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CONTENTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

The current edition in 2018, no. 3 and no. 4 (68-69) comprises a collection of five articles, to which add the section *Dynamics of the security environment*, *Book review* and the traditional *Guide for authors*.

The journal opens with the rubric ***Political-Military Topicality***, where we have included an article signed by Iulian Chifu, PhD, Associate Professor, together with Teodor Frunzeti, PhD, Professor, regarding *principled realism*, concept that is found in the doctrine of US President Donald Trump, followed by an analysis on *the picture of international relations of South-Eastern Europe*, written by Mr. Teodor Badiu, MA Student.

In the next section, ***Defence and Security Concepts***, Mr. Cristian Bărbulescu, Ph.D. Student, shares with us his research on *national resilience* seen as *strategic option of state actors to adapt to hybrid threats*.

Next, at the rubric ***Geopolitics and Geostrategies − Trends and Perspectives***, we have grouped two articles − in the first article, Mr. János Besenyö, Ph.D. and Adrián Csajka-Vándor as co-author, deal with the issue of *Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the Middle East proxy wars*, and, in the second article, Mr. Akos Treszkai addresses the issue of *water conflicts*, and particularizes with the *case study on Lake Chad*.

In this issue, we would like to point out the inclusion, in the pages of the journal, of a new section, ***Dynamics of the Security Environment (DSE)***, which is a CDSSS initiative meant to provide timely assessments on recent developments or events in the field of security. Issued in October 2015 as a freestanding publication, exclusively online, every two months, the *Dynamics of the Security Environment* was included in *Strategic Impact* to ease not only a more efficient dissemination of these assessments, but also to cover a wider time horizon, thus being able to identify relevant trends depending on the topics or areas of strategic interest. Therefore, under this heading, the CDSSS research team publishes analyses and evaluations of some major events, evolutions or trends, with an impact on the international and regional security environment and with relevance for the area of strategic interest for Romania.

In the current edition, *DSE* is structured in four sub-chapters, as follows: Mrs. Mirela Atanasiu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, addresses the issue of *US military withdrawal from Syria*, from the points of view of signals, motivations and possible consequences in the medium and long term. Mr. Marius Potîrniche, Ph.D. Researcher, analyses the implications and consequences of the *Russian campaign in Africa* and *the Russian-Ukrainian conflict*, and Mrs. Cristina Bogzeanu, Ph.D. Senior Researcher, brings to our attention two contemporary issues, namely the *Western Balkans* and from the point of view of *the Euro-Atlantic route and dissensions*, and *Brexit*, viewed as *the tip of the iceberg of European challenges*.

In this edition's ***Book Review***, we wish to bring to the attention of our readers a work entitled *Cognitive, argumentative and discourse analysis in intelligence*, written by Ruxandra Buluc, PhD, Associate Professor, through the review made by our colleague, Cristina Bogzeanu.

In the end, we would like to point out, as always, the ***Guide for Authors***, a compulsory reading for those who wish to disseminate the results of their research in our journal.

For those who open *Strategic Impact* for the first time, we mention that the journal is an open access publication of the Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies within "Carol I" National Defence University and is a prestigious scientific journal in the field of military science, information

and public order, according to National Council for the Recognition of University Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates (CNATDCU).

The publication is issues for eighteen years in Romanian and for thirteen years in English and approaches a complex thematic − political-military topicality; security strategies; military strategy; NATO and EU policies, strategies and actions; future of conflict; peace and war; information society; intelligence community. Readers may find, in the published pages, analyses, syntheses and evaluations of strategic level, points of view which study the impact of national, regional and global actions dynamics.

Regarding international visibility − primary objective of our 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, Germania), EBSCO (SUA), ProQuest (SUA) Index Copernicus International (Poland), to these adding recently 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 from Bulgaria, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia and so on.

Strategic Impact journal is issues in two separate editions: one in Romanian and one in English. The journal is distributed free of charge in main security and defence institutions, as well as in national and international academia in Europe, Asia and America.

In the end, I would like to encourage those interested to publish in our pages to prospect and evaluate thoroughly the dynamics of the security environment, and, at the same time, I invite students, master's students and doctoral candidates, interested in sending articles for publication in the monthly supplement of the journal, Strategic Colloquium, available at http://cssas.unap.ro/ro/cs.htm and indexed in the international database CEEOL.

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

TRUMP DOCTRINE.
THE "PRINCIPLED REALISM"

Iulian CHIFU, Ph.D.*
Teodor FRUNZETI, Ph.D.**

The foreign policy doctrine of the Trump administration has been proclaimed as "principled realism". The label didn't catch on and has been criticized in relation to its substance, and also due to the oxymoronic form of the phrase expressing the name, as well as its content. But "principled realism" is not new, it has been used several times in history and the inspiration for the Trump Doctrine when it comes to foreign policy should be Henry Kissinger, a confident of President Trump. The concept also links very tightly the future Trump Doctrine to the Ronald Reagan administration, doctrine and policies - who became a model more or less for a lot of the members of the administration. It is still debatable what is the real level of understanding of the concept of "principle realism" within the Trump administration and how deep is the practical approach linked to the theory.

Keywords: realism; principled realism; isolationism; interventionism; internationalism; liberal democratic values.

1. "Principled realism" and Donald Trump's administration

The self-definition of Trump's administration foreign policy as "principled realism" was announced in the remarks made by President Trump at the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017[1], then in the US National Security Strategy, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", on December 18, 2017[2], and finally in President Trump's address at the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly[3] on September 25, 2018 in New York City where he emphasized his foreign policy as being that of "principled realism."

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[1] ***, "Remarks made by President Trump at the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly", URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-72nd-session-united-nations-general-assembly/, accessed on September 19, 2018.
[2] ***, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", *US National Security Strategy*, URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/new-national-security-strategy-new-era/, accessed on December 18, 2018.
[3] ***, The full transcript of "President Donald Trump's UN General Assembly Speech", *National Post*, URL: https://nationalpost.com/news/world/trump-un-speech, accessed on September 26, 2018.

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In front of the UN General Assembly, President Trump first stated that "We want harmony and friendship, not conflict and strife. We are guided by outcomes, not ideology. We have a policy of principled realism, rooted in shared goals, interests, and values."[4] At the same time, in the same speech, President Trump balanced the need for friendship, non-conflict and strife with the need to "aggressively confront challenges", threats, and "even wars that we face". "(…) We have enough strength and pride to confront those dangers today so that our citizens can enjoy peace and prosperity tomorrow"[5].

Regarding the 2017 National Security Strategy, the documents mentioned: "An America First National Security Strategy… is a strategy of principled realism that is guided by outcomes, not ideology."[6] And in the 2018 UN General Assembly speech titled "America's policy of principled realism" Trump said to the General Assembly, that this "means we will not be held hostage to old dogmas, discredited ideologies and so-called experts who have been proven wrong over the years, time and time again."[7]

More references came in the context of specific issues and foreign policy actions of the Trump administration such as the relationship with Saudi Arabia, the announcement on US policy in Afghanistan and the announcement about moving US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, with the consecutive recognition of Jerusalem as capital of Israel. The most extensive research on "principled realism" has been made by the TRENDS institution, that is widely quoted by both supporters or critics of the concept or of its association with Donald Trump's policies.[8]

The main finding came from the research of American Presidency Database indicating that Donald Trump is the first U.S. President to use the label, the concept and the phrase "principled realism."

Therefore, according to TRENDS, Trump's "principled realism" should be viewed as a type of continuation of a traditional, conservative approach to foreign affairs, downplaying the importance of intergovernmental organizations, except where alliances provide strategic balance against a perceived opponent. While shared interests will be the primary motivator for international cooperation, „the United States will accept to be constrained internationally only when it is in its interest, or when power games make action untenable"[9].

There are three more occasions when President Trump mentioned the principled realism as a feature of US foreign policy under his presidency. In all three cases, we are talking about individual concrete political actions, as TRENDS underlined[10]. During his first address abroad at a counter-terrorism summit sponsored by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President Trump stated that he is seeking a policy that was limited, yet bold and firm, where "our friends will never question our support, and our enemies will never doubt our determination. Our partnerships will advance security through stability, not though radical disruption."[11] That would be a rejection of the neo-conservative approach to spread democracy in the world through projection of power or state building, and the United States would not impose its form of government or ideals on others through the force of arms: "We are not here to lecture – we are not here to tell other people how to live, what to do, who to be, or how to worship. Instead, we are here to offer partnership – based on shared interests and values – to pursue a better future for us all."[12]

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4   *Ibidem*.
5   *Ibidem*.
6 ***, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", *US National Security Strategy*.
7 ***, "Remarks by President Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly", URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/, accessed on September 25, 2018.
8 Scott Englund, "Principled Realism: Interests and Ideology", *TRENDS*, URL: http://trendsinstitution.org/principled-realism-interests-and-ideology/, accessed on April 2nd, 2018.

9 *Ibidem*.
10 *Ibidem*.
11 ***, "President Trump's Speech to the Arab Islamic American Summit", URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-trumps-speech-arab-islamic-american-summit/, accessed on May 21, 2017.
12 *Ibidem*.

The second occasion, during the address on the future US strategy in Afghanistan, President Trump stated again that American military will not be used anymore for constructing democracies or rebuilding other countries "in our own image." "This principled realism will guide our decisions moving forward"[13] he added. And the third time is linked to the decision to relocate the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, when he stated: "The foreign policy of the United States is grounded in principled realism, which begins with an honest acknowledgment of plain facts. With respect to the State of Israel, that requires officially recognizing Jerusalem as its capital and relocating the United States Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem as soon as possible."[14]

In conclusion, we could speak about a nuanced approach which contains both realism and idealism – traditional principles and values; unilateralism and nationalism – America First as well as multilateralism – shared goals, interests and values; interventionism – "aggressively confronting challenges", even through wars and military means, but not export of the democratic system via colored revolutions or state building; pragmatism – goals not ideology; nationalism once again – promoting America's interests, but limited by realism that implies the need for alliances and thorough consideration of involvement when needed. We could add the cost oriented approach and retreat of the American troops from long wars ending with settlements, opting for stability and security rather than revolutions and change. A complex combination of nuances between pragmatic goals, on one hand, and realistic and available means, on another.

2. Critics and supporters of US "principled realism" as Trump's Doctrine

Following the chart of the term usage in the American president's documents and public speeches, we will look at the critics and supporters of the Trump Doctrine to see how they asses the principled realism as a theoretical concept as well as the way Trump administration sees it and applies it in current concrete foreign affairs positions. The first line of critics simply challenged the very existence of such a concept or the oxymoronic formula that designates it as the new US foreign policy of the Trump Administration.

So firstly, "principled realism" seems, for a majority of critics, not a doctrine with in depth significance and content but rather a slogan, a label easy to propagate in media. It helps to have a simple slogan every time when Donald Trump has a public appearance without checking to his team first. It also helps when explaining the incoherence of an extreme pragmatism and selective application of rules and norms in different cases[15].

"Principled realism" is an ambiguous formula that seems to have been issued by the White House communication staff rather than by the foreign affairs staff of Trump administration, describing an "America First" foreign policy doctrine, "something that seems much closer to the way Trump understands his foreign policy."[16] On another note, critics are even challenging the wording of the formula defining the concept since it is considered an oxymoron in both meaning and substance. They claim that "principled realism" is, in fact, "a contradiction in terms, a realism putting national interests first, above all considerations, whether moral, human or ideological"[17].

Academic critics think that adding principles to such a doctrine makes it superficial, taking into consideration every potential male voter, who would like to be both principled and realistic. A policy that applies to all concrete cases, even if when it is done in one place contradicts what

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[13] ***, "Remarks by President Trump on the Strategy in Afghanistan and South Asia", *Whitehouse.gov*, URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-strategy-afghanistan-south-asia/, accessed on August 21, 2018.
[14] *Ibidem*.

[15] Sharon Kirkey, *op cit*.
[16] *Ibidem*.
[17] Max de Haldevang, "The Oxymoron doctrine. Trump's doctrine of "principled realism" baffles the foreign policy world", *Quartz*, URL: https://qz.com/1401599/unga-trumps-principled-realism-doctrine-is-an-oxymoron/, accessed on September 25, 2018.

is done in the next one[18]. "Principled realism" would be the pursuit of realism (maximizing state power in an anarchic and competitive system) with a moral compass based on values (the principled part)"[19], claim supporters of the administration.

On another hand, our understanding of principled realism goes via limiting the realist approach in favor of advancing national interests through a careful use of the instruments of power, but with a very solid reference to common values and solid moral ground and common rules, aiming at making states behave in more principled ways. This approach is much closer to what Henry Kissinger would believe. At the end of the Cold War, Henry Kissinger presumed that the United States would attempt to decisively shape the international system in accordance with its own values[20]. Kissinger said America could not "change the way it has perceived its role throughout its history, nor should it want to.(…) For America, reconciling differing values and different historical experiences among countries of comparable significance will be a novel experience and a major departure from either the isolation of the last century or the de facto hegemony of the Cold War"[21].

But here critics are claiming that even this very nuanced approach that could be Henry Kissinger's idea and belief, drafted by Trump staffs, would have nothing to do with Trump or his foreign policy, in any case not in a systematic way, since "Trump is the ultimate opportunist who puts the doctrine aside when it suits his political needs. If you are willing to override your principles whenever politics or realism demands it then you're not very principled."[22]

On the same note as our understanding of the concept, Scott Englund tried to make sense of

the substance of "principled realism" taking into consideration both the theoretical background and previous means of the concept, when used in American politics, as well as deeds and actions of the Trump administration in foreign affairs. For him, it should be a combination of conditional realism, depending on the situation and if it is linked to America's national interests.

In the general approach, US will maintain its high moral ground via combining national interest with the commitment of preserving liberal system and rule based international relations, with an America that defends democracy, individual freedoms and the rule of law. Secondly, where U.S. national interest runs contrary to international institutions, U.S. interests will take over, ignoring or leaving those institutions. And finally, "while the U.S. will leave the "nation building" business, and no longer attempt to spread democracy through the force of arms, aggressive pursuit of U.S. security interests by military action will likely intensify"[23].

But if supporters will go into details, specifics of regions or actors in every case to explain the unity and integrity of the application of "principled realism" the way it is described in the Trump administration official papers and understanding, the critics have much more to say about the inconsistency and lack of sustainability of the concept when applied to concrete cases. After threatening it during his first year in office to "totally destroy" North Korea, especially in his first address to the UN - the same occasion he called Kim Jong-un the "Little Rocket Man" - the US president met with Kim in Singapore and suddenly declared that North Korea was no longer a nuclear threat, offering to the worse dictator in the world (according to the democratic index) a stage, visibility and integration in international politics[24].

For Max de Haldevang, in the case of North Korea, Trump helped legitimize Kim Jong-un through the meetings, embracing realism but handling him with kid gloves, while Iran was treated based on principles, but not following US

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[18] *Ibidem*.
[19] Sharon Kirkey*, op.cit.*
[20] *Gail Yoshitani, "Jeane Kirkpatrick and the Roots of Principled Realism", War on the rocks*, URL: https://warontherocks.com/2018/10/jeane-kirkpatrick-and-the-roots-of-principled-realism/, accessed on *October 29, 2018.*
[21] Kissinger, Henry, *Diplomaţia*, All Publishing, 1998, p. 807.
[22]*Ibidem*.

[23] Scott Englund, *op. cit*.
[24] Sharon Kirkey, *op. cit*.

main interests when pulling out of the multilateral nuclear deal[25]. Then, when emphasizing national sovereignty and abstention from projecting democracy, this looks completely against the US approach to Venezuela[26]. The ideological approach could be found in the decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. "The move was widely criticized by regional allies and it is difficult to calculate which foreign policy interest was served by it.", convey academic critics[27]. In that respect, different explanations of concrete actions based on principled realism are leaving the critics room for interpretation and favorable arguments.

3. The concept of "principled realism". Alternative sources

Where critics are mistaking is that the concept of principled realism, or at least the formula and its content, already existed and has been used in American politics. It is true that the concept is still unsubstantiated and Donald Trump is the first president to use it. Even if it was not so appealing to the media and by no means to the international relations specialists that were so heavily criticized by Trump[28].

In an effort to make reason on the concept of "principled realism", on theoretic terms, we should begin by making a tour on different approaches to realism, which is the key concept well defined, and its multiple derivatives. Then, we must return to the core of "principled realism" *per se* and its uses in the American politics. Thucydides and its *History of the Peloponnesian War*[29] is the father of realism, and was seen as following immutable lessons of the nature – a

reference that Trump himself is following[30]. It is the story of the strong who takes over and of the weak, who has to comply and accept the outcome. The law of the nature.

Then, Niccolo Machiavelli moved things closer to a cynical explanation when asking Il Principe[31] to do whatever is necessary, whatever it takes, to use whatever method in his reach in order to grant political stability, prosperity for his people through power maximization. Hans Morgenthau relied on power as the driver of all politics, national interest as a motivation and ruled out any moral judgement on political acts, that could be measured only by outcomes[32].

Finally, Kenneth Waltz introduces the neo-realism linked to the balance of power, invoking three principles: the anarchic nature of the international system, with states as the only actors; the equal sovereignty of states in nature, with the only difference in the power of each one; and the natural search for the balance of power, either globally or regionally, being the only guarantee for peace[33].

So realism is defined by goals, not by ideology or by any moral indications, not by good or evil, but just by how effective the means are in reaching the national interest. All that could be found in Trump's definitions and documents, that is why a first conclusion is to call the new American policy hard and tough realism, power politics, with an economic pragmatic approach[34].

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[25] Max de Haldevang, *op.cit.*

[26] *Ibidem*.

[27] Scot Englund, *op.cit.*

[28] ***, "Remarks by President Trump to the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly", URL: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-73rd-session-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-ny/, accessed on September 25, 2018.

[29] Platias Athanassios G., Koliopoulos Constantinos, *Thucydides – On Strategy. Grand Strategies in the Peloponnesian War and their Relevance Today*, Columbia University Press, 2010, p. 197.

[30] ***, "A Keynote Speech by U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo", *GMF*, URL: http://www.gmfus.org/events/keynote-speech-us-secretary-state-michael-r-pompeo, accessed on December 4, 2018.

[31] *Enciclopedia operelor fundamentale ale filosofiei politice*, Editura Institutului de Teorie Socială, Bucharest, 2001, p. 562.

[32] Hans J. Morghentau, *Politica între națiuni. Lupta pentru putere și lupta pentru pace.*, Polirom Publishing, Iași, 2013.

[33] Dungaciu Dan (coordonator), *Enciclopedia Relațiilor Internaționale* (vol I, II), RAO Publishing, Bucharest 2017, pp. 693- 695.

[34] Iulian Chifu, "Strategia de Securitate Trump: realism dur și pur, naționalism și excepționalism american, cu Europa partener transatlantic puternic", *Adevărul blog*, URL: https://adevarul.ro/international/statele-unite/strategia-securitate-trump-realism-dur-pur-nationalism-exceptionalism-american-europa-partener-transatlantic-puternic-1_5a3ccb25d7af743f8d9bb5c1/index.html, accessed on December 22, 2017; Iulian Chifu, "Premise, preliminarii și

So what about the principled realism? Where could this concept be found in the realism family of ideas? It is clear that this would primarily mean a limitation of the realism through some principles and values. Since we are talking about America First in Trump's case, those would be principles coming from nationalism, but also traditional American values. Scott Englund and TRENDS study have dug deep into modern American politics and found other mentions of the „principled realism" referred to as an ideology[35]. Poorly drafted, without any theoretical strong development or recognition, it has some roots in the history of the US.

There are basically four sources in modern American politics related to "principled realism". The first comes from a historian, Gregg Russell, who described the foreign affairs priorities of two presidents as being linked to principled realism, one limiting realism by focusing on the moral purpose of its decisions, James Madison (1751-1836)[36], the second by enforcing justice in the world, Teddy Roosevelt (1858-1919)[37]. But Madison stated that there should be a "moral purpose" for power, and argued, "what a perversion of the natural order of things…to make power the primary and central object of the social system, and Liberty but its satellite."[38] And Roosevelt believed that by serving justice in the world, the United States' moral strength could be maintained in order to command respect[39]. This has no relation with the way Donald Trump and his administration see the concept.

The second source is represented by the Deputy Secretary of State, John Whitehead, who held a public address at the Hans Morgenthau Award Dinner of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy in 1988, titled "Principled Realism: A Foundation for U.S. Foreign Policy," which was published in the Department of State Bulletin.[40] For Whitehead, the approach would be rather neo-conservative, including the encouragement of democracy in the world, therefore a purely idealistic approach. He stated that "there is no doubt whatever that the spread of democracy throughout the world is a good thing for the United States".[41] And the substance would be that democracies are more reliable allies for the United States, inclined to negotiation rather than war, more open to international trade, multilateralism and cooperation.

Whitehead illustrated his definition of "principled realism" through an example from Ronald Reagan's policy, the security offered by the US to oil tankers and U.S. Navy protection during the Iran-Iraq war: "Many people counseled that we do nothing; a few suggested direct military interventions. We chose a middle — and, I believe, realistic — course. We initiated a policy that was limited, yet bold and firm…We affirmed to Arab governments that we are hearty and reliable allies, even as we discouraged Soviet adventurism."[42] Moreover, Whitehead's speech ended saying America was "born in principled realism. By policies principled and realistic it is, and shall be, sustained."[43]

The third source is also a speech and concept that has been developed in an interview in 2006 by then Senator Chuck Hagel, and it was specially designed to explain the neo-conservative military interventions abroad. Hagel noted that principles are the ones that should guide and they should be deeply rooted in American founding acts. And he put "principled realism" closer to principles and idealism than realism, which was the limitation term of the application of those idealistic principles in foreign policy. The example used to illustrate his thesis was: "We have to appreciate the realism demonstrated by Ronald Reagan. It is not a choice between giving up your principles, or giving in to someone else's agenda. Foreign

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perspective pentru o Doctrină Trump: revenirea la politica de putere", *Infosfera, Year XI*, no. 1/2019, pp. 3-12.
[35] Scott Englund, *op.cit.*
[36] Greg Russell, "Madison's Realism and the Role of Domestic Ideals in Foreign Affairs", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 4, Perceptions of the Presidency (Fall, 1995), pp. 711-723.
[37] Greg Russell, "Theodore Roosevelt, Geopolitics, and Cosmopolitan Ideals", *Review of International Studies,* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Jul., 2006), pp. 541-559.
[38] See note 36.
[39] See note 37.

[40] Scott Englund, *op.cit.*
[41]   *Ibidem.*
[42]   *Ibidem.*
[43]   Sharon Kirkey, *op.cit.*

Policy must be grounded in our values, what we believe, what has formed and shaped us as a nation."[44] It is true that Donald Trump was the first president to adopt "principled realism" as a foreign policy doctrine. But before him, we had a Democratic candidate that, in 2008, grounded its foreign policy on "principled realism", he published and launched the debate in Foreign Policy. Governor Bill Richardson was closer to Madison's approach on limiting realism through moral principles. He pleaded for an "ethical, principled realism", focused on respect for American basic values, in particular protecting human rights globally[45].

So, according to Scott Englund, the definition of "principled realism" before Trump would mean that states should act according to their own interests, but their actions must also promote their national values. National interest is in the forefront in any hierarchy of values, but the means used to reach the goals should respect the state's principles and values. Thus, long-held national values would constrain both means and ends of policies.[46]

4. Jane Kirkpatrick's "principled realism" and its links to Reagan's doctrine

As we have already seen, "principled realism" already existed in the American literature, ideas and politics, but had nothing to do with the way Trump administration is foreseeing its approach to Foreign Affairs. In all those approaches, a strong link is manifested with Ronald Reagan's Foreign policy. And this comes first from John Whitehead, from the deeds or Ronald Reagan's administration foreign policy, as well as from the influence Reagan's leadership has on a part of Donald Trump administration. And Gail Yoshitani found the source in the foreign policy concepts suggested by Jeane J. Kirkpatrick in

1980, and embraced by Ronald Reagan in his first presidential race[47].

This could explain both the approaches of today's Trump administration that took those policies from Ronald Reagan period, as well as from Henry Kissinger's private advice for the president – even though there were not rationally identified as Jeane Kirkpatrick's principles. Yoshitani made a full comparison between Trump's documents and Jeane Kirkpatrick's essays and speeches. Even though Kirkpatrick never used the formula „principled realism", her description of the way America sees the world in the 80's and its role in the world are very similar to those promoted today by the Donald Trump administration.

Kirkpatrick was a Democrat when, in 1980, she was approached by Ronald Reagan's team. She became foreign policy adviser to Reagan during the campaign and on the transition team. She served in the National Security Council and as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations. She was Mrs. America Foreign Policy from January 1981 to April 1985[48]. In her thoughts, she has drawn three main directions for America: first, she rejected the policy of détente, aiming at wining the Cold War via the arm race and economic exhaust of the Soviet Union; she rejected globalization and America assuming to a global role; and thirdly, she has pleaded and strongly supported the American principles of liberal democracy. All those features can be found in Ronald Reagan's foreign policy.

Reagan's foreign strategy was titled "Peace Through Strength", same as one of the pillars in Trump National Security Strategy. While Kirkpatrick did not accept the possible integration of the Soviet Union in the international democratic system – Fukuyama's approach after the Cold War[49] – the current US National

[44] Chuck Hagel, "Principles and interests", *The National Interest*, URL: https://nationalinterest.org/article/principles-and-interests-797, accessed on June 1st, 2006.
[45] Bill Richardson, "A new Realism. A realistic and principled foreign policy", *Foreign Affairs*, URL: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2008-01-01/new-realism, accessed on January 27, 2018.
[46] Scott Englund, *op.cit.*

[47] Gail Yoshitani, *op.cit.*
[48] *Ibidem.*
[49] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *National Interest*, summer 1989, URL: https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf, accessed on September 25, 2018; Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History and the Last Man", *The Free Press*, New York, 1992, URL: https://www.democraziapura.altervista.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/1992-Fukuyama.pdf, accessed on

Strategy sees the same situation in the case of China: "For decades, U.S. policy was rooted in the belief that support for China's rise and for its integration into the post-war international order would liberalize China. Contrary to our hopes, China expanded its power at the expense of the sovereignty of others."[50]

On the global scale, Kirkpatrick called for the United States to "abandon the globalist approach which denies the realities of culture, character, geography, economics, and history in favor of a vague, abstract universalism."[51] Monroe doctrine was mentioned, globalization was criticized and so was the liberal approach, instead suggesting that the United States should assume an disinterested internationalist spirit, challenging the belief "What was good for the world was good for the United States," and the fact that "Power was to be used to advance moral goals, not strategic or economic ones", the approaches of the academia at the end of the Cold War. Curbing the US global approach in foreign policy could be found in the 2017 Trump National Security Strategy as well.

Where the strong difference emerges is in observing the liberal democratic tradition, where Kirkpatrick, as well as Ronald Reagan did not take any step back, but where Donald Trump administration embraced a rather constructive ambiguity referring to the principles of the American liberal democratic tradition[52]. But the authors of the 2017 Strategy document have stated that the American way of life cannot be imposed upon others, nor is it the inevitable culmination of progress, and Donald Trump's deeds in relation to North Korea and Saudi Arabia support that – the Khashoggi case is running against this strong belief of Ronald Reagan's administration. It seems that this is the big difference: for Reagan, liberal democracy was a way of living, for Donald Trump pragmatism and cost oriented approach to the world and to allies, as well as the attraction

of autocratic leaders like Vladimir Putin leave those principles in a blurred gray space where they could be used or ignored depending on the situation.

5. Ups and downs: "principled realism" in the new competitive global world. A label for all purposes?

The high level of influence, or even direct links between Ronald Reagan's approach to foreign policy and Trump's approach have been our subject of analysis in several articles[53]. We even spoke about the Reagan Doctrine 2.0 when considering the way the administration reacted after the announcement of US troops retreat from Syria (and Afghanistan)[54]. Our basic thesis is that, even if it resulted from the need to improvise a reaction to the President Trump's ad hoc announcement, the establishment and the Trump administration had found some workable ideas in a Reagan 2.0 doctrine of blocking Russia in Syria, similar to how the Soviet Union has been kept busy in Afghanistan in 1989, when the arms race have been launched by means of hypersonic missiles while Russia was facing strong economic sanctions that exhaust its resources in the same way the Soviet Union has been exhausted by the arms race and Star Wars initiatives at the end of the Cold War[55].

What we have seen in 'principled realism', the way it is enacted by Trump Administration,

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September 25, 2018; Francis Fukuyama, *Sfârșitul Istoriei și ultimul om*, Paideia Publishing, Bucharest, 1994.
[50] ***, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", *US National Security Strategy*.
[51] Gail Yoshitani, *op.cit.*
[52] ***, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", *US National Security Strategy*.

[53] Iulian Chifu, "Testul Suprem: Trump împinge Rusia spre un nou Afganistan în Siria", *Adevărul blog*, URL:https://adevarul.ro/international/rusia/testul-suprem-trump-impinge-rusia-nou-afganistan-siria-1_5c35bd0edf52022f75686527/index.html accessed on 9 January 2019.
[54] Iulian Chifu, "Efectul Trump în administrația americană: cum faci peste noapte o doctrină, o retragere și soluții de pace în Orientul Mijlociu", *CPCEW Bulletin*; Iulian Chifu, "Complexitatea relațiilor Trump-Erdogan și revenirea lui Bashar al Assad în față în Siria și Orientul Mijlociu", *Adevărul blog*, URL: https://adevarul.ro/international/in-lume/complexitatea-relatiilor-trump-erdogan-revenirea-bashar-assad-fata-siria-orientul-mijlociu-1_5c3c5e73df52022f7599aa49/index.html#; Iulian Chifu, "Premise, preliminarii și perspective pentru o Doctrină Trump: revenirea la politica de putere", *Infosfera, Year XI*, no. 1/2019, pp. 3-12.
[55] Iulian Chifu, "Premise, preliminarii și perspective pentru o Doctrină Trump: revenirea la politica de putere", *Infosfera, Year XI* nr. 1/2019.

is a kind of improvisation rather than a well reflected doctrine in foreign policy. It is more a way of explaining unpredictable public statements of the US President and to correct and nuanced them, in America's advantage, than a real doctrine. Scott Englund calls it a label for its foreign policy, meant to explain "America First" anti-internationalism while remaining able to justify military intervention when desired[56]. He also noted that „what President Trump says impromptu should be given less importance than what is written in his name, which should be given less importance than what is done on behalf of the American people"[57].

As we have seen, the comparison with the Reagan doctrine could be made on solid grounds, but with some differences linked to the current person who is serving a term at the White House. This could be the result of the similarities present at international level then and now, a transition from bipolar world towards the US, an actor with a dominant role and vice versa, the return from a world in which the US had a dominant role to one with multiple stakeholders. In the 80's, the US contemplated the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar world, cautious not to assume the hegemonic position with all associated responsibilities, a position that the US has never exerted; now the world moved the other way around, with multiple challengers, in a globalized world, with multiple attempts to frame the global governance (something called by Russia multipolarism, but a term that we reject due to its links and use of power politics and spheres of influence). Also, China is an objector to the U.S. global primacy. The US should also deal with a reluctance to exhibit enough force in order to dishearten but not use its power, due to a more limited capacity to impose its own will globally, whenever and wherever it needs to.

Regarding the documents, the NIC - National Intelligence Council Global Trends 2030 Report notes: "It will be tempting to impose order on this apparent chaos but that ultimately would be too costly in the short term and fail in the long run."[58] The 2017 Trump National Security Strategy states that in the current "competitive world" US should promote a balance of power first, tailor the U.S. approach by region, and secondly, limit the role America plays in the formation of a global system of thought[59]. Regarding the former, the security strategy notes: The United States must tailor its approaches to different regions of the world in order to protect US national interests. "We require integrated regional strategies that appreciate the nature and magnitude of threats, the intensity of competitions, and the promise of available opportunities, all in the context of local political, economic, social, and historic realities."[60]

Gail Yoshitani's noted in his conclusions regarding „principled realism" and Trump's practical approach of the concept that when Kirkpatrick believed in the 1990s that America lacked the money, will and wisdom for global dominance and that conversion of the world to America's political ideology was beyond America's capacity, it acted within its resources, and had to rely on other nations in order to prevent the violent expansionist control of major states. Faced with a competitive international system, Trump administration, in the 2017 National Security Strategy, imitated through "principled realism" concept Kirkpatrick's foreign policy approach from the 1980s, and her recommendations for maintaining US supremacy in a competitive world.

What should we expect from the US foreign policy under Trump administration? A very clear focus on national interests reflected at all levels of decision making, a cost oriented and shared responsibilities approach, trying to balance trade with the most important US trade partners – China, Japan, South Korea, EU (Germany first and foremost), Australia; maintaining alliances – especially NATO, whenever it is necessary to face

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[56] Scott Englund, *op. cit.*
[57] *Ibidem.*

[58] ***, "Global Trend 2030: Alternative Worlds", *National Intelligence Council*, URL: https://globaltrends2030.files. wordpress.com/2012/11/global-trends-2030-november2012. pdf, accessed in December 2012.
[59] Gail Yoshitani, *op.cit.*
[60] ***, "A New National Security Strategy for a New Era", *US National Security Strategy.*

threats coming from big players – China, Russia, Iran. Attempting to forge a trade agreement with the EU; on top of the unpredictability of president Trump's public appearances and statements, that have to be observed but also nuanced afterwards in order to serve American interest and existing commitments.

Russia remains an adversary that steps in wherever American interests are present, trying to subvert them, but is considered less of a threat, because of its weak economic power; China is the primary rival at all levels, and should be contained via multiple types of alliances; EU is a partner as long as it meets the real competition conditions, including investing in its defense and acquiring new capabilities; and, in the Middle East, Iran is an enemy that should be contained and Israel is the most important ally, while Sunni Gulf Arab states represent viable partners when trying to contain Iran and stabilize the Middle East.

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THE PICTURE
OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE

Teodor BADIU*

Considering the global evolutions and the constant (sometimes, even radical) changes that we are witnessing, we notice that interactions between different civilizations create a true "domino effect", having more negative connotation than constructive one. But when we talk about Eastern Europe, the historical track reveals the struggle of powers to challenge and counteract opponents' ability to gain advantages, a situation/process that after 1945 specialists defined as balance of power. So that, detailing the situation in the Southeastern Europe, we will notice how actors such as the Russian Federation, Turkey and the US, are trying to use this area to balance each other and to promote themselves globally in the international anarchic system. Secondary actors, such as Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Serbia and the Republic of Moldova, are trying to participate in this international game with the intention of stabilizing and returning to the path of normality, although even between them, they try to make a demarcation between chaos and stability in the Southeastern Europe.

***Keywords**: balance of power; Southeastern Europe; NATO; geostrategy; threats, security.*

Introduction

Since the Middle Ages, the Upper East Europe region has been in the convergence of the interests of the great powers, and this space has become a common reference point of political and military maneuvers in the attempts to maintain a balance that would prevent the rise of a hegemon. We can say that from a social, cultural and historical point of view this part of Europe belong, in fact, to Eastern Europe[1]. Thus, the borders of Southeastern Europe are not solid, but rather fluid, and we need to see the actors from this geographical space as an interconnected entity with multiple strategic values. This paper aims at emphasizing the relevance of the strategic and security aspect of the area, what actors are interested and involved in the current historical

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[1] A.N.: In the case of Eastern Europe, like other regions of the globe, there is no clear delimitation, the definitions and delimitations of this area varying from author to author and from source to source. However, it is also accepted that the Eastern Europe consists of the Baltic states - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania -, Central European States - Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia -, Balkan States and Southeastern Europe - Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, the Republic of North Macedonia and Bulgaria - and only Eastern states - Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. See also URL: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Eastern_Europe, accessed on 14.10.2018.

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time, if some political and military movements in the region can cause changes of balance of power, and how it can affect other neighboring areas. So, through this work, I would like to highlight the pragmatic importance of the area and how it can determine, through the big players' interventions, unexpected geopolitical changes in the medium and long term.

Structurally, the first part of the paper refers to the big players that are directly involved in Southeastern Europe – the US, the Russian Federation and Turkey – and I try to give a perspective on everyone's motivation to act, followed by an attempt to provide a description of the situation. Next, I will detail the actions of the secondary players - Romania and Bulgaria, as NATO states in the region, and Ukraine, as an element not affiliated to the area, but whose dynamics could generate risks and threats to the security architecture of Southeast Europe – and, ultimately, I will analyze the conflicts between Kosovo-Serbia and Transnistria-Republic of Moldova, in an attempt to show how these security problems can cause serious issues on the security of the region, with the possibility to be used by the non-NATO states against NATO.

Regarding the balance of power in the region, based on the Cold War empiricism, whether we talk about authors such as Thucydides and Carl von Clausewitz or Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz or Martin Wight, mainly, all define the international environment as a scene where state actors confront, individually or as a group, to balance power relations and to impose their will and cultural model. In a realistic view, the balance of power is considered to be a natural aspect, because if a state or a group of states earns its or their supremacy, the other states will make a coalition against them to restore the balance. There are two approaches: *simple power balance* can be achieved between two entities, which will make a simple equilibrium, or at least between three entities, which will make a complex equilibrium. Here, we have two levels, namely global balance – referring to the international environment – and regional balance – referring to specific areas[2].

In this context we can notice a new rebalancing, both of the Black Sea region and Eastern Europe, seen as a confrontation between the Orient - expressed by the Russian Federation, especially from historical point of view that contributed to its strategic culture, and Turkey, where we need to consider the attitude towards its allies after the failure of the 2016 coup d'état – and the West – expressed through NATO and EU structures.

But the question arises: what causes this rebalance, involving riparian and remote actors, in the Southeastern Europe? As we can see, there are some elements, such as the Russian Federation and Turkey, having a proactive approach from a political and military perspective, in order to transform the *local balance[3]* in their favor and to use it for the transition to a *global balance*; Ukraine is trying to recover from the shocks after the loss of the Crimean Peninsula and the confrontations between its own forces and the pro-Russian separatists; the slow political and economic recovery of Serbia after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and after the bombing of Belgrade by NATO forces, where Serbs could play a vindictive role in the context of NATO security architecture; the difficult situation of Republic of Moldova and Bulgaria, whose necessary security policies exceed their economic and military capabilities due to their internal problems, encountering difficulties in providing prompt responses to the threats and risks of the Black Sea region, both failing to combat the influence of the Russian Federation on them; and Romania's position as a forward operating base for NATO in the region that should increase its role as a security generator, alongside Poland, even if the infrastructure does not allow it to maximize its actions and the costs exceed the state's possibilities.

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[2] Edward A. Kolodziej, "Securitatea și relațiile internaționale", translated by Ramona-Elena Lupu, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2007, pp. 161-188.
[3] Paul Robinson, *Dicționar de securitate internațională*, translated by Monica Neamț, CA Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca, 2010, p. 82.

1. What are the main actors and what causes them to act in the region?

Southeastern Europe is an area of particular importance with old military valences, but also with new geo-economic implications that can increase the wealth of states or, used by competitors, can work against national economies. So, whether we are talking about the Black Sea basin stakes – the strategic one, because it offers access to the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosporus and the Dardanelles and to the Danube mouths, so that the state who holds the majority or total political and military control of the basin is increasing its power and influence in the region; and the energetic one, because, on one hand, in the underground of the Black Sea there are significant deposits of oil and natural gas[4], and, on other hand, it can become a transportation route for energy resources – whether we are talking about the political and military stakes of the Western Balkans – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, the Republic of Moldova or Ukraine, the dynamics of the international environment of this region largely keeps the historical cyclicality, where strong actors intersect and rationally try to impose their will.

I. Russian Federation

Starting with the Russian Federation, there is a defining moment that transformed the idea into action, in this case the moment of Vladimir Putin's speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference. Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, announced[5], in an almost prophetic tone, the directions his state will take in the context of the new world order, so that he then pointed out the intentions of the Russian leadership to turn his state into an international decision-maker. Later, with the occasion of the centenary of the Bolshevik Revolution, he betrayed a nostalgia for the valences of the imperial Russia[6], which would denote a return to origins. In this regard, the Russian Federation conducts hybrid actions – a combination of military, unconventional and informational operations - and political pressures – energy and economic blackmail, diplomatic actions, disproportionate rewards, etc. – against competitors and it has set a couple of principles to direct its actions from Eastern Europe towards Asia.

Territorial-political defense of the state – the Russian state is aware of the fact that it is vulnerable in two major aspects: its territory is asymmetrically populated, so the majority of the population is situated in the European Russia, and the defense and security of the borders of such a colossus involve significant costs, complex and functional logistics and massive involvement of state forces. In this situation, the promoted regime is moving away from the models of Western democracies, favored more and more after the 1990's, causing dissatisfaction and giving the premises of social insurgences that could have a paralyzing effect on the institutions and general infrastructures. Thus, the adoption of a defensive-aggressive political approach based on a pretext of opposition to a state or a group of states, gives legitimacy to coercive actions, both in the face of international opinion and in the face of one's own society that is involved, on its own initiative or aided to accept and support the policies of its own government, even if it neglects the Russian citizen. In this context, a Russian security perspective has been created with strong military valences, which pursues four dimensions[7]: the discouragement of military/political threats that

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[4] Daniel Ionașcu, "Zăcăminte valoroase din Marea Neagră. Cum poate deveni România un hub regional de gaze naturale", in *Adevărul*, URL: https://adevarul.ro/economie/afaceri/zacaminte-valoroase-marea-neagra-deveni-romania-hub-regional-gaze-naturale-1_561fd071f5eaafab2cb1ab85/index.html, accessed on 14.10.2018.

[5] The official site of Russian Presidency, URL: http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034, accessed on 04.01.2019.

[6] David Filipov, "Russia carefully marks 100th anniversary of Great October Revolution", in *The Washington Post*, URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/russia-carefully-marks-100th-anniversary-of-great-october-revolution/2017/11/06/94afde02-c284-11e7-9922-4151f5ca6168_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8211799fbf98, accessed on 04.01.2019.

[7] The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, URL: http://eng.mil.ru/en/mission/tasks.htm, accessed on 14.09.2018.

can negatively affect national security and the promotion of its interests; support political and economic interests for the benefit of the state; place other types of operations than the ones of constraints; and the use of military force when needed, which has been deeply felt in recent years in the Black Sea basin.

Influencing areas near the border – although the dissolution of the USSR has led to the emergence of new states whose history, culture, values, traditions and customs are largely different from the rest of the former Soviet republics, the Russian Federation, by virtue of its historical links, but also having strategic and economic reasoning, preferred to continue to keep in touch with ex-soviet states. To begin with, the CIS[8] solution seemed the most profitable option to maintain a political and economic link between the former Soviet Union core and former peripheral states. From the observed actions of the Russian Federation, it is noted that there is a tacit agreement to give up the influence on the states that were part of the Warsaw Treaty – keeping an interest in those of Slavic origins where the affiliation to a common branch may also produce, in different measures, effects on their national policies – in favor of Western intergovernmental institutions. However, when the influence of the Western structures began to expand on the former USSR federal republics, the Russian state reacted with the military invasion of Georgia and then, the destabilization process of Ukraine, followed later by the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula – an action explained by some analysts, especially from RAND Corporation or Geopolitical Future[9], as a

correction of the historical territorial boundaries. From their perspective, the Russian Federation's maritime territory in the Black Sea basin is close to the one owned during the Russian Empire. It should be noted that the geostrategic importance of the Georgia and Ukraine, as riparian actors, is important for the Russian Federation's security architecture, as they may constitute breaches.

Over time, the Russian actions also aimed at transmitting messages that set the limits of the relations between Russia and NATO and Russia and the EU, mostly in that matter. Exception made the Baltic States, whose specificities have led to Moscow's disinterest in their fate, but with the mention that they have not left the Russian minorities from that states, being ready to intervene in their support if it was needed. It is obvious to us that Moscow will not give up its influence on historical territories, even if they are currently, theoretically, sovereign and independent international actors, whose relationship with them is mediated not by the Foreign Minister, but by Kremlin Chief of Staff.

The perspective of transforming the Russian Federation into a Great Power – Inevitably, we must refer to the Russian pride as a specific feature of the Russian nation's psychology/identity, which acted as a driving force that fueled the ambitions of this state for centuries. Since the time of Peter the Great, the idea of a cosmopolitan Russia as a cradle of Slav civilization, has made the Russians to enlarge their expansionist tendencies in all forms - political, military, cultural, social, economic – and engaged them in various confrontations in order to be recognized after their power and their status by the international decision-makers, even if Russia's real capabilities could not support the claims of political elites. Kremlin leadership is trying to prove that the Russian model can be an alternative and/or a solution for international policy issues, and, thus, deserving through its efforts, its place in the G-states. It also tries to assume a leading role in two other fundamental aspects: religion and identity. Considering that from a religious point of view, with the exception of Turkey, all riparian states have Orthodox confessions, and,

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[8] A.N.: The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional organization composed of former states that formed the USSR and in present being members only 10 from 15: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The aims of this organization are: to recognize and respect the principle of non-interference in internal problems, to respect national sovereignty, not to use coercive methods in international relations and between them and the equal rights of members.

[9] George Friedman, "Russia's Strategy: Built on Illusion", *Geopolitical Futures*, URL: https://geopoliticalfutures.com/russias-strategy-built-illusion/, accessed on 06.10.2018.

at linguistic and cultural level, the majority of the riparian states – Ukraine, Georgia, Bulgaria – share common roots. This is why the Russian Federation is trying to position itself in respect to them and others similar in Eastern Europe, as the continuator of the Byzantine Empire[10].

Non-interference in home affairs – although paradoxically, the actions of the Russian Federation in recent years in Europe and the Middle East have proved to have the opposite meaning to this principle. Seen from the Russian perspective, the non-intervention over internal regulation is a key element of Russian politics. Only the Russian Federation and its associated states are excluding the principle of non-intervention in internal politics. From its behavior, we can conclude that in order to become a great power and to act in accordance with its objectives, the Russian Federation must be "free" of the elements and external agents that can influence its decisions or can constrain it. To secure itself from external interference, Kremlin approaches a tactic to avoid competition where the state is weak and prefers to eliminate competition or sabotage it to overpass the other states.

The political changes announced by the Russian Federation at the Security Conferences have begun to drive this player towards a strong militarization that produces in Eastern Europe, but specifically in Southeast Europe – the presence of the 14th Army in Tiraspol, the militarization of Sevastopol, the presence of a permanent naval fleet in the Black Sea, the existence of the S-400 missile system in the Crimea - a serious security dilemma. Thus, we can say that the essence of the Russian military threat lies in the fact that the inequalities of power between the international actors have determined symmetrical actions in terms of rearmament and the use of power in this region in order to face or discourage potentially threatening actors against the very idea of "Russia" – an idea that protects the Russian population from alteration, but also causes it to

act for the benefit of the state and justify various approaches[11] – such as the United States, for example. Finally, we can say that the Russian Federation still does not exclude the application of its principles to Southeast Europe, marking its status as an opponent of Western influence, but also the ambition to demonstrate the efficiency of the Russian model as a first step in the spheres of influence reconfiguration in Europe.

II. Turkey

Regarding Turkey, it has reverted to international attention as the third major actor involved in the region, after the USA and the Russian Federation, following its transition from passivity to dynamism concerning foreign policy. So, the wider Black Sea area has become one of the points of interest for Turkey, which it sees an opportunity that will drive it to the rank of regional power. Although, its recent actions represent a sudden movement with ample effects on the security architecture of Southeast Europe, to a certain extent the evolution of some essence events was predictable. Albeit Turkey is an old member of the North Atlantic Alliance, the increasingly intense activity of the US Navy in the Black Sea and its focus on US political and military impulse have led Turkey to have fears that the United States may reject the Montreux Convention and could pass, through NATO, the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits from an exclusive use to a common one for the member states. Dubbed by the Alliance's new policies in the Black Sea area and the presence of several allies in the area, Turkey began to feel out of its element, perceiving a strong constraint on its freedom of action in the Black Sea and causing it to move towards the Russian Federation, especially given the fact that between the two states there is a tradition of political and military relations on the Black Sea dating from the 18th century. It is important to appreciate that the psycho-historical perception of the Turks on the Bosporus and Dardanelles causes them to act in

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[10] Jean-Sylvestre Mongrenier, *Rusia amenință oare Occidentul?* Cartier Publishing House, Chisinau, 2010, pp. 65-66.

[11] Barry Buzan, *Popoarele, statele şi frica: O agendă pentru studii de securitate internațională în epoca de după Războiul Rece*, Cartier Publishing House, Chisinau, 2017, p. 103.

international politics with harmful opportunism generated by the fear of losing control over the straits, but this also proves that they are not willing/open to concessions in front of NATO or Russia in this context. From the point of view of the Turkish strategic culture, the Turkish lake of the Black Sea paradigm is still valid, dating from the time of the Ottoman Empire. But they are in contradiction with the same Russian paradigm, which determines both states to try to share a common approach to the region, according to their interests.

And although Turkey tends to become a member with an exceptional status within the Alliance, it can also play a particularly important role as a mediator in the relationship between NATO and the Russian Federation, because, from experience, Turkey is aware that, in the long run, Russia can be an untrustworthy partner and, between the two actors, tense situations can escalate quickly and in a very short time. In this respect, Ankara's leadership remains dependent on its membership with the Alliance and its relationship with the USA, especially as the Russians will try to undermine the Turkish importance in the Black Sea, but it cannot ignore the other riparian actors responsible for their good neighborly relations. Certainly, Turkey's activity in the wider Black Sea area raises great questions and concerns for others riparian states, especially for Romania, whose NATO outposts disperse attention from the Russian Federation's game, consuming additional resources in monitoring Turkish activity; Greece considers Turkey to be a threat to regional security, especially because of the historical conflict between the two actors; and Ukraine, which is in an open conflict with Russian-backed rebels, looks closely at Russian-Turkish cooperation, especially since Turkey did not recognize the annexation of the Crimea by the Russians. As we see Turkey's attempt to promote itself as a solution and model in solving European problems, it actually generates more tension and destabilization, precisely because of the common memory of the Southeastern European states that have been for decades under Ottoman pressure and domination, Turkey's interventions being

reminiscent of these times.

Another aspect is that Turkey is forced by its cultural-historical specificity, to include the religious approach in its internal and, even, foreign policy. So that, using the Muslim communities beyond the Black Sea shores, can influence the geostrategic directions of the actors through the religious communities within them. What gives these communities the strategic value is that they can see the Turkish state as one of the pillars of the old and modern Islam. For example, Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania, where they form the majority, can feel affinities with Turkey, which makes them vulnerable to religious initiatives led by the Turks, and is also a launching pad for promoting Turkish interests beyond the wider Black Sea region to the heart of Europe.

III. United States of America

On the other hand, the US, through NATO, has a significant relevance to the security environment in the region. After 1945, the United States became, based on idea of American exceptionalism[12] – the perspective of a special mission that marked the American political environment and legitimized its interventions in the world as a missionary action to spread the principles of democracy, doubled by the promotion of national interests –, the power they aspired at and a few decades later, the disappearance of the Warsaw Treaty, along with the collapse of the USSR, confirmed the United States key role in international politics. But its apogee has caused a series of mistakes made by American governments since 1990 that have turned the advantage of being the world hegemon into a political and economic burden. So that, the poor power management allowed the military rise of the Russian Federation at the edges of the North Atlantic Alliance, and since September 11, 2001, we notice that the US and NATO focus on the Middle East[13], leaving Europe and the Black

[12] George Cristian Maior, *Incertitudine. Gândire strategică și relații internaționale în secolul XXI*, Cartier Publishing House, Chisinau, 2015, pp. 113-115.
[13] David Ochmanek, Peter A. Wilson, Brenna Allen, John Speed Meyers, Carter C. Price, *U.S. Military Capabilities*

Sea region to one side. From what we can see, Eastern Europe has reverted, to a large extent, to the specific view of the Cold War period, where the US comes to counterbalance the Russian Federation, but pursuing the deterrence doctrine, both conventional and nuclear.

And yet, the United States, in the NATO context, does not take full advantage of its strength to secure the region, a proof being the demands of the Eastern European states – members of the Alliance – to add more US troops and military equipment in the region. But the United States' actions do not show a lack of attitude, precisely because of the investments in defensive systems – one of the examples consists in implementing the *European Phased Adaptive Approach, EPAA*[14], also known as the missile defense system – demonstrating the interest of the United States in preserving and forging its influence in Eastern Europe. It should be noted, however, that the relationship between the USA and the Russian Federation, no matter how antithetical it may seem, it is a rather stable and consistent one. Even after the 1990s, the two actors have shown that in some areas they can work closely, for example, on the issue of cosmic space as a strategic aspect from which both can benefit and as a continuation of bipolarity, from which they mutually can secure their power and influence in an attempt to counter the multi-polarity of the international arena.

As for the Southeastern European area, we can assume that either the collaboration between the two states will become stronger, preserving each area of influence and without actually challenge each other; either the US will continue to emphasize and strengthen its hegemony status by using a combined approach between soft and hard power in the region.

However, the motivation of the United States of America to maintain its influence in Eastern Europe, but particularly in Southeastern Europe – namely the Readiness Action Plan[15], which means the establishment of medium and long-term insurance measures to strengthen the defense of NATO member states and the prevention of aggression with a focus on joint exercises and collective defense – is due to its strategic culture which, after 1945, was modeled on the conception of decisive power in the international arena. And later, the collapse of the USSR gave the United States the hegemonic power status. This very long period of involvement in the international environment will cause the US to continue perpetuate its influence and strategic vision in the region, especially since much of the Eastern and Southeastern European countries prefer a closer relationship with the US at the expense of the Russian Federation, whose reminiscences of the socialist past are still wounds in the common consciousness of the former satellite states.

Thus, if in the past in the East and South-East of Europe we were talking about empires that opposed each other in order to maintain a balance of power, now this feature has been perpetuated with the indication that the actors involved are new, but also resized as a result of the broad geopolitical changes. It is precisely because of these changes states like Romania and Bulgaria as NATO members or states like Ukraine − with the help of the EU or NATO − have real chances of contributing to the balance of regional power, becoming, politically and military, much more relevant than in previous periods when the actors' survival depended only on their own abilities.

2. Perspectives of the secondary actors

Giving the developments of the new balance of power, we can say that riparian actors who are not directly involved, but who feel the effects of these changes, have a certain interest in establishing this balance. Referring to Ukraine, the episodes of Crimean annexation and the beginning of civilian confrontations, especially

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and Forces for a Dangerous World. Rethinking the U.S. Approach to Force Planning, RAND Corporation, 2017, p. 31.
[14] ***, "European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA)", *Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance*, URL: http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems-2/missile-defense-systems/policy-coming-soon/european-phased-adaptive-approach-epaa/, accessed on 15.10.2018.

[15] ***, "Readiness Action Plan", *NATO*, URL: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm?selectedlocale=en, accessed on 04.10.2018.

in the eastern part of the state, produced a series of vulnerabilities and problems in the state functioning that closely matched the typology of a failed state.

In this light, the leadership of Kiev is subject to issues related to the territorial integrity of the state, stability and preservation of national and social security, development issues, institutional malfunctioning and defense. The militarization of Crimea by the Russian Federation with the three main forces of the army – infantry, aviation and navy – having also the S-400 missile defense system[16], creates security dilemmas not only for Ukraine, but accentuates it to the rest of NATO eastern European countries. Also, with Iskander M/SS-26 ballistic missile systems and Iskander M/SS-26[17] tactical nuclear units from Kaliningrad, it forms strong defensive/offensive points in Eastern Europe that have the ability to hinder or cancel the Alliance's efforts to engage in military action in the event of a conventional conflict.

It must be noted that Viktor Yanukovych's presidency, due to his affinity with Kremlin and the lack of interest in bringing Ukraine closer to the West, determined the aggravation of corruption, economic and political instability, social tensions and precarious institutional functioning[18]. So, after the collapse of the USSR, Ukraine has failed to apply policies specific to good governance or, in terms of politics and economy, to make the transition from the old system to something better that could produce visible effects in favor of the state and of society. Firstly, this only facilitated for the Russians the possibility for a shadow control, and secondly, the possibility to intervene in the event that

Ukraine's path moved away from the Russian Federation. A proof of long-term bad political management is the actions of the leadership after Viktor Yanukovych, which has deepened the crisis in the Ukrainian state. According to a report by the RAND Corporation[19], immediately after the Crimean annexation, the Interim Government of Kiev tried to adopt a law prohibiting Russian language from being spoken, which stirred the riots of ethnic Russians in the eastern part of the country. In the middle of them, in the eastern regions of the country, politicians and opinion-makers from the outskirts of the Ukrainian political scene, who, helped by the Russian intelligence services, have obtained an independent temporary control of the regions in relation to Kiev. The most relevant example in this regard is the case of the Donbass region, which has remained an unsolved security issue. Thus, in order to counter the loss of political control over their own territories, the Ukrainian government replaced the regional leaders with local oligarchs in the hope that they would significantly contribute to maintaining control, in the light of their personal interests. But in the eastern part of the country the solution was unsuccessful, being replaced by pro-Russian protesters, who went from demands for extended autonomy and federalization to directly self-proclaiming independence from Ukraine. The military response of Kiev was not only weak, but pointed out the inability to coordinate the army, the lack of loyalty through the waves of defections and the disparity between official documents and reality.

It is true that the position of Ukraine will move further away from the Russian Federation, choosing the Western structures as an optimal alternative, but remains for the moment blocked in this situation - the deprivation of territory and the confrontations between the governmental and separatist forces - without being able to bring, in the short and medium terms, an added value to the regional security environment. The internal

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[16] Manea Robert, "Rusia amplasează un sistem avansat de apărare anti-rachetă S-400 în Crimeea", in *NewsInt*, URL: https://newsint.ro/global-news/europa/rusia-amplaseaza-un-sistem-avansat-de-aparare-anti-racheta-s-400-crimeea/, accessed on 15.09.2018.

[17] Bryan Frederick, Matthew Povlock, Stephen Watts, Miranda Priebe, Edward Geist, *Assessing Russian Reaction to U.S. and NATO Posture Enhancements*, RAND Corporation, 2017, p. 107.

[18] Samuel Charap, James Dobbins, Andrei Zagorski, Reinhard Krumm, Esther Ademmer, Yaroslav Lissovolik, Oleksandr Chalyi, Yulia Nikitina, *Getting Out from "In-Between"*, RAND Corporation, 2018, pp. 35-36.

[19] Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Olesya Tkacheva, Jenny Oberholtzer, *Lessons from Russian's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, RAND Corporation, 2017, pp. 36-41.

confrontations, doubled by the vindictive attitude of the Ukrainian officials, turn Ukraine into a source of insecurity alongside the frozen areas such as Transnistria and Kosovo, where Kremlin can maximize the benefits in its favor.

In this context, being so unstable, the nearby states of southeastern Europe, such as Romania and Bulgaria, can feel pressure from the threats and risks that Ukraine is generating, and to a certain extent there is the possibility of engaging them, against their will, in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Also, Ukraine situation is making Romania and Bulgaria to strengthen politically and militarily, forcing them over their capacities to stop the expansion of instability in national territories as well.

Regarding the situation of Romania and Bulgaria as peripheral NATO bastions, they are in a position to manage the security dynamics of the region as part of the Alliance, but are particularly disadvantaged, especially considering the combined forces of the Russian Federation and Turkey – with the mention that it is still NATO member, equally responsible for its obligations to provide security to allies and to maintain good neighborly relations with them. The region insecurity exceeds the capabilities of the two states by sea and aviation; increase the dependence on allied military support which creates breaches in national defense systems, due to the fact that the effectiveness of defense efforts is directly proportional to the forces of the states involved in the regional security process; also, the absence of major infrastructure investments and defense industry; lack of unity of the EU states and the very distinct perceptions of the western states in relation to the Eastern ones regarding the threats and risks on the security environment coming from the East.

Thus, the presence of NATO forces, but especially of the United States, is particularly important, because only by doing so, the doctrine of deterrence can be implemented, hindering the possible hybrid threats directed towards Romania and Bulgaria in Southeastern Europe. The absence of timely endowment programs and the negligence with which these two states have treated their own armies over the last decade, demonstrate a vicious long-term strategic thinking. This problem is largely due to their post-communist social and political transition where the Romanian and Bulgarian political environments kept in place people from the old system into the new one due to the lack of a new political elite successors, redefining the role and purpose of the political decision-maker[20]. Thus, even after the transition period, in both countries had functioned a mixed system based on the rules of democracy and specific elements of the old system.

But if we refer strictly to Bulgaria, it must be said that it is under Russian economic "occupation and therefore it is conditioned by the collaboration with Romania – considering the relationship of the two states, their opening to the Black Sea and the need to collaborate in order to counteract external influences.

According to a Global Firepower ranking[21] of the world's military capabilities, Romania holds position 40 and Bulgaria position 60, given that the US is at the top of the list, followed by the Russian Federation. In this light, it becomes obvious that, from a military point of view, the two states are vulnerable and can hardly take action to defend themselves, mainly to the Russian Federation.

However, Bulgaria and Romania have an essential advantage over the two competitors – Turkey and Russia – namely the high degree of compatibility between these two nations, which allows them to co-ordinate and collaborate with ease, through exchanges of experience and/ or information in the military, intelligence and future regional security strategies where both states are concerned with risks and threats. Also, given that many European states face military budgeting problems, military technique aging and staff shortages, Romania and Poland initiated

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[20] Grzegorz Ekiert, Stephen E. Hanson, "Timp, spațiu și schimbare instituțională în Europa Centrală și de Est", in *Capitalism și democrație în Europa Centrală și de Est*, Grzegorz Ekiert, Stephen E. Hanson (editors), Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, 2010, p. 21.

[21] ***, "Military Strength Ranking", *Global Firepower*, URL: https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing. asp, accessed on 10.10.2018.

with the support of the neighbor allies and the US – the creation of a dual system of protection and security through the state-network concept[22] – through which interconnection nodes and inter-state communication networks are established in the military and economic fields – named Bucharest 9 Format (B9) and the Three Seas Initiative (3SI) format. In this respect, they are making a joint and integrated effort to stop the destabilizing activity of the Russian Federation, which uses hybrid, maskirovka[23] and energy blackmail tactics[24].

Although it is not a singular episode, we must keep in mind the similarities between these two security structures and regional alliances of the interwar period, namely the Little Entente[25] and the Balkan Pact[26]. Then, like in today's context, set for defensive purposes, the failure of those regional alliances is currently fueling the new intergovernmental structures fear for a repetition of subsequent events.

Starting with the Bucharest 9 Format, this initiative is made up of the Baltic countries, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and was established by the Romanian-Polish consensus during the European and Central European Summit of 2015. One year later, they set the ground for the Three Seas Initiative, including a wider spectrum of states from the Baltic States, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria[27]. Although the existence of initiatives is public, it is still not very clear how they will proceed and what will really be the assumed role. The willingness of the actors involved to not depend on Allied powers in the context of securing their own security has led them to build two large security communities based on the military and economic dimensions – the decision to double the military by the economic spectrum is not random, because it determines the existence and development of the military component, which leads to a cruel but simple reason: the economic field can exist without military field, but the military field cannot exist without the economic one.

3. Possible breaches of NATO security system in the Southeast European region

As we have seen earlier, how the allied states' initiatives, B9 and 3SI, are trying to form a common front – the southeastern flank with the northeast – against a set of common threats, but also to prevent the spread of destabilization from Ukraine to their borders, we note that just in the proximity of this front there are elements that may constitute insecurity outbreaks that have the potential to cause risks and threats for the common security architecture of the East-European, NATO and EU states.

Of course, when we talk about the breaches of an integrated defense system, there is a multitude of elements and perspectives that can be addressed and that can explain its correct functionality or malfunction. But this time, we will focus our attention on two frozen conflicts, the Transnistrian issue and Kosovo, because they have the potential to determine subsequent evolutions in the process of securitization in the region of Eastern Europe and, particular, in Southeast Europe.

Thus, after the declaration of independence in 1991, the Republic of Moldova has faced an aggravation of the situation in Transnistria, the main ethnic Slavs from the eastern bank of Dniester formed a separatist republic, near the Gagauz Republic, called the Moldavian Republic of Dniester, having the capital at Tiraspol. The stationing of the 14th Army in Chisinau[28] since

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[22] George Cristian Maior, *Incertitudine. Gândire strategică și relații internaționale în secolul XXI*, Cartier Publishing house, Chisinau, 2015, p. 74.

[23] A.N.: Maskirovka refers to military deception.

[24] George Friedman, "From the Intermarium to the Three Seas", in *Geopolitical Futures*, URL: https://geopoliticalfutures.com/intermarium-three-seas/, accessed on 06.10.2018.

[25] Encyclopaedia Britannica, URL: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Little-Entente, accessed on 06.10.2018.

[26] ***, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, URL: https://www.britannica.com/, accessed on 05.10.2018.

[27]***, "Declarație comună a miniștrilor de externe din statele Formatului București 9 (B9)", *Ministerul Afacerilor Externe*, URL: https://www.mae.ro/node/43571, accessed on 06.10.2018.

[28] Paul Dănuț Duță, Teodor Frunzeti, Ion Panait, *Operațiuni și misiuni OSCE: Studiu de caz: Moldova*, Techno Media

1956 and then in Tiraspol was and continues to be a challenging element, directly for the national security of states, such as Romania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. That puts a strong pressure on Romania and Bulgaria – important NATO outposts – which, as we have seen, are in a process of military modernization. Also, the positioning of a Russian army so close to the borders of both Romania and Bulgaria, as well as of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, inevitably leads to the exertion of Russian influence on them, even if the first two are members of the EU and NATO. The 14th Army is a Russian key with an unbalanced role in the regional power balance, being a realistic element, because it uses the coercive component to redefine diplomatic policy and relations.

On the other hand, the presence of the 14th Army is also explained, beyond the Russians' opportunity to engage in regional geopolitical developments, by the existence in Tiraspol of one of the largest armament warehouse, dating from the Soviet era, that cannot be relocated to the Russian Federation territory, mainly because of the very high costs it would entail, but also because of its very convenient positioning. So, based on this fact after the 1990s, there was an initiative called the "Belkovski Proposal"[29] that would give Transnistria status with all rights, but without offering a solution to the Russian arsenal issue. In the scenario where the "Belkovski Proposal" is put into practice, the situation could be worsened precisely because of the Transnistrian's dependence on the defense of the Russian forces and at the initiative of Tiraspol or Moscow, the Russian Federation would be invited to install nuclear or conventional ballistic and tactical systems, like in Kaliningrad, so the European security environment would be shaken from the ground. Beyond the fear and tense relations, there would be a visible fracture within Europe as a result of the divergences generated by the redefining of many states' foreign policy towards the US and the Russian Federation.

By changing the topic to the Kosovo problem,

according to an older interview from the Council on Foreign Relations[30], the recognition by most Western states, especially the United States, of Kosovo's independence, was one of the solutions with the lowest negative effects. But it was another strong blow for the Serbs, which further distracted them from Western values in favor of deepening their cultural-historical relationship with the Russian Federation. It should be remembered that, at the time of Kosovo's secession, the territorial delimitation covered not only the territories of the Kosovo Albanians, but also the northern part of the state included an important minority of Kosovo Serbs who were in a situation of ingratitude: on one hand, there was a risk of being victims of some policies of social and political segregation, thus forming ghetto enclaves, and on the other hand, Kosovo Serbs feel no degree of closeness or affinity toward the new state, challenging the state construction of Kosovo and still recognizing it as part of Serbia. Under the auspices of ethnic differences in the northern Kosovo border, if the outbreak of a new secessionist interethnic conflict seems to be a matter of time, the possibility that Serbia might intervene, militarily speaking, to support the Kosovo Serbs, is highly probable. And in this situation, Serbia could demand the Russian Federation military support that would turn the Serbian state into a powerful Russian military outpost that would cause tensions between Russian forces and NATO peacekeepers in Kosovo.

Although discussions for a possible accession of Serbia to the European Union exist, but because of a dispute with one of the neighbors, according to the EU Treaty, the adhesion procedure is blocked. Also, under the pressure of its unfavorable situation, Serbia can change its foreign policy approach by preferring a strong economic rapprochement with China and a military one to the Russian Federation, having the possibility to host Russian military bases

Publishing House, Sibiu, 2008, pp. 242-243.
[29]   *Ibidem*, p. 248.

[30]   Charles A. Kupchan (interviewed), "Kupchan: Recognizing Kosovo Least Bad Option for United States", in *Council on Foreign Relations*, URL: https://www.cfr.org/interview/kupchan-recognizing-kosovo-least-bad-option-united-states, accessed on 18.09.2018.

and/or ballistic systems as in the case of Belarus. We can create a scenario in which we can see the economic and military ties between Serbia and the Russian Federation and China, so that they can be invited to join the Shanghai Treaty if the EU treats with disinterest the Serbia issue. Not only would the Russian Federation have political and military access within the European Union and NATO, but for China it would be the economic ramp it craves to penetrate the European market.

As we note the possibilities of maneuver of Serbia, whether real or hypothetical, are not so limited, and this fact determined the proactive attitudes of Poland and Romania as NATO's flanking leaders. Taken into account this context of the Republic of Moldova and Serbia, through unresolved territorial issues, can make a significant contribution to the state insecurity of the Southeastern European region.

Although the relevance of the frozen conflicts between Serbia and Kosovo and the Republic of Moldova with Transnistria appears to be low in the context of changes of the balance of power in the region, they can represent significant pawns whose geographic positioning currently gives them a geostrategic relevance. Due to the fact that Serbia and Transnistria are using the conflict to affirm themselves in an international context, corroborated with the support of the Russian Federation for their actions and intentions, they will, at one point, determine a joint move which the Russian Federation will benefit from.

Conclusions

In December 9, 1999 John C. Gannon, a member of the National Intelligence Council, gave a speech, highlighting some of the problematic issues of the newly established Russian Federation (1991), specific to the transition period – a blunt adaptation of the market economy, preservation of autocratic specificity, the cultural crisis to which society is subjected, etc. – seem to be solved in present in an atypical way and which has as reference points principles unaligned with the Western thinking. Since the Russian Federation can no longer express – military, cultural, ideological, economic and political - what the Soviet Union mean, it now wishes to assume the identity of the Russian Empire in the Black Sea region as a political, economic and military power coming in counterbalance for the US and NATO, but also for Turkey, and thus, the balance of power turning into a more complex issue.

The Eastern European states are facing two challenges: on the one hand, the actions of the Russian Federation and, on the other, the tendency of allies to work with it on economy and energy issues: for instance, we make reference to the duplicitous attitudes of some Eastern European actors (President Vladimir Putin's visit to Budapest or the pro-Russian attitude of the President of Bulgaria, Rumen Radev, and the Czech Republic, Milos Zeman.

The involvement of more and more actors in south-east and eastern part of Europe in the context of balance of power, if we speak from the perspective of realistic theories, leads us to a distance from the values and norms of the EU and NATO, each actor acting in accordance with his own national interests. However, the limits of the theories lie in the dynamics and geopolitics and the evolution of history, and these present, as can be easily observed, support an approach based on common security and cooperation. We can say that we are witnessing a confrontation between old and new conceptions of security, where the West is trying to come up with modern elements of *smart power* while the Russian Federation is trying its own conservative approach to state aggression as a solution of perpetuation and international assertion.

The Black Sea region represents, militarily and energetically, one of the West's vulnerable points, as for the Russian Federation, the North Caucasus represents a risk in its security system from a geographical, geostrategic and economic perspective. Turkey's recent actions to acquire S-400 anti-missile systems and trigger an economic war between Ankara and Washington – causing the US to impose sanctions on one of its allies – and Russia's rising aggression,

also testify the assumption that this region is becoming vulnerable, and for the states in the area it is becoming increasingly clear that without the emphasis of the American presence and Western Europeans the premises of a situation similar to the time of the Munich Agreement of 1938 may be created.

So, the predominantly soft attitudes of Westerners in the Black Sea region towards the Russian Federation and Turkey – whose actions show more and more signs of alienation to the North Atlantic Alliance, becoming an unstable player in international politics – with their assumption that the two actors do not have the necessary capabilities and neither enough determination to generate an US response, enhances the instability in the region. Especially after the episodes of the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 or the operations in Ukraine in 2014, we notice that the voice of the West is not strong enough. Although to a certain extent the directions of the actions of the two states are predictable, the Turks and the Russian Federation have shown, over time, that they can initiate spontaneous actions in their own logic, according to national strategic culture approaches.

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NATIONAL RESILIENCE – STRATEGIC OPTION OF STATE ACTORS TO ADAPT TO HYBRID THREATS

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The emphasis on the hybrid character in the aggressive behavior of the state and non-state actors determines the increasing complexity degree of the emerging security threats. The evolutions recorded in recent security conflicts and crises indicate the aggressors' tendency to carry out hostile actions simultaneously, on multiple operational levels, against the vulnerabilities identified in their targets. In this context, strengthening national resilience can be a viable option to respond against a hybrid spectrum of threats. The present paper summarizes the trends that determine the hybrid behavior in the global and regional security environment, the essential attributes of hybrid threats, as well as the dimensions of strengthening national resilience to these types of actions.

Keywords*: hybrid warfare; hybrid threats; hybrid strategy; national security; national resilience.*

Preliminary considerations

The reality in which we live seems to be better described by the *realist* conception of the world according to which the condition of generalized entropy that defines the relations in the international system favors the conflict expansion in multiple fields of interaction between actors – political, economic, military, informational and cyberspace.

However, an suitable response regarding the management of emerging security challenges seems to be provided by the *liberal* and *constructivist* view of international relations. Such a solution starts from the idea of compatibility (and not of mutual exclusion) between the *security* and the *resilience* of complex state social organizations. In this logic of complementarity between the two concepts, *resilience* can be considered a tool that contributes to ensuring national *security*. Before testing the validity of this hypothesis[1], several aspects need to be clarified and fathomed, as follows: the factors that favor the emergence of hybrid aggression manifestations, globally and regionally, in the security environment; what signifies *national resilience* and which are the main attributes of hybrid aggressions needed to strengthen *national resilience*.

1. Tendencies favoring hybrid behavior in international relations

The transition from the current liberal international order to another, governed by neorealist principles, is still a subject of dispute between the exponents of the two schools of thought in international relations. The neorealist

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[1] N.A.: aspect that is not the subject of this article.

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thesis does not deny the existence of the liberal international order but argues instead that its dominance after the end of the Cold War is about to stop. One of the most vocal exponents of structural realism, John J. Mearsheimer, goes as far as to claim that the liberal order, associated with the domination of a single superpower (US) in a unipolar international system, "contains the seeds of its own destruction"[2], arguing that, paradoxically, precisely the "success" achieved by integrating China and Russia into the current global economic architecture (of liberal inspiration) has created favorable conditions for the rise and "revisionism"[3] of the two actors.

The new international order described by Mearsheimer includes an emerging *multipolar system at the global level* – within which new arrangements will be defined globally, in the economic field (e.g. sanctions policy, trade regulation etc.), military (e.g. control of conventional weapons, disarmament and non-proliferation), environmental policies (e.g. management of global warming effects) and technology (e.g. use of 5G infrastructures and networks) – and *two other competing (sub) systems* around the two major rival powers, the US and China[4]. Mearsheimer's thesis is difficult to combat, although it minimizes Russia's potential[5] to become influential enough to determine developments in the security environment, if not globally (the global implications of the crisis in Ukraine are already known), at least regionally, in multiple contested security areas (e.g. Black Sea Region, Middle East and Central and Southeast Asia[6]).

Reinventing *realist* principles in the international relations – without thereby understanding the dissolution of the liberal international order – generates implications in what the actors and the interactions between them are concerned. The new reality becomes one in which geostrategic competition tends to intensify and to highlight the frictions between actors. Currently, we are already witnessing an increasingly high competition between the major powers on multiple levels of interaction, as follows:

– *at global level*, the actors are engaged in a fierce competition for accessing the economic markets and digital technologies based on artificial intelligence. Also, the confrontation between the actors tends to evolve in *areas of interaction that are insufficiently regulated at international level*, such as the informational, cyber and space domains, in order to gain control in the areas of strategic interest, extend the influence on the economic markets and achieve the competitive advantage in the field of digital technologies;

– *at regional level*, major actors are involved in actions that are aimed to increase the influence in the contested areas such as South America[7], Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific region, and to control the corridors that ensure the access to both important energy resources (e.g. Persian Gulf, South China Sea), and the existence of less explored trade routes (e.g. Arctic route).

Apart from the geostrategic competition, there are other factors that shape the developments in the security environment both globally and regionally. The international normative system is not comprehensive enough to regulate the actors' behavior in the cyber and information domains. Although recent efforts have been made in this

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[2] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Rise and Fall of the Liberal International Order*, pp. 2, 2018 URL: https://ndisc.nd.edu/assets/288231/rise_and_fall_of_the_liberal_international_order.september_11_2018.pdf, accessed on 09.11.2018.

[3] N.A.: The US National Security Strategy (2017) identifies China and Russia as "revisionist powers", a term commonly used in US analytical environment, in references to the actions undertaken externally by the two actors in a wide range of fields (political, economic, military, cyber, spatial and so on).

[4] *Ibidem*, p. 27.

[5] N.A.: His theory recognizes Russia as a great power that balances permanently, according to its own interests, between the two actors.

[6] N.A.: Especially from the perspective regarding the possible reduction of the US military footprint and other allied states in Afghanistan.

[7] N.A.: In the most recent case of the crisis in Venezuela, which reveals, from the beginning phase, the competition between US and Russia on a global level and the stake of the latter's involvement in this area, to legitimize itself as a global power.

regard by the UN[8], it still persists the different approaches of the international actors regarding cyber-aggression and their implications on *national sovereignty* and *unilateral measures* (derived from the right to self-defense) that can be adopted, in accordance with the international law, as a response of states to cyber attacks.

The proliferation of subversive actions of social influence and electoral processes, through information operations, was/is possible because of the absence of clear rules that sets the conduct in the online environment, applicable to both IT companies and media entities. In subsidiary, the current normative framework, established by the international humanitarian law, does not guarantee the inviolability of national security and the disruption of stability at regional and global level, as seen in the Georgian war and, later, in the conflict in Ukraine[9]. Therefore, these limitations and gaps in international law favor a type of hostile conduct we have not been accustomed with yet, not so much through the instruments of power that are used, but through the means and methods by which it is expressed, that enables the aggressor the possibilities of anonymization and camouflage in his actions.

At the same time, the increasing relevance of non-state actors in the international system – such as terrorist and hacker groups – is another kind of challenge that states must pay special attention to, in a world that is increasingly connected, as an effect of digitalization and widespread use of online social networks. They become much more autonomous at the operational level, being able to carry out, in a coordinated way, asymmetrical actions in the conflict zones in which they operate, as well as propaganda, recruitment and influence activities in the sense of executing terrorist attacks / sabotage at long distance outside the territorial area on which they operate, with effects on security at national, and,

sometimes, regional and global level. Threats that circumscribe these patterns become all the more complex as the extended operational potential of non-state actors is exploited by state actors (who use them as *proxy* elements) in order to achieve their own strategic objectives.

These developments – the increased geostrategic competition, the existing limitations in the international normative framework and the enhancing profile and actions of the non-state actors at global level – reiterate the need to identify solutions at the international community level that will ensure the conservation of security and stability at global level, beyond the sufficient condition (of *realist* inspiration) of *the balance of power* in the international system. The same tendencies bring to the fore *the states' role in ensuring their own security* - all the more important as the progress made on the dimension of international cooperation is significantly influenced by the actors' different political interests.

2. Main attributes of aggressions in the hybrid spectrum

Currently, the actions undertaken in an aggressive manner are very diverse. Operations of members of armed groups in combat-type uniforms without military insignia, unexplained explosions and malfunctions reported at the level of electricity and communications distribution systems, the occurrence of contradictory news and the dissemination of *fake news* through traditional media and social media are just a few of the elements[10] that can be identified again in future confrontation scenarios, integrated into the coordinated attacks of a potential aggressor.

For a better understanding of aggressions in the hybrid spectrum, we can refer to the following specific attributes:
  − the *variability* of the security environment or its ability to take different forms and aspects, depending on the actors' interactions (the higher their number, the higher and more complex the unpredictability in the security environment and

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[8] N.A.: In October 2018, two resolutions (A/C.1/73/L.37 and A/C.1/73/L.27/Rev.1) were adopted in the UN General Assembly, recognizing the applicability of international law and, especially the UN Charter, in order to ensure cyber security.

[9] N.A.: See the actions of the "little green men" in Crimea from February to March 2014, before the annexation of the peninsula to Russia.

[10] N.A.: derivated from lessons learned in Ukraine (2014).

its future evolution are);

– the *diversity* of the instruments of power, means and methods of action that can be used by the potential aggressor;

– the *existence of the (hybrid) strategy*, as an expression of the aggressor's ability to combine the instruments of power, to establish the means and methods of action and to synchronize them in a way that contributes to achieving its established objectives;

– the *ambiguous character of hostile actions* that makes it difficult to distinguish between the two states, *peace* and *war*. The implications at the target level can be translated, either by its late reactions (*it realizes very late that the effects of the aggressor's actions are systemic*), or by exaggerated tendencies in assessing the security situation - with negative effects on its credibility and in accentuating the differences of perception at the level of third parties, not directly involved in the conflict.

The most recent conflicts – Estonia (2007), Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014) – reflect not only the diversity of instruments of power and the means and methods of action undertaken in an aggressive manner, but especially the way in which they are combined to reach the objectives set at strategic level. The hybrid character of the aggression is conferred precisely by the potential of the aggressor to adapt the set of tools, means and methods of action to the whole operational context – defined by the particularities of the security environment (which influence the behavior of the aggressor, of his target and of the third actors), the vulnerabilities of the target and its own constraints (in relation to the political, financial, imagological costs involved in choosing the courses of action) – and related with its strategic objectives. Moreover, the combination of methods and means reveals the existence of a strategy of the aggressor in relation to its target. There is no sign of aggression in the hybrid spectrum in the absence of the linking elements between the different actions of the aggressors. They develop *synchronized attack packages*[11], as

defined by Patrick J. Cullen and Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, specifically designed to address the vulnerabilities identified at the target entities level.

What makes the hybrid model of conflict different is how the aggressor pursues the advantage by blurring the dividing lines between civilian and military, conventional and unconventional, intrastate and interstate conflict[12], public communication and propaganda etc.[13] At first glance, none of the aspects of *hybrid warfare* is particularly new – throughout history, conventional military campaigns have been amplified by other tactics, from misinformation to economic coercion and the use of *proxy* elements[14]. However, technological innovations and the exponential growth of social interconnection, through social media platforms and mobile applications, continuously generate *new opportunities for the potential aggressors in projecting their operational register*. Through the actions carried out they will seek to ensure *anonymity*, *plausible deniability* and *the impossibility to attribute international responsibility*.

For these reasons, the prevalent means of action in the hybrid register are the unconventional ones. The inclusion of conventional means of action in *hybrid strategies* is not a mandatory condition. The activities carried out on the military level are adapted to the operational context in such a way that the condition of *plausible deniability* is met. Regular forces can be used mainly in shaping the operational context as part of the deterrent actions and not in executing classic combat operations, if the condition of not assuming responsibility is assured, eventually by using *proxy* elements as a

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[11] Patrick J. Cullen, Erik Reichborn-Kjennerud, "MCDC Countering Hybrid Warfare Project: Understanding Hybrid Warfare", *GOV.UK*, URL: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countering-hybrid-warfare-project-understanding-hybrid-warfare, accessed on 11.11.2018.

[12] N.A.: The use of proxy groups blurs the line between internal conflicts and regional rivalries.

[13] Anja Kaspersen, "Is technology blurring the lines between war and peace?", *World Economic Forum*, URL: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/02/is-technology-blurring-the-lines-between-war-and-peace/, accessed on 11.11.2018.

[14] *Ibidem.*

means of covering military actions[15].

Hybrid strategies include, more frequently, actions that are conducted on a new operational dimension, the cyber one. Essentially, there are two interconnected dimensions[16] that need to be considered in evaluating how cyberspace is used as an operational domain in hybrid confrontations scenarios:

– *information dimension* – it involves taking advantage of communication opportunities in cyberspace and transforming it into an effective tool for propaganda, manipulation and distortion of information, information warfare and recruitment actions;

– *technical dimension* – involves the use of cyberspace for executing cyber attacks that may target information collection or block the functionality of critical infrastructure objectives (e.g. energy distribution system, transport system, communications networks, etc.)

Both types of actions favor the achievement of the aggressor's objectives with reduced political and material costs. Also, both dimensions raise the issue of *attributing the aggresion* and the existing limitations and difficulties in identifying the aggressor's relationship with his *agent* and, in other words, the issues that reveal the connection between the source's action and the aggressor's command. For example, although it is known that Russian media sources, such as RT and Sputnik, are state-funded, it remains difficult to assess, with accuracy and certainty, whether the subversive actions promoted by them in the Western states' information environment are the consequence of drawn orders coming from the political decision-making area at the top of the Russian state. The same idea is valid when speaking about *trolling-type* actions of influence

– after the pattern of operations conducted in the online environment in order to influence the outcome of US presidential elections[17]. These entities – the subservient media or the *trolling* entities – are nothing but *interfaces* that can be used to promote one aggressor's interests in relation to their targets and are, in reality, a new type of *proxy* entities specialized to operate in the information domanin of war[18].

From this perspective, the following aspects need to be considered in assessing the actions carried out independently or as part of a (hybrid) strategy, in the online environment:

– *cyberspace ensures the possibility of incognito mode of action for the aggressor in the strategic depth area, at a great distance from his own territory*. Basically, communication in the online environment overrides the limitations imposed by the geographical space for the dissemination of information to the target selected audiences. Unlike the Cold War period, for example, when public access in Western states to Russian media was very limited, this constraint has now disappeared due to the high speed of distribution and circulation of information in the online environment. The same rule also applies to cyber attacks. Currently, the aggressors are practically "*one click away*" from the targets, and can easily act under the protection of anonymity, once their vulnerabilities have been identified;

– *in the online environment, there are no big actors and small actors depending on which one can determine the magnitude and the effect of the actions promoted on both informational and cyber dimensions*. The accessibility of the online environment facilitates the consolidation of the profile of the small states and non-state actors in

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[15] N.A. similar to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where according to information released in open sources, denied by Russia, Russian regular forces would have acted in support of separatist groups. Source: "Running hot and cold: The potential for a frozen conflict in eastern Ukraine" URL: https://www.janes.com/ images/assets/966/75966/ Running_ hot_ and_ cold_ The_potential_for_a_frozen_ conflict_in_eastern_Ukraine.pdf, accessed on 11.11.2018.
[16] Sorin Ducaru, "The cyber dimension of modern hybrid warfare and its relevance for NATO", *Europolity*, vol. 10, nr. 1, 2016, pp. 16-17, URL: http://europolity.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Vol.-10.-No.-1.-2016-editat.7-23.pdf, accessed on 09.10.2018.

[17] *** Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Background to "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent US Elections": The Analytic Process and Cyber Incident Attribution*, p. 4, URL: https://www.dni.gov/files/ documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf, accessed at 11.10.2018; N.A.: The report refers explicitly to the actions conducted in order to influence the outcome of US presidential elections by the so-called "trolls factory" in St. Petersburg (Internet Research Agency), an entity funded by Yevgheny Prigozyn "a close ally" of the Russian President, with links to Russian intelligence services.
[18] N.A.: as opposed to the proxy groups we are familiar with, the type of paramilitary forces and the local militias that operate mainly in the physical field of war.

the cyber[19] and information confrontations, which implicitly leads to an increase of the security risks in this dimension, with global implications;

– *the online environment favors the widespread dissemination of fake news content.* The autocratic systems, where the control over the media is higher, seem to have an advantage in comparison with the liberal democracies, under the aspect of using media influence to promote their own foreign policy interests. Paradoxically, however, the same control-based relationship between the authorities and the media, reduces the effects obtained in the information domain to influence the target audiences in the potential aggressor's *strategic depth*. The Lisa case in Germany[20] shows, once again, how easily and quickly the *fake news* content can spread in the information space and, at the same time, how important it is not to underestimate the seriousness of the manipulation and the often irreversible effects that misinformation can generate despite the subsequent efforts to restore the truth – in this case the targeted-effect was to amplify the anti-migration feeling in Germany[21].

All these aspects demand the need to adapt the threat reporting modalities in the elaboration of the security policies established at the states level. The new approach must not only be sufficiently

inclusive – to take into account a broad spectrum of threats that can affect and generate systemic effects at the national level – but to go beyond the limit imposed by the established sense of *national security* described by the "absence of threats"[22] to the state and its constituent elements (population, territory, political organization). This change is more than necessary given that the idea of "absence of threats" is not and should not be read in absolute terms, especially in the context of their multiplication in the new cyber operational domain. In other words, we could begin by accepting that *volatility* and *uncertainty* are variables that need to be considered in assessing the security environment and the imminence of threat materialization in all operational domains. This approach can ultimately contribute to a better *self-awareness* and understanding of the stress factors that influence/might influence the functionality and stability of their own system.

3. Dimensions of strengthening national resilience to hybrid threats

The new approach to reporting on hybrid threats stresses the importance of *resilience* as a national "*precursor to security*"[23]. Thus, one of the ways in which states can approach their security aims at strengthening resilience, defined by the ability of complex social organizations – from public and private organizations, to social communities and nation-type macro-organizations – to absorb shocks and to recover from them, by adapting and transforming at functional and structural level[24] in the sense of reducing future exposures.

[19] Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A brief history of tomorrow*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2015, p. 22.

[20] N.A.: In January 2016, Russian television station Perviy Kanal presented the case of a 13-year-old girl Lisa F., a German and Russian national, who disappeared for 30 hours and was raped by a group of migrants in Berlin. Subsequently, the news was taken over by other Russian media sources, such as RT, Sputnik and RT Deutch, distributed on social networks and even taken over in the Russian Foreign Ministry's messages accusing the German authorities of being unable to solve the case. For two weeks Lisa's case was heavily reported in the Russian media and got top billing in the German debates. The story turned out to be false (German police determined she was with a friend that night), but it degenerated into diplomatic tensions between Germany and Russia.

[21] Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, Alexandre Escorcia, Marine Guillaume, Janaina Herrera, *Information Manipulation: A Challenge for Our Democracies*, Policy Planning Staff (CAPS) of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Institute for Strategic Research (IRSEM) of the Ministry for the Armed Forces, Paris, 2018, p. 189, URL: https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/information_manipulation_rvb_cle838736.pdf, accessed on 01.12.2018.

[22] Arnold Wolfers, "National Security as an Ambiguous Symbol", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 67, Nr. 4., 1952, pