rape and torture campaign, that specifically targeted the Muslim Rohingya population⁴³.

At the linguistic level, the term *Rohingya* has lost its importance because the government uses the term *Bengali*, which implies immigrant status; in addition, they are not recognized as Myanmar citizens, but are considered "resident aliens". The 1982 Citizenship Act divided citizens into three different categories: citizens, associate citizens and naturalized citizens - and the Rohingya minority was included and, therefore, not recognized.⁴⁴

The abuses of power and violent actions did not remain unnoticed. After a long period of massive atrocities committed against the Rohingya minority, the international community, whose voice was represented by the United Nations, pressed the government of Myanmar to embrace the democratization path. A new era has begun for Myanmar with the election of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in 2015, led by Aung San Suu Kyi; this long expected

change came after the state and the population have been under a military dictatorship (junta) for several decades (about half a century).⁴⁵ However, the transition was not smooth and peaceful so that further confrontations took place. The sectarian tensions in Rakhine reached the peak at the end of 2016, with a series of attacks by Muslim militants, which brought tough military retaliation. In the initial attacks, on October 9, at least 350 Rohingya militants – mainly armed with knives, sticks and swords – carried out raids at several police stations, along the Rakhine border with Bangladesh. A few days later, more than 600 Rohingya men were identified and subjected to inhumane treatments, such as burning. In the same time, the medical and food aid was suspended for at least forty days, and much of the villages were burned down. As such atrocities attracted the attention of international organizations, allegations by state officials arose that the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Rohingya militia) would have overseas terrorist ties, possibly in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.⁴⁶

Briefly, the constant violation of human rights and the harsh treatment, received by the Rohingya minority, forced its members to flee across the border. Of the numerous waves of emigrants, the most important ones, in terms of numbers, are the late 1700s and early 1800s, 1940s, 1978s, between 1991 and 1992 (about 300,000) in 2012, the most recent wave being in 2016-2017 (almost 500,000), drawing the attention of the international community.

4. Applying Galtung's method to the Rakhine state

This part of the paper will have three directions of analysis, each speaking of one of the triangles imagined by Galtung and applied to the Rakhine state. As we have already mentioned, the interest will be namely on the interethnic conflict between Rakhines and Rohingya. The research

³⁹ Kongsam Shakila Devi, "Myanmar under the Military Rule 1962 - 1998", in *International Research Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 3, no. 10, 2014.

⁴⁰ Ahsan Ullah, "Rohingya crisis in Myanmar: seeking justice for the "stateless", in *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2016.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 297.

⁴² Alireza Arashpuor, *op. cit.*, p. 385.

⁴³ Human Rights Watch, "All You Can Do is Pray" in *Crimes Against Humanity and Ethnic Cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma's Arakan State*, 2013.

⁴⁴ Ahsan Ullah, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁴⁵ Ardeth M. Thawngmung; Gawn Robinson, "Myanmar's New Era: A Break from the Past or Too Much of the Same?" in *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 2017, p. 237.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 247.



intertwines with historical data and theoretical references, precisely because the latter attempt to explain the sequence of the first.

The first triangle is the one that proposes to analyse contradictions, attitudes and behaviours (see Figure 1.a). Contradictions, which are at the top of the triangle, represent the incompatibility of the objectives between two or more conflicting parties, assuming that the achievement of a goal almost automatically excludes the achievement of another or other objectives.⁴⁷ The multitude and diversity of ethnic-religious groups create confusion among those who want to investigate the state of Myanmar, which is why the diagnosis of the Rakhine state and the Rohingya minority is only one element of a more complicated image. In this region, there are two groups in dispute and a third party which, at a declarative level, states that it is not biased and does not take sides: on the one hand we have the Rakhine group, the majority being Buddhists, on the other hand we have the Rohingya group, and the third is the central government of Myanmar. By getting a better understanding of the situation of the Rakhine state and of the Rohingya minority, we notice that the roots of contradictions reached Second World War, when these two ethnic-religious groups developed different affinities with respect to the two great alliances. While the Rohingya minority stayed loyal to the British Empire, being under their domination for nearly six decades, the Rakhine group favoured the Japanese invaders, whose support was demanded by the Burmese Independence Army, led by the national hero Aung San⁴⁸, seeing in these actions an opportunity for independence. Also, in this part we include the statements of the Buddhist extremists who consider that their people cannot live in peace and welfare if the Rohingya minority continues to be part of the state, the latter wanting

to turn this country into a Muslim one.⁴⁹ Thus, the objectives of the Buddhist religious extremists exclude almost entirely the objectives of the other group, leading to continuous struggles and sedimentation of hate.

The second component of the triangle is represented by the attitudes – self perceptions and misperceptions about others.⁵⁰ In a violent conflict such as the one analysed in this paper, the attitudes are influenced by a series of emotions, as hate, anger, fear. If the perception about self is a method of self-definition, the perception of others implies significant elements from the past. In the breakout of hostilities of Rakhine state, attitudes represented a fundamental element based on the past experiences, the relation being in a constant disorder. The idea of superiority of the Rakhine group came on the basis of their number⁵¹ – they were and still are the majoritarian population of the region, while Rohingya are representing the minority, thus inferior, their claim for equal rights and treatment being illegitimate. The government contributed to the amplification of these attitudes through the measures they have taken, with the Rohingya minority having many restricted rights: the right to freedom of movement, the right to get married⁵². As expected, the measures had a negative effect leading to the isolation of the Rohingya minority. In addition, the government's actions were perceived by the Rakhine people as an encouragement of their superiority, while making the Rohingya minority an inferior group that must, therefore, be isolated in order to not “contaminate”. The

⁴⁷ Johan Galtung, *Introduction: peace by peaceful...*, p. 15.

⁴⁸ Aung Zaw, Aung, *The Irrawaddy*, August 25, 2017, URL: <https://www.irrawaddy.com/opinion/commentary/man-behind-burma-independence-army.html>, accessed on July 23, 2019.

⁴⁹ Paul Fuller, *Myanmar and Buddhist extremism*, November 4, 2017, URL: <http://theconversation.com/myanmar-and-buddhist-extremism-86125>, accessed on July 23, 2019.

⁵⁰ Johan Galtung, *Introduction: peace by peaceful...*, p. 28.

⁵¹ ***, UNDP Myanmar, *The state of local governance: trends in Rakhine*, 2015, URL: https://themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Report_Local_Governance_Mapping_Rakhine_UNDP_Feb2015.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3rg0G6kPy150k2TxXgnqXikJZIrH6iYL3zSp29ECT6GM5cHDkTS_HxDx8, accessed on November 3, 2019, p. 11.

⁵² Jones J. William, “Myanmar’s Rohingya: Human Rights Abuses and Systemic Violence”, in *Journal of Urban Culture Research*, Vol. 14, January - June 2017, p. 6.



last component of this triangle is represented by behaviour, being the only visible element of this figure because it implies open and violent actions. The behaviour can comprise actions that vary from cooperation to coercion and hostility. The history of the Rohingya minority and the relations it had with the Rakhine people reveals that the cooperation was almost inexistent, while coercion and hostility were omnipresent, growing bigger and bigger. Cooperation, as an alternative, was removed from this power game, since the government and the local authorities do not recognize the Rohingya people⁵³. Therefore, their argument is that they were entitled to reject any cooperation proposal since the group does not even exist. In these circumstances, Buddhist extremists took advantage of the government's permissiveness and lack of any political support for the Rohingya minority, going from coercion and hostility to clear violent actions. Rohingya people are constrained to live only in certain areas, the access to some cities being restricted⁵⁴; moreover, if they want to get married, they have to pay a special tax, the same practice is in place when they want to have children. To all these must be added the rejection of the majoritarian population for an International Commission that should analyse the ethnical and religious problems⁵⁵.

The second triangle, as noticed in Figure 1, b, goes deeper into the analysis, approaching the matter of violence: direct, structural and cultural. According to Galtung, violence does not have to be understood in a restrictive way because violence is not represented only by clear aggressive actions, but also social injustice, uneven distribution of power, unequal distribution of resources. Direct violence is the visible component, being measured in the number of victims, wounded, as well as material damage. Nevertheless, direct violence is not the most dangerous part because

it is rather caused and sustained by the cultural and structural one: the first one legitimizes the violence and the second backs it up. According to a study of Amnesty International, the Rohingya minority was the most persecuted minority in 2017⁵⁶, being a strong evidence for the existence of direct violence.⁵⁷

Over time, the violent actions between the two ethnic groups escalated, but there were also mitigations. However, the violent clashes caused victims among innocent people, even women and children. An exact number of deaths or injured does not exist because the government does not recognize the Rohingya minority, but also due to the fact that people with injuries do not go to hospitals to be treated. There are some statistics about the confrontations from different periods of time, but most of it are only estimates. In the case of the last confrontation of 2017, the army made public, on their Facebook page, that nearly 400 persons died⁵⁸, especially mentioning that some of the dead were terrorists.⁵⁹ Estimation about the impact of the conflict are made also on the number of those who were forced to leave the country even if they did not endure any direct violence but suffered as refugees: in 1997 almost 200.000 people left Myanmar; between 1992 and 1993, almost 300.000⁶⁰ left, and in 2017 the number of dislocated people reached 500.000. To these numbers are added the material damage that was not quantified until the end of 2017 (caused mostly by the arson of the Rohingya houses).

Violence propagation was not a one-way road but was actually dual because of the violent actions of the Rakhine army, the representative of

⁵³ Ahsan Ullah, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁵⁴ ***, UNDP Myanmar, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵⁵ ***, "Gov't rejects UN Rakhine investigation", The Republic of the Union of Myanmar – President's Office, URL: <http://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=issues/rakhine-state-affairs/id-7428>, accessed on November 3, 2019.

⁵⁶ ***, Amnesty International, September 26, 2017, URL: <https://www.amnesty.org.au/who-are-the-rohingya-refugees/>, accessed on July 24, 2019.

⁵⁷ ***, Amnesty International, "We will destroy everything" *Military responsibility for crimes against humanity in Rakhine state, Myanmar*, London, 2018.

⁵⁸ A.N: the data varies according to the source; some sources are estimating that 600 men were killed, without counting the number of women and children.

⁵⁹ ***, Jon Sharman, The Independent, *Burma: 400 killed amid 'massacre' of Rohingya Muslims, army says*, September 1, 2017, URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/urma-rohingya-muslims-killed-massacre-highlands-armed-forces-army-soldiers-terror-a7924411.html>, accessed on July 24, 2019.

⁶⁰ Ahsan Ullah, *op. cit.*, p. 298.



the Rohingya minority – ARSA – responded with violence. These actions amplified especially in 2012, when the ARSA group began to fight back. On 29 of May 2012, the rape and murder of a 27-year-old Rakhine woman, by three Rohingya men, draw the attention of most people in the region. This event generated a disproportional response because the authorities started to commit indiscriminate crimes among the Rohingya minority. The escalation of the conflict can be seen in the events that took place few days later, when clandestine groups were acting violently. Thus, on 3rd of June, a group of ten Muslims were killed in a majoritarian Rakhine city. In October 2016, another event aggravated the relations between the two ethnic groups. Then, three police stations were attacked, causing nine victims. However, the most significant act of direct violence, conducted by ARSA, took place in August 2017, when the group attacked 30 police stations, killing 12 officers.⁶¹

In analysing the spectrum of violence, Galtung made some specifications. There is physical and psychological violence as well as positive or negative violence; there must be an object or a subject towards which the violence is directed. One of the most important clarifications Galtung has made in his analysis of violence was between personal or direct violence and structural or indirect violence.⁶² Structural violence is an indirect action because there is no need for a particular person to cause it. This type of violence is created by the structure, brought upfront by an uneven distribution of power and unequal life chances.⁶³ The second triangle is closely linked to the first one because it depicts the type of relations between the actors: on the one hand we have the *topdogs* (those who make the policies in their favour), and, on the other

hand, we have the *underdogs* (those who do not have so much power and are disadvantaged). The policies that favoured the Rakhine ethnics have been formulated immediately after the 1962 coup d'état. The Socialist Party that came to power also decided to abolish Rohingya's social and political organizations. The discrimination within the structure continued and reached the peak in 1982, when the law of citizenship entered into force. This law let the Rohingya minority stateless because their citizenship has been revoked and they were seen as immigrants. Since then there is no official recognition and neither the term *Rohingya* can be found in the vocabulary of the authorities. Because they have no citizenship, Rohingya people cannot benefit from a series of rights be it civil, social or political. Starting with 1990s, children born in Rohingya families were no longer given birth certificates while the couples were forced to register with the Myanmar Border Guard Force.⁶⁴ The next step was made in 2005, when the government limited the number of children for the Rohingya families to maximum two.⁶⁵ Ten years later, in 2015, were formulated the Four Race and Religion Protection Laws: the first one forbids polygamy (imposing the idea of monogamy, even if Muslims are accepting and practicing polygamy); the second law bans forced conversion and imposes the idea of respecting the decision taken by the Administration Council of Religious Conversions (that in many cases forbids the conversion to Islam); the third law creates the favourable conditions to reject marriage proposals to diminish the number of Muslim women converting to Buddhism; the fourth law gives special prerogatives to the local authorities that can limit the number of births.⁶⁶ All these measures contributed to the further isolation of the Rohingya minority.

The last component of this triangle

⁶¹ ***, "Myanmar: Who are the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army?", *BBC*, September 6, 2017, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41160679>, accessed on July 24, 2019.

⁶² Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. VI, no. 3, 1969, pp. 167-191

⁶³ Johan Galtung, *Violence, Peace...*, p. 171 and Johan Galtung; Carl G. Jacobsen, *Searching for Peace. The road to transcend*, Pluto Press, London, 2000, p. 277.

⁶⁴ J. Jones William, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁶⁵ P. Karen Simbulan, *A Legal and Structural Analysis of the Violence in Rakhine State against the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar*, URL: https://www.academia.edu/6101564/Legal_and_Structural_Analysis_of_Violence_in_Rakhine_State_against_the_Rohingya_Muslims_of_Myanmar, accessed on July 25, 2019.

⁶⁶ J. Jones William, *op. cit.*, p. 7.



approaches the cultural aspects (religion, ideology, language) that are used to legitimize direct and structural violence.⁶⁷ The two types of violence – structural and cultural – should not be seen and analysed separately because they are complementary. Structural violence, as already mentioned, refers to the laws and norms of a state that favours the marginalization of a certain social group. In addition, cultural differences (religion, ideology, language) are used to legitimize these laws and norms. In other terms, cultural violence manages to change the “moral colour of an act from red/wrong to green/right”⁶⁸. The structural and the cultural elements made it normal for the Rakhine people to persecute the Rohingya members. As was previously mentioned in the definition of interethnic conflicts, the ethnic differences are perceived in strictly antagonistic terms. In the case of Rakhine state, the cultural differences existed since the beginning of the colonial era, but they have amplified after 1948. These differences are present especially at the religious level: Rohingya, majoritarian Muslims, and Rakhine people, majoritarian Buddhists, are in opposition. Though, important for this analysis is to notice that especially the Rakhine people base their actions on the differences between the two major ethnic groups in Rakhine state. Following the events of 2017, when ARSA attacked the police stations, the Army’s law enforcement agencies, Tatmadaw, demonized the Muslims, calling them terrorists.⁶⁹ This perspective created the proper environment to use the discourse of fighting against terrorists and not against the Rohingya minority.

The 1982 Law can be seen as based on the ethnical differences. For example, we have the linguistic terminology, through which the Rohingya members are called Bengalis⁷⁰. But maybe one of the most conclusive examples for the cultural violence is the nationalist group

with religious preoccupations, Association for the Protection of Race and Religion, known as Ma Ba Tha, founded in 2014. At some point, one of its leaders stated that the main threat for the country is Islam.⁷¹ And even though the group was banned in 2017, the ideas promoted by its members are wide-spread within the Buddhist community.

The third triangle is comprised of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding⁷² (see Figure 1.c). The cessation of the three forms of violence – direct, structural and cultural – are in close relation with the three strategies for peace. The process of peacemaking is the first one. In a traditional sense, this phase depicts the actions developed with the aim of stopping an ongoing conflict through negotiations and mediation.⁷³ In Myanmar’s case, the answer from the international community was made especially through diplomatic means. As a first step was the designation of a rapporteur with the mission to create a connection with the governmental authorities as well as with the civilians, including the detained political leaders. This designation was legalized through the Commission of Human Rights Resolution 1992/58.⁷⁴ Initially, the mandate was given for one year, but subsequently was extended annually, the rapporteur being active even nowadays.⁷⁵ The next step was made in 2016 when, in September, was created the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, comprising nine members, six nationals and three internationals. The Commission was chaired by the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. The mandate

⁶⁷ Johan Galtung, *Cultural Violence*, pp. 291-292.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 292.

⁶⁹ Austin Bodetti, *What Is the Tatmadaw’s Plan for the Rohingya?*, October 14, 2017, URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/what-is-the-tatmadaws-plan-for-the-rohingya/>, accessed on July 25, 2019.

⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁷¹ Katie Hunt, CNN, *Rohingya crisis: It’s not genocide, say Myanmar’s hardline monks*, November 26, 2017, URL: <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/11/25/asia/myanmar-buddhist-nationalism-mabatha/index.html>, accessed on July 25, 2019.

⁷² Johan Galtung, “Three Approaches to Peace. Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding”, in *Peace, War and Defence*, by Johan Galtung, Ejlert, Copenhagen, 1976, pp. 282-304.

⁷³ Iulian Chifu, Lavinia Lupu, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁷⁴ ***, United Nations Human Rights, “Situation on Human Rights in Myanmar”, Office of the High Commissioner, 1992.

⁷⁵ ***, United Nations Human Rights, “Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar”, Office of the High Commissioner, n.d.



of this Commission ended in August 2017, by drafting the Final Report⁷⁶, treating the main lines of actions that must be pursued by both the authorities of the Rakhine State and the authorities from Naypyidaw, in order to solve conflicts.

The second process – peacekeeping – implies the deployment of international military or civil personnel in a conflict zone, with the agreement of parties involved. The mission of this deployments would be either to stop the conflict, or to endorse a peace accord, or maybe both, according to the situation. In the case of Myanmar, the process of peacekeeping did not imply the entire actions that fall under its definition; there were no military or civil personnel deployed, the diplomatic reconciliation being the main action for solving the problems of the region. However, if we consider the implication of the Commission, chaired by Kofi Annan, and the Final Report as representing the international personnel, then it can be stated that in the case of Rakhine state existed a process of peacekeeping.

In 2015, at the Naypyidaw initiative, was signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement that tried to put an end to the conflicts that occur in other parts of Myanmar (Mon state, Kachin state).⁷⁷ In the peace talks other actors were involved as well, among which the European Union having an observatory status.⁷⁸ An important factor for the peace process (not limited to Rakhine State) was the Joint Peace Fund, to which contributes 12 actors worldwide. This Fund promotes a comprehensive and efficient approach by providing to all the parties involved technical, financial and consultative assistance. All these efforts are made for a durable and

inclusive peace.⁷⁹

The third process of the last triangle is one of the most important ones, namely: peacebuilding. This process implies actions that endorse and encourage the achievement of a sustainable peace by addressing the profound causes of the conflict, through the consolidation of institutions, reconciliation, and through political and economic transformation.⁸⁰ Even though this analysis is considered one of the most important stages – due to the fact that it is regarding long term peace – in this moment, it is difficult to have some clear indicators for it, in the case of Rakhine State. One of the most important changes, meant to lead to a consolidated peace in Rakhine State, was the 2016 elections, when the National League for Democracy (NLD) won and favoured the transition from a military to a civil government. But despite the victory of NLD the changes were not significant: on the one hand, because the army still holds a quarter of the places in Parliament, on the other hand, because there are still ethnical preferences and a nationalist discourse that will overridden the imperative of respecting human rights.

Conclusions

As a result of the analysis, the conflict between the Rakhine people and the Rohingya minority does not seem to see a peaceful end any time soon. The complexity of the situation does not forecast real and sustainable solutions.

As was previously mentioned, the process of peacebuilding is one of the most important ones. But this process seems to be rather on a downward path, considering the evolution of the conflict, that has lately amplified. According to the analysis, the most relevant difficulties can be identified at two levels. There is the political level that combines the prerogatives of the local government with the prerogatives of the central government. While the first has an active role in the conflict, the second is an accomplice that

⁷⁶ ***, Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, “Towards a peaceful, fair and prosperous future for the people of Rakhine”, Final Report, 2017.

⁷⁷ ***, The Institute for Security and Development Policy, *Myanmar’s Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement*, The Institute for Security and Development Policy, 2015.

⁷⁸ ***, European Union External Action, *Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Myanmar/Burma*, signed in EU presence, October 15, 2015, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/2894/nationwide-ceasefire-agreement-myanmarburma-signed-eu-presence_en, accessed on July 29, 2019.

⁷⁹ ***, Joint Peace Fund, URL: <https://www.jointpeacefund.org/en>, accessed on July 29, 2019.

⁸⁰ Iulian Chifu, Lavinia Lupu, *op. cit.*, p. 113.



tolerates the actions of the local authorities that are committing crimes indiscriminately killing both ARSA representatives and civilian population. On the other hand, there is the social level, where one can identify the level of hatred reached between the two ethnic groups. The 2015 Peace Agreement was a step towards reconciliation, but the events that followed did not lead to an increase in confidence in the government's ability to ensure the security of both ethnic groups. These points lead us to what we chose to emphasize through our assumption, made in accordance with Galtung's triangles method: the security cannot be addressed as a primary issue, but rather the effort must be directed towards building trust between the parties involved. However, to test this assumption, we used one main question and two subsequent ones. Starting with the subsequent question of how deep one must go in order to identify the sources of conflict, our answer is based on the first triangle: attitudes, contradictions and behaviours. In other words, one must observe these elements as a first step for trust building between the parties involved. However, the process is long and complicated, but this is the mechanism for a sustainable peace process.

Another subsequent question that was used in guiding this research was the one dealing with the elements that foster and perpetrate the conflict. Thus, following a systematic analysis, we could observe that there can be identified three main categories of violence that are reinforcing each other, in a vicious circle. If this research should offer a series of proposals that are to be implemented for a successful peace process, they would attempt to touch the basic level (attitudes, behaviours, contradictions), by intervening at levels where human decision can make a difference. For example, at the political-institutional level, it should be started by reviewing the status of the Rohingya people, by amending the Citizenship Law of 1982. On a structural level, it would be recommended that the camps in which the Rohingya people where moved after 2012 be dismantled. At the

same time, it must be addressed also the matter of the discriminatory laws that imposed taxes on marriage, children and banned conversions between the two religions: Islam and Buddhism. Last, but not least, changes must be done at the cultural level. A first step was taken when the Ma Ba Tha organization was banned, but there is still much to be done in this area. Each of these measures have a significant role, but they are efficient only considered together at all levels because one failure at one level draws the failure of others.

Some of these punctual recommendations are for the internal level and, implicitly, for the actors involved. However, not only the national authorities have a role in this peace process, but also the international actors. Thus, on 17 of March 2017, the UN Security Council met in order to discuss the problem of Myanmar. However, the common declaration condemning the acts of violence from this country was vetoed by China and Russia. The reaction of the two permanent members of the Council has discouraged any further negotiations for a resolution that could endorse the peace process. In the absence of a common decision, the international community preferred low scale actions, such as humanitarian aid provided through UN Agencies and other non-governmental organizations. However, this aid must be first accepted by the decision-makers from Naypyidaw, who have so far refused it. The cooperation with Bangladesh must be also carefully planned and in this sense an agreement must be signed.

These recommendations are in close relation with those made in the Commission Report, chaired by Kofi Annan. Our input is part of the efforts made in confidence building, a complicated process that is necessary for a sustainable peace.

The proposed model does not exclude other measures not mentioned in this analysis. But for the aim of this research, trust building between the parties involved in the conflict, none of the steps described above can be skipped.



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THE BALANCE OF MILITARY EXPENDITURES IN 2019

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According to the latest data, world military spending continue to increase amid obvious divergences between USA, China and Russia and the degradation of the international security environment. It is estimated that the total defence expenditures will reach \$1.9 trillion in 2020¹, mainly allocated for the replacement of outdated military equipment with state-of-the-art

equipment. Increasing uncertainty and security concerns call for the strengthening of defence capabilities, modernization of the armed forces being the key factor that will lead to higher military budgets in NATO, USA, China, Russia, India and other states. For 2019, estimates show that the US military ranks in first place, spending about \$717 billion, followed by China with \$177

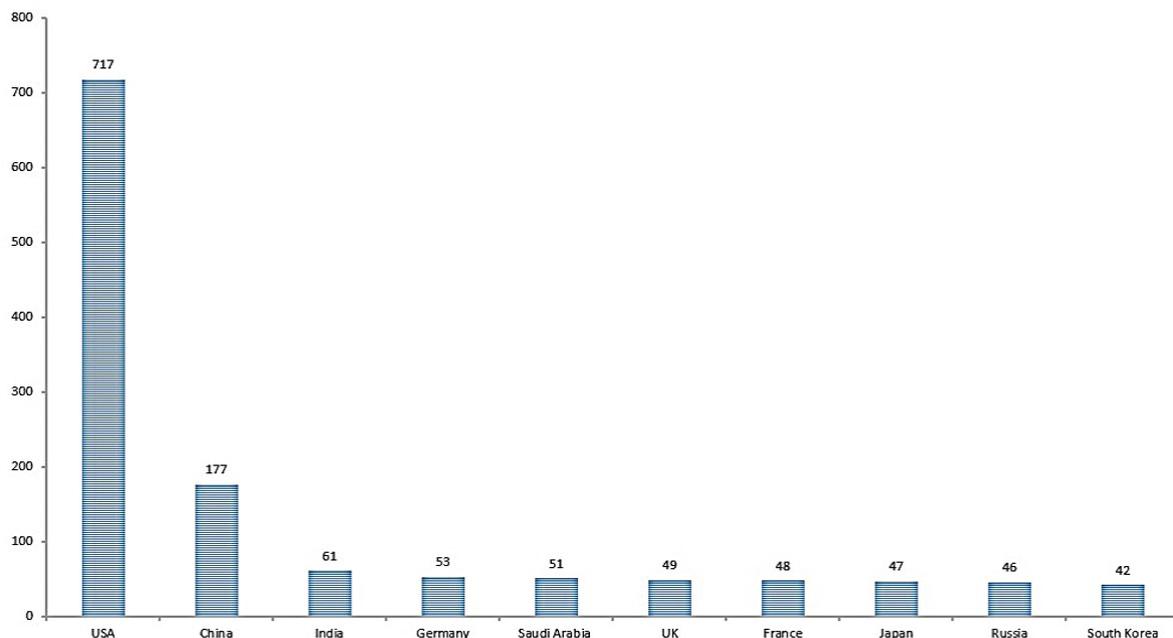


Figure no. 1: Top 10 countries with the biggest military budgets in 2019²

¹***, 2020 global aerospace and defence industry outlook, Deloitte Research Centre for Energy & Industrials, 2019, p. 2.

² Idem.

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billion, India with \$60.9 billion, Germany with \$53 billion and Saudi Arabia with \$51 billion³. Subject to data and reports that may be inaccurate/incomplete, we can see that Russia came out of the top five of the largest investors in the armed forces, ranking ninth. Germany and France, even if they do not meet the Allied recommended target (at least 2% of GDP for defence), continue to be among the three largest European spenders in the military field.

It is not less true that geopolitical tensions in MENA have led to an increase in demand for military equipment and technologies. Available data shows that USA, Russia, France, Germany and China continued to hold the first places in exports of major weapons systems, with a volume of about 75% of the total, and the main buyers were, especially, the countries of the Middle East⁴.

United States of America

The US continues to invest far more in the military field than any other country in the world. Its defence budget exceeds the total allocations of the next nine countries in the ranking, being more than four times higher than that of China. To strengthen its military superpower status, the US is upgrading its capabilities (M1 Abrams tanks, ballistic missile defence systems, F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, AH-64E Apache and UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters, joint light tactical vehicles and advanced extremely high-frequency systems⁵). Also, US contributes about 70% to the total defence expenditures of NATO Member States⁶ and remains the main contributor to global security.

However, the Trump administration has invested only \$420 billion in new military

equipment in the last three years, out of an aggregate total of about \$2,045 billion allocated to the army budget, which is less than 27%⁷. The rest of the amount were personnel expenses, for operations and maintenance, research and development etc. The largest transaction in US military history is the acquisition of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, a \$34 billion deal⁸, to which are added investments in training aircraft and aerial refuelling drones.

In the short term, the US military budget seems to be closer to the 2009-2011 level, considering that for 2020 an amount of \$738 billion has been approved⁹. Russia uses this data to justify its actions and accusations to the US, Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu, stating that this amount is equal to the cumulative annual military budget of all countries of the world and is 16 times larger than Russia's¹⁰.

People's Republic of China

The Beijing regime continues its program that has started a few years ago, to make major investments in developing military capabilities, involving the national defence industry in the development of Stealth fighters, aircraft carriers and anti-satellite missiles. 2019 was the 25th consecutive year of increase in the Chinese defence budget and in 2018 it was almost 10 times higher than in 1994 and accounted for about 14% of the world military expenditures¹¹.

⁷ *Idem*, pp. 6 and 13.

⁸ Erica Werner, Aaron Gregg, "Trump overstates military spending and readiness in face of Iran conflict", *The Washington Post*, 7 January 2020, URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2020/01/06/trump-overstates-military-spending-readiness-potential-iran-conflict-looms>, accessed on 10.01.2020.

⁹ Joe Gould, "Pentagon finally gets its 2020 budget from Congress", *Defense News*, 19 December 2019, URL: <https://www.defensenews.com/congress/2019/12/19/pentagon-finally-gets-its-2020-budget-from-congress>, accessed on 10.01.2020.

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¹¹ ***, "World military expenditure grows to \$1.8 trillion in 2018", *SIPRI*, 29 April 2019, URL: <https://www.sipri.org/>

³ ***, *The world's biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019, URL: <https://www.army-technology.com/features/biggest-military-budgets-world>, accessed on 11.11.2019.

⁴ Pieter D. Wezeman, Aude Fleurant, Alexandra Kuimova, Nan Tian, Siemon T. Wezeman, *Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018*, SIPRI Fact Sheet, March 2019, p. 1.

⁵ ***, *The world's biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019.

⁶ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, Press Release, 29 November 2019, p. 4.



Financing some major defence programmes of the Chinese Army is boosted by undeclared military competition with the US, especially the Shenyang J-31 and Chengdu J-20 fighter aircrafts, surface-to-air missiles, transport aircraft, multi-mission helicopters and its naval fleet¹². The development of long-range ballistic and cruise missiles, such as the Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missile systems (has a range of 100 nautical miles), hypersonic missile or DF-21D “carrier killer” (has a range of 1,000 miles)¹³, is also a priority.

More experts claim that China’s military power will soon become a serious threat to US domination. A report by the Center for a New American Security¹⁴, co-authored by former Deputy Secretary of Defence Robert O. Work, analyses how Beijing’s strategy and technology threatens the US in this race for power. The methods and means used are various: industrial espionage in the military field, through cyber-attacks and hacking, skipping in that way the expensive R&D phase; finding and exploiting vulnerabilities in order to jam the battlefield communication system within the so-called “killing chain”¹⁵; developing the ability to strike early and strike hard in an eventual conflict; “offset” strategies that include a capability concealment that can surprise adversaries during combat (so-called “black capabilities”); adapting artificial intelligence (autonomous unmanned systems, human-machine hybrid intelligence, automated decision-making, intelligent robotics) to military capabilities and their use in combat; further economic development allowing to spend

annually more resources in the military field¹⁶.

It is true that the multiple challenges in the international security environment, in addition to the regional insecurity and the territorial disputes with its neighbours, have led to a significant increase in China’s military spending. In the coming years, it is unlikely that China’s military power will be dethroned from the second place in the world, as the Chinese economy will maintain its current growth rate without major crises.

Russian Federation

Some analysts continue to place Russia third in the world top of defence budget, claiming that the real military spending calculated on the basis of purchasing power parity is somewhere in the range of \$150-180 billion¹⁷. Compared to many Western states, the Russian government allocates a much larger percentage of this budget for the procurement of modern weapons and military equipment and, also, for research and development activities¹⁸. In fact, it seems that Russia’s defence expenditures, evaluated on the basis of the exchange rate, reached only \$46.4 billion in 2019¹⁹, given the fact that Russian economy continues to be impacted on by Western sanctions and the volatility of oil and natural gas international prices.

Putin’s ambitions to regain Russia’s superpower status also translate into major investments in the strengthening of its military power. The Kremlin regime continues the modernization of the armed forces’ plan, started in 2011, by increasing funding which improved pay for military personnel, allowed for the purchasing of new and more sophisticated equipment, and

media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018, accessed on 26.11.2019.

¹² ***, *The world’s biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019.

¹³ Ellen Ioanes, “China’s military power may surpass the US’s faster than you think, thanks to 6 shrewd strategies”, *Business Insider*, 26 August 2019, URL: <https://www.businessinsider.com/chinas-military-power-surpass-the-us-faster-than-you-think-2019-8>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

¹⁴ Robert O. Work, Greg Grant, *Beating the Americans at their Own Game – An Offset Strategy with Chinese Characteristics*, Center for a New American Security, June 2019.

¹⁵ US high-technology system comprised of four grids that, working in concert, find, fix, and finish intended targets.

¹⁶ Robert O. Work, Greg Grant, *op. cit.*, June 2019.

¹⁷ Richard Connolly, *Russian Military Expenditure in Comparative Perspective: A Purchasing Power Parity Estimate*, CNA Occasional Paper, October 2019, p. 22; Michael Kofman, “Russian defense spendings is much larger, and more sustainable than it seems”, *Defense News*, 3 May 2019, URL: <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/05/03/russian-defense-spending-is-much-larger-and-more-sustainable-than-it-seems>, accessed on 28.11.2019.

¹⁸ Michael Kofman, *op. cit.*, 3 May 2019.

¹⁹ ***, *The world’s biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019.

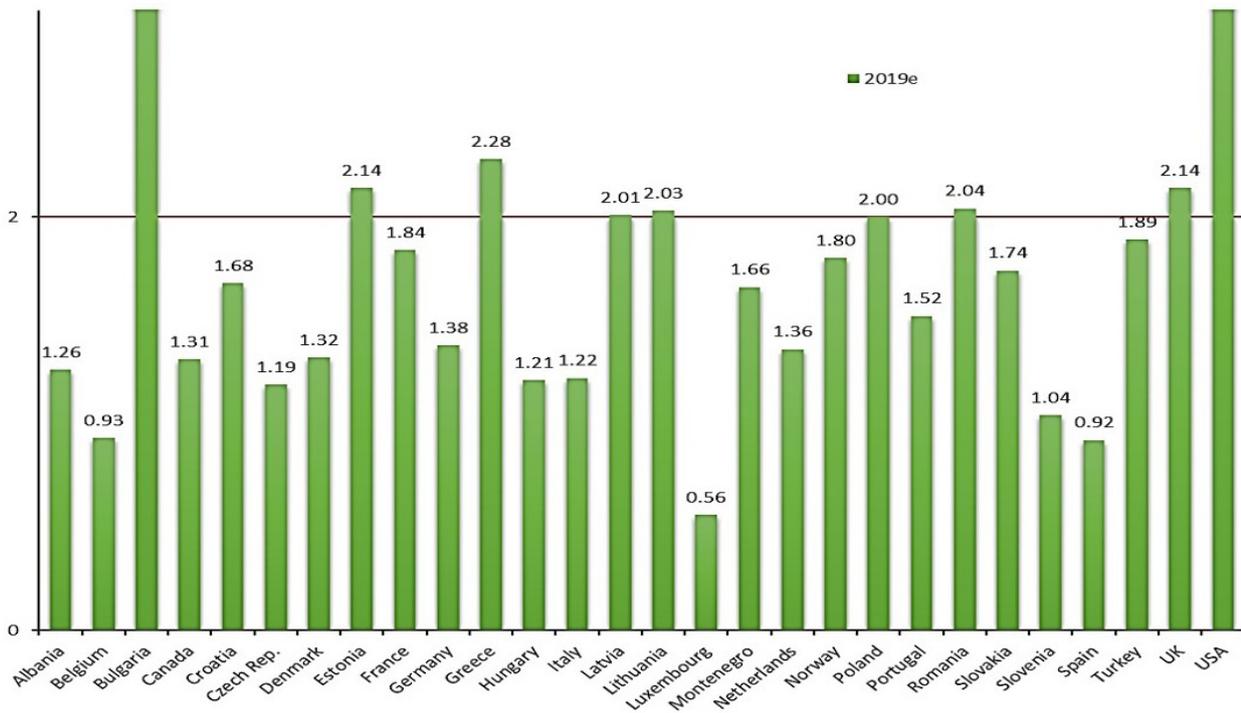


Figure no. 2: Percentage of GDP allocated to estimate defence expenditures in 2019²¹

supported more training and exercises²⁰. In the next period, the accent falls on upgrading the strategic nuclear assets, submarines and surface vessels, aircraft and helicopters, as well as their air capabilities. The defence investments will support Russia’s major acquisition programs, including Borei-class submarines equipped with ballistic missiles and Yasen-class attack submarines, SU-57 fighter jets, and modernized TU-160 strategic bombers²².

NATO

In *Report on a New Concept for NATO*, issued 2010, it was stated that only six of the 26 European Allies spend 2% of GDP or more for military transformation, only a dozen was

able to meet the deployment and sustainability requirements for their own armed forces, and just over half allocated 20% of military expenditure or more on equipment²³. After almost ten years, the situation has not changed much.

Although, since 2014²⁴, most European Allies have committed/reconfirmed, within each summit, that defence expenditures will increase, the reality is different. According to estimates, in 2019 only eight (Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the UK) of the 27 Allies, if we do not consider the US, have already met the requirement of 2% of

²⁰ Sintia Radu, “How Russia Improved its Military With An Economy the Size of Spain”, *U.S. News*, 5 December 2019, URL: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2019-12-05/russia-boosted-its-military-with-increased-in-house-production-and-spending>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

²¹ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, Press Release, 29 November 2019, p. 8.

²² ***, *The world’s biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019.

²³ ***, *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement – Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a New Strategic Concept for NATO*, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 17 May 2010, p. 38.

²⁴ At the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, the Heads of State and Government agreed on a Defense Investment Pledge that stipulates for all Allies that did not already meet NATO-agreed guideline of spending at least 2% of their GDP on defence to stop cuts and gradually increase spending to reach this goal within a decade. Also, Allies that did not meet NATO-agreed guideline to spend at least 20% of annual defence expenditures on major new equipment, including related R&D, must comply in the same timeframe.

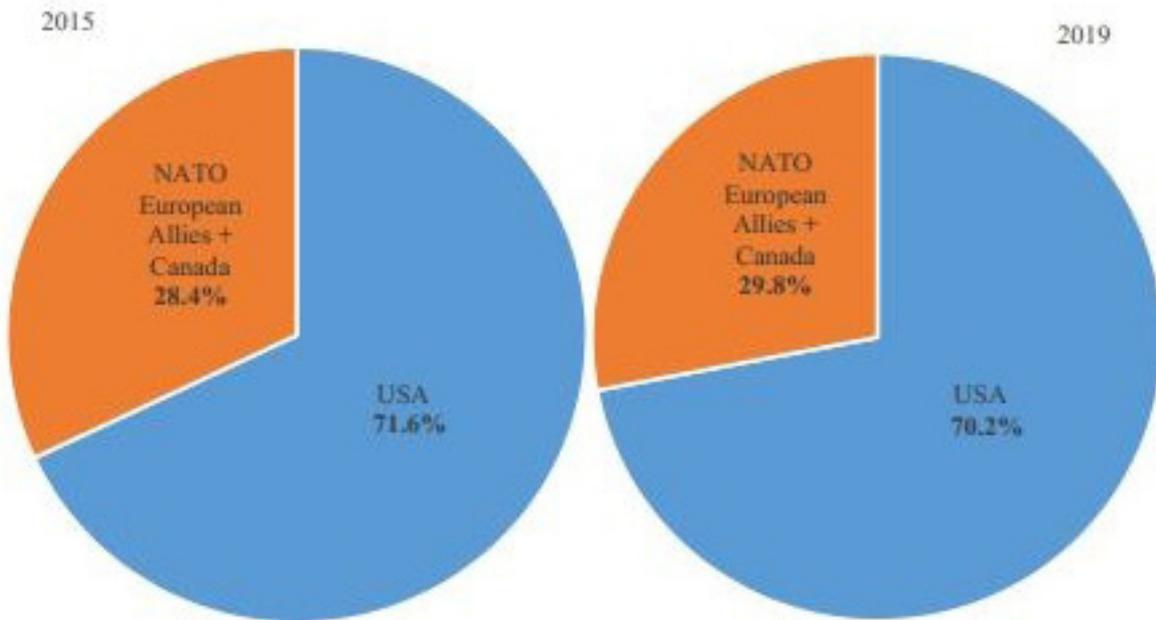


Figure no. 3: The percentage contribution in total defence expenditures of NATO member states²⁵

GDP, allocated to the military budget. France, Norway, Slovakia and Turkey follow closely, with allocations of over 1.7%. Belgium, Canada, Croatia and Spain show no signs of increasing defence expenditures. The biggest increase in the budget in 2019, compared to 2018, was recorded by Bulgaria (about 127%), followed by great distance from Slovakia (48%), Montenegro (23%), and Romania (16%). Decreases were recorded only in Greece (-5.83%) and Latvia (-0.74%), which already meet the NATO target, and Turkey (-0.24%)²⁶.

In real terms, NATO European Allies, as well as Canada, have steadily increased their military spending from \$254 billion in 2015 to \$309 billion in 2019. If we refer to the last two years, it results an increase of only \$10 billion, which represents a very small sum of the total NATO budget (0.96%) or the US military budget (1.37%).

As we can see in the figure no. 3, the share of US contribution in the total Allies' expenditures has decreased by about 1.4%, in the last five

years. Despite the urging of both US President Donald Trump and NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, the process of increasing the national allocations of European allies for the Armed Forces is very slow and depends both on political will and economic capacity. Many countries on NATO Eastern flank are facing a number of social, environmental, infrastructure problems which impose the reform of major investment systems and programs. Other economically powerful countries, such as Germany, consider that increasing the military budget to 2% of GDP is an unrealistic measure²⁷, the current allocation being sufficient for modernizing its armed forces.

In 2015, the aggregate defence expenditures of NATO member countries reached the lowest level in the last 10 years, below \$900 billion, but soon they entered an upward trend, recording a cumulative increase of over \$144 billion, in the

²⁵ *Idem*, p. 7.

²⁶ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, Press Release, 29 November 2019, p. 8.

²⁷ Matthias Gebauer, "Germany Remains Tepid on NATO 2-Percent Goal", *Spiegel International*, 7 November 2019, URL: <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/german-government-clash-over-nato-2-percent-goal-a-1295429.html>, accessed on 16.12.2019.



period 2015-2019²⁸. An analysis of Jane's²⁹ has predicted for 2019, a 5% increase in the total military spending of European Allies compared to the previous year. Overall, in 2019, defence expenditures in Western NATO countries, including the UK, Germany, Italy and France, could increase by 4%, while that of Eastern European Allies could reach 9%.

Germany's Army will record an 11% increase in the military budget, the biggest rise since the end of the Cold War, in order to cover the lack of heavy equipment such as tanks, aircraft, and submarines. Most of the Bundeswehr's funds (1.38% of GDP in 2019) were allocated towards the procurement of military transport aircraft, helicopters, multiple launch rocket systems and UAVs. In 2019, France allocated about 1.82% of GDP to the military budget – below the NATO target. In the area of capabilities modernization, the Paris government has focused on the acquisition of bulletproof vests, Griffon armoured vehicles, HK416 assault rifles, NH 90 helicopters, a multi-mission frigate, a patrol boat, a multi-mission building (B2M), Reaper drones, A400M, C130J and MRTT aircraft. In contrast to France, the UK continues to invest more than 2.10%, every year, in developing defence capacity by financing major procurement programmes and defence infrastructure improvement. For 2019, significant funds are granted for the acquisition of submarines, warships, fighter jets, missiles, transport aircraft, as well as land-based equipment and systems, including the contracting of Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, Astute-class submarines, F-35 fighter aircraft and Ajax (Scout SV) armoured vehicles³⁰.

Regarding the expenses for the purchase of military equipment, 16 Allies already invest more than 20% of the 2019 defence budgets for major procurement programmes, including the

associated research and development activities. Only three states still have percentages below or around 10% – Croatia (with only 6.7%), Slovenia (7.6%) and Belgium (10.8%)³¹. In recent years, a number of Allies in the NATO Eastern flank have concluded a series of billion-dollar contracts for the acquisition of new military equipment and technologies. Bulgaria is the leader in this field with expenditures of almost 59% of its military budget, followed by Luxembourg – 45%, Slovakia – 41.7%, Turkey – 38.6% and Lithuania – 30%³². According to the national objectives, all the Allies, with the exception of two, will fulfil, by 2024, the NATO recommendation to spend at least 20% on military equipment³³.

In the context of equitable defence cost-sharing discussions, Donald Trump has also insisted on reducing the US contribution to the direct funding of NATO's civil budget, military budget, and NSIP programme. For 2019, the civil budget was set at about \$260.5 million to cover the current running costs of the NATO HQ in Brussels and some administrative costs, the military one at \$1.56 billion to finance the joint operations and the NATO Strategic Command Centre, as well as the training and research activities, and NSIP at \$770 million for investments in major construction and command and control systems³⁴. Currently, according to the agreed cost-share formula based on Gross National Income, the US contribution is 22.14%, which is about \$573.5 million. In contrast, Germany contributes with 14.76%, France – 10.50% and Italy – 8.14%³⁵.

In order to reduce the discrepancies related to the direct financing of the Alliance, a new formula of cost-sharing has been agreed on,

²⁸ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, Press Release, 29 November 2019, p. 8.

²⁹ Fenella McGerty, *European Defence Spending Inches Closer to USD300 Billion*, Jane's by IHS Markit, 1 November 2019, URL: <https://ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/janes-european-defence-spending-inches-closer-to-usd300-billion.html>, accessed on 16.12.2019.

³⁰ ***, *The world's biggest defence budgets in 2019*, Army Technology, 13 June 2019.

³¹ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, Press Release, 29 November 2019, p. 13.

³² *Idem*.

³³ ***, *NATO: Ready for the Future. Adapting the Alliance (2018-2019)*, NATO, 29 November 2019, p. 13.

³⁴ Ryan Browne, "Trump administration to cut its financial contribution to NATO", *CNN*, 28 November 2019, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/27/politics/trump-nato-contribution-nato/index.html>, accessed on 17.12.2019

³⁵ ***, *Funding NATO*, NATO, 20 December 2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm, accessed on 13.01.2020.



at NATO level³⁶. This method for calculating national contributions will apply from 2021. According to it, the US will reduce its funding to about 16.36%, and Germany will have a constant growth, France will remain at the previous level (not agreeing with the new formula and, implicitly, with the increase of its contribution), Italy will grow to 8.79%. The other Allies will also increase their financial contribution, for example Romania will grow from about 1.14%, as recorded currently, to 1.23%, in 2021³⁷.

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Despite the disputes on funding issue, the Final Declaration of the NATO leaders³⁸ meeting in London, on 3-4 December 2019, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Alliance's founding, confirms once again the commitment of the Allies to increase defence investments in accordance with the guidelines of 2%, respectively 20% of GDP. NATO's defence

expenditures, with the exception of the US, have increased over the last five years by over \$130 billion, most being invested in new capabilities and increased contribution to missions and operations. Moreover, it seems that by the end of 2024, the surplus brought by the European Allies and Canada to NATO's total budget will reach \$400 billion³⁹.

If a new major financial or economic crisis will not emerge, global military spending will continue to rise and will soon surpass \$2,000 billion. At NATO level, the need for Allies, especially European ones, to allocate more resources to the development of national and NATO military power will continue to be supported. However, it is unlikely that by 2024 all Allies will want and succeed in allocating the 2% of GDP for defence expenditures, given the fact that there is no mechanism to sanction those who do not comply.

³⁶ ***, *Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of France Emmanuel Macron*, NATO, 28 November 2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_170790.htm, accessed on 14.01.2020.

³⁷ ***, *Funding NATO*, NATO, 20 December 2019.

³⁸ ***, *London Declaration – Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019*, Press Release (2019) 115, 4 December 2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm, accessed on 14.01.2020.

³⁹ ***, *NATO: Ready for the Future. Adapting the Alliance (2018-2019)*, 29 November 2019, p. 13.



IS NATO THE VICTIM OF POWER INTERESTS OF ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES? – Events in the Last Quarter of 2019 that Questioned Alliance’s Cohesion –

*Alexandra SARCINSCHI, Ph.D.**

The second part of 2019 represented both a time of anniversary and a possible turning point, for NATO.

The anniversary is related to the 70th year of NATO existence marked by the Leaders Meeting in London (3-4 of December, 2019). Though, what should have been a time of celebration and positive results turned into a debate on member countries’ cohesion and on Alliance’s *raison d’être* both because of the global security context and the explicit statements of some heads of state. This does not mean that NATO Leaders have not discussed topics related to the Alliance’s development directions, but, on the contrary, the London Declaration reaffirms them.

NATO cannot be analysed by referring exclusively to the organization itself, but it is necessary to correlate the institutional component with that of the member states because their international conduct, their internal and external policy interests and objectives determine their behavior within the organization.

Regarding the activity of the member states during the analyzed period (July-December 2019), the international agenda was dominated by issues related to: Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), Turkey’s actions worldwide, allocation of 2% from GDP for defence spending, but also the statements of the French President

regarding the Alliance’s present and future evolution.

1. US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

In early August came into force US withdrawal from the INF Treaty, that was officially announced six months before, as a result of the Russian Federation’s failure to comply with its provisions. The US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, declared that Russia did not return to full and verified compliance with the Treaty by destroying its non-compliant intermediate-range missile launch system (SSC-8 or 9M729)¹. At the same time, NATO published a statement by the North Atlantic Council expressing its support for the US withdrawal and condemning Russia’s actions²; this is a continuation of the series of chronologically and conceptually “tandem” positions with the US ally (in February 2019,

¹ ***, *Retragerea SUA din Tratatul INF*, U.S. Mission Romania, 02.08.2019, URL: <https://ro.usembassy.gov/ro/retragerea-sua-din-tratatul-inf/>, accessed on 08.08.2019.

² ***, *Statement by the North Atlantic Council on the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty*, NATO, 02.08.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_168164.htm?fbclid=IwAR0Lf3URLD1rmfoOSA9gpsScyfpX-6IPbw7eCeanOryWBkv_teNfJYags, accessed on 07.08.2019.

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both the US, as a state actor, and NATO, as an alliance, issued similar statements about Russia's violation of the INF Treaty³). Russia's invitation that the US and NATO declare a moratorium on the deployment of short and medium-range missiles, was characterized by J. Stoltenberg as having "zero credibility" because neither America, nor NATO deployed new missiles, but Russia itself⁴. However, the Russian Federation, in its rhetoric on the Treaty, has approached a strategy of self-victimization, placing absolute responsibility on the US, which was accused that, instead of engaging in an effective debate, has chosen to waste several years of efforts aimed at reducing the possibility of a large-scale armed conflict, including nuclear weapons, while Russia has acted in accordance with its commitments and will continue to work to maintain strategic security and stability⁵. An argument later used, by the Russian President, is represented by the US Tomahawk missile test performed by US after withdrawing from the Treaty⁶. Moreover, in an official statement, V. Putin declares that, if the Russian Federation will obtain credible information on the US

completing the development of medium and short range missile systems and start producing them, Russia will have no choice but to engage in a large-scale effort to develop similar missiles. However, until this long process is completed, Moscow can rely on other existing systems, such as the "the X-101 and the Kinzhal air-launched missiles, the Kalibr sea-launched missile, as well as future weapons systems, including Tsirkon-class hypersonic systems"⁷.

This type of rhetoric reveals an important part of the motivation of Russia's actions, namely to regain the Cold War sphere of influence and to maintain its status on the international arena, given that NATO's expansion and development of its infrastructure through and within the allied and partner states are pictured as potential threats to its national security⁸.

The Alliance's position on Russia's actions is unwavering: it will respond in a measured and responsible manner to the significant risks posed by the Russian SSC-8 system, and the member states will remain committed to maintaining effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, stressing out that they do not want the installation of new land-based nuclear missiles in Europe⁹.

The issue that arises on this matter, a new arms race, is an important element of the NATO agenda in the last semester of 2019. In a speech delivered at the end of October, J. Stoltenberg identifies three key elements that erode the global architecture of arms control: Russia, China and emerging technologies¹⁰.

³ ***, *President Donald J. Trump to Withdraw the United States from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty*, The White House, 01.02.2019, URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-withdraw-united-states-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-inf-treaty/>, accessed on 02.02.2019;

***, *Statement on Russia's failure to comply with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty Issued by the North Atlantic Council*, Brussels, NATO, 01.02.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_162996.htm, accessed on 02.02.2019.

⁴ Robin Emmott, *Russian request for missile freeze has "zero credibility": Stoltenberg*, Reuters, 01.08.2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-russia-inf-moratorium/russian-request-for-missile-freeze-has-zero-credibility-stoltenberg-idUSKCN1US18Y>, accessed on 07.08.2019.

⁵ ***, *Statement by the President of Russia on the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles*, President of Russia, 05.08.2019, URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61271>, accessed on 07.08.2019.

⁶ Kingston Reif și Shannon Bugos, *Russia, China Criticize U.S. Missile Test*, Arms Control Association, October 2019, URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2019-10/news/russia-china-criticize-us-missile-test>, accessed on 20.11.2019.

⁷ ***, *Statement by the President of Russia on the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles*, President of Russia, 05.08.2019, URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/61271>, accessed on 07.08.2019.

⁸ ***, *Meeting of Russian Federation Security Council*, President of Russia, 22.11.2019, URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62096>, accessed on 24.11.2019.

⁹ ***, *Top Five Russian Myths Debunked*, NATO, 05.08.2019, URL: <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/115204.htm>, accessed on 07.08.2019.

¹⁰ ***, *Speech by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg at the High-level NATO Conference on Arms Control and Disarmament*, NATO, 23.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169930.htm, accessed on 24.10.2019.



As for Russia, the Secretary General says that it has been deploying intermediate-range ground-launched missiles in Europe for years, which are mobile and easy to hide, ignoring NATO Allies' calls to comply with the INF Treaty.

As for China, in addition to an increased military budget (in 2018, it was the second in the world: 250 billion USD, 5% more than in 2017¹¹), there is also an increase in the number and the complexity of the missile arsenal, which, had China signed the INF Treaty, would have been banned (moreover, at the National Day military parade, China unveiled several new weapons systems and platforms, including DF-41 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile and the supersonic CJ-100 cruise missile¹²). Although it cannot be said that this country violates the provisions of any arms control treaty, because it did not sign any of them, the NATO Secretary General believes the status of major military power implies increased responsibilities, so it would be necessary that China get involved in one or several of these regimes¹³. In fact, the US has proposed that China takes part in the new START (Treaty signed in 2010 by the US and the Russian Federation which will expire in February 2021), but the Chinese officials have expressed their disagreement¹⁴.

The third key element that erodes the architecture of global arms control, identified by J. Stoltenberg, is represented by the emerging technologies whose military use is not fully regulated internationally (cyber, hypersonic

glide, autonomous weapon platforms, artificial intelligence and biotech)¹⁵. A recent example is the Russian Federation, which, at the end of December 2019, announces that the planned Avangard hypersonic missiles system, whose technical features are not found in any foreign arsenal, have become operational¹⁶.

Also, the NATO Secretary General states four areas in which Allies and partners must work together: to preserve and implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty; to adapt nuclear arms control regimes to new realities; to modernise the Vienna Document, and to consider how to develop new rules and standards for emerging technologies, including advanced missile technology¹⁷. J. Stoltenberg's proposals are more relevant since the signing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, but even during 2019, when it was brought into attention the issue of the forward deployment of US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe¹⁸, as well as the actions of Russia, China, but also Iran (non-compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Nuclear Agreement of 2015). This concerns both the nuclear issue and the exchange of military information on the forces deployed in Europe (Russia is accused of not fully complying with the provisions of the Vienna Document¹⁹).

¹¹ ***, *World military expenditure grows to \$1.8 trillion in 2018*, SIPRI, 23.04.2019, URL: <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018>, accessed on 24.10.2020.

¹² Henry Boyd, *China's PLA: new weapons, new approaches*, Military Balance Blog, IISS, 03.10.2019, URL: <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2019/10/china-national-day-parade-pla>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹³ ***, *Speech by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg at the High-level NATO Conference on Arms Control and Disarmament*, NATO, 23.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169930.htm, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹⁴ Leanne Quinn, *China's Stance on Nuclear Arms Control and New START*, Arms Control Association, 23.08.2019, URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/2019-08-23/chinas-stance-nuclear-arms-control-new-start>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹⁵ ***, *Speech by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg at the High-level NATO Conference on Arms Control and Disarmament*, NATO, 23.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169930.htm, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹⁶ Jonathan Marcus, *Russia deploys Avangard hypersonic missile system*, BBC, 27.12.2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50927648>, accessed on 28.12.2019.

¹⁷ ***, *Speech by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg at the High-level NATO Conference on Arms Control and Disarmament*, NATO, 23.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169930.htm, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹⁸ Joseph A. Day, *A New Era for Nuclear Deterrence? Modernisation, Arms Control, and Allied Nuclear Forces. General Report*, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 12.10.2019, URL: <https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2019-10/REPORT%20136%20DSC%2019%20E%20rev.%201%20fin%20-%20A%20NEW%20ERA%20FOR%20NUCLEAR%20DETERRENCE%20-%20MODERNISATION%20ARMS%20CONTROL%20AND%20ALLIED%20NUCLEAR%20FORCES.pdf>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

¹⁹ *Speech by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg at the High-level NATO Conference on Arms Control and*



Indeed, the suspension of the INF Treaty gives rise to new risks and threats to international security, but NATO does not remain unprotected in front of them; on the contrary, it is motivated to accelerate a series of necessary reforms, such as those presented, by the Secretary General, at the end of 2019.

2. Turkey's ambitions and the future of NATO decision-making homogeneity

The following section of the paper will focus on another important element on the NATO agenda of the last semester, which is related to the problem of the US tactical nuclear weapons in Europe: the cohesion of the Allies questioned by the external actions of the Turkish government. Turkey, which hosts American B61 US Nuclear Bombs in the Incirlik Air Base²⁰, is in the process of redefining its role on the international stage, which has led to recommendations to US by experts in the field regarding the withdrawal of those weapons, in particular due to the consolidation of President Erdogan's authoritarian regime and military intervention in Syria²¹. It is not just about these issues, but also about the relations with the Russian Federation (acquisition of Russian S-400 systems to the detriment of US Patriot and the intention to jointly produce S-500²²; signing with the Russian Federation the Memorandum of understanding

Disarmament, NATO, 23.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169930.htm, accessed on 24.10.2019.

²⁰ ***, *Arms Control and Proliferation Profile: The United States*, Arms Control Association, July 2019, URL: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/unitedstatesprofile#nuclear>, accessed on 24.10.2019; Hans M. Kristensen și Matt Korda, *United States nuclear forces, 2019*, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Volume 75, 2019 - Issue 3: Special issue: The global competition for AI dominance, URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1606503?scroll=top&needAccess=true>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

²¹ Hans M. Kristensen, *Urgent: Move US Nuclear Weapons Out Of Turkey*, Federation of American Scientists, 16.10.2019, URL: <https://fas.org/blogs/security/2019/10/nukes-out-of-turkey/>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

²² ***, *Turkey to produce new S-500 missile system with Russia*, Deutsche Welle, 19.05.2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/turkey-to-produce-new-s-500-missile-system-with-russia/a-48792240>, accessed on 24.10.2019.

in terms of combatting terror, ensuring Syria's territorial integrity and political unity, and facilitating the return of refugees; launching the joint Turkish-Russian patrols in northeastern Syria; joint military exercises with Russia in the Black Sea; relaunching the TurkStream project etc.), the deteriorating relations with the EU as a result of raising awareness of the role Turkey plays in managing the crisis of refugee and illegal migration (Turkish officials have repeatedly stated that the detention of migrants in Turkish camps depends on the outcome of negotiations with the EU regarding the accession process²³; the international community's disagreement over military intervention in Syria has prompted the Turkish president to rise once again the question of opening borders to Europe to the Syrian refugee and asylum seekers, if the intervention will be presented as an "invasion"²⁴); involvement in the Libyan conflict (supports the UN-recognized Libyan government and announces, in December 2019, that troops will be sent there within a

²³ Safak Timur and Rod Nordland, "Erdogan Threatens to Let Migrant Flood Into Europe Resume", in *The New York Times*, 25.11.2016, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/25/world/europe/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-migrants-european-union.html>, accessed at 05.04.2019; Caroline Mortimer, "President Erdogan: I will open gates for migrants to enter Europe if EU blocks membership talks", in *The Independent*, 25.11.2019, URL: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/president-erdogan-turkey-eu-membership-migrants-refugees-europe-warning-a7438316.html>, accessed at 05.04.2019; Euractiv, *Erdogan in Rome: Let Turkey be full EU member*, 05.02.2018, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/erdogan-in-rome-let-turkey-be-full-eu-member/>, accessed at 05.04.2019; Selcan Hacaoglu, "Erdogan Says Turkey Can't Stand Alone Against New Migration Wave", in *Bloomberg*, 20.02.2019, URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-20/erdogan-says-turkey-can-t-stand-alone-against-new-migration-wave>, accessed on 05.04.2019.

²⁴ Irina Cristea, *Erdogan amenință Europa că "va deschide porțile" pentru refugiații sirieni*, AGERPRES, 10.10.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/10/10/erdogan-ameninta-europa-ca-va-deschide-portile-pentru-refugiati-sirieni--383286>, accessed on 10.10.2019; Roland Oliphant, *Turkey's Erdogan threatens to send 'millions' of refugees to Europe if EU calls Syria offensive 'invasion'*, The Telegraph, 10.10.2019, URL: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/10/turkeys-erdogan-threatens-send-millions-refugees-europe-eu-calls/>, accessed on 10.10.2019.



month²⁵); tensions with Cyprus (drillings in the exclusive economic zone of the Cypriot state); certain indicators on the development of a nuclear program (uranium deposits; building the largest nuclear reactor to generate electricity, with the help of Russia²⁶; President Erdogan's statements regarding the fact that is forbidden for Turkey to own nuclear weapons, which he "cannot accept"²⁷); but also its major interests in the Balkan countries (developing infrastructure and cultural projects, especially religious ones, in Albania, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina). President Erdogan's national rhetoric, whose popularity has grown internally since the launch of military intervention in Syria, is directed against a part of the Western countries with which Turkey is a NATO ally²⁸, and it has increased anti-American feeling of the Turkish population²⁹. In addition, Turkey's dissonant behavior was also visible at the end of November, when it refused to support NATO's defence plan for the Baltic states and Poland until the Alliance offers Ankara more political support for its fight against Kurdish militias in northern Syria³⁰; still,

²⁵ Andrei Văcaru, *Turcia va trimite trupe în Libia în cel mult o lună*, Mediafax, 27.12.2019, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/turcia-va-trimite-trupe-in-libia-in-cel-mult-o-luna-18679347>, accessed on 27.12.2019.

²⁶ David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, *Erdogan's Ambitions Go Beyond Syria. He Says He Wants Nuclear Weapons*, The New York Times, 20.10.2019, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/20/world/middleeast/erdogan-turkey-nuclear-weapons-trump.html>, accessed on 21.10.2019.

²⁷ Ece Toksabay, *Erdogan says it's unacceptable that Turkey can't have nuclear weapons*, Thomson Reuters, 04.09.2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-nuclear-erdogan/erdogan-says-its-unacceptable-that-turkey-cant-have-nuclear-weapons-idUSKCN1VP2QN>, accessed on 15.10.2019.

²⁸ ***, *Erdogan accuses the West of 'standing by terrorists' in Syria*, Euractiv, 21.10.2019, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/news/erdogan-accuses-the-west-of-standing-by-terrorists-in-syria/>, accessed on 30.10.2019.

²⁹ Ragip Soylu, *Anti-US sentiment in Turkey reaches a new high, poll shows*, Middle East Eye, 01.02.2019, URL: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/anti-us-sentiment-turkey-reaches-new-high-poll-shows>, accessed on 15.10.2019.

³⁰ Robin Emmott, *Exclusive: Turkey holds up NATO military plans over Syria dispute – sources*, Thomson Reuters, 26.11.2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-summit-turkey-exclusive/exclusive-turkey-holds-up-nato-military-plans-over-syria-dispute-sources>

it joined its partners a few days later, despite France's opposition³¹ to the Turkish proposal to classify as a terrorist group the People's Protection Units (YPG, considered by Ankara to be the Syrian branch of the PKK, but which fought alongside the US against ISIS)³².

In this context, is there cohesion within the Alliance while the Turkish actions were disavowed by most NATO members?

Faced with the Turkish intervention in Syria, NATO member states have different views (Hungary supports it³³, while Norway³⁴, France, Netherlands, Germany³⁵, Spain³⁶, UK³⁷

turkey-holds-up-nato-military-plans-over-syria-dispute-sources-idUSKBN1Y01W0, accessed on 30.11.2019.

³¹ Florin Ștefan, *Macron nu vede "un consens posibil" cu Turcia privind definiția terorismului*, Agerpres, 04.12.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/12/04/macron-nu-vede-un-consens-posibil-cu-turcia-privind-definitia-terorismului--414679>, accessed on 04.12.2019.

³² Jared Szuba, *Turkey agrees to NATO Baltic defence plan after Syria rift*, The Defence Post, 04.12.2019, URL: <https://thedefencepost.com/2019/12/04/nato-baltic-turkey-ypg/>, accessed on 05.12.2019.

³³ ***, *Opinie separată: Ungaria sprijină ofensiva Turciei în Siria, în timp ce UE îl somează pe Erdogan să încheie urgent operațiunea militară*, Digi24, 15.10.2019, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/ue/opinie-separata-ungaria-sprijina-ofensiva-turciei-in-siria-in-timp-ce-ue-il-someaza-pe-erdogan-sa-incheie-urgent-operatiunea-militara-1201657>, accessed on 15.10.2019.

³⁴ S.I. Cătălin, *Norvegia suspendă exporturile de armament către Turcia*, Defența România, 10.10.2019, URL: https://www.defenceromania.ro/norvegia-suspenda-exporturile-de-armament-catre-turcia_599275.html, accessed on 10.10.2019.

³⁵ Diana Zaim, *Franța a decis să suspende orice plan pentru exportul în Turcia de materiale de război care ar putea fi utilizate în cadrul ofensivei din Siria*, Calea Europeană, 13.10.2019, URL: <https://www.caleaeuropeana.ro/franta-a-decis-sa-suspende-orice-plan-pentru-exportul-in-turcia-de-materiale-de-razboi-care-ar-putea-fi-utilizate-in-cadrul-ofensivei-din-siria/>, accessed on 13.10.2019.

³⁶ Irina Cristea, *Spania nu va mai vinde Ankaei material militar "susceptibil să fie utilizat" în operațiunea din Siria*, Agerpres, 15.10.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politic-ex/2019/10/15/spania-nu-va-mai-vede-ankarei-material-militar-susceptibil-sa-fie-utilizat-in-operatiunea-din-siria--386086>, accessed on 15.10.2019.

³⁷ Eduard Pascu, *Marea Britanie își suspendă exporturile de arme către Turcia*, Defența România, 15.10.2019, URL: https://www.defenceromania.ro/marea-britanie-isi-suspenda-exporturile-de-arme-catre-turcia_599321.html, accessed on 15.10.2019.



and Canada³⁸ have suspended plans to export to Turkey war material that could be used in the offensive in Syria, and the US has imposed a series of sanctions³⁹, which subsequently lifted, following Ankara's acceptance of a permanent truce in Syria⁴⁰, but during the meeting of Defence ministers (NATO, Brussels, 24-25 October, 2019), they decided that they must rely on significantly reducing violence in order to progress in the efforts regarding a political solution to the conflict in Syria and to preserve the results achieved in the fight against ISIS⁴¹.

Moreover, NATO Secretary General acknowledges Turkey's role in the fight against ISIS, but does not comment on how the Allies involved in Syria - both Turkey and the US - are conducting their activities in the Northern part of the country⁴². In this way, a clear delineation between NATO's actions and those of its members as state actors is underlined.

The meeting in the late October 2019 included also on the agenda other elements that have been addressed, which demonstrates that NATO operates even in circumstances of disagreements between its members. These include continuing support for Afghan security forces (training and funding); upgrading civil telecommunications to NATO basic requirements, including 5G; Rapid Air Mobility, but also the much-debated issue of

burden sharing, which will be developed in the next section.

If the Turkish state acts as a rebel member, it does not mean that its presence within the Alliance is not necessary and that Ankara does not want this membership. Turkey holds a strategic position to the Black Sea, which it wants to emphasize in order to increase its role on the international arena in a context that includes a balance of power, favourable to Russia (by annexing Crimea). Even if at first glance Ankara's actions (shown above) seem to lead away from Western Allies and get closer to Russia, Turkey will not leave NATO because, mainly, it needs support in countering Russian influence in the region, and NATO will continue to work with Turkey as a member because the Black Sea is an area of strategic interest for the Alliance (for instance, in 2016 Turkey opposed Romania's proposal to establish a permanent NATO presence in the Black Sea, under the aegis of MARCOM, but the Permanent Naval Forces regularly conduct patrols in the international waters of the Black Sea with the participation of both riparian states and others Allies⁴³).

Therefore, the decision-making process within NATO will not suffer dramatically due to the dissonant behavior of some of its members, because the absence of the vote and relying on consultations and consensus (the consensus was accepted as the only basis in the decision-making process in NATO, since 1949) ensures a high degree of success in decision making.

3. Commitment to reach 2% of GDP for defence spending and the NATO cohesion

In 2014, at the Wales Summit, the Allies agreed that, the member states continue to spend a minimum of 2% of their GDP on defence, while those who allocate less money stop any decline in defence spending, pursue to increase defence expenditure in real terms as GDP grows and reach the 2% guideline within the next

³⁸ Alic Mirza, *Canada suspendă noile vânzări de arme către Turcia*, Agerpres, 16.10.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/10/16/canada-suspenda-noile-vanzari-de-arme-catre-turcia--386182>, accessed on 16.10.2019.

³⁹ ***, *Trump impune sancțiuni contra Turciei după ofensiva din Siria*, Euractiv, 15.10.2019, URL: <https://www.euractiv.ro/extern/trump-impune-sanctiuni-contraturciei-dupa-ofensiva-din-siria-16238>, accessed on 15.10.2019.

⁴⁰ ***, *Trump anulează sancțiunile impuse Turciei, după încheierea ofensivei în Siria: Este un rezultat creat de SUA, nu de altcineva*, Digi24, 23.10.2019, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/sua/trump-anuleaza-sanctiunile-impuse-turciei-dupa-incheierea-ofensivei-in-siria-este-un-rezultat-creat-de-sua-nu-de-altcineva-1205687>, accessed on 23.10.2019.

⁴¹ ***, *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meetings of NATO Defence Ministers*, NATO, 25.10.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_169945.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on 27.10.2019.

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ ***, *NATO ships patrol the Black Sea*, MARCOM, 22.10.2019, URL: <https://mc.nato.int/media-centre/news/2019/nato-ships-patrol-the-black-sea-2>, accessed on 30.10.2019.



years⁴⁴. In 2014, only three countries exceeded this percentage - US (3.73%), United Kingdom (2.16%) and Greece (2.21%)⁴⁵ - while nine others did not even reach 1% (Belgium, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary)⁴⁶. Further developments and the estimates for 2019 show that, compared to 2014, the percentage allocated to defence spending by the US and the UK decreased by 0.29%, respectively 0.02%, but, in absolute figures, the real GDP of both countries has increased (US: from 17,709 billion US dollars, in 2014, to 20,004 billion US dollars, in 2019; UK: from 2,830 billion US dollars, in 2014, to 3.081 billion US dollars, in 2019)⁴⁷.

The present section does not constitute an analysis of the defence budgets, but the data already mentioned are an introduction to a topic that has been discussed by the American president since taking office in the White House: namely, compliance with the commitment to allocate the 2% of GDP⁴⁸, in the larger context of the “burden sharing” concept. The state actor to whom D. Trump directly refers is Germany⁴⁹, the European country with significant economic

potential (since the Summit in Wales, Germany’s real GDP is on an upward trend, reaching, in 2019, the highest level among the European allies: 3,614 billion dollars, according to estimates⁵⁰), but which aims to reach the target of 2% no sooner than 2031, and not in 2024⁵¹. Moreover, D. Trump refers to other countries that do not reach the 2% threshold, such as Canada⁵² and France⁵³, emphasizing that the US contributes with over 22% to the Alliance’s direct budget, more than any other member state.

In order to reduce the tensions caused by these discrepancies, in November 2019, according to J. Stoltenberg, the Allies decided to adopt a new formula for burden sharing in the NATO direct budget (civil budget, military budget, security investment program), applicable since 2021, by which the US will pay less, and Germany more: each will contribute about 16% of the Alliance’s budget, and the rest will be divided among the other Allies⁵⁴. Thus, the US share will be reduced from 22.14% (2018-2019) to 16.36% (2021-2024), Germany’s share will increase from 14.76% (2018-2019) to 16.36% (2021-2024), and the share of the other Allies, except France, will increase⁵⁵.

⁴⁴ ***, *Wales Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Wales*, NATO, 05.09.2014, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁴⁵ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, NATO, 29.11.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_pr-2019-123-en.pdf, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁸ John Haltiwanger, *Trump keeps criticizing NATO allies over spending. Here’s how NATO’s budget actually works*, Business Insider, 02.12.2019, URL: <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-nato-budget-is-funded-2018-7>, accessed on 04.12.2019.

⁴⁹ Dani Rockhoff, *Noi presiuni americane pe contribuția germană la NATO. Trump nu va vizita Germania, ci Danemarca, pe care o acuza de “socialism nordic”*, Hotnews, 12.08.2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23311555-noi-presiuni-americane-contributia-germana-nato-trump-nu-vizita-germania-danemarca-care-acuza-socialism-nordic.htm>, accessed at 29.11.2019; ***, *Donald Trump lansează un atac violent împotriva Berlinului: Germania e prizoniera Rusiei / Este controlată total de Rusia*, Hotnews, 11.07.2018, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22561226-donald-trump-germania-prizoniera-rusiei.htm>, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁵⁰ ***, *Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2019)*, NATO, 29.11.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_11/20191129_pr-2019-123-en.pdf, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁵¹ Irina Cristea, *Germania va atinge ținta NATO pentru bugetul de apărare în 2031, afirmă ministrul Apărării*, Agerpres, 07.11.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/11/07/germania-va-atinge-tinta-nato-pentru-bugetul-de-aparare-in-2031-afirma-ministrul-apararii--398629>, accessed on 07.11.2019.

⁵² ***, *Remarks by President Trump and Chancellor Merkel of the Federal Republic of Germany before Bilateral Meeting*, The White House, 04.12.2019, URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-chancellor-merkel-federal-republic-germany-bilateral-meeting/>, accessed on 05.12.2019.

⁵³ ***, *Donald Trump lansează un atac violent împotriva Berlinului: Germania e prizoniera Rusiei / Este controlată total de Rusia*, Hotnews, 11.07.2018, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22561226-donald-trump-germania-prizoniera-rusiei.htm>, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁵⁴ ***, *Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of France Emmanuel Macron*, NATO, 28.11.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_170790.htm?selectedLocale=en, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁵⁵ ***, *Cost share arrangements for civil budget, military budget and NATO Security Investment Programme (2018-*



The NATO Leaders Meeting in London (December 3-4, 2019) brought into discussion once again the Defence Investment Pledge, the final Declaration mentioning the ongoing process of increasing defence investments according to the requirements of 2% of GDP, respectively 20% of this amount allocated to major equipment, Research and Development activities, investing in new capabilities and contributing to missions and operations⁵⁶. Although NATO Secretary General has had some comments over Germany's financial contribution over the years⁵⁷, the London Declaration emphasizes that over the past five years, Allies' defence spending, excepting the US, has been steadily increasing, with a notable progress in this regard⁵⁸.

Although the US has often expressed dissatisfaction with the existing imbalance in both NATO's direct and indirect budget contributions, its commitments have not been withdrawn. The representation of the Russian Federation's actions, mainly, as a threat to the Euro-Atlantic security made that these divergences be overcome. Moreover, an American official said that the savings made by reducing the direct budget contribution will be used to fund other American actions to support European security, including programs in third countries, such as Ukraine and Georgia⁵⁹.

However, another ally with a significant contribution, France, raised problems regarding the decision-making on NATO budgeting, opposing the decision to adopt the new formula for calculating the share in the direct budget of the Alliance⁶⁰. As the statistics presented above show, France's contribution remained at the same level, for the period 2021-2024. The issue is, however, more complex than that: in the last two years, French officials have questioned not only the contribution of the American partner, but also the usefulness and future of NATO, emphasizing instead the idea of a "Europe of defence" (in 2019, a report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee of the French Senate underlined the ideas promoted by a report from 2013 of the same Committee⁶¹).

4. France and the "brain death" of NATO

The climax of the debate on the cohesion of the Allies was reached in November 2019, when *The Economist* published the interview of the French President, E. Macron, in which he states that "What we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO"⁶², and Europe is "on the edge of a precipice"⁶³. E. Macron's rhetoric is not

2019), NATO, 20.12.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_12/20191220_NATO_common_funded_budgets-2018-19.pdf, accessed on 21.12.2019; ***, *Cost share arrangements for civil budget, military budget and NATO Security Investment Programme (2021-2024)*, NATO, 20.12.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2019_12/20191220_NATO_common_funded_budgets-2021-2024.pdf, accessed on 21.12.2019.

⁵⁶ ***, *London Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019*, NATO, 04.12.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm, accessed on 04.12.2019.

⁵⁷ Tom Rogan, *NATO secretary general: We will push Germany to spend more on defence*, Washington Examiner, 27.01.2019, URL: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/nato-secretary-general-we-will-push-germany-to-spend-more-on-defence>, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁹ Ryan Browne, *Trump administration to cut its financial contribution to NATO*, 28.11.2019, URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/2019/11/27/politics/trump-nato-contribution-nato/index.html>, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁶⁰ ***, *NATO: Alianții SUA, aproape de un acord pentru a suporta mai mult din costurile operaționale*, Antena 3, 26.11.2019, URL: <https://jurnalul.antena3.ro/stiri/externe/nato-aliatii-sua-aproape-de-un-acord-pentru-a-suporta-mai-mult-din-costurile-operationale-828595.html>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

⁶¹ Daniel Reiner, Jacques Gautier, André Vallini și Xavier Pintat, *Pour en finir avec 'l'Europe de la défense' - Vers une défense européenne*, 03.07.2013 conform Ronan Le Gleut și Hélène Conway-Mouret, *Information report drawn up on behalf of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Armed Forces Committee (1) by the Working Group on European Defence*, 03.07.2019, Senatul Franței, URL: <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-626-2/r18-626-22.html#fnref4>, accessed on 30.11.2019.

⁶² ***, *Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead*, The Economist, 07.11.2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 08.11.2019 (quotation in the author's translation).

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

surprising for his manner of expression and the ambitions regarding Europe's future that he has announced since the beginning of the presidential term, but he is radical in terms of reporting to the American partner, directly accusing the US of turning its back to the Allies, given that Europe is in a volatile security context (China's ambitions, authoritarian regimes in Russia and Turkey, Brexit and political instability), and of not sharing the idea on a European project⁶⁴. Moreover, the French president expresses concerns about the effectiveness of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, both because of statements and decisions of D. Trump (withdrawal from northeastern Syria) and Turkey's actions (acquisition of S-400 and military intervention in Syria without consulting the Allies)⁶⁵.

Prior to this interview, E. Macron stated that "the Near and the Middle East is a strategic and neighboring region for Europe (...) we must rebuild there a strategic autonomy and capacity of Europe. (...) we can no longer be minority partners of others, even if they are our allies"⁶⁶.

The strategic ambitions of the French president are not surprising: a recurring issue of his speeches is the need for Europe to think as a strategic power. The main elements of such a renewal of Europe are, in his view, focused on: regaining the military sovereignty and reopening the dialogue with the Russian Federation, despite the fears of Poland and other former Soviet states⁶⁷. From this moment, the question of whether or not France affects the cohesion of the Alliance seems legitimate. Not only that the President E. Macron opposed the rise of France's

contribution to the NATO direct budget and exaggerated the organization's lack of openness towards dialogue with Russia, while minimizing the threat of the Federation actions, but it can also be accused of acting unilaterally within the EU, by blocking expansion in the Balkans⁶⁸. His statement on NATO "brain death" was obviously supported by officials of the Russian Federation, but rejected by Allies (the Turkish president had a virulent position, accusing E. Macron of being in such a state⁶⁹). In a meeting prior to the one in London, held in Paris, on November 28, 2019, E. Macron recalled the need to open dialogue with Russia, and his statements indicate that he is open to assuming the leadership role in this regard. He considers not only that the only positive steps regarding the crisis in Ukraine are those taken by France and the Normandy format, while the US withdrawal from the INF Treaty and the denial of a dialogue with Russia leaves Europe unprotected, but raises some questions on the common enemies identified by NATO – Russia and China –, appreciating that the only one is inside the Alliance, namely terrorism⁷⁰. Also, a similar rhetoric uses V. Putin, who stated that he has "repeatedly expressed our willingness to cooperate with NATO for jointly countering real threats, such as international terrorism, local armed conflicts, and WMD proliferation"⁷¹, but

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁵ Lilia Traci, *Atacul Turciei împotriva kurzilor ridică întrebări despre modul în care funcționează NATO (Macron)*, Agerpres, 18.10.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politic-ex/2019/10/18/atacul-turciei-impotriva-kurzilor-ridica-intrebări-despre-modul-in-care-funcționeaza-nato-macron--388111>, accessed on 18.10.2019.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem* (quotation in the author's translation).

⁶⁷ ***, *Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead*, The Economist, 07.11.2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 08.11.2019 (quotation in the author's translation).

⁶⁸ Lilia Traci, *Uniunea Europeană, divizată asupra reformei privind extinderea către Est*, Agerpres, 19.11.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/11/19/uniunea-europeana-divizata-asupra-reformei-privind-extinderea-spre-est--405469>, accessed on 19.11.2019.

⁶⁹ Lilia Traci, *Atac virulent al lui Erdogan împotriva lui Macron: "Examinează-ți mai întâi propria moarte cerebrală!"*, Agerpres, 29.11.2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/11/29/atac-virulent-al-lui-erdogan-impotriva-lui-macron-examineaza-ti-mai-intai-propria-moarte-cerebrala--412175>, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁷⁰ ***, *Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of France Emmanuel Macron*, NATO, 28.11.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_170790.htm, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁷¹ ***, *Meeting with senior Defence Ministry officials and defence industry executives. The President held a meeting on the implementation of the state defence order for the Navy*, Russian Presidency, 03.12.2019, URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62228>, accessed on 04.12.2019.



“after 2008 cooperation was actually curtailed because the Alliance’s actions towards Russia were inappropriate, if not blatant, and did not take into account Russia’s interests”⁷².

NATO Secretary General’s reply was firm. Acknowledging France’s meritorious contribution to the Alliance, he stressed that NATO is the only platform where North America and Europe can jointly address strategic issues (the fight against terrorism, a more assertive Russian Federation and a developing China), and the EU cannot defend Europe by itself, European unity cannot replace the Transatlantic one, a strong NATO and a strong EU are the two sides of a single coin, and both are indispensable for Europe’s freedom and prosperity⁷³.

It is not for the first time in history when France makes a discordant note with its allies (in 1966, it withdrew from NATO military structures, to return in 2009), and the pressure placed by E. Macron on the organization cannot be completely separated in this analysis from the internal problems he is facing and which have affected his image⁷⁴, but the balance of internal and external popularity does not seem to be equilibrated by foreign policy actions, as in the case of Turkey. E. Macron’s efforts to strengthen France’s external image capital and to increase its role on the international arena, assuming its role as a reformer of NATO and the EU, have given rise to question over the future of the Alliance’s cohesion. However, NATO has functioned and will continue to function for now, as it turned out after the London meeting, with no changes in the definition of common enemies and with a brand new formula for sharing the financial burden.

⁷² *Ibidem*.

⁷³ ***, *Joint press point with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of France Emmanuel Macron*, NATO, 28.11.2019, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_170790.htm, accessed on 29.11.2019.

⁷⁴ Romina McGuinness, *Macron crisis: Popularity plummets among public – shock poll*, 28.10.2019, URL: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1196775/emmanuel-macron-france-news-opinion-poll-popularity>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

5. Several directions for the future of NATO cohesion

Following the statements of the French president, two proposals were made for projecting the future of the Alliance: a French and a German one.

France’s proposal aims at forming a small group of experts to reflect on NATO’s vision of its own values and goals and to present a report at the 2021 Summit. In the opinion of the French Foreign Minister, experts should consider the following elements: NATO’s relationship with the Russian Federation; future security threats, in particular terrorism; China’s evolution and the impact of new military technologies⁷⁵.

At the same time, Germany was also suggesting the creation of an expert group to strengthen NATO’s political thinking, emphasizing the need to maintain NATO unity and strengthen its political component for better coordination between partners. The proposal was well received by J. Stoltenberg⁷⁶, given that he refused to comment on France’s proposal⁷⁷.

Therefore, in the last semester of 2019, NATO faced a number of important challenges to its cohesion: from financial issues (compliance with commitments made at the Summit in Wales), to those related to capabilities (Turkey’s acquisition of Russian systems, one of Ankara’s arguments being that other Allies use Russian systems - Bulgaria, Greece, and Slovakia still have operational S-300 systems), political

⁷⁵ ***, *France, Germany offer NATO plans after ‘brain death’ row*, France 24, 20.11.2019, URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/20191120-france-germany-offer-nato-plans-after-brain-death-row>, accessed on 25.11.2019.

⁷⁶ ***, *France, Germany offer NATO plans after ‘brain death’ row*, Business Standard, 20.11.2019, URL: https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/france-germany-offer-nato-plans-after-brain-death-row-119112001867_1.html, accessed on 25.11.2019; ***, *NATO meeting: Germany proposes new ‘expert group’ to strengthen union*, Deutsche Welle, 20.11.2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/nato-meeting-germany-proposes-new-expert-group-to-strengthen-union/a-51335080>, accessed on 25.11.2019.

⁷⁷ ***, *France, Germany offer NATO plans after ‘brain death’ row*, France 24, 20.11.2019, URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/20191120-france-germany-offer-nato-plans-after-brain-death-row>, accessed on 25.11.2019.



ones (Turkey ignoring Allies's position on the intervention in Syria), and even the ones about its future (France's attitude, which is also trying to redefine the representation of threats to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area).

However, the decision-making process has not been hindered, the Alliance ending 2019 with a positive balance: regular patrols and air police in the Black Sea region, despite the manifestation of Turkey's regional ambitions and the establishment of relations between Ankara and the Russian Federation; strengthening NATO's role against terrorism, in the same context of Turkey's assuming a more visible role, but also Ankara's desire to define a US ally (YPG) as a terrorist group; further adapting NATO Response Force to current security challenges, especially with regard to the Baltic states, despite Turkey's opposition and France's desire to open relations with the Russian Federation.

Also, in the second part of the year, NATO took important steps for its future: it defined the cosmic space as a new operational area and, in this sense, assumed the role of a defensive alliance;

endorsed alongside Eurocontrol, the Rapid Air Mobility mechanism; deployed the first support team against hybrid threats in Montenegro; continued 15 tasks, missions and activities aimed at deterring, defending and projecting stability and combating terrorism; established a set of recommendations for strengthening its role in energy security etc.

Last but not least, the Alliance successfully completed an image exercise involving the 70th anniversary of its founding, in an unfavorable context for asserting organizational unity and solidarity: The London Declaration reaffirms the transatlantic link and maintains the representation of security threats, despite France's different opinion.

Therefore, the answer to the question asked in the title of this dynamics of the security environment analysis is a negative one. In the short and medium term, the Alliance will not be considered a victim, as organizational cohesion is not visibly affected by the power interests of its members.



EUROPE'S VULNERABILITIES: FROM BREXIT TO INTERNAL DIVERGENCIES GROWING CHRONIC

*Cristina BOGZEANU, Ph.D.**

Ever since June 2016, Brexit has been one of the topics monopolizing the debates on the EU, as the results of the referendum in June 23, 2016, are certainly one of the strongest shocks the EU has ever faced as well as one of the most visible warning signs on the extent of the crisis the organization is currently experiencing. The manner in which Brexit would become a reality, even the mere possibility for this to happen, the repercussions of UK's withdrawal from the Union both for London and Brussels, the possibility for other states to follow the same course of action are just some examples of the topics constantly approached.

However, despite of requiring, attracting and focusing a large part of EU's energy, Brexit is only one of the many symptoms of the crisis the Union has been facing for a considerable amount of time and which, as years go by, it only gets deeper.

1. Brexit

During the period analysed, the process of UK withdrawal from the EU was carried out between two major polls. First, Boris Johnson's election to the leadership of the Conservative Party (July 2019), following Theresa May's resignation, which resulted in the former's appointment as UK prime minister and brought a hard line in negotiating the conditions for Brexit. The second ballot – the early parliamentary

elections (December 2019) – ended with the Conservative Party winning the majority in the British legislature, which provided the necessary support for advancing the process of London's leaving the institutional framework of the European Union.

In both ballots, the winners were the ones who had a decisive speech regarding Brexit implementation. During June-July 2019 electoral campaign, Boris Johnson won with a clear pro-Brexit speech against Jeremy Hunt, whose goal was to avoid UK's exit from EU without an agreement. B. Johnson's clear goal was to materialize the option expressed by British citizens, up to the last deadline set by T. May, October 31, 2019¹, with or without an agreement². B. Johnson's determined stance on Brexit has been the basis of a political crisis consisting, firstly, in the decision to extend the parliamentary vacation by two weeks, thus reducing the chances of the legislature opposing a Brexit without an agreement or an unapproved agreement and, secondly, in the loss of the parliamentary majority³.

¹***, Boris Johnson: First Speech as PM in full, 24 July 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-49102495>, accessed on 25 July 2019.

²Richard Pérez Peña, "Brexit under Boris Johnson: Deal or No Deal?", in *The New York Times*, 23 July 2019, URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/23/world/europe/brexit-boris-johnson-explainer.html>, accessed on 6 September 2019.

³***, "UK PM Johnson loses majority in parliament after lawmaker defects to Liberal Democrats", in *Reuters*, 3 September 2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/>

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The main cause for this state of affairs is that, given the negotiation of a withdrawal agreement, acceptable to both London and the EU, seemed unlikely, the opposition tried to prevent a hard exit, without agreement⁴. This is all the more so as both UK and the EU were preparing to mitigate the consequences of such a withdrawal from the EU⁵.

At the same time, representatives of the Labour Party, led by Jeremy Corbyn, tried to impose the option of organizing a new Brexit referendum. The initiative was also supported

us-britain-eu-defection/uk-pm-johnson-loses-majority-in-parliament-after-lawmaker-defects-to-liberal-democrats-idUSKCN1VO1SX, accessed on 10 October 2019.

⁴ In October 2019, Benn Act is approved – one of the Labourites' efforts to impose a new delay of Brexit in case negotiators wouldn't arrived at an agreement. For details, see: ***, The Benn Act, URL: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/benn-act>, accessed on 20 October 2019.

⁵ DG, "Marea Britanie riscă să intre într-o criză de combustibil, alimente și medicamente în cazul unui Brexit fără acord", *Mediafax*, 18 August 2019, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/marea-britanie-s-ar-putea-confrunta-cu-o-criza-de-medicamente-si-alimente-in-cazul-unui-brexite-fara-acord-18291799>; I.B., „Brexit: Londra ar putea să nu aibă destule nave pentru a-și supraveghea apele teritoriale”, in *Hotnews*, 12 August 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23310153-brexite-londra-putea-nu-aiba-destule-nave-pentru-supraveghea-apele-teritoriale.htm>; F.B., "Britanicii își fac stocuri de mâncare, medicamente și băuturi înaintea Brexitului. Cei foarte bogați își cumpără mașini de lux", in *Hotnews*, 12 August 2019, URL: https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-finante_banci-23310324-britanicii-isi-fac-stocuri-mancare-medicamente-bauturi-inaintea-brexiteului-cei-foarte-bogati-isi-cumpara-masini-lux.htm; A.Z., "Aproape 100 de companii se vor reloca în Olanda înainte de Brexit", in *Hotnews*, 27 August 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23333004-aproape-100-companii-vor-reloca-olanda-inainte-brexite.htm>; R.M., "Avertismentul Băncii Angliei: Un Brexit dur va provoca un 'șoc instantaneu' în economie", in *Hotnews*, 2 August 2019, URL: <https://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-finante-23294000-avertismentul-bancii-angliei-brexite-dur-provoca-soc-instantaneu-economie.htm?nomobile=>; I.B., "Marea Britanie își dublează bugetul anual pentru pregătirea Brexitului", in *Hotnews*, 1 August 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23291076-marea-britanie-isi-dubleaza-bugetul-anual-pentru-pregatirea-brexiteului.htm>; I.B., "Europa își 'armează' bugetul în fața riscurilor unui Brexit fără acord", in *Hotnews*, 11 July 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23250780-europa-isi-armeaza-bugetul-fata-riscurilor-unui-brexite-fara-acord.htm>, accessed on 20 December 2019.

by numerous surveys organized after the 2016 referendum, according to which, in the event of a second Brexit referendum, the decision of British citizens would be inclined to remain in the EU. However, the results of those surveys show the same strong polarization of British society. For example, in July 2019, in such a referendum, 40% of British citizens said that they would vote for Brexit, while 45% would vote against Brexit, 7% would not vote, and 8% did not know⁶.

At the same time, the difficulty of London and Brussels in reaching a consensus on Brexit, the dawdling led to the emergence of the so-called "Brexit fatigue" respectively, the decrease of British citizens' interest for this topic. In this regard, we consider relevant the results of an opinion poll conducted by Christian Aid, according to which 7 out of 10 British people are more concerned about climate change than Brexit⁷.

The victory of Boris Johnson, whose electoral campaign was built around the major idea the UK must exit EU at any cost, meant, on the one hand, the return of Brexit debates to a register of certainty regarding its implementation and, on the other, to a gloomy tone when talking about the conditions in which Brexit will be implemented. Theresa May's failure to persuade the national political class to approve her withdrawal agreement, as well as the perception that Brexit negotiations had reached a critical point where compromise was nearly impossible, along with the determination expressed by the new British prime minister justified the expectation that a *no-deal scenario* would have a high degree of probability. This would have meant the UK's withdrawal from the EU in the absence of an agreement setting out how this would take place, a so-called "disorderly withdrawal", which

⁶ If there was a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU, how would you vote? (Eurotrack), URL: <https://whatukthinks.org/eu/questions/if-there-was-a-referendum-on-britains-membership-of-the-eu-how-would-you-vote-2/>, accessed on 30 December 2019.

⁷ A.Z., "Britanicilor le pasă mai mult de criza climatică decât de Brexit" (Sondaj), in *Hotnews*, 26 July 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-mediu-23278498-britanicilor-pasa-mai-mult-criza-climatica-decat-brexite-sondaj.htm>, accessed on 29 July 2019.



would have triggered serious economic, political and social consequences for both UK and the EU.

Although he was not able to meet the Brexit deadline of October 31, 2019, Boris Johnson did negotiate a new agreement⁸, identifying a compromise on the backstop issue, the main reason why the Agreement negotiated by T. May was rejected three times in the British legislature, a provision seeking to avoid the creation of a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The importance of this issue is even greater when considering that in 2016, British citizens in Northern Ireland voted against Brexit (55.78% for staying in the EU vs. 44.22% for leaving the EU⁹). Backstop solution meant that the UK would remain in the EU customs union until a new solution to avoid border checks was identified, and Northern Ireland to remain part of EU market regulations.

B. Johnson's compromise solution assumes that Northern Ireland will remain in the UK customs area, but the province will also retain EU rules for all goods for a transitional period of time. However, it is relevant that this regulation will not be applicable to the entire territory of the United Kingdom, which implies the risk for an "informal" commercial border to emerge between the two islands.

The agreement is to be ratified by the British and European legislatures and enter into force on January 31, 2020. Once the Agreement was

approved by the European Council (October 17-18, 2019), it needs only the approval of the British Parliament in order to enter into force. Given that the Conservative party achieved at least a comfortable majority in the parliamentary forum, following the early elections of December 2019, the taking into effect of the Withdrawal Agreement is almost a certainty. Thereafter, a transitional period will follow in which the UK will comply with EU rules. By July 2020, London may decide to extend the transitional period until December 31, 2022. Once this period is over and the UK withdrawal from the EU is concluded, another phase will begin, which is not void of challenges and difficult-to-reach compromises – the negotiation of the EU-UK free trade agreement. Also, by the end of the transitional period (December 31, 2020), the Parliament and the Government of Northern Ireland will have to give their consent for these changes but only four years after the transition period.

Despite the fact that UK's exit from the EU's institutional framework is undoubtedly an instability factor, a signal of the internal crisis, with strong negative implications for European security and stability, clarifying the conditions under which Brexit will take place, contributes to lowering the level of uncertainty, at least partially. This is because it is unlikely that the compromise solution, negotiated by Boris Johnson, regarding the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland is definitive or acceptable on the long-term. Furthermore, the United Kingdom will have to negotiate free trade agreements with other actors in the international arena, implying a possible period of economic and financial instability for the United Kingdom as well. The positive character of reaching a mutually acceptable Withdrawal Agreement is also limited by the fact that the economic relations between the EU and the United Kingdom are still to be negotiated and, in our opinion, the negotiations will be at least as harsh as the ones recently ended, and the compromise at least as difficult to reach.

At the same time, the temporary nature of the alternative to the *backstop* solution, negotiated by B. Johnson for the border between the two

⁸ Revised texts agreed at negotiators' level for: The Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland included in the Withdrawal Agreement and the consequential technical adaptation to Article 184 "Negotiations on the future relationship" and Article 185 "Entry into force and application" of the Agreement of the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community ("Withdrawal Agreement"), 17 October 2019, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/revised_withdrawal_agreement_including_protocol_on_ireland_and_northern_ireland.pdf, accessed on 20 October 2019.

⁹ The Electoral Commission, Results and turnout at the EU referendum, URL: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/elections-and-referendums/past-elections-and-referendums/eu-referendum/results-and-turnout-eu-referendum>, accessed on 20 December 2019.



Ireland, as well as the activity of the paramilitary organizations in the region justify considering an increase of instability on this line also.

Another possible source of instability in the post-Brexit UK lies in the separatist tendencies of two provinces – Northern Ireland and Scotland, regions where the British voted against Brexit in 2016¹⁰. In Northern Ireland, the issue of unity is back on the political agenda, with the nationalist party Sinn Fein even calling for a referendum on Irish unity¹¹, warning on the risk of economic turmoil in a region where most of the population voted against Brexit. As far as Scotland is concerned, we can already talk about the constant nature of the call for an independence referendum, particularly expressed by the Scottish National Party (SNP). Significant for the risk of destabilization in this direction is the fact that during the parliamentary elections, organized on December 12, 2019, the SNP got 48 seats in the House of Commons out of the 59 possible ones¹².

For Europe, the increase of instability on the background of separatism in a non-EU United Kingdom implies a possible source of destabilization, not only from the perspective of the geographical proximity and the possible economic, social, political and military connections that will be established after Brexit, but also in the light of the existing separatist tendencies within the Union, which could be fuelled in this way. In this sense, the Catalan problem is illustrative. Although the peak of the crisis was overcome during the past year, getting Catalonia's independence from Spain is still one of the main priorities of the regional institutions¹³.

¹⁰ In Northern Ireland, 44.2% of British citizens voted for Brexit, while 55.8% expressed their opinion against Brexit and 38% of Scots voted for Brexit, while 62% against it. For details, see: EU Referendum Results, URL: https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results, accessed on 20 December 2019.

¹¹ G.S., "Sinn Fein cere referendum pentru unificarea Irlandei în următorii cinci ani", in *Hotnews*, 17 November 2019, URL: <http://mobile.hotnews.ro/stire/23495731>, accessed on 18 November 2019.

¹² 2019 General Election Scotland, Electoral Reform Society, URL: <https://ge2019.electoral-reform.org.uk/region/scotland>, accessed on 15 December 2019.

¹³ Andrei Văcaru, "Scenă emoționantă. Sute de primari catalani, strânși la un loc pentru a cere autodeterminarea Cataloniei", *Mediafax*, 26 October 2019, URL: <https://>

2. The European Political Context

EU-UK free trade agreement negotiations will take place in a context in which it is increasingly clear that the EU itself will have to become part of the competition for power in an international system whose configuration is more and more a multipolar one. Under these circumstances, London will become one of those players in the international arena, in relation to which Brussels will try to maximize its winnings and minimize its losses. For example, in a speech to industry representatives, A. Merkel said that, after Brexit, Britain will become a new competitor at the gates of Europe. Thus, the European Union will face an even greater challenge to be competitive and to take on geopolitical responsibility¹⁴. One month after the withdrawal agreement was approved in the Council of Europe, Donald Tusk warned in a speech held at the College of Europe that, after Brexit, Britain would become a "second-hand player"¹⁵, unable to compete with powers such as the United States, China or the European Union.

www.mediafax.ro/sport/scena-emozionanta-sute-de-primari-catalani-stransi-la-un-loc-pentru-a-cere-autodeterminarea-cataloniei-18503804; Mihaela Toth, "Parlamentul Cataloniei adoptă o moțiune fără caracter constrângător prin care își exprimă voința de autodeterminare", *Agerpress*, 12 November 2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/11/12/parlamentul-cataloniei-adopta-o-motiune-fara-caracter-constrangator-prin-care-isi-exprima-vointa-de-autodeterminare--401578>; N.O., "Catalonia divizată: Zeci de mii de unioniști au manifestat în Barcelona la o zi de la marșul separatiștilor", in *Hotnews*, 27 October 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23450279-foto-video-catalonia-divizata-zeci-mii-unionisti-manifestat-barcelona-marsul-separatistilo.htm>; ***, "Violențe la Barcelona: Ciocniri între protestatarii separatiști și polițiștii/ Duminică vor manifesta anti-separatiștii", in *Hotnews*, 27 October 2019, accessed on 20 November 2019.

¹⁴ I.B., "După Brexit, UE va fi confruntată cu o provocare și mai mare", in *Hotnews*, 16 October 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23428135-dupa-brexit-confruntata-provocare-mai-mare.htm>, accessed on 20 December 2019.

¹⁵ S.J., "Donald Tusk: Brexitul va transforma Marea Britanie într-un „jucător de mâna a doua”, in *Hotnews*, 14 November 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23489790-donald-tusk-brexitul-transforma-marea-britanie-intr-jucator-mana-doua.htm>, accessed on 20 December 2019.



The EU, as a geopolitical actor, is also a topic addressed in the speech of Ursula von der Leyen, the new President of the European Commission¹⁶, as well as by Joseph Borrell, the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who said in a speech in the European Parliament that the Union must learn the language of power and that Europe must create its own position in the increasingly acute confrontation between the US and China, underlying that Europeans promote their own approach¹⁷. This topic was also addressed by Emmanuel Macron in the already famous interview for *The Economist*, in which he also stated that “what we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO”¹⁸. In this context, the French president supported the idea that “Europe needs to start thinking and acting not only as an economic grouping, whose chief project is market expansion, but as a strategic power”¹⁹.

Thus, one could firstly note that a lucid, objective and pragmatic understanding of the international reality grows at European level, marked by the evolution of the international system towards multipolarity and competition for power and, secondly, the need for the European actors to give in to this reality. However, the way EU needs to adapt and respond to this context is

¹⁶ On September 10, 2019, Ursula von der Leyen presented the new European Commission, her speech stressing that this Commission shall be a geopolitical commission directed towards sustainable policies and expressed her wish for the European Union to be the guardian of multilateralism as we all know that we are stronger when working together on what we cannot do alone. For details, see: Direcția pentru Uniunea Europeană, “Comisia Europeană”, in *Politici UE. Orientări. Sinteză activităților europene*, nr. 29/2019, URL: http://www.cdep.ro/afaceri_europene/afeur/2019/szs_2774.pdf, accessed on 10 October 2019.

¹⁷ Florin Ștefan, “Europa trebuie să învețe „limbajul puterii”, susține candidatul la postul de șef al diplomației UE la audierea din PE”, in *Agerpress*, 7 October 2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/10/07/europa-trebuie-sa-invete-limbajul-puterii-sustine-candidatul-la-postul-de-sef-al-diplomatiei-ue-la-audierea-din-pe--381619>, accessed on 29 November 2019.

¹⁸ ***, “The future of the EU. Emanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead”, in *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 10 November 2019.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

neither clear, nor uniform. The evolutions of the second semester of 2019 reflect the maintenance and even deepening of the fragmentation tendency at European level.

As mentioned before, Brexit is just one of its manifestations. The difficulty with which the new composition of the European institutions was established, after the European Parliamentary elections of May 23rd-24th, may be considered another symptom. After long negotiations, proposals and rejections of the proposals made by Member States, the European Commission, in its new formula, started its mandate only on December 1st, 2019.

Evolutions in EU enlargement policy are also eloquent regarding the fragmentation trend of the European area. The Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) of Albania and Northern Macedonia was discussed at the European Council on October 15th, 2019. France, backed by Denmark and the Netherlands, refused to open accession negotiations, despite the fact that the two states were considered to meet the conditions for opening accession negotiations²⁰. France made use of the right of veto, calling for the reform of the enlargement policy, a decision that raised dissatisfaction among the European states. Paris also proposed that the process was conditioned by the full respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights; however, at the Intergovernmental Conference on Serbia’s EU accession (Brussels, December 11th), is reaffirmed that the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU is an “important strategic objective”. The issue of EU enlargement in the Western Balkans will be resumed before the EU-Western Balkans Summit, which is to be held in Zagreb (May 2020).

Another sensitive issue regards the evolution of the quality of democracy in European states. Hungary and Poland do not cease to deviate

²⁰ European Parliament, Failure to open accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia is a mistake, 24 October 2019, URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20191021IPR64717/failure-to-open-accession-talks-with-albania-and-north-macedonia-is-a-mistake>, accessed on 25 October 2019.



from European standards²¹. In Hungary, populist rhetoric is still present, exploiting conspiracy scenarios. For example, in the context of the hearings held at the EU General Affairs Council on the state of complying with the rule of law, the Secretary General for Communication and International Relations at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Hungary, Zoltan Kovacs, mentioned in a social media post that it is obvious that the procedure initiated against Hungary has nothing in common with the rule of law or the freedom of the press, but is a political campaign launched against a country whose democratically elected leadership is despised by the “Soros orchestra” and its liberal colleagues from the left. Hungary has rejected all the conclusions contained in the final report²². Taking into consideration the emphasis placed by the new European Commission on the observance of the rule of law, it is expected that the procedure for activating Article 7 will continue in the following period, especially since there are no signs of improvement in this direction in either states.

The series of measures taken by Brussels to stop the process of degrading the quality of democracy at European level and deviations from European standards is expected to continue, not only under the aegis of processes related to Article 7 for Hungary and Poland, but also in other forms. For instance, as of July, the candidate for the Head of the European Commission who also got the office eventually, Ursula von der Leyen, supported the idea of introducing a rule of law verification mechanism for all Member States²³.

²¹ Lili Bayer, “Hungary clashes with other EU members in rule-of-law hearing”, in *Politico.eu*, 10 December 2019, URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/hungary-clashes-with-eu-governments-in-rule-of-law-hearing/>; Jennifer Rankin, “EU challenges Poland over judicial independence”, in *The Guardian*, 10 October 2019, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/10/eu-sues-poland-over-judicial-independence>, accessed on 17 December 2019.

²² Vlagyislav Makszimov, “Soros orchestra’: The next chapter in Hungary’s Article 7 odyssey”, in *Euractiv*, 11 December 2019, URL: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/justice-home-affairs/news/soros-orchestra-the-next-chapter-in-hungarys-article-7-odyssey/>, accessed on 17 December 2019.

²³ DG, “Ursula von der Leyen susține introducerea unui MCV privind statul de drept pentru toate țările membre.

In addition, the European Commission launched an initiative to strengthen the rule of law in the EU²⁴. The document calls for the development of a rule of law culture and addresses ways of applying it and preventing infringement, but has been criticized not only for failing to provide how governments having breaking the rule of law could be determined to change their course, considering that any decision to this effect requires unanimity, but also for not including procedures to reduce the tensions once the observance to the rule of law improved, here referring to the Article 7 procedure²⁵, the so-called “nuclear option”.

Another significant process from this point of view is related to the negotiations on the EU multiannual budget (2021-2027). Thus, before the European Council of October 17th-18th, the European Commission indicated the main factors that the representatives of the Member States should take into account in this regard. These include “ensuring a closer connection between funding and policy priorities and *by strengthening the instruments that protect the EU budget from deficiencies in the rule of law*”²⁶. Moreover, the new European Commission proposal on the EU multiannual budget, supported by Germany and other contributing states, contains a reduction of

Ce mai propune candidatul pentru șefia Comisiei Europene – UPDATE”, in *Hotnews*, 15 July 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23265560-ursula-von-der-leyen-sustine-instituirea-unui-mecanism-pentru-monitorizarea-statului-drept.htm>, accessed on 20 August 2019.

²⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Strengthening the rule of Law within the European Union. A blueprint for action, Brussels, 17 July 2019, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/7_en_act_part1.pdf, accessed on 18 July 2019.

²⁵ Ionuț Băiaș, “EUobserver: Planul UE pentru statul de drept: doi din trei nu e suficient”, in *Hotnews*, 31 iulie 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23288763-euobserver-planul-pentru-statul-drept-doi-din-trei-nu-suficient.htm>, accessed on 5 August 2019.

²⁶ Bugetul UE pentru perioada 2021-2027: momentul luării deciziilor, Comisia Europeană. Reprezentanța în România, 9 October, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/romania/news/20191009_bugetul_UE_2021_2027_ro, accessed on 3 November 2019.



cohesion funds²⁷, which is considered unfair in relation to the Eastern states by Hungary and too rigid, in terms of conditionality, by Poland and Slovenia.

In our opinion, the fact that Brussels takes a firm stand regarding the rule of law in the EU Member States is certainly necessary and timely, but at the same time, it may lead to deepening the divisions already existing within the Union. This even more as the elections held in the second semester of 2019 in the European states have generally resulted in the consolidation of the position of the Conservatives and the extreme right political parties²⁸, which may indicate a

²⁷ Cohesion fund targets EU Member States with a GNP per capita below 90% of EU average. The fund is meant to reduce economic and social disparities and promote sustainable development. In 2014-2020, the states targeted by this fund are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. For details, see: Cohesion Fund, European Commission, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/funding/cohesion-fund/, accessed on 10 November 2019.

²⁸ In Austria, the early parliamentary elections held in September 29 were won by the People's Party, led by Sebastian Kurz, in Poland, parliamentary elections of October 13 were won by the political party already in government (Law and Justice – PiS, with 44, 6% of the votes). On October 20, in Switzerland, the legislative elections are won by the Central Democratic Union (right, populist). In Spain, although the parliamentary elections of November 10 are not won by the far-right party, its representatives doubled their number in the legislative forum. In Hungary, municipal elections were held on October 13 and despite some victories of the opposition, Fidesz continues to dominate the Hungarian political landscape. Also, local elections in Germany resulted in the consolidation of the far-right party in the eastern part of the country. For details, see: Bernd Riegert, „Austria: Kurz câștigă alegerile parlamentare”, in *Deutsche Welle*, 29 September 2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/ro/austria-kurz-c%C3%A2%99tig%C4%83-alegerile-parlamentare/a-50625751>; Andreas Rostek, “Victorie clară a PiS la alegerile parlamentare din Polonia”, in *Deutsche Welle*, 14 October 2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/ro/victorie-clar%C4%83-a-pis-la-alegerile-parlamentare-din-polonia/a-50796693>; ***, “Switzerland election: Green parties make landmark gains”, in *BBC News*, 21 October 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50116400>; ***, “Nou blocaj în Spania: Rezultatele anticipatelor arată că nu poate fi formată o majoritate; extrema dreaptă își dublează locurile”, in *Digi24*, 10 November 2019, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/nou-blocaj-in-spania-rezultatele-alegerilor-anticipate-arata-ca-nu-poate-fi-formata-o-majoritate-1214844>; N.O., “Partidul premierului Viktor Orban, învins la Budapesta.

trend consisting in the political consolidation of a critical and sceptical position regarding the EU. In addition, the Freedom House Annual Report entitled *Freedom in the World 2019. Democracy in Retreat*²⁹ addresses the degrading quality of democracy and warns that “anti-democratic leaders in Central Europe and the Balkans (...) continued to undermine institutions that protect freedoms of expression and association and the rule of law”³⁰. Further, the document offers some brief examples from Hungary, Poland, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Serbia, Montenegro and Turkey. The claim of Donald Tusk, former president of the European Council and future president of the European People's Party, that one of the biggest challenges the EU faces nowadays is fighting populism and manipulation is thus justified³¹.

Cumulated, all three aspects – the quality of liberal democracy (how leaders are elected), respect for the rule of law (the responsibility of each citizen or leader in front of the law), the ascension to power of political formations with at least a critical position towards the European project – are indications of major relevance attached to EU's capacity to coagulate enough political willpower to act in a coherent, unitary way on the international arena and to minimize

Este prima înfrângere pentru Fidesz din ultimul deceniu /Rezultatele parțiale arată că Fidesz a pierdut mai multe orașe mari”, in *Hotnews*, 13 October 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23423266-alegeri-locale-ungaria-partidul-lui-orban-invins-budapesta-rezultate-parțiale.htm>; ***, “Extrema dreaptă depășește partidul Angelei Merkel în alegerile din Turingia. De ce este Germania îngrijorată de ascensiunea AfD”, in *Digi24*, 28 October 2019, URL: <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/externe/ue/extrema-dreapta-depasese-partidul-angelei-merkel-in-alegerile-din-turingia-de-ce-este-germania-ingrijorata-de-ascendiunea-afd-1207825>, accessed on 12 December 2019.

²⁹ ***, *Freedom in the World 2019. Democracy in Retreat*, Freedom House, URL: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2019/democracy-in-retreat>, accessed on 30 December 2019.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

³¹ ***, “Donald Tusk: Una dintre principalele provocări pentru PPE va fi combaterea populismului și a manipulării”, in *Agerpres*, 20 November 2019, URL: <https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2019/11/20/donald-tusk-una-dintre-principalele-provocari-pentru-ppe-va-fi-combaterea-populismului-si-a-manipularii--406428>, accessed on 3 December 2019.

its vulnerabilities in a multipolar context, increasingly characterized by competition for power.

3. Implications on EU's foreign policy

The vulnerability resulting from the difficulty of concentrating enough political willpower to act unitarily and timely on the international arena can be exploited and emphasized by third parties, especially in the context in which the international system evolves towards a multipolar model, characterized by competition between centres of power. In this regard, we consider necessary to recall another interview given by a regional leader – V. Putin in the *Financial Times*, on June 28th, 2019. The Russian leader argued that the liberal ideology has become obsolete³².

Further, dissensions within the EU can also be turned to advantage for denying the Union the status of international actor. Thus, it is illustrative the manner in which Vladimir Cijov, Russia's permanent representative to the EU, argued in an interview with *Russia Today*, that the EU should accumulate a very high degree of political will to improve cooperation with Moscow. Moreover, EU-Russia relations are "far from normal", as some common projects are frozen and inter-parliamentary cooperation suspended. The Russian Foreign Ministry also refers to the "wish of some EU political forces" to demonize Moscow and maintain an abnormal state in bilateral relations³³. Thus, the Union's reaction to Moscow's action to illegally annex the Crimean Peninsula, an act which at the time denoted the high degree of cohesion that EU member states can achieve, is framed in the context of the lack of EU political will.

However, although the European Council decided, on December 13th, to extend the

sanctions imposed on Russia by six months, during the analysed period, the efforts of some EU states to improve relations, and even get close to the Russian Federation, became visible. A first example is Hungary, whose efforts to strengthen relations with Moscow are not recent, and the period analysed in this paper has undergone significant developments in this direction. In December, Budapest negotiated with Moscow conditions for natural gas supply³⁴. Also, at the end of July, in the context of Romania hindering the transit of Russian military equipment to Serbia, due to EU sanctions imposed on Moscow for actions in Ukraine, Budapest decided to approve that its airspace be used to transit the Russian armoured transport³⁵.

Another European state whose efforts to enhance relations with Russia are visible in recent times is France. There are a series of illustrative events in this respect, but we will discuss the meeting between French and Russian state leaders in Biarritz, before the G7 Summit (August 19th), meant to explore new forms of cooperation in conflict and instability management and to establish a new Normandy meeting mediated by France, considering that there is a change in the Moscow-Kiev relations and that EU and Russia shall improve their relations and shall regain mutual confidence in an international order in full process of restructuring³⁶. The summit was held on December 10th, in Paris, and resulted in measures to re-launch the peace process and to hold regular meetings in this format every

³² ***, "Putin says 'liberalism has become obsolete'", in *Financial Times*, 28 June 2019, URL: <https://www.ft.com/content/670039ec-98f3-11e9-9573-ee5cbb98ed36>, accessed on 3 August 2019.

³³ I.B., "Rusia Today: Ambasadorul Rusiei la UE a enunțat condiția necesară pentru îmbunătățirea relațiilor cu Bruxellesul", în *Hotnews*, 25 iulie 2019, URL: <http://mobile.hotnews.ro/stire/23276376>, accessed on 3 August 2019.

³⁴ Teodora Marinescu, "Ungaria, pregătită să înceapă negocierile cu Rusia privind aprovizionarea cu gaze naturale", *Mediafax*, 3 December 2019, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/ungaria-pregatita-sa-inceapa-negocierile-cu-rusia-privind-aprovizionarea-cu-gaze-naturale-18646649>, accessed on 9 December 2019.

³⁵ Mircea Olteanu, "Budapesta își apără decizia de a permite unui avion rus încărcat cu blindate să tranziteze Ungaria", *Mediafax*, 1 August 2019, URL: <https://www.mediafax.ro/externe/budapesta-isi-apara-decizia-de-a-permite-unui-avion-rus-incarcat-cu-blindate-sa-tranziteze-ungaria-18259245>, accessed on 1 August 2019.

³⁶ R. M., "Macron dorește un nou summit în format Normandia dedicat Ucrainei/ Vladimir Putin vorbește despre un optimism prudent după contactele cu noul președinte ucrainean", în *Hotnews*, 28 August 2019, URL: <http://mobile.hotnews.ro/stire/23321323>, accessed on 28 August 2019.

four months, but the parties disagreed over the political component of the conflict³⁷.

In the same context, France announced its intention to identify solutions within six months to avoid US sanctions obstructing the funding of Russian projects, an issue to be discussed with Vladimir Putin at the Davos Economic Forum in January 2020. Once this is done, we could talk about another topic on the agenda of disputes between Europeans and the transatlantic partner, along with the vision on the nuclear agreement with Iran or the issue of defence investments.

Turning to the French president's interview for *The Economist* on November 7, 2019, we can see the outline of a position that involves three major ideas: a) the vulnerability of the transatlantic partnership ("What we are currently experiencing is the brain death of NATO", "we should reassess the reality of what NATO is in the light of the commitment of the United States"³⁸), b) his openness towards strengthening relations with Russia, and c) the EU's turn towards a functioning on "Multiple speed Europe" (blocking EU enlargement process until reforming it). Not coincidentally, the reaction from Russia was a laudatory one: "Golden words ... an exact definition of the current state of NATO" (Maria Zakharova, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation)³⁹. Equally significant is Angela Merkel's reaction: "The French president has expressed his views

in relatively drastic words. This is not how we look at cooperation with NATO"⁴⁰ and the one expressed by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg: "NATO is the only platform on which North America and Europe can tackle issues together ... such as fighting terrorism, or coping a more assertive Russia and China's emergency"⁴¹.

For the EU, the vision of the French president is equivalent to the development of "military sovereignty"⁴², or what the Global Strategy of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy (2016) called "strategic autonomy"⁴³. However, despite developments in the last three years in this area, the EU is still far from achieving this goal, and so much the less if we considered the central and eastern parts of the organization, with conservative political parties acceding to the leadership of EU Member States, sometimes of far-right orientation and often with a strong populist and, more importantly, critical component regarding the EU. In this context, the evolution of the Union towards a "multi-speed"/"concentric circles" principle seems one of the plausible scenarios.

This is all the more so if we consider the power balance within the Union, where a multitude of conditions are favourable to the assertion of

³⁷ R. M., "Ce s-a convenit la summitul în Format Normandia dintre Putin, Zelenski, Macron și Merkel/Măsurile pentru relansarea procesului de pace, dar dezacord pe componenta politică", in *Hotnews*, 10 December 2019, URL: <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-23542126-convenit-summitul-format-normandia-dintre-putin-zelenski-macron-merkel-masuri-pentru-relansarea-procesului-pace-dar-dezacord-componenta-politica.htm>, accessed on 12 December 2019.

³⁸ ***, "The future of the EU. Emanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead", in *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 10 November 2019.

³⁹ ***, "Russia Lauds Macron's 'Golden Words' About 'Brain Dead' NATO", in *Moscow Times*, 8 November 2019, URL: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/11/08/russia-lauds-macrons-golden-words-about-natos-brain-death-a68094>, accessed on 10 November 2019.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ Rym Momtaz, Andrew Gray, "Macron stands by NATO 'brain death' remarks but tries to reassure allies. French president urges alliance to get away from focus on cost-sharing and reach out to Russia", in *Politico.eu*, 28 November 2019, URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-my-brain-death-diagnosis-gave-nato-a-wake-up-call/>, accessed on 3 December 2019.

⁴² ***, "The future of the EU. Emanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead", in *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, URL: <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>, accessed on 10 November 2019.

⁴³ Strategic autonomy, one of the central concepts of the EUGS, implied the development of EU capacity to launch security actions in its own space, as well as in the neighbouring one, but not a dissolution of the transatlantic partnership, but a redefinition of it on the basis of equality, balanced burden sharing, especially in financial terms, in order to guarantee security and stability. For details, see: Cristina Bogzeanu, Cristian Băhnăreanu, *Geopolitica și geoeconomia spațiului european după 2010*, "Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017, pp. 18-20.

France as the main European power. First, Brexit supposes the exit of one of the greatest economic and political “engines” within the EU institutional framework. Germany, with a similar status, has lately faced a period of relative internal political instability, fuelled by the chancellor’s decision to end her political career starting 2021. As for Italy, the political developments marked by the rise of far right, strongly populist and anti-European political parties do not constitute a solid foundation or conducive to the affirmation as leader of European states.

Conclusions

Looking into the dynamics of the European security environment from the second part of 2019, we can deduce the following tendencies and implications on the short and medium term:

1. Brexit is a definite fact. This implies a decrease of uncertainty for the EU, but only partially, as negotiating the free trade agreement between the two entities will most likely be difficult, involving compromises difficult to reach.

2. Separatist tendencies in the United Kingdom are expected to grow, which will generate instability not only in the United Kingdom, but could fuel the separatist tendencies in Europe, with the Catalan crisis being one of the best examples.

3. The evolutions on internal political arena in the European states indicate a consolidation of the position of the far right-wing political groups, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, which may imply an increasing reluctance of the governments of the respective states towards Brussels.

4. Given UK withdrawal from the EU, Germany’s relative political weakness, and Italy’s domestic policy developments, France benefits of a favourable context for asserting as a major European power. Promoting a “multi-

speed Europe”, with a critical attitude towards the US and NATO and supporting the development of the EU military dimension, the premature approach to the Russian Federation and the delay of European integration to the Western Balkans makes it possible for the effort to prepare Europe to face increasingly competitive international environment to have a diametrically opposite effect than expected – the deepening of the EU’s vulnerability as a unitary political entity and a significant international actor.

5. In the context of an increasingly competitive international environment, EU vulnerabilities can be emphasized and exploited by third parties in their own interests.

6. EU measures to counter the violation of the rule of law by national governments, albeit aimed at strengthening the common foundations and standards that Member States have adhered to once they joined the Union, while timely and necessary, can also contribute to increasing dissensions within the EU, to shaping the “distinct speeds” within the Union.

7. For Romania, whose security is designed in relation to NATO and EU membership and strategic partnership with the US, the context is fraught with challenges and implies an increase in the instability and volatility of the environment in which national interests are promoted and defended. And this not only in relation with the two organizations, but also to the possible increase of instability in the neighbouring regions – the Wider Black Sea Region and Western Balkans (especially in case of the “multiple speed Europe” or “concentric circles Europe” become real). Maintaining a firm commitment to the standards, values and obligations assumed by joining the two organizations and those involved by the strategic partnership with the US, as well as continuing to send clear messages in this direction, actions contributing to reinforcing the transatlantic community are today, perhaps, more necessary than ever.



RUSSIA PURSUES ITS STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

*Marius POTÎRNICHE, Ph.D.**

Through its external diplomacy, the Russian Federation is actively involved within those countries and regions where strategic and geopolitical interests are considered important, and, thus, must be protected. Russia is eager to maintain and strengthen its influence in the post-Soviet space, the Middle East and Africa. Development diplomacy, a major asset for Russian diplomacy, is characterized by economic assistance and defense cooperation, used to promote its national interests. To strengthen its international influence and generate *soft power*, Russia continues its diplomacy of assistance development and military involvement, although it had to readjust some effective methods, given the reduced financial capabilities and transformed geopolitical architecture.

1. Kremlin's security concept in the Middle East

Russian policy in the Middle East region can be considered one of the most important achievements for President Putin in recent years. With relatively small material investments and minimal casualties, Moscow has managed to transform itself, from an almost unnoticeable participant on the Middle East stage, into one of the main actors of the region, without whom even a single major regional security problem cannot

be solved today. The Russian victories are even more impressive, if you compare the results of the Russian operation in Syria with those of the US and its allies in Iraq, in 2003.

Russia exploits tensions in the Middle East to promote a security concept to make itself an international mediator and security guarantor. Kremlin promotes the formation of a new international security organization,¹ and the initiative provides for the ultimate goal to be the creation of a “Security and Cooperation Organization in the Persian Gulf” that will include the Gulf countries, Russia, China and other stakeholders as members or observers, inviting even the US and the EU.

Through this initiative, Kremlin aims to: shape a regional coalition to combat terrorism under the auspices of the UN Security Council, an internationally-recognized antiterrorist partnership to define terrorism and to support its own actions in the region, as it did in Syria, by framing selective of Assad's anti-Bashar opposition groups as terrorists; coordinate information operations with Muslim-majority countries in the fight against terrorism – likely

¹ ***, “Russian Concept of Collective Security in the Persian Gulf”, *Russian MFA*, 23 July, 2019, URL: [http://www.mid\(\(.\)\)ru/ru/foreign_policy/international_safety/conflicts//asset_publisher/xIEMTQ3OvzcA/content/id/3733575](http://www.mid((.))ru/ru/foreign_policy/international_safety/conflicts//asset_publisher/xIEMTQ3OvzcA/content/id/3733575), accessed on 15.08.2019.

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to expand the information influence in the Gulf; setting up consultation groups with regional and international stakeholders and an action group to lead the initiative (Kremlin seeks to include existing regional and international organizations, including the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League in its concept)²; to host an international conference on security cooperation in the Gulf (Kremlin often uses the mechanism of international forums to promote its goals); gradually implement arms control agreements, establishing demilitarized areas and reducing the international military presence in the region. These initiatives, in the long term, aim to weaken the US position in the region and to establish areas that will protect Russia's regional partnership with Iran. China has expressed public support for the initiative.³

The stated objective of Russian Federation for a new security organization in the Gulf is, at best, unrealistic in the short term. Maybe it does not even intend to reach that goal in the near future. Kremlin is trying to become an influential global player, but Russia's close ties with Iran and Syria's Assad regime are hampering stability in the region. Russia does not want to respond to Western initiatives, such as the Anti-ISIS Coalition, the Gulf Maritime Security Mission, and considers US⁴ efforts in the region as "anti-collaborative" and unnecessarily focused on Iran.⁵ If the West refuses to join Kremlin's initiative – which is the most likely scenario – Kremlin reinforces its narrative of an "obstructionist West". Russia has seen an opportunity to increase its influence in the Gulf,

² Nataliya Bugayova, Darina Regio, "The Kremlin's Campaign in Africa: Assessment Update", *Institute for the Study of War*, August, 2019, URL: <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20-%20The%20Kremlin%20Campaign%20in%20Africa%20-%20August%202019.pdf>, accessed on 12.09.2019.

³ Abhishek Bhaya, "China Backs Russian Plan for "Collective Security" in Persian Gulf", *CGTN*, 26 July 2019, URL: <https://www.cgtn.com/news/2019-07-26/China-backs-Russian-plan-for-collective-security-in-Persian-Gulf/index.html>, accessed on 16.09.2019.

⁴ ***, "Speech and Answers to the Questions of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov at the Session on Russian Politics in the Middle East of the Valdai International Discussion Club", Sochi, 2 October, 2019, *Russian MFA*, URL: https://www.mfa.gov.ru/ru/foreign_relations/2019/10/02/speech_and_answers_to_the_questions_of_the_minister_of_foreign_affairs_of_the_russian_federation_sergey_lavrov_at_the_session_on_russian_politics_in_the_middle_east_of_the_valdai_international_discussion_club/, accessed on 10.11.2019.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

at a time when the US appears to be delimiting the Middle East following its announcement of withdrawal from Syria.

2. Kremlin controls the pace of operations in Syria

Kremlin sets the conditions to allow further pro-regime offensive operations in Idlib province, which is in opposition, in northern Syria, showing indications of continuing preparation for future combat operations. Pro-regime forces have reopened a humanitarian supply line in this province, and Russia has deployed an Inguş Military Police battalion, both actions as part of a future offensive operation in western Syria⁶, while the Russian special forces are actively pursuing reconnaissance and raids. The Russian president stressed that he would continue to support "local operations for the terrorist threat neutralization"⁷ in Idlib province. Russia has also played a key role in a temporary ceasefire agreement. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad does not have the capacity to carry out successful offensive operations without the support of Russia and Iran.⁸ The province hosts about three million civilians, creating a massive logistical and humanitarian challenge for pro-regime forces, despite attempts to depopulate the region through evacuation corridors and non-discriminatory air strikes against civilians.⁹

Kremlin recognizes that any major offensive to liberate the entire province would probably result in large numbers of casualties and would require logistical support that Assad does not

⁶ Enab Baladi, "Ingushetia Sends a Battalion of Military Police to Syria", 17 September 2019, URL: <https://enabbaladi.net/archives/328502>, accessed on 18.11.2019.

⁷ ***, "Press Statement and Answers to Media Questions Following a Trilateral Meeting Between the Leaders of the Guarantor States of the Astana Process on the Settlement in Syria", Kremlin, 16 September 2019, URL: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/61542>, accessed on 12.11.2019.

⁸ ***, "Bulletin of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides and Refugee Migration Monitoring in the Syrian Arab Republic", no. 1, September, 2019.

⁹ Suzan Fraser, Zeynep Bilginsoy, "Russia, Iran, Turkey Say Syrian Constitution Committee Ready," *AP*, 16 September 2019, URL: <https://www.apnews.com/359b711434034ac29bf8cbe18698b5cb>, accessed on 17.11.2019.



have and Russia does not want to offer.¹⁰ Russia will probably allow limited offensive action by government troops to regain some areas in the southern province and to mitigate the threat of counter-attacks from the opposition, which have caused heavy losses to Syrian forces. Russia will play a major role in shaping the timing, level and objectives of other pro-regime operations in Idlib province to achieve its own (and often limited) strategic goals in northern Syria.

Russian achievements in the region need some explanation. Some observers believe that Moscow's victories are linked to the fact that, after its failed involvement in Iraq, the US essentially abandoned new interventionist actions in the region during the Obama period, leaving behind a vacuum of geopolitical power. Russia has filled this void promptly and without excessive costs. Another explanation is that Moscow has outperformed its Western rivals because of a higher level of expert advice on policy in the Middle East. Unlike American strategies, the Russian leadership continues to rely on an extremely professional community of Orientalists who know and understand the region well. The third explanation is that President Putin's main advantage has been the consistency and stability of his policies in the region - policies from which Russia has won, if not appreciation, at least, respect from Middle Eastern partners. In contrast, Western countries, which have often changed positions during the Middle East drama development, have largely lost credibility with the region's political leaders and elites. Another explanation for Moscow's successes is that, contrary to other influential international actors, Russia has been able to maintain constructive relations with almost all parts of the Middle East conflicts - with the Israelis and Palestinians, with the Sunnis and with the Shiites, with the Turks and Kurds, with Iran and the Arab monarchies in the Persian Gulf. In all likelihood, this particularity

¹⁰ Michael Land, Matti Suomenaro, Mason Clark, Elizabeth Teoman, "Pro-Assad Regime Forces Locked in Battle of Attrition in Idlib Province", *Institute for the Study of War*, 2 July 2019, URL: <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2019/06/pro-assad-regime-forces-locked-in.html>, accessed on 10.10.2019.

of Russia's position in the region is directly related to the country's initial marginal status in the Middle East (in the post-Soviet context). Therefore, Moscow is now better suited to play the role of the honest broker in the region than Washington.

3. Military exercises as a geopolitical tool

Russia held two major military exercises in September – Union Shield 2019, with Belarus and Center 2019 with China, India, Pakistan and members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. Russia used these exercises to demonstrate the ability to act militarily on several fronts and to deepen ties with key states in South and East Asia. These types of exercises support President Putin's goal of establishing sovereignty over the – now independent – states of the former Soviet Union – an effort that is moving forward in Belarus and Moldova. Union Shield 2019 has explicitly set out to practice the defense of the State of the Union, a federation-type entity that has not yet been implemented, which would ensure Belarus's loyalty to Russia.

The two exercises were different in objectives, but both focused on combating unconventional military threats against Russia and allied states. Russian military exercises are increasingly emphasizing the inclusion of partner forces in coalition operations and coordination with foreign armed forces.¹¹ The Union Shield 2019 and Center 2019 exercises demonstrated Russia's efforts to build interoperability with former Soviet states and to engage major players in Asia, including India, Pakistan and China.¹²

Russia is focusing on developing initiative and creativity in young officers, stressing the need to make unconventional decisions in combat.

¹¹ Catherine Harris, Mason Clark, "Russia in Review: Russia's Lessons Learned in Syria", *The Institute for the Study of War*, 9 November 2018, URL: <http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/11/russia-in-review-russias-lessons.html>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

¹² Natalia Balkanska, "The Defense Ministry Revealed the Timing and Scope of Strategic Exercises - Center-2019", *TV Zvezda*, 20 August 2019, URL: [https://tvzvezda\(.\)ru/news/forces/content/20198192231-FKhpU.html](https://tvzvezda(.)ru/news/forces/content/20198192231-FKhpU.html), accessed on 21.10.2019.



Russian officers with command experience in Syria stressed the need for increased decision-making flexibility. Union Shield 2019 had non-standard approaches to fighting insurgencies¹³, Russia experiencing the ability to carry out long-distance relocations and increasing the maneuverability of its own and partner forces and defending against illegal armed formations, which are aimed at destabilizing the Union state. The Union Shield 2019 exercise went far beyond the Russian border, as Russia's effort to reduce regional tensions and avoid NATO reactions.¹⁴ Russia has chosen this solution in order to practice offensive hybrid scenarios. The Center 2019 exercise focused on counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia, tested new transport vehicles, optimized for the Arctic area, practiced the development of logistical and technical support for Arctic operations, in addition to air training and Special Forces in the Arctic area along the Northern Sea route.¹⁵

Russia is also successfully gaining influence in Moldova, which has requested a military cooperation agreement. Russian Defense Minister, Sergei Shoigu, suggested a three-year military cooperation plan during his unofficial visit to Moldova, the first time a high-ranking Russian military official visited Moldova in recent years.¹⁶ The Moldavian President, Igor

Dodon, said that he would probably invite Shoigu to Moldova for an official visit to discuss this topic more thoroughly. A military agreement between Russia and Moldova would mark progress in Kremlin's campaign to expand its influence in Moldova after suffering inflictions in recent years.

4. Kremlin's involvement in the Balkans

Kremlin is increasing its influence in Serbia, in support of its strategic objective - to prevent the integration of the Balkan states into the EU, by signing new security and economic agreements, through the Eurasian Economic Union (EUE); thus, the two states signed a free trade agreement.¹⁷ Russia has launched new infrastructure and energy projects, including a nuclear research center, sold to Serbia advanced air defense systems and signed several agreements with security agencies. Kremlin is using every means possible to undermine the normalization of the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo, which prevents Kosovo or Serbia from joining the EU, while increasing the threshold of its military cooperation with Serbia, where it is likely to seek to establish a long-term military footprint. Russia deployed Pantsir and S-400 air defense systems in Serbia during the joint Slavic Shield exercise 2019, October 24-27.¹⁸ This deployment marked a novelty - this is the first time Russia has used these systems in military exercises outside its territory and is intended to be a signal to the states in the region.¹⁹ Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has expressed his

¹³ ***, "Over 4,000 Belarusian Military to Participate in Union Shield 2019 Exercise", *Belta*, 24 August 2019, URL: <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/over-4000-belarusian-military-to-participate-in-union-shield-2019-exercise-123339-2019/>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

¹⁴ Georgi Okoshko, "'Union Shield-2019' will Complete the Cycle of Joint Training of Servicemen of the Russian Federation and Belarus", *RITM Eurasia*, 17 August 2019, URL: <https://www.ritmeurasia.org/news--2019-08-17--schit-sojuza-2019-zavershit-cikl-sovmestnoj-podgotovki-voennosluzhaschih-rf-i-rb-44373>, accessed on 27.11.2019.

¹⁵ Atle Staalesen, "A Large-Scale Russian Military Exercise is Coming to the Arctic", *Barents Observer*, 20 December 2018, URL: <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2018/12/large-scale-russian-military-exercise-coming-arctic#.XBumgn2T55A.twitter>, accessed on 06.01.2020.

¹⁶ ***, "Dodon Talked About Possible Official Shoigu Visit to Moldova", *Sputnik Moldova*, 27 August 2019, URL: <https://ru.sputnik.md/society/20190827/27378388/dodon-rasskazal-o-vozmozhnom-ofitsialnom-vizite-shoigu-moldova.html>, accessed on 30.11.2019.

¹⁷ ***, "Serbia Signs Trade Agreement with Russia-Led Eurasian Economic Union", *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, 25 October 2019, URL: <https://www.rferl.org/a/serbia-to-ink-trade-agreement-with-russia-led-eurasian-economic-union/30235917.html>, accessed on 30.11.2019.

¹⁸ ***, "Russia, Serbia Follow 'Slavic Shield' With Second Joint Military Drill", *The Moscow Times*, 11 November 2019, URL: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/11/01/russia-serbia-follow-slavic-shield-with-second-joint-military-drill-a68000>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

¹⁹ ***, "S-400 division and a 'Pantsir-S' battery of the Russian Aerospace Forces are transferred to Serbia, where they will take part for the first time in exercises in the territory of a foreign state", *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, 24 October 2019, URL: <https://function.mil/>



wish to purchase the S-400, being warned in this regard by the US that he is at risk of a sanction.²⁰ Kremlin is likely to seek to use military exercises and arm sales to determine the conditions for a long-term Russian military presence in Serbia. A strategic Russian military position in Serbia would allow Russia to put pressure on NATO and block the integration of the Balkan states into the EU—a goal of the Russian president.

Russia has invited Albania and Northern Macedonia to sign agreements with the EU, after French President Emmanuel Macron stopped talks on Albania and Northern Macedonia's accession to the EU.²¹ Northern Macedonia has rejected Russia's offer, and Albania has reaffirmed its commitment to the EU.²² However, the three countries have signed an agreement for the creation of a "mini-Schengen" (free movement), which emulates the European Schengen area and allows the free movement of capital, goods, services and people across national borders.²³ Kremlin is unlikely to move the Balkans away from EU membership aspirations, but will try to expand the geopolitical weight of the EU. The EU is the main trading partner of the Balkan states.

Kremlin is stimulating Serbia's campaign to deny Kosovo's legal status, while maintaining the stakes of preventing the normalization of diplomatic relations between Serbia and Kosovo, which could allow one or both to

ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12258382@egNews, accessed on 20.12.2019.

²⁰ Aleksandar Vasovic, "Serbia faces risk of U.S. sanctions over Russian arms deal", *Reuters*, 8 November 2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-serbia-usa-sanctions/serbia-faces-risk-of-u-s-sanctions-over-russian-arms-deal-idUSKBN1XI199>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

²¹ ***, "European Union warned of 'historic mistake' as Emmanuel Macron blocks Balkan enlargement talks", *The Telegraph*, 18 October 2019, URL: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/10/18/europe-union-warned-historic-mistake-emmanuel-macron-blocks/>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

²² Guy Delauney, "European snub to North Macedonia fuels frustration in Balkans", *BBC News*, 2 November 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50260379> accessed on 20.12.2019.

²³ Luke Bacigalupo, "Western Balkans: A 'Mini-Schengen' Zone", *Global Risk Insights*, 20 October 2019, URL: <https://globalriskinsights.com/2019/10/western-balkans-a-mini-schengen-zone/>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

join the EU. Russian officials called Kosovo a "quasi-state entity" and added that "the growing number of countries revoking the recognition of Kosovo's independence" confirms this status as a "quasi-state entity".²⁴ Russia also fears that the recognition of Kosovo would amplify the demands for independence of autonomous regions in its area of influence. Kosovo-Serbia peace negotiations have ceased for more than a year. US and European officials have said that Serbia must recognize Kosovo's independence in order to join the EU.²⁵

5. Russian Campaign in Africa

Kremlin continues to develop military, economic and political ties with African states as part of its campaign to ease sanctions and compete with the West. Russia hosted two major forums focused on cooperation with African states in mid-2019, ahead of the forthcoming Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, in October 2019. Kremlin used these forums to strengthen its bilateral relations and multilateral involvement with the African states.

The summit focused on joint projects with the African Union (AU) and the South African Development Community (SADC), as well as a potential free trade area built on the Continental African Free Trade Agreement, which includes fifty-three Member States.²⁶ Kremlin also intends to sign a memorandum of cooperation between the African Union and the Eurasian Economic Union—part of its broader effort to

²⁴ Misha Savic, "Kosovo's Election Winner Signals Tough Stance Toward Serbia", *Bloomberg*, 6 October 2019, URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-06/kosovo-opposition-wins-election-that-may-help-bid-for-eu-nato>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

²⁵ Snezana Bjelotomic, "Palmer: 'Serbia will not join the EU unless it recognizes Kosovo's independence'", *Serbian Monitor*, 4th November 2019, URL: <https://www.serbianmonitor.com/en/palmer-serbia-will-not-join-the-eu-unless-it-recognizes-kosovos-independence/>, accessed on 20.12.2019.

²⁶ ***, "African Continental Free Trade Area: A New Horizon for Trade in Africa", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 10 July 2019, URL: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/african-continental-free-trade-area-new-horizon-trade-africa>, accessed on 19.12.2019.



build international alliances centered on Russia.²⁷ These efforts seem to be successful, as African leaders regularly express positive attitudes towards partnering with Russia.

Economy: Afreximbank (African Export Import Bank) has signed at least six memoranda of understanding with Russian investment and energy companies at the Russia-Africa Economic Summit. The Russian export center (which is already operating in an industrial area in Egypt) owns shares in Afreximbank and jointly funds projects in Sierra Leone, Angola, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe.²⁸ Kremlin is trying to use these links with Africa to increase bilateral trade, to attract foreign investments and to compete with the economic influence and investments of the West in Africa.

Politics: The Russian Duma hosted the Russia-Africa Interparliamentary Forum, which included more than three hundred MPs from over thirty-eight states.²⁹ Kremlin views these countries as potential supporters of its Western delegitimization campaign and calls for their support to ease sanctions on Russia.³⁰ Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov stressed in November 2018 that “Russia views Africa as an important and active participant in the emerging polycentric architecture of the world order and an ally in protecting international law against attempts to undermine it.”³¹ Russia is also using

inter-legislative exchanges to build support for projects to expand its economic presence in Africa, promote educational cooperation, provide scholarships to study in Russia, and develop additional centers of Russian science and culture which already exists in Egypt, Morocco, Zambia, Congo, Tanzania, Tunisia and Ethiopia.³² Russia has presented itself as a strong global partner and regional ally for Africa, given its recent investments, as well as the historical relations formed during the Soviet Union. Kremlin is willing to lobby on behalf of its major African partners to gain support, in turn, within the United Nations.

Military: Russia already has more than twenty military cooperation agreements with countries in Africa, including Sudan, Central African Republic, Tanzania and Eritrea.³³

The West should carefully monitor Russia’s commitments to Africa, given the region’s growing strategic importance in the overall Kremlin calculation.

Conclusions

As far as real engagement in the Middle East is concerned, Russia’s advantage is a major one. This is evident especially in Syria, where the conservation of success has become increasingly difficult. With the military defeat of ISIS, a common enemy for many players in the Syrian theater has disappeared. Bashar Al-Assad is becoming increasingly harsh and uncompromising in his dialogue with the Syrian opposition, demanding unconditional surrender. Iran is also less inclined to compromise with its opponents. For its part, Israel, fearing a growing Iranian presence and strengthening Hezbollah

²⁷ Frederick W. Kagan, Nataliya Bugayova, Jennifer Cafarella, “Confronting the Russian Challenge: A New Approach for the U.S.”, *Institute for the Study of War*, URL: <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20CTP%20Report%20-%20Confronting%20the%20Russian%20Challenge%20-%20June%202019.pdf>, p. 30, accessed on 18.09.2019.

²⁸ ***, “Priority Directions of Strategic Development of Russia – ‘International Cooperation and Export’”, *Russian Export Center*, 15 July 2019, URL: <https://www.exportcenter.ru/company/international-cooperation/>, accessed on 18.09.2019.

²⁹ ***, “Vladimir Putin: The Modern World Needs an Open and Free Exchange of Views”, *Russian State Duma*, 3 July 2019, URL: <http://duma.gov.ru/news/45564/>, accessed on 18.09.2019.

³⁰ ***, “Why the World Needs Parliamentary Development: Five Tasks of Inter-Parliamentary Dialogues”, *Russian State Duma*, 9 July 2019, URL: <http://duma.gov.ru/news/45610/>, accessed on 18.09.2019.

³¹ ***, “Development of Interaction Between Russia and African Countries Was Discussed in the State Duma”,

Russian State Duma, 19 November 2018, URL: <http://duma.gov.ru/en/news/28831/>, accessed on 18.12.2019.

³² ***, “United Russia Bloc”, *Russian State Duma*, 2 July 2019, URL: <http://www.er-duma.ru/news/olga-timofeeva-nasha-zadacha-dat-kachestvennyy-start-otnosheniyam-mezhdu-parlamentom-rf-i-parlamentom/>, accessed on 18.09.2019.

³³ Jakob Hedenskog, “Russia Is Stepping Up Its Military Cooperation in Africa”, *Swedish Defense Research Agency*, 15 July 2019, <https://www.foi.se/rest-api/report/FOI%20MEMO%206604>, accessed on 18.12.2019.



and relying on the Trump administration's almost unconditional support, is expanding its air operations in the Syrian airspace. Turkey is rushing to consolidate its successes in the west and north, creating a buffer zone on the border between Syria and Turkey. Syrian Kurds are nervous—not without reason—and expect another betrayal from the Allies and their tactical partners. The question would be: is Moscow capable of maintaining the status quo in Syria—and in the region as a whole—in the long run, even if it is in Russia's interests? This means that Moscow must seek solutions to the problems of the Middle East that will enable it to transform its current military successes into a more lasting—even if more contestable—political influence in the region, and the solution seems to be the “Security and Cooperation Organization in the Persian Gulf”.

The Western Balkans are an integral part of Russia's strategy to be considered a leading player in European security issues, along with other important states, such as Germany, France and the United Kingdom. Having an influence in the Balkans means having a say in strategic issues, which are direct consequences for Russia. Moscow is run by geopolitics, with concerns such as economic interests or historical ties with southern Slavic countries or other Orthodox nations, which play a secondary role, and considers the Balkans to be a vulnerable periphery of Europe, where Russia can build a foothold, by recruiting supporters and, finally, maximizing their effect on the West. There is no doubt that South-Eastern Europe far exceeds what Russia considers its privileged sphere of geopolitical interest. In economic, social and purely geographical terms, the former Yugoslav republics and Albania gravitate towards the West. Russia's only option is to act in an obstructive

manner to undermine the EU and NATO, using the vulnerabilities of the Balkans, either through disputes fueled by nationalism, inherited from the 1990s, corruption and state capture, or distrust of citizens in public institutions. Influence in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Northern Macedonia or elsewhere is a reason for negotiation in Russia's strategic competition with Western powers. From Moscow's perspective, projecting power in the Balkans is tantamount to giving the West a boomerang effect. If Europeans and Americans get involved in its sphere of influence—Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia or any other country in the “near vicinity”—Russia believes it has the right to do the same in the area close to the West.

Since the 2000s, there has been a noticeable increase in Russia's interest in Africa. Indeed, between 2005 and 2015, trade with Africa increased by 185 percent, and Russia has several reasons to engage more intensively in Africa. The main objective is to reduce the effect of the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the US, by: projecting power on the global stage—supporting the African states, which is the largest UN voting bloc, Kremlin cultivates allies in its challenge for the current security order dominated by the US; accessing raw materials and natural resources—Russia, like other major world powers, creates joint projects and investments to access them; exporting arms and providing security of investments. In recent years, Russia has become the largest arms supplier to Africa, accounting for 35 percent of the region's arms exports, followed by China (17 percent), the United States (9.6 percent) and France (6.9 percent). The recently announced US intention to withdraw from Africa leaves Russia an economic ground capable of counterbalancing sanctions imposed in various areas by the Trump administration.



TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY – BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

*Mirela ATANASIU, Ph.D.**

Turkey is a polemic actor in the Eurasian space; its cultural heritage is, largely, Oriental – of Turkish and Muslim roots –, but its official posture is Occidental, through NATO membership and EU candidature, but also by the ongoing Westernization process initiated after World War I.

Throughout history, Turkey's intercontinental geopolitical position, together with other characteristic elements (large population, wide territory, developed economy, endowed army etc.), have placed it among the regional powers, regardless of the form of government, and this ensured the opportunity to participate, constantly and actively, in shaping the status quo of some European and Middle Eastern states, and even in regulating the balance of power between West and East.

At present, the international Euro-Atlantic community raises some question marks regarding Turkey's intentions, amidst part of the foreign policy actions of the Ankara administration, which are suspected of violating NATO principles, rules of the international law and customs of the alliance system which Turkey is part of, reaching to contest the quality of the Turkish state as a potential EU member or even that of a trustful member of the Alliance.

This paper will analyze recent issues related to Turkey's controversial foreign policy actions and their possible motivations.

Turkey's geographical position is unique, being located on the Anatolian Peninsula, within the space of the former Ottoman Empire

of Islamic religion¹, at the junction between the Arab Middle East and Europe. This dual geographical belonging manifests itself in a tendency of cultural and mental interweaving between East and West, to which contributed the multiple former empires (Hittites, Persian, Roman, Byzantine or Ottoman), established by different peoples on this territory and at different historical stages.

After going through a tumultuous imperial historical period, at present, from a political point of view, the Turkish state represents a parliamentary republic, recommended itself as a liberal democratic regime² rooted in the

¹ A.N.: field's studies show that in the Republic of Turkey population, the Muslim (Sunni) individuals number a ratio of almost 100%, from whom, about 75% are Turks ethnics. For example, 99.8% Muslim population is presented in: Diana Aschner, Rachael Bane, Kevin Kaiser, Jean-Jacques Sène, *History & Culture of Turkey: From Anatolian Civilization to Modern Republic. A guide created by Chatham students for Chatham students for our 2010-2011 Global Focus*, Chatham University, 2009, p. 3, URL: https://www.chatham.edu/academics/globalfocus/archives/turkey_1011/_pdf/history_culture.pdf, accessed on 12.12.2019.

² A.N.: we refer to it as "is recommended" because, although in the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey there are many elements presenting the Turk state as a democratic regime ("liberal democracy" (p. 10), "democracy-loving Turkish" (p. 11), "democratic, secular and social state" (p. 11), "democracy" (p. 11, 43), "democratic order" (p. 13), "principles of democracy" (p. 26, 31), "democratic political life" (p. 30), "democratic and secular republic" (p. 31, 36), some field's Western analysts refer to nowadays Turkey as anything else but democracy. See: Steven A. Cook, "Turkish Democracy Can't Die, because It Never Lived", *Foreign Policy*, 13 May 2019, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/05/13/turkish-democracy-cant-die-because-it-never-lived/>, accessed on 02.12.2019.

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reforming ideas of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk³. Throughout history, the geopolitics of Turkey has been one of water and oil⁴, linked, on the one hand, to its wide access and rights to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (and the straits between them), and the watershed of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates⁵ and, on the other hand, of its quality of hosting energy transportation routes from East to West⁶. Also, Turkey (regardless of the historical period or the form of territorial organization it had) has been an important economic and commercial hub, connecting the different regions of the world, mentioning here the old *Silk Road*, which links Europe to Asia or China's current "Belt and Road" initiative – as a gateway to the European market for goods and services.

³ A.N.: its essential goal was to modernize and secularize the country, and this was initiated by studying the Western governments and by adapting their structure to the Turk state. He believed modernization necessarily involved the Westernization and established a policy of state secularism with a constitution separating the government from the religion. See details at: ***, *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Biography (c. 1881–1938)*, 18 April 2019, URL: <https://www.biography.com/political-figure/mustafa-kemal-Atatürk>, accessed on 05.12.2019.

⁴ Ruchir Shah, *The Geopolitics of Water and Oil in Turkey*, Institut Francais des Relations Internationales, 29.10.2009.

⁵ A.N.: Turkey, as a riparian state located upstream of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, is the main beneficiary of the economic and military advantages derived from this geographical asymmetry, having numerous dams, of which *Atatürk*, built for the supply of irrigation water and electricity production, is one of the largest in the country.

⁶ A.N.: through Turkey, oil and gas are transported from the Middle East and the Caspian Sea, as follows: Iraq - Turkey oil pipeline, Baku - Tbilisi - Ceyhan main oil pipeline for export, Russia - Turkey (West Line) natural gas pipeline, *Blue Stream* natural gas pipeline, Eastern Anatolia main line of natural gas transmission (Iran-Turkey), Baku - Tbilisi - Erzurum (BTE) natural gas pipeline for which an expansion project has been started, aiming to transit Europe and which it is expected to be completed by 2022; Turkey-Greece natural gas interconnection, *Turkstream* is a project that consists of building two networks over the Black Sea, the first aimed to supply Turkey, and the second to supply Europe. See details on the website of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of the Turkish Republic, URL: <https://www.enerji.gov.tr/en-US/Pages/Oil-Pipelines>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

1. The overall geopolitical situation of Turkey

Turkey is geopolitically framed in the Middle East region, one of the most complex and conflicting global areas, where instability and insecurity persist for millennia. Moreover, the Republic of Turkey's security (established in 1923), was dictated by two main elements – its geography and long-term links with the neighboring countries.

From a geographical point of view, Turkey is constituted as an intercontinental state contiguous to the Black Sea, comprising two territorial areas – one narrower, in the South-East of Europe and one more extended, in the Middle East. Its geographical location, at the intersection of three continents and two representative civilizations – Eastern and Western –, credited the Turkish state with geopolitical importance for the states in its geographical proximity, as well as for the more outlying states, regardless of the historical period and the owned form of government. Also, throughout history, Turkey has been a foothold for its allies. For example, in its capacity as a NATO member, during the Cold War, it was an important geopolitical asset to the Western bloc, being a strong ally in the immediate vicinity of the USSR. With the abolition of the Warsaw Pact, this consideration has disappeared, but Turkey has continued to have geopolitical importance, but on other bases, one of them being its location between major energy markets and major energy producers, serving as a transit state, which hosts pipelines linking its exporter energy-rich neighbors to Western European importers' consumer markets.

The layout of the Turkish state territory at the junction between East and West, its extended geographical scope and large population⁷, its recognized military power, membership of a number of Eastern and Western political

⁷ A.N.: Turkey has a territorial area of 783.562.000 km² and a number of registered population for 2017 of 80.8 million inhabitants. For details, please see: ***, *Îndrumar de afaceri cu Republica Turcia 2018*, Biroul pentru Promovare Comercial Economic, Ankara, 2018, p. 2, URL: http://www.imm.gov.ro/adaugare_fisiere_imm/2018/11/TURCIA_Îndrumar-de-afaceri-sept.2018-1.pdf, accessed on 02.12.2019.



organizations⁸, including NATO, and its strong economy, recommend it for the role of strategic pivot in the East-West relationship. But its specific cultural, linguistic and historical heritage, in conjunction with the tendencies of appropriation and regimentation with the Western civilization and culture, make it a controversial actor on the international stage.

But why did this become a problem? One might say the answer comes in part from the fact that the currently and most challenging issues faced by the European and Euro-Atlantic community – related to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, international terrorism, illegal migration, Middle East conflict, problems with Russia and energy security –, Turkey is forced to face all this, as a barrier state at the border between East and West. Of course, to this Turkey's apparent "slide" from West to East also contributes to its civilizational duality. All these issues bring unclarity to Turkey's current geopolitical situation or generate a lack of easy answers to questions about its Oriental or Occidental tendencies. Another reason for this trend may be the fact that, in recent years, Turkey, under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has gone through a period of hasted domestic politics, generated by some impact

⁸ A.N.: Turkey is a founding member of several international cooperation organizations in various fields: UN (1945), the Council of Europe (1949), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1961), the Islamic Cooperation Organization (1969), the Economic Cooperation Organization (1985), Organization for Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea - BSEC (1992), Joint Administration of Turkish Culture and Art - TURKSOY (1993), D-8 (1997), Cooperation Council of Turkish-speaking States (2009), Conference of interaction and confidence building in Asia - CICA (1999), MIKTA (2013). At the same time, the Turkish state is a member of NATO (1952), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975), BLACKSEAFOR (2001), the Advisory Group on International Agricultural Research (2005), the Union for the Mediterranean (2008), the Dialogue of Asian Cooperation (2013). Also, Turkey has the status of permanent observer of the League of Arab States (2007) and the Organization of American States (1998). At the same time, it is a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - CTBT (ratified in 2000), but is not a signatory party to the Rome Statute. To be seen: ***, "International Organisations", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/sub.en.mfa?7cafe2ef-78bd-4d88-b326-3916451364f3>, accessed on 20.11.2019.

elements, such as:

- the growth of the pro-Kurdish movement, culminating in its electoral performance in the 2014 elections, which allowed it to establish itself as a key political player in Turkey that intensifies the Kurdish conflict, amid the lack of an alternative administrative framework, to respond the Kurds' request for autonomy;

- the military coup attempt of July 15, 2016, considered in the "Al Jazeera" publication "a cultural moment of transformation in the political history of Turkey"⁹, when a part of the Turkish armed forces launched a coordinated operation in several major cities to overthrow the government and President Erdoğan. The Turkish government accuses Fethullah Gulen, an influential Islamic cleric, of initiating the failed coup attempt followed by the instalment of a state of emergency in Turkey consisting of media censorship and repression materialized in dismissals and emprisoning of government enemies and critics;

- conducting the constitutional referendum in 2017, its validity being challenged by the opposition¹⁰, following which the Turkish president obtained the victory in a package of amendments that bestowed on him increased powers;

- the presidential and parliamentary elections held in June 2018, following which President Erdogan was re-elected, and the People's Alliance, consisting of the Development and Justice Party (AKP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) prevailed in government¹¹;

- the repetition of local elections taking place in April 2019, where the ruling party (AKP)

⁹ ***, "Turkey's failed coup attempt: All you need to know", *Al Jazeera*, 15 July 2017, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/12/turkey-failed-coup-attempt-161217032345594.html>, accessed on 02.12.2019.

¹⁰ Kareem Shaheen, "Erdoğan clinches victory in Turkish constitutional referendum", *The Guardian*, 16 April 2017, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/16/erdogan-claims-victory-in-turkish-constitutional-referendum>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

¹¹ ***, "As it happened: Erdoğan re-elected president, 'People's Alliance' wins majority at parliament", *Daily News*, 24 June 2018, URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-election-live-updates-vote-counting-starts-as-polls-close-across-turkey-133726>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

had lost in Istanbul in favor of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), in June 2019, fact that sparked protests in Turkey and drew criticism of European states.

The manner in which these political events unfold shows that the internal struggle for power is fierce in Turkey. Moreover, following the coup attempt of July 15, 2016, for a period of two years, the state of national emergency was instituted, the end of 2018 finding Turkey "in a persisting climate of media censorship and repression of enemies and government critics, with many journalists, as well as parliamentarians and the candidate for the presidency from the pro-Kurdish opposition in prison"¹². Erdoğan's policy has continued to be authoritarian. In fact, some specialists in international relations, following the latest internal events, consider Erdoğan's leadership as having four main dimensions¹³: electoral authoritarianism as a way of conducting elections; neo-patrimonialism as an economic system; populism as a political strategy and Islamism as a political ideology. Others see the new national identity built by Erdoğan as using four main tools¹⁴: abandoning Kemalist non-interventionism in foreign policy; deconstruction of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's image; Islamization of concepts of secular leadership and emulation of selected aspects of Kemalism. The *EU Observer* presents "the idea that Turkey could join in one day the EU has evaporated, no matter how much Erdoğan helps Europe to control refugee flows"¹⁵.

To clarify, the focus of the analysis below will be the evolution of the relationship of Turkey with some representatives of Western belonging

¹² ***, *World Report 2019*, Human Rights Watch, US, 2019, p. 588.

¹³ Ihsan Yilmaz, Alfred Deakin, "The AKP after 15 years: emergence of Erdoganism in Turkey", *Research Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation*, Deakin University, Burwood, Australia, URL: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2018.1447371>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

¹⁴ Kumru F. Toktamış, Isabel David, "Introduction: Democratization Betrayed — Erdoğan's New Turkey", *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Mediterranean Affairs, 17 September 2018, p. 8.

¹⁵ Selcuk Gultasli, Andrew Rettman, "Leaked document sheds light on Turkey's 'controlled coup'", *EU Observer*, Brussels, 11 March 2019, URL: <https://euobserver.com/foreign/144366>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

(EU, NATO, US, some neighboring European states), but also Eastern (League of Arab States, the Russian Federation, some Arab states etc.), according to its decisions, in the field of foreign policy, in relation to the issues considered major for its external relations with the geopolitical actors in the two hemispheres, Eastern and Western.

2. Trends in Turkey's relationships

Since its establishment, the Republic of Turkey has sought to reach contemporary civilization landmarks, becoming an active member, when it had the possibility, of the various international organizations, especially the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, set up to address various issues. However, cooperation is a constant assertion aim of Turkey, whether it is headed to the East or the West, and this is also demonstrated by the 246 diplomatic and consular missions¹⁶, which ranks it as the fifth largest diplomatic network in the world.

2.1. Relation with the EU

In 1959, Turkey requested economic affiliation with the European Community, in this context, *the Agreement establishing an association between the European Economic Community and Turkey* was signed, which was then intended to be a provisional formula "until the conditions fulfilled by Turkey allowed its accession"¹⁷. Later, Turkey became the candidate country for EU accession at the Helsinki Summit in 1999. Important steps have been taken towards obtaining the EU member state statute, so that on December 17, 2004, at the Brussels Summit, it was decided to start the accession negotiations with Turkey.

Meanwhile, Turkey has participated in

¹⁶ ***, *Turkey's Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/synopsis-of-the-turkish-foreign-policy.en.mfa>, accessed on 15.12.2019.

¹⁷ ***, "History of Turkey- EU Relations", *Directorate of EU Affairs*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, 23.07.2019, URL: https://www.ab.gov.tr/brief-history_111_en.html, accessed on 08.12.2019.



missions and operations¹⁸ and has been involved in solving European problems. One such moment was in 2015, when the human tragedy in Syria, following the protracted conflict, resulted in a refugee crisis for the EU. At that time, Turkey crucially intervened by offering itself to host, on its territory, the Syrian refugees on their way to the migration routes to Europe. Thus, a joint EU-Turkey action plan was agreed in October 2015, and on March 18, 2016, the European Council and Turkey reached an agreement to stop the flow of irregular migration through Turkey to Europe. By this agreement, Turkey committed to host a large share of Syrian refugees and to take measures for preventing the opening of new immigration routes to the EU, and the EU committed to allocate 6 billion euros, by the end of 2018, to be used for building facilities for refugees received by Turkey. Moreover, following the start of refugee accommodation by Turkey, a series of meetings of Turkey-EU officials took place in 2015-2016, after which accession negotiations were revitalized by accelerating dialogue on visa liberalization for Turkish citizens and on customs services modernization. On this occasion, Turkey gained the fact that Chapter 17 “Economic and Monetary Policy” and Chapter 33 “Financial and budgetary provisions” were opened for negotiation, and the Member States obtained the fact that the flow of immigrants to the EU was reduced.

Although, repeatedly, the Turkish administration closed the Turkish-Syrian border, in order to limit the massive flow of refugees, it was reached that at the end of December 2019, Turkey registered, on its territory, 3,691,333 Syrian citizens¹⁹, respectively the largest number of refugees in the territory of a single state in the world. Thus, the pressure of the surplus of

population exerted on the Turkish society is remarkable, presenting itself as an economic, social, political and demographic problem. Moreover, the long-term integration of Syrians is being discussed at the moment, although it was initially hoped that the vast majority of refugees will return to their country of origin²⁰. This is all the more difficult to do since the Syrians in Turkey do not have official refugee status but are temporarily protected persons²¹. An additional concern is the phenomenon of anti-Syrian racism that has arisen among the Turkish population, who feels their security threatened from several points of view (physical security – acts of violence of newcomers, social security – increased competition for existing workplaces, economic security – diminished incomes due to the fact that immigrants work on lower wages, political security – Syrians who will gain Turkish citizenship have the opportunity to change the fate of elections etc.).

As a result of these social pressures, some friction has emerged between the EU and Turkey, the latter threatening to terminate the bilateral agreement on migration, blaming the EU for late payments of stipulated amounts of money²², for delaying visa liberalization for Turkish citizens and, more recently, for the lack of involvement in the creation of so-called “safe zones”²³ in Syria, for Turkey to return some of the Syrian refugees there.

Turkey has become increasingly involved in Syria, in addition to participating with Russia

¹⁸ A.N.: Turkey participated in operations as “Concordia”, “Proxima”, EUFOR ALTHEA, and EUPM EULEX. See largely: ***, *IV. Turkey’s International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy-_esdi_p_.en.mfa, accessed on 11.12.2019.

¹⁹ ***, *Regional Strategic Overview 2020 – 2021*, Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan (3RP), 2019, p. 22, URL: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/73116>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

²⁰ Alan Makovsky, *Turkey’s Refugee Dilemma*, Center for American Progress, 13 March 2019, URL: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2019/03/13/467183/turkeys-refugee-dilemma/>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

²¹ ***, *Content of temporary protection. Turkey*, Asylum Information Database, URL: <https://www.asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkey/content-temporary-protection>, accessed on 14.12.2019.

²² A.N.: See the latest situation of refugee financing in Turkey. Details at: ***, *EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey List of projects committed/decided, contracted, disbursed*, 19.12.2019, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/facility_table.pdf, accessed on 02.12.2019.

²³ Joshua Nevett, “Turkey-Syria offensive: What are ‘safe zones’ and do they work?”, *BBC News*, 2 November 2019, URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50101688>, accessed on 04.12.2019.



and Iran in the peace talks in Astana since 2017²⁴, in January 2018, a military offensive was carried out in Afrin district of the northwestern Syria, under the control of the Kurdish-majority Autonomous Administration and, in October 2019, in northeastern Syria, following the withdrawal of US troops, where the US supported Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Subsequently, a number of objections were raised by humanitarian organizations regarding the numerous human rights violations by Turkish troops during the occupation and these offenses. Later, in December 2019, the Turkish state began transferring Syrian refugees across the border to northeastern Syria, in not-quite-safe areas, the Turkish president specifying that he wants to return about 3 million Syrians living in Turkey, in the former territory controlled by the kurds²⁵. The EU neither endorses Erdogan's authoritarian policy nor agrees with Turkey's military interventions in Syria.

The effects of President Erdogan's political decisions, taken in the context of the emergency situation in Turkey, prolonged by certain non-democratic practices, determined that in the context of the 54th EU-Turkey Association Council in Brussels, March 15, 2019, when analyzing the state of EU-Turkey bilateral relations, in the press statement that followed the event, it was presented that "the accession negotiations are blocked"²⁶. Subsequently, in

the Report of the European Commission for the year 2019, regarding the evolution of Turkey in meeting the accession criteria, it is specified that Turkey remains a key partner for the European Union²⁷, although the accession process has not yet been finalized, and of the 35²⁸ initial chapters of negotiation "16 are open, and one is temporarily blocked"²⁹. Among the problems of the Turkish state, identified as unresolved in the negotiation talks, are the non-democratic legislative framework in force that limits certain rights and freedoms, such as the laws that allowed the dismissal of a large number of civil servants and the prolongation of detention (for example, for those convicted for the involvement in the coup in July 2016), restricting the freedom of movement and the freedom to organize and conduct public meetings, limiting the freedom of expression, including in the mass-media, or extending the powers of the police and legal bodies of investigations and prosecutions. Moreover, this general factual situation is summarized on the official website of the European Commission in the form of "Turkey is an essential strategic partner of the EU on issues such as migration, security, combating terrorism and the economy, but has deficiencies in the fields of democracy, state of law and fundamental human rights"³⁰. On this background, the many papers analyzing whether Turkey falls within the profile of the European state with real chances of EU integration are a matter for discussion, but this is another topic to be addressed.

²⁴ A.N.: The peace process in Astana, launched in January 2017 by Russia and Iran, allies of the Damascus regime, and by Turkey supporting the rebels, aims to end the Syrian conflict. So far, 13 rounds of discussions have taken place. See more: ***, "Astana talks achieve mixed results although crucial issues broached", *The Arab Weekly*, 03.08.2019, URL: <https://www.france24.com/en/20180905-syria-astana-peace-process>, accessed on 02.12.2019.

²⁵ Lara Seligman, "Turkey Begins Resettling Refugees in Northeastern Syria", *Foreign Policy*, 9 December 2019, URL: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/09/turkey-resettling-refugees-northeastern-syria/>, accessed on 22.12.2019.

²⁶ ***, *Press statement following the 54th meeting of the Association Council between the European Union and Turkey*, Brussels, European Council, 15 March 2019, URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/03/15/press-statement-following-the-54th-meeting-of-the-association-council-between-the-european-union-and-turkey-brussels-15-march-2019>, accessed on 10.12.2019.

²⁷ ***, *Commission Staff Working Document, Turkey 2019 Report Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions 2019 Communication on EU Enlargement Policy*, European Commission, Brussels, 29.05.2019, p. 3, URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-turkey-report.pdf>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

²⁸ ***, *Negotiating Framework*, Luxembourg, 3 October 2005, Annex, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/turkey/st20002_05_tr_framedoc_en.pdf, accessed on 12.12.2019.

²⁹ ***, "History of Turkey- EU Relations", *doc. cit.*

³⁰ ***, "Turkey", *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations*, European Commission, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/turkey_en, accessed on 12.12.2019.



2.2. Relations with NATO and some of its Member States

Turkey has played an active role in NATO since its accession in 1952. In fact, Turkey's contribution to NATO was evident, based on its early role in the alliance given by the principle of reciprocity: Turkey played an important role in defending the West by offering its facilities, while the West provided Turkey with an element of deterrence against the Soviet attack, as well as economic assistance. Nowadays, Turkey's relations with its allies continue to operate on a reciprocal basis, but are correlated with changes in security concerns. "The only difference from the last few years is that the Soviet threat has sharply diminished, and Ankara has assumed an important role in the allied coalition against Iraq, the strategic significance of Turkey being re-evaluated, mainly in the context of the Middle East"³¹. Moreover, the Turkish army is among the main financial contributors (89.8 million euros in 2018³²), but also operational contributor to the Alliance's missions. It cannot be neglected that Turkey: is a framework-nation in Afghanistan's *Resolute Support* Mission; contributes to the Iraq mission; participates in KFOR; provides permanent naval assistance to NATO missions in the Aegean Sea; provides air-to-air supply to AWACS NATO aircraft operating in coordination with the Global Coalition against the *Islamic State* terrorist organization; hosts the AN/TPY-2 radar in Eastern Malatya province. Also, one cannot ignore the facilities that Turkey hosts for the Alliance: LANDCOM – land command of the Alliance in Izmir; NATO Rapid Deployable Corps under the command of Turkey (one of the nine headquarters of NATO's land forces with high level of combat readiness³³; the two US military bases in the Turkish territory – Incirlik and Kurecik –, used to send troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, and later to Syria, in the context

³¹ Bruce R. Kuniholm, "Turkey and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1991, URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1991-03-01/turkey-and-west>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

³² Ali Murat Alhas, *Turkey: A major NATO contributor*, Anadolu Agency, 12.02.2019, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-a-major-nato-contributor/1390730>, accessed on 14.12.2019.

³³ *Idem*.

of counter-terrorism actions, which are crucial locations for the US missions in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Turkey's relationship with NATO has deteriorated in recent years, and especially in the second half of 2019, amid three major developments:

a) The consequences of the *Arab Spring*, in particular, the Turkish military incursions into the Kurdish-controlled territory in northeastern Syria under the pretext of eliminating the latest ISIL terrorist establishments in the region, which has worsened the relations with the US that cooperated with Syrian Kurds against the Islamic State, but also with other allies;

b) The failed coup attempt in Turkey and the undemocratic political measures, in violation of fundamental human rights and international law, taken subsequently by Erdogan, which have deteriorated the bilateral relations of NATO member states with the Turkish state;

c) The closeness of Turkey's military and economic relations with Russia through the construction of the TurkStream³⁴ gas pipeline and the acquisition of the Russian S-400 air defense system elements.

Also, Turkey believes that NATO does not fully recognize or address its legitimate security concerns, in particular those related to migration and terrorism³⁵. Its response reactions were to force the Alliance's framework to achieve Turkey's own interests. For example, recently, Ankara has postponed the approval of a renewed NATO defense plan for the Baltic States and Poland, under the condition of NATO's designation of Kurdish fighters as terrorists³⁶. This type of action

³⁴ A.N.: the gas supply through TurkStream is due to start in January 2020. For details, please see: ***, "TurkStream", *Gazprom*, URL: <https://www.gazprom.com/projects/turkstream/>, accessed on 29.12.2019.

³⁵ Rachel Ellechuus, *Turkey and NATO: A Relationship worth Saving*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2 December 2019, URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/turkey-and-nato-relationship-worth-saving>, accessed on 29.12.2019.

³⁶ A.N.: Ankara views Kurdish population protection units (YPGs) as an extension of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has carried out an insurgency against Turkey for 35 years and is designated a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US and the EU. To be seen: Samuel Stolton, "Turkey's relationship with NATO tested over Syria operation", *Al Jazeera*, 14 octombrie 2019, URL: <https://>



threatens the cohesion of the Alliance. However, in the Declaration issued following the NATO Summit in London on December 3-4, 2019, on the occasion of celebrating 70 years of Alliance and 30 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain, no reference was made to this state of affairs, the topic focusing on the Russian threat, terrorism and China's emergency.

2.3. Turkey – US relations

In the 1990s, the US officials and analysts believed that Turkey was uniquely positioned to guide the economic development and democratization of newly independent Central Asian states³⁷. Moreover, “in the early part of the AKP era, Turkey's good offices with Arabs and Israelis led American officials to believe it could be a facilitator of regional peace”³⁸. But the partnership with Turkey was not easy because of the differences between the two in terms of divergent interests, policies and perspectives expressed in actions such as the acquisition of the Russian air defense system S-400, context in which the US president had stopped the supply towards Turkey of F-35 fighter jets. The American motivation was that this could allow Russia to find out about their operational methods, despite Turkey's statement that “it can keep the Russian system technically separate from NATO systems and limit its radar area”³⁹. As feedback, in December 2019, Turkey threatened to close the two military bases used by the American forces⁴⁰ if the US imposes

sanctions on Ankara. The US continued the sanctioning of Turkey by including in the *Law on the authorization of national defense for fiscal year 2020* a paragraph stipulating “companies involved in the TurkStream pipeline project will be sanctioned, and the US arms embargo on the Republic of Cyprus, which is in conflict with Turkey from 1974 will be lifted”⁴¹. Regarding the US, there are a number of possible punitive measures: preventing Turkey from accessing funds from international financial institutions; banning weapons and ammunition used during the Turkish military operation in northern Syria; banning third countries from selling weapons to Turkey⁴². So, the facts are in continuous dynamic and we will see what will be in 2020.

2.4. Turkey – Russian Federation relationship

In the last years, the cooperation between the two states has been revitalized by restoring the reactivated bilateral dialogue in 2016⁴³, in the context of the support expressed by the Russian Federation for the Turkish president at the time of the coup attempt. In 2017, with the establishment of the Astana mechanism in order to pacify Syria, Turkey and Russia became even closer. Later, including the incursions into Syria in 2018 and 2019, Turkey had the approval of the Russian Federation and Iran to act.

History has shown that Turkey and Russia had only short-term alliances, but are not becoming long-term partners, as might one see currently the case. The reason of this apparent alliance is twofold, being well identified in an analysis by Adam McConnel⁴⁴: Turkey's exposure to two fronts of Russia, the traditional maritime

www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/turkey-relationship-nato-tested-syria-operation-191013190857028.html; ***, “Nauseda: Turkey approves defense plan but technical hurdles still possible”, *EN Delfi*, 12 decembrie 2019. URL: <https://en.delfi.lt/politics/nauseda-turkey-approves-defense-plan-but-technical-hurdles-still-possible.d?id=83033493>, accessed on 13.12.2019.

³⁷ Steven A. Cook, *Neither Friend nor Foe. The Future of U.S.-Turkey Relations*, Council Report No. 82, Council on Foreign Relations, November 2018, p. 7.

³⁸ *Idem*.

³⁹ Patrick Wintour, “Turkey denies blackmailing NATO over Baltics defence plan”, *The Guardian*, 3 December 2019, URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/02/turkey-denies-blackmailing-nato-over-baltics-defence-plan>, accessed on 03.12.2019.

⁴⁰ ***, “Turkey's Erdogan threatens to close strategic bases to US military”, *Deutsche Welle*, 15.12.2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-erdogan-threatens-to>

close-strategic-bases-to-us-military/a-51686229, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁴¹ ***, *S. 1790: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020*, US, p. 468.

⁴² ***, “US Senate readies its second shot at sanctions on Turkey”, *Deutsche Welle*, 19.12.2019, URL: <https://www.dw.com/en/us-senate-readies-its-second-shot-at-sanctions-on-turkey/a-51742836>, accessed on 23.12.2019.

⁴³ ***, *Relations between Turkey and the Russian Federation*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkey-and-the-russian-federation.en.mfa>, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁴⁴ Adam McConnel, “ANALYSIS – Turkey and Russia: Back to where we left off 100 years ago”, *Anadolgu Agency*, 01.11.2019, URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/>



border on the Black Sea and that of Syria, with Russia taking over here and the fact that Turkey has a declared democratic system (with the implied contextual reservations), which makes it with a rival of the non-democratic systems that surround it, such as the regimes in Saudi Arabia or Egypt that obviously does not enjoy its emergence. To these aspects is added Russia military supremacy of.

2.5. Turkey's relations with European neighbors and other Middle Eastern states

Turkey's future is inevitably linked to that of the Middle East because it shares strong historical and cultural roots with neighboring states. Moreover, this reality was optimally noticed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which, with its accession to power in 2002, introduced new policies in Turkey, such as the one specific to foreign policy focused on not having problems with neighbors (*zero problems*)⁴⁵, emanating from the reflection "Peace at home, peace in the world"⁴⁶ by Kemal Atatürk.

The implementation of this policy proved to be possible only theoretically, because the elimination of old conflicts with some of its neighbors did not materialize. For example, with Greece there are problems with the delimitation of the maritime border in the Eastern Mediterranean so, when, on November 27, 2019, Turkey signed an exclusive economic zone agreement with the internationally recognized Libyan government of the National Agreement (GNA), without consulting the other riparian states (including Greece, the island of Crete being positioned in the middle of the Mediterranean just within the area claimed by agreement), the latter sent warships to its Greek island⁴⁷. Moreover, the Turkish-Greek

relations are strained for several reasons (Cyprus issue, Greece's accusation of protecting some members of Fetullah Gullen's organization, the rights of Turkish Muslim minorities in Greece and Orthodox Christians in Turkey etc. Thus, the Euro-Atlantic community is affected by another dispute inside it, besides those between US-Turkey, France-US, Germany-France etc.

Moreover, at present, of the 8 neighboring states, Ankara has to face the challenges arising from the fragile neighborhood with Syria, Iraq and Iran, a situation that no other EU or NATO member state is facing. In addition, some threatening events⁴⁸ have prompted Turkey to change its approach to its neighbors.

The Kurdish issue is considered a major aspect of its policy, both internal and external. In this context, in an attempt to limit and slow down Kurdish secessionist tendencies, in 2018, Turkey increased its operations in northern Iraq against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and involved in the conflict with its Syrian neighbor. These political-military actions in the territories of its neighbors, although seek to solve stringent problems of regional security, arouse dissatisfaction with other Middle Eastern states. For example, the Turkish military incursions into the territory of its Syrian neighbor from 2018 and 2019 have transformed the dynamics of the conflict, resulting in new regional alignments, meaning that the Gulf states – United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait -, but also Egypt and Israel opposed to Turkey's initiative. Moreover, the Arab League in the emergency gathering in October 12, 2019, through the voice of its Secretary General, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, called the Turkish military operation to be "an invasion of the territory of an Arab state and an aggression against its sovereignty"⁴⁹.

analysis/analysis-turkey-and-russia-back-to-where-we-left-off-100-years-ago/1632709, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁴⁵ ***, "Turkish attack in Syria condemned as 'invasion of an Arab state's land'", *Arab News*, 13 October 2019, URL: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1567876/middle-east>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

⁴⁶ ***, *Turkish Foreign Policy during Ataturk's Era*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-foreign-policy-during-ataturks-era.en.mfa>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

⁴⁷ John Psaropoulos "Greece and Turkey closer to armed conflict, say experts", *Al Jazeera*, 6 December 2019, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/greece-turkey->

closer-armed-conflict-experts-191205214345751.html, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁴⁸ A.N.: for example, in 2005, parts of a Scud-D ballistic missile manufactured in North Korea and launched by the Syrian Arab Army fell in the Turkish state territory, after its explosion.

⁴⁹ ***, "Turkey's Syria offensive an 'invasion': Arab League secretary general", *Reuters*, 12 October 2019, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-arableague-turkey-syria/turkeys-syria-offensive-an-invasion-arab->



Moreover, the decision taken at the end of December 2019 by the Erdoğan leadership to send Turkish military troops to Libya for a year “to strengthen the government of Tripoli and allow the political process to return”⁵⁰, although at the request of the UN-recognized government – GNA, is considered by most international community to be a controversial one, in the context of Turkey supporting GNA alongside Qatar (another problematic actor in the Middle East), while Russia, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and France, support Khalifa Haftar, leader of the Libyan National Army (LNA)⁵¹. Therefore, the involvement of Turkey alienates it from the Arab countries even more, mainly from those already mentioned, from Russia which they will be in opposition with in this field of operation, but also from NATO, since in 2011, when France proposed to intervene in Libya for the creation of an air denial area, Turkey opposed, saying that “NATO or any other country military intervention in Libya would be totally counterproductive”⁵². Therefore, the majority of Eastern and Western actors stand against Turkey’s involvement in the Libyan conflict.

Conclusions

In terms of territorial surface and its ubiquitous geopolitical role of East-West link, the Turkish state is an important actor for both the Middle East and the Eurasian framework as a whole. But its intercontinental settlement at the intersection of Europe, Asia and Africa, as well as its maritime posture, represent for Turkey, in addition to the mentioned geopolitical opportunities, a number of difficulties generated by the continuous disjunct polarization of the

league-secretary-general-idUSKBN1WR0C9, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁵⁰ ***, “Erdoğan announces plan to send troops to Libya”, *Al Jazeera*, 26 December 2019, URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/12/erdogan-announces-plan-send-troops-libya-191226090214331.html>, accessed on 29.12.2019.

⁵¹ *Idem*.

⁵² Ayla Jean Yackley, “Turkey opposes any NATO operation in Libya”, *Reuters*, 14 March 2011, URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-turkey-idUSTRE72D49D20110314>, accessed on 12.12.2019.

states bordering Turkey to the East or West, the regional hegemony between the US and the Russian Federation, the struggle to access the energy resources, the failed states that surrounds it, the struggle to control the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, the Iranian ambitions in Syria and Iraq, and the Russian interests in the Caucasus.

Turkey’s ambition for the role of leader in the region, regardless of the political formula adopted – that of an actor who pursues the implementation of a “zero problems”⁵³ neighborhood policy or through the implementation of the “Turkish model”⁵⁴ complicates its decisions abroad, their results presenting sometimes as an oscillating partner, although the actions themselves are aimed at internal and regional stability. Moreover, based on this balancing perceived by the Western international community, there is currently a debate about the appearance of a change of axes in the Turkish foreign policy. The aggravated deterioration of the Turkish state’s relations with its traditional NATO allies against divergent interests or opinions and its strategic closeness in recent years to Russia and Iran, as a result of common involvement in the Syrian issue, were elements that gave impetus to statements regarding the emergence in the Turkish foreign policy of a Eurasian orientation.

After President Erdoğan came to power, the Turkish foreign policy was focused on reducing dependence on the West, maintaining a balance of power, and finding possible alliances in the East. In order to gain regional supremacy, Turkey must develop a system of political relations and alliances that will give it an optimal level of independence and power, while maintaining the fragile balance of power between West and East.

⁵³ ***, *Policy of Zero Problems with our Neighbors*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, URL: <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/policy-of-zero-problems-with-our-neighbors.en.mfa>, accessed on 08.12.2019.

⁵⁴ Hugh Pope, *The ‘Turkish Model’ and the Middle East*, International Crisis Group, 13 May 2011, URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/turkish-model-and-middle-east>, accessed on 12.12.2019.



At the end of the second half of 2019, conducting a brief geopolitical analysis, it is noted that there are some major foreign policy issues that set the tone of Turkey's relationship with the West and the East as a whole, but also with the important political-economic and military organizations and each state actor: the dilemma of the Kurdish minority with the assaults on the Kurds in Syria; immigrants from MENA and hosted in Turkey following the agreement with the EU used as a negotiating coin to obtain benefits from Western organizations; the approach to the Russian Federation through Turkey's acquisition of Russian armament incompatible with NATO systems, which may constitute a vulnerability for the Alliance; announcing the intention of military involvement in the Libyan theatre of operations.

All presented aspects of Erdoğanist internal politics, in conjunction with some foreign policy decisions of intervention in the politics of other states (for example: Syria, Libya), have determined that Turkey be seen as an unpredictable ally for both NATO, as a whole, as well as for the US, France, Germany or Romania (Alliance's states). Also, the current state of Turkey's relations with the EU completes an image of the anti-Western attitude. However, even in this context, it is certain that under NATO legislation there is no provision that neither of its members be removed from the organization. Moreover, before other NATO member states consider Turkey unworthy of its current membership, they should consider its unique geography beneficial to the Alliance's frontier defense, its military capabilities (in particular, air bases and depots hosting American nuclear weapons), its active involvement in the problems and missions of the alliance, its strategic presence in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, its leverage role in relation to the Muslim countries, but also the push, by the Western allies themselves, to a potential rupture from Turkey, in conjunction with a stronger reorientation to eastern allies, including Russia or Iran.

The current status of Turkey's relations will continue to be a source of uncertainty, if an acceptable and functional common framework with the West cannot be developed. In order to achieve a resurgence of mutual trust, on the one hand, Turkey should give up unprovoked incursions into the territories of other states, renounce diplomatic pressures on other states as a result of international actions⁵⁵ targeting the Fetullah Gullen movement's representatives and focus on the democratization of the Turkish state to become the desired model of the modern Islamic state. On the other hand, the European and Euro-Atlantic community needs to be more prompt in answering Turkey's requests for support in terms of Syrian refugees, implementing safe areas to set conditions for returning Syrian citizens to their country, strengthening security on NATO's southern flank, and greater EU openness in dealing with Turkey.

⁵⁵ A.N.: in an attempt to seek revenge, it severely damaged its diplomatic relations with other states – with the US mainly (Gulen resides in the US and Turkey has repeatedly requested his extradition), but also with Kyrgyzstan (extradition request of 13 individuals living in this country), with Greece (the case of Turkish officers who requested political asylum in Greece and are still hunted by Turks), or even with Romania (see the case of the teacher requested for extradition by Turks). For details, please see: ***, "Arrest warrants out for 150 FETÖ suspects", *Daily News*, 19 November 2019. URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/arrest-warrants-out-for-133-feto-suspects-148849>; Hande Fırat, "Turkey requests immediate extradition of key FETÖ suspects from Kyrgyzstan", *Daily News*, 5 September 2018, URL: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-requests-immediate-extradition-of-key-feto-suspects-from-kyrgyzstan-136503>; Barin Kayaoglu, "Will Turkish-Greek tensions escalate over Aegean islands, fugitive officers?", *Al-Monitor*, 26 January 2017, URL: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/fa/originals/2017/01/turkey-greece-tensions-gulenist-extradition-aegean.html>; Marcel Gascón Barberá, "Romanian Judge Blocks Extradition of Second Arrested 'Gulenist'", *Balkan Insight*, 24 December 2019, URL: <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/12/24/romanian-judge-blocks-extradition-of-second-arrested-gulenist/> accessed on 29.12.2019.



NORTH KOREA: FRAIL DIPLOMACY AND UNCERTAIN FUTURE

*Mihai ZODIAN, Ph.D.**

Pyongyang's authorities restrained themselves from testing new nuclear weapons or International Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) in the second half of 2019, after the start of a détente with US. Even so, the negotiations between the two parties did not lead to concrete achievements, and the communist regime continued some military activities. In this paper, the main events will be reviewed, from a rational deterrence theoretical perspective.

The North Korean nuclear issue matters for a few reasons. It illustrates many of the strategic studies' research interests, such as protracted or frozen conflicts; the sources of nuclear proliferation and how to stop this process, or at least, how to control it; globalization or the Great Power politics' consequences. From a pragmatic point of view, it is connected with subjects such as the efficiency of negotiations and sanctions; a renewed attention which the nuclear agenda has received lately (proliferation, arms control, Middle East crisis); the relationships between US, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea etc. For Romania, there is also a direct interest, the state being a member both of NATO and of NPT¹.

The approach used in this paper is a simple version of the rational deterrence theory, which posits states as self-interested actors, with hierarchical preferences/goals, according to an efficiency criterion². From this perspective, there are not many stimuli which may move

¹ NPT = Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

² Stephen L. Quackenbush, Frank C. Zagare, "Modern Deterrence Theory: Research Trends, Policy Debates,

the Pyongyang' authorities toward complete and full nuclear disarmament, or to renounce to its development, but their options can still be influenced³. The main prediction is that, lacking major changes in negotiation positions or power relationships, the main disagreements on this issue will continue.

A failed summit at Hanoi, in February, opened the events of 2019, but a series of diplomatic efforts led to a second high-level meeting, on the armistice line between the two Korean states⁴. Even if it was considered historical, like the meeting from Singapore, and raised similar hopes, after a few taken steps, the deadlock reappeared, while a deadline requested by Pyongyang, until the end of the year, had expired. In general, sequences of negotiations and military activities happened, resumed in Table 1⁵.

For example, the deadline was about to get some firm promises from the US related to sanctions and similar topics, while a North Korean official invoked a "Christmas gift", in case it was ignored⁶. The US chief negotiator, Stephen Biegun rejected this, but not the general

and Methodological Controversies", *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2008.

³ Vipin Narang, "Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation. How States Pursue the Bomb", *International Security*, winter 2016.

⁴ CFR: "North Korean Nuclear Negotiations, 1985-2019", <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/north-korean-nuclear-negotiations>, accessed on 10 January, 2020.

⁵ Leon V. Sigal, *op. cit.*

⁶ Khang Vu, "North Korea ambiguous New Year's message", *The Interpreter*, accessed on 8 January 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/north-korea->

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Table 1: Summary of main events

July–August 2019	North Korea tests small range missiles. Small size US-South Korea military exercises. ⁷
10 September 2019	US National Security Adviser, John Bolton fired/resigned. ⁸
2 October 2019	North Korea tests a sea-launched missile. ⁹
5 October 2019	Failed negotiations at Stockholm ¹⁰
8, 13 December 2019	North Korea tests missile-related technology, but not a missile as such. ¹¹
December 2019	Intense diplomacy.
28–31 December 2019	Leadership of North Korea Workers Party meeting; Kim Jong Un announces a tougher line. ¹²

practice of discussion, while China and s-ambiguous-new-year-message, accessed on 9 January 2020.

⁷Choe Sang-Hun, “North Korea Says It Tested New Type of Missile, Further Enhancing Its Arsenal”, New York Times, 11 August 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/11/world/asia/north-korea-missile-test.html> (accessed on 10 January, 2020).

⁸ Ed Pilkington, Julian Borger, “Donald Trump ousts top adviser John Bolton: ‘I disagreed strongly with him’”, The Guardian, accessed on 10 September 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/sep/10/trump-fires-john-bolton-national-security-adviser> accessed on 10 January, 2020; Philip Ewing, “Trump Fires John Bolton In Final Break After Months of Internal Policy Division”, accessed on 10 September 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/10/724363700/trump-fires-john-bolton-in-final-break-after-months-of-policy-divisions>, accessed on 11 January, 2020.

⁹ Michael Elleman, “North Korea’s New Pukguksong-3 Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile”, 38 North, 3 October 2019, <https://www.38north.org/2019/10/melleman100319/>, accessed on 11, January 2020.

¹⁰***, “US denies North Korean nuclear talks failed”, BBC News, 5 October 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-49947836>, accessed at 11 January, 2020; Johan Ahlander, Philip O’Connor, “North Korea breaks off nuclear talks with U.S. in Sweden”, Reuters, accessed on 5 October, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-usa-sweden/north-korea-breaks-off-nuclear-talks-with-u-s-in-sweden-idUSKCN1WK074>, accessed at 11 January, 2020.

¹¹ BBC: “North Korea conducts ‘crucial test’ – state media”, BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50792849>, accessed at 11 January, 2020.

¹² Khang Vu, “North Korea ambiguous New Year’s message”, The Interpreter, accessed at 8 January, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/north-korea-s-ambiguous-new-year-message>, accessed on 8 January,

Russia supported a relaxation of restrictive measures at UN (17 December)¹³. A surprise at that time, Kim Jong UN reacted with a more forceful, but still nuanced statement¹⁴.

Thus, during a Central Committee plenary meeting, the party leader announced a “by our means” type of policy, in which economy and science are supposed to be priorities, but he also announced that the future capability of “nuclear deterrence” will depend on the US attitude¹⁵. He warned that the communist regime must adapt to

2020; KCNA: “Report on 5th Plenary Meeting of the 7th C.C., WPK”, KCNA Watch, accessed on 1 January 2020, <https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1577829999-473709661/report-on-5th-plenary-meeting-of-7th-c-c-wpk/>, accessed on 20 January, 2020, Leon V. Sigal, “Premature Epitaphs for Nuclear Diplomacy With North Korea”, 38 North, accessed on 9 January, 2020, <https://www.38north.org/2020/01/lsgal200109/>, accessed on 10 January, 2020.

¹³ Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein, “North Korea, December 2019: Business as Usual, but Pyongyang is worse off”, FPRI, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2019/12/north-korea-december-2019-business-as-usual-but-pyongyang-is-worse-off/>, accessed at 12 January 2020; ***, “China calls of easing UN sanctions on North Korea”, CNA, accessed at 3 January 2020, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/business/china-calls-for-easing-un-sanctions-on-north-korea-12232322>, accessed January 2020.

¹⁴ Khang Vu, “North Korea ambiguous New Year’s message”.

¹⁵ KCNA: “Report on 5th Plenary Meeting of the 7th C.C., WPK”, KCNA Watch, 1 January 2020, <https://kcnawatch.org/newstream/1577829999-473709661/report-on-5th-plenary-meeting-of-7th-c-c-wpk/>, accessed at January 2020.



the perspective of living with the international sanctions for a long time, and announced a “new strategic weapon”¹⁶. More precisely, he manifested reserves towards the future of negotiations, even if he did not reject them¹⁷.

This announcement of policy is debatable, since we are speaking about an official translation of a seven hours report, during a closed meeting session, as Robert Carlin mentioned, thus with the official storyline for the outside world¹⁸. From the text revealed, it followed that we can expect either a new crisis, including new tests, or a new round of talks. For example, it is possible that Pyongyang will require the easing of sanctions or other type of concessions which US representatives hesitated to accept.

It is easy to see that the second half of 2019 was marked by an oscillation between negotiation and military activities, during which was held the moratorium on nuclear tests and ICBM launches.

There were not important concrete successes, because the older issue of sanctions versus denuclearization was proven difficult to handle¹⁹.

The Pyongyang regime tested different military technologies at least 10 times, often with many systems at the same time, but kept some degree of prudence²⁰.

As in previous years, the most probable anticipation is that the deadlock will continue, since the goals are divergent and the power relationships are persisting, as the rational deterrence theory suggested²¹. One cannot simply exclude small diplomatic progresses or new forms of rivalry. A radical change seems less probable, but there is a lot of incertitude, not the least because our information is incomplete.

The North Korean nuclear issue has many effects on International Relations. It weakens the non-proliferation norm and its associated policies, in a context where arms control and disarmament are put under increasing questioning, as it happened with the INF treaty²². Thus, for Romania, a NATO and NPT member, it will remain a subject of interest.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ Khang Vu, “North Korea ambiguous New Year’s message”.

¹⁸ Robert Carlin in 38north: “38 North Press Call Transcript: Kim Jong Un’s 2020 New Year’s Address: No, Kim Jong Un Is Not Taking a Wait and See Approach”, 2 January 2020, <https://www.38north.org/reports/2020/01/pressbriefing010220/>, accessed at 13 January 2020.

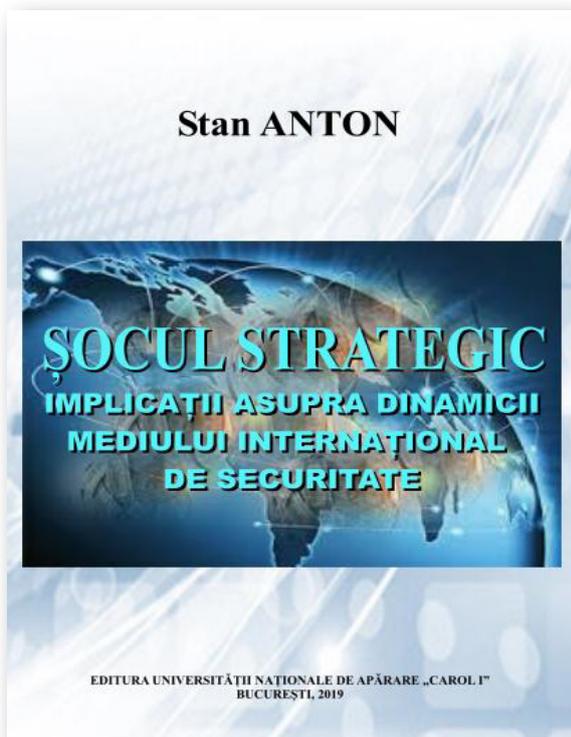
¹⁹ ACA: “Chronology of U.S.-North Korean Nuclear and Missile Diplomacy”, *Arms Control Association*, November 2019, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/dprkchron#2019>, accessed at 13 January 2020; Liang Tuang Nah, “What’s Behind North Korea’s Missile Testing”, *The Diplomat*, 4 December 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/12/whats-behind-north-koreas-missile-testing/>, accessed at 14 January 2020; BBC: “North Korea conducts ‘crucial test’ – state media”.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ Also see Robert Baker, “North Korea: A Problem Without a Solution”, *Stratfor*, 10 January 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/north-korea-problem-without-solution>, accessed at 15 January 2020.

²² ACA: “The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty at a Glance”, *Arms Control Association*, August 2019, <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>, accessed at 15 January 2020.

STRATEGIC SHOCK – IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DYNAMICS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT



It's beyond any doubt that the uncertainty, fluidity and volatility of the evolutions in the security environment have always been a constant part of the lexical field of security analysis. Events and phenomena such as the world economic and financial crisis, the “Arab spring”, the Syrian war, the illegal annexation of Crimean Peninsula and the bursting out of a separatist war in Eastern Ukraine, the European refugee crisis, the ascension of the extremist political parties in Europe, frequently with an anti-European discourse, illiberal democracy, Brexit and US losing its superpower status are just some of the landmarks which could be invoked for arguing that the international system goes through a period of deep transformation concerning not

only the main security trends, but also the manner in which we relate to them.

In this context in which the effort to decrease uncertainty is a major challenge, not only from the perspective of the difficulty, complexity and of the multiple factors which have to be considered, but also from the one of its necessity for maintaining stability and balance at strategic level, “Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House printed the book *Strategic Shock – Implications for the International Security Environment* (2019). The author, Colonel (ret) Stan Anton, Ph.D., held the position of Director of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies between 2013-2017, having a solid training in the field of security studies and military strategy, as well as a remarkable working experience in international environments, being the academic coordinator of the NATO DEEP Afghanistan Program from 2014 to present.

Through its content, the book highlights the strategic level challenges of the contemporary world, analysing through a scientific apparatus specific to military science, security studies and strategic theory, a series of factors and variables that characterize the current security environment, achieving a conceptual clarification of terms such as strategic shock, strategic inflection or strategic surprise.

The book is built around “strategic shock” concept, developed within the coordination of the Office of US Secretary of Defence (OSD) within the project “Strategic Trends and Shocks” (2007). The phrase refers to an event “interrupting the evolution of a trend, a discontinuity which either rapidly accelerates



the rhythm, or modifies in a significant manner its trajectory and, in this sense, undermines the hypotheses laying at the basis of the current policies”¹.

The author advocates for turning this concept to advantage in the analysis of security environment and especially in the current international security context, arguing that “thinking in conventional terms on security and defence will not result in a proper, timely and efficient response to the new threats, risks and vulnerabilities emerging from the dynamic of events characterizing this beginning of century”².

Therefore, the purpose of this book is to examine the influence of strategic shocks on security and defence institutions, as well as major events that may have such effects, as well as to encourage research into these issues. According to the author, the strategic shocks, by the strategic impact and the presumptive potential for violence, by the multidisciplinary character, both military and non-military, will require increased attention from the political-military decision-makers and a firm use of the military and civilian capabilities at the disposal of a state in the response and reaction to the production of those conditions that can induce such an effect.

Thus, after the introductory chapter in which the author motivates the necessity of such a study, the 120 pages volume opens with a chapter addressing, first of all, the main trends in the dynamic of international security environment and, secondly, the exploration of the future evolutions in this area. Under the title *Strategic operational environment of the future. Exploratory analysis*, S. Anton approaches the limits in the capacity to forestall a series of strategic shocks, the changes they determined, as well as the transformations which can be inferred in conflict typology, especially from the

perspective of military action. In this context, the author asserts that the conventional armed conflict and its ways of manifestation will remain anchored in the classical war paradigms only at tactical and operational level. At strategic level, however, conflict and military action are strongly influenced by the pressure of trends originating in the information space (influence operations, propaganda, cyber-strikes), which “replace the old paradigm of air strikes”³.

Based not only on scientific literature, but also on statistics, official documents and data, as well as information from mass-media, the chapter also includes a thorough analysis on the main trends of international security environment. The author approaches this question from geopolitical, social, economic and military perspective, resulting in an objective and rational analysis, focusing on recent strategic shocks and their effects, while acknowledging and identifying the aspects remaining constant. For instance, as far as NATO is concerned, S. Anton considers that, in the short term, it will remain the main pillar of Euro-Atlantic security, but that there is a probability for the Alliance to be engaged in politically sensitive missions or in missions of urgent nature⁴.

Regarding the EU, he argues that there is a scarce probability for this organization to develop genuine armed forces, although, most probably, the initiatives for military capabilities developments will continue, and the organization will keep a key role within European security affairs. Moreover, according to his saying, it is highly probable for “the topic of values, of democracy quality both beyond and within EU borders”⁵ to remain on the top of European leaders’ priorities. In the same line of thought, referring to conflict evolution in the medium and long-term, S. Anton says that “the nature of conflict will suffer deep transformations under the influence of various actors, among which there are notable the technological, social, environmental and cultural evolutions. Warfare and military action, as integral part of social

¹ *** Naval Postgraduate School – Transformation Chair, Forces Transformation Chairs Meeting: Visions of Transformations 2025 – Shocks and Trends, 21 February 2007, p. 3, apud Stan Anton, *Șocul Strategic – implicații pentru mediul internațional de securitate*, „Carol I” National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2019, p. 54.

² Stan Anton, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 21.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 34.



action will continue to represent a fight between wills, a subject of friction, thus falling under the classical sense of Clausewitz' trinity containing violence and the main actors, still under the subordination of politics and the objectives set by political leadership⁶.

If the first chapter offers an incursion in the events having marked or changed the dynamic of the security environment in the last ten years, the second one contains the theoretical foundation of the entire approach. Under the title *The conceptualization and correlation strategic shock – strategic surprise – point of strategic inflexion*, the author defines the three concepts and assess them in relation to the very recent history of the security environment. Beyond conceptual clarification, another strength of this chapter resides in the analysis of the process of strategic planning in relation to uncertainty and strategic shock. This question becomes even more relevant as “it doesn't matter how determined we are in being completely prepared for a certain situation; there are limitations of the abilities of the ones in charge with the elaboration of future strategies, being known axiomatically that the more certain the future, the more foreseeable and predictable it is, the easier it is to respond to operational challenges. The strategic level of manifestation of the military action is characterized by the omnipresence of uncertainty⁷. Thus, the relevance of the second chapter of *Strategic Shock – Implications for the International Security Environment* doesn't reside only in the contribution to the theoretical advancement of a range of concepts significant in the area of security studies, but also in the fact that it can be considered a warning on the necessity to continuously deepen the security analysis, a necessity coming from the wide variety and complexity of the factors that can trigger substantial effects on what we define as state of normality. There are multiple examples in this respect, which are descanted in the first chapter of the book and, beyond any doubt, the future shall not be unconcerned with such evolutions with little probability or unexpected, implying flexibility and capacity of rapid adaptation, no

matter to what system one may relate to.

Accurate analysis of the relationships between the strategic shock, the strategic surprise and the strategic inflection points is one of the elements of individualization of this work in the field of research of strategic theory. To this end, the author proposes a model of conceptual differentiation of the phenomena and processes presented, analysing different strategic indicators, which, together, may constitute for military leaders and planners, available analytical tools to help them in the broad process of analysis and strategic decision, systematically and permanently, to properly understand the causes and effects of conflicts, to cope with the dynamics accentuated by technological and geopolitical evolution.

The last chapter, *The typology of strategic shocks*, can be considered a synthesis of the theory of strategic shocks, a theoretical formula that can be easily used in the analysis of future strategic shocks. The author proposes a taxonomy of strategic shocks, based on the conditional links between the risk factors and their consequences at the strategic level, detailing also a list of the strategic shocks considered to be possible in the medium and long term.

The concluding chapter summarizes the possible security trends, while acknowledging the limits of our capacity to anticipate what will be the next strategic shock and the certainty that another strategic shock will undoubtedly happen⁸. In fact, the strategic shock theory itself refers to events that fall outside our forecasting capacity, with strategic shocks having “multiple cascade effects, leading to a change in the strategic context, a change in the behaviour and mode of action on the part of the actors⁹”.

Through a deep analysis, objectivity and scientific clearness, S. Anton succeeds, in the volume published in 2019, not only in making a highly topical assessment on recent security related events through the theoretical lenses of strategic shock, but also in constructing a warning sign regarding the multitude of unknown factors which can influence, change or

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 86-87.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 97.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 95.



disturb international actors' stability and security. When referring to an unpredictable event with major, unpredicted effects on the operational environment, any approach of strategic shock is actually a warning sign.

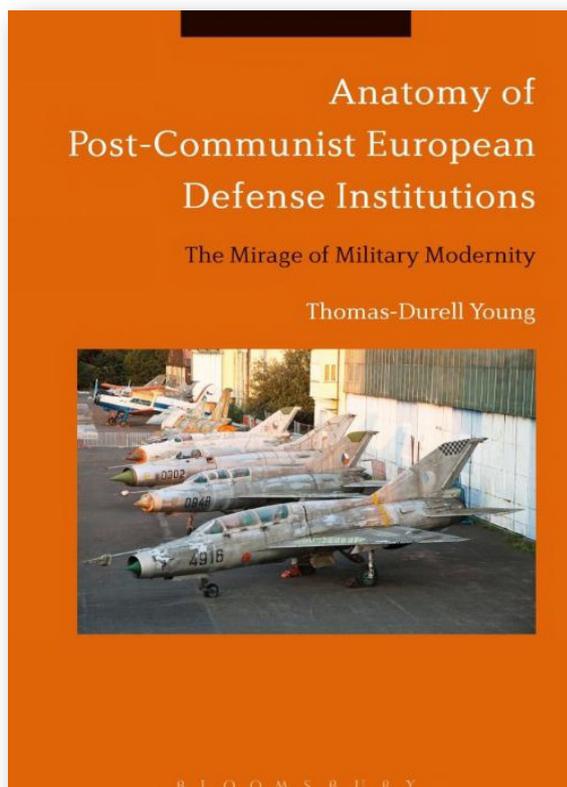
We appreciate that the book *Strategic Shock – Implications for the International Security Environment* is useful both to practitioners in the field of strategic art – leaders, planners and advisers, as well as to those who deepen military

art or security studies, educators and students alike, not only by providing a solid theoretical and analytical framework for the issues addressed, but also by raising questions about the evolution of the international security environment, which may generate new research directions in the field or new perspectives open to military strategists in their effort to respond timely and optimally to an increasingly complex strategic environment characterized by a period of strategic inflection.

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ANATOMY OF POST- COMMUNIST EUROPEAN DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS The Mirage of Military Modernity



I have recently come across a book written by Thomas-Durell Young, entitled “Anatomy of Post-Communist European Defense Institutions—The Mirage of Military Modernity”.

The author, previously a Research Professor at the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army War College, holding a Ph.D. in International economics and policy of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, University of Geneva, Switzerland, is currently Program Manager with Europe Center for Civil-Military Relations (CCMR) within Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, where his responsibilities are to develop and manage the execution of defense planning and change management

consultancies throughout Central and Eastern Europe, as he has practical expertise in the national defense organizations of several countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Some of the key reform projects he has managed include the oversight of comprehensive defense planning and change management projects in Estonia (2000-2002), Ukraine (2003-2013), Moldova (2004-2008), Bulgaria (2008-2011), Serbia (2010-present), and Montenegro (2011-present). He is also Academic Associate for the Comparative Defense Planning Certificate in the Department of National Security Affairs.

I had the pleasure of reading some of the author’s previous work, so I began reading this book with great anticipation, as a university professor who had served over 30 years in the Hungarian Defense Forces and had an insight into what the author had written. In 1987, I joined the Hungarian Defense Forces under the communist rule, when the Hungarian Armed Forces included 155,000. In 1990, the communist rule failed and the democratization of the Central and Eastern Europe’s countries had started and their accession to the Western world had begun. We witnessed the former large numbers of military being reduced at an incredible rate, which resulted in the disbanding of several military units and the almost complete cessation of military occupations. Of course, this process happened not only in Hungary, but also in other Central and Eastern European countries, albeit in different ways. In his book, the author describes the status of these countries’ Armed Forces at the time of the Warsaw Pact, the changes and transformations that followed,



and the situation as it was after joining NATO and the European Union. He wrote the book not only as a Researcher, but also as a military professional who closely saw changes in the forces of this region, along with their ups and downs. In addition to the practical, direct experience, the book's strength is the rich source material used by the author, mainly written by researchers of these countries. Another strength of the book is that it systematically examines the Defense Institutions of the Soviet system and its subordinate countries in Central and Eastern Europe, their command and education systems.

"Loyalty versus expertise"—probably the first and one of the most important statements, when we talk about the Soviet Era. Anyone familiar with this period knows that the Armed Forces of the Soviet bloc were mass Armed Forces that the Soviet Union did not really trust, and therefore, with the exception of some units, were inadequately equipped and trained. Nevertheless, they were planned to be deployed in offensive operations against American and NATO forces. Of course, the leaders of the national Armed Forces sought to exploit their potential and develop their Armed Forces, but this was only partially successful, as the author points out several times. For example, he opens the book by describing how, in the region, there are many gratuitous battalions in the Defense Forces. For instance, let us look at the case of the Serbian Army, which comprises a total of 13,250 active personnel structured in thirty-five battalions! Far fewer, but well-equipped and trained battalions would have been enough, but more important was the compliance with the Soviet leadership and demonstration of operability. Unfortunately, this approach still exists in several states, which negatively affects the activities of the Armed Forces.

In the first chapter, where the author describes the state of Defense Institutions and Armed Forces, he writes about historical events from the end of the Second World War until the Soviet Union's collapse. If we refer to a status,

I would like to underline that we should focus on the situation in 1990, not previous, because otherwise, the title becomes meaningless. I support the concept of breaking down the scope to Soviet, Warsaw Pact and Yugoslav, because both political and historical events are establishing the fact that there were fracture lines between these alliances. Although they were officially part of a political institution, in many cases, they were not politically united and did not act on their federal interests, but in their national interests. Therefore, by no means can we consider the Union of Socialist Countries to be a single entity. An interesting aspect is that, in political concept, they were ruled by communist parties, however, there were many differences. Mr. Young cites the case of Romania, where the National Level Command differed from their Warsaw Pact allies. While the others did not make differences between National Level Command and Policy framework, Romania had its own legislation homeland security (Defense Council of Socialist Romania), learned from the Invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, policy which did not allow to transfer national command outside the country. In the Soviet perspective, there was a concept of making an imperial context, where the control and power to be centralized in Moscow, a fact that was obvious from the start. The Soviet General Staff hand-gear their satellite states, made no difference between national-level and direct command in their policy making.

In the third chapter, the author describes common values between the newly formed alliance - the Warsaw Pact - and NATO. These are sharing commitment towards democratic principles, respect and protect of the rule of law and human rights. Establishing and operating in a market economy and developing good neighbourly relations are also important to these countries. It should also be borne in mind that these countries have faced similar security challenges which they have been able to tackle much more uniformly. It is because of these common values that the former Warsaw Pact members joined not



only the military organisation (NATO), but also the European Union. The author also addressed the security risks posed by the disintegration of Yugoslavia both to NATO and EU. As a result, the role of the newly joined countries had become more important for the alliances. However, these have not even led to the new states effectively transforming their defence policies and armies.

Although I agree with many of the author's statements, there are some topics that have been overlooked. First, confirming that the strictness of resources in the post-communist countries constitutes a small problem. From a Western thinker's point of view, it is not an imaginable one. But most of the former Warsaw Pact countries had never been colonies in their entire history. Secondly, I would refer to the relationship between an effective defense policy and the economic situation in the country. NATO, of course, expects its new member states to pursue and develop an effective defense policy and to modernize their armies. However, this is a major challenge for most of them, as most people are not interested in the state of the country's armed forces, but in the economic situation. The changes in the Central and Eastern European countries have brought about positive changes in many respects, but societies have faced many challenges in the economic field that have not or only been partially addressed. As a result, most of the budgetary discussions focus on economic rather than military issues. Some political forces or other groups often ask the following question "If we cannot guarantee the welfare of the society first, how can we rely on building up a defense force?" This is partly understandable since in the communist period, the political and military leadership often spent too much on military goals, however, this is unimaginable in democratized states. Another challenge is that a lot of people think there is no new real enemy such as it was in the past decades. It is also a problem the fact that the Central and Eastern European countries which have joined NATO do not have a common view regarding several security issues, such as

the possible Russian threat, which also affects the state of their forces.

In the last three chapters, the author examines the changes in the Armed Forces, following the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact and the ex-Warsaw countries accession to NATO. Although he recognizes the changes and positives – for example, the Hungarian Defense Forces participation in peacekeeping missions – of the former Warsaw Pact Armed Forces, he criticizes not only them, but also the Western countries, as the problem remains to date that the Russian military equipment has not been replaced, education and training have not been changed so much and NATO principles have been poorly taken over. This is also due to the fact that while most officers, NCO-s and other service members have been replaced since the 1990s, the former negative norms have not disappeared and the new military way of thinking has not been strengthened, so that these armies operate under some kind of hybrid (double) norms.

Professor Young often uses the term "Western democratic defense concepts" moving towards the conclusion for "Honest Defense" and I wonder where society can make effective pressure on these systems. If people do not want war, do they have the power to suppress the democratic governments to get involved in one?

The Polish story is a remarkable one, that other ex-Warsaw countries should follow. Poland has been gaining capabilities very quickly (they were given technical and financial resources), and they can thank the United States, Germany and Norway for that. Due to this, Poland started to build numerous and well trained Armed Forces. Nevertheless, they commanded the Multinational Division in Iraq from September 2003 to October 2008, giving them enormous operational experience. Taking that as a good practice, following post-Warsaw Pact countries, which are today NATO members (Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia etc.) would follow these with the help of the older NATO members. In the next few decades, the Visegrad Group's



cooperation will be a crucial one, there are still questions in the present, where these nations follow common platforms (e.g. European Migration Crisis).

However, even if there still may be differences between ‘old’ and ‘newer’ NATO members, I would say that we need to search opportunities and common goals together and this book can be a good map to find our way in the past and seek possibilities for the future. But I also must underline, that exceptionally, in the case of

Middle and Eastern-European countries, there are several hundred years of historical empirical knowledge why these nations are maybe a bit strict in what upcoming concepts are concern. For this reason, I recommend this book for getting essential information about this topic, being a good starting point of mapping this field with a ‘Western mind’, but it is necessary to thoroughly know this region’s culture and history and the way people think, in order the get clear picture about the situation.

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ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE FOR DEFENCE AND SECURITY STRATEGIC STUDIES

JULY - DECEMBER 2019

In the second semester of 2019, CDSSS organised three scientific events and published two research papers, as well as three issues of the monthly supplement journal, *Strategic Colloquium*.

In the opening of the 2019-2020 academic year, *two public lectures were held at the Palace of the National Military Circle*, the first one on October 16th, entitled *NATO – 70 years since the signing of the Washington Treaty. Romania – 15 years within NATO. Trends, challenges, opportunities*, held by Cristina Bogzeanu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, and the second one on December 11th, with the theme *Means and methods of undermining used in the international security environment*, delivered by Marius-Titi Potîrniche, Ph.D. Researcher.

On the 14th and 15th of November, there was held the **International Scientific Conference STRATEGIES XXI with the theme: “The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment”**. The main topics addressed belonged to the field of security and defence. The sections of the conference included works of interest with reference to recent actions of state and nonstate actors in power relations, international and regional security transformations, strategic theory and practice, armed forces and society, areas of strategic interest for Romania.

Regarding CDSSS publications in this timeframe, we would like to signal the issue of two research papers. The first one is a volume presenting an analysis of the international security picture in 2018 in terms of evolution and transformations, under the coordination of the Director of the Centre, Colonel Florian Cîrciumaru, Ph.D., volume entitled “*Strategic evaluation 2018 – Global trends and security challenges*”, to which contributed the following researchers: Mirela Atanasiu, Cristian Băhnăreanu, Alexandra Sarcinschi, Marius-Titi Potîrniche, and Mihai Zodian. The second book also deals with a topical subject, “Ways of countering hybrid threat to state security”, a study carried through by Marius-Titi Potîrniche, Ph.D. Researcher, together with Dan Petrescu, Ph.D. Lecturer.



Moreover, we want to signal the publication of three issues of the monthly supplement journal, *Strategic Colloquium*, to which doctoral students contributed: Major Bogdan-Alexandru Constantin elaborated a paper on *human losses and incidental damages in relation to military operations*; Major Ion Paraschiva wrote about *setting up a Computer Emergency Response Team for the Romanian Police*, and Mrs. Magdalena Crişan studied *migration and the risks for national security of identity populism*.

For the CDSSS events planned for 2020, please follow our website: <https://cssas.unap.ro/en/events.htm>.

2020 edition of Strategies XXI Conference will take place on November, 5 and 6.

More details will follow at <https://www.strategii21.ro/index.php/en/conferences-strategies-xxi/the-centre-for-defence-and-security-strategic-studies-conference>

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STRATEGIES XXI INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

THE COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC NATURE OF THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

14-15 November 2019

The international scientific conference with the theme “*The Complex and Dynamic Nature of the Security Environment*”, organised by the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies (CDSSS) on 14-15 November 2019, under the aegis of STRATEGIES XXI, represented the 19th edition of the manifestation. The conference aimed at promoting a strategic and security culture, providing a framework for guidance and exchange of views with experts from the national defence, public order and national security system, disseminating the latest results of scientific research in the field of security and defence, as well as developing national and international scientific cooperation.



Photo: Aspect from the Scientific Conference STRATEGIES XXI

The issue addressed was specific to security and defence field, the conference sections including papers of interest with reference to the recent actions of state and non-state actors in shaping the power relations, changes in the international security environment, strategic theory and practice, armed forces and society, Romania’s strategic areas of interest and national security system resilience – a basic element for regional stability.

The activity was attended by representatives from the Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies of the National University of Public Services of Hungary (NUPS), Faculty of Political Science within University of Bucharest, “Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University, Islamic Republic of Pakistan Embassy and from the Centre for Conflict Prevention and Early Warning.

The event has achieved its objectives through comprehensive debates among participants from the military and civilian environment, such as active and retired officers, academics, researchers, Ph.D. and M.A. students. Also, the auditorium consisted of representatives of the Diplomatic Corps and accredited military attachés from the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Ireland, Republic of Moldova and the Tunisian Republic.



Photo: Aspect from the Scientific Conference STRATEGIES XXI

Starting this year, CDSSS has awarded, on the behalf of “Carol I” National Defence University Graduates Association, the best communication at the Conference. The award was granted to the paper entitled “*Use of Autonomous Systems for Evacuation and Medical Support*”, elaborated by Lieutenant-colonel Eduard Grigore JELER, Ph.D. Lecturer, in appreciation of the author’s contribution to the development of security studies. The topic approached in the paper has a valuable practical utility, whereas the use of autonomous systems aims at reducing the exposure of medical personnel to dangerous situations when trying to provide medical assistance for the wounded, under enemy fire, limiting contamination in NBC environments and provides the force multiplier for a limited medical capacity; in addition, autonomous systems can locate the injured military personnel, extract and transport them to specialized medical centers, providing assistance during the transfer.



Group photography from the Scientific Conference STRATEGIES XXI

All communications can be accessed, by those interested, in two electronic volumes published on the conference website, www.strategii21.ro, indexed in ProQuest and CEEOL international databases.

In the end, we invite you to participate in the next edition of the conference, which will take place on November 5th and 6th, 2020.

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GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

We welcome those interested in publishing articles in the bilingual academic journal *Strategic Impact*, while subjecting their attention towards aspects to consider upon drafting their articles.

MAIN SELECTION CRITERIA are the following:

✓ **Compliance with the thematic area of the journal – security and strategic studies** and the following topics: political-military topical aspects, trends and perspectives in security, defence, geopolitics and geostrategies, international relations, intelligence, information society, peace and war, conflict management, military strategy, cyber-security;

✓ **Originality** of the paper – own argumentation; novelty character – not priorly published;

✓ **Quality of the scientific content** – neutral, objective style, argumentation of statements and mentioning of all references used;

✓ **A relevant bibliography**, comprising recent and prestigious specialized works, including books, presented according to herein model;

✓ **English** language shall meet academic standards (British or American usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Romanian authors shall provide both Romanian and English versions of the text.

✓ **Adequacy to the editorial standards adopted by the journal.**

EDITING NORMS

✓ **Article length** may vary between **6 and 12 pages** (25.000 - 50.000 words), including bibliography and notes, tables and figures, if any.

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✓ **A short presentation of the author**, comprising the following elements: given name, last name (the latter shall be written in capital letters, to avoid confusion), main institutional affiliation and position held, military rank, academic title, scientific title (PhD. title or PhD. Candidate – domain and university), city and country of residence, e-mail address.

✓ A relevant **abstract**, not to exceed 150 words (italic characters)

✓ 6-8 relevant **keywords** (italic characters)

✓ **Introduction / preliminary considerations**

✓ **2 - 4 chapters** (numbered, starting with 1) (subchapters if applicable)

✓ **Conclusions.**

✓ **Tables / graphics / figures**, if they are useful for the argumentation, with reference made in the text. They shall be also sent in .jpeg / .png / .tiff format as well.

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Example of official document consulted on the Internet: Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on the EU's comprehensive approach*, Bruxelles, 2014, p. 1, URL https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/142552.pdf, accessed on 06.01.2018.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Example of book: GOLDSTEIN, Joshua S.; PEVEHOUSE, Jon C., *International Relations*, Longman Publishing house, 2010.

Example of article: OATLEY Thomas, "Toward a political economy of complex interdependence", in *European Journal of International Relations*, no. 4/2019 (vol. 25), pp. 957-978.

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“CAROL I” NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING HOUSE

Director: Colonel Alin CRIVINEANU

Layout editor: Liliana ILIE

The publication consists of 128 pages.

“Carol I” National Defence University Printing House
Panduri Street, no. 68-72, 5th District, Bucharest
E-mail: editura@unap.ro
Phone: 021/319.40.80/215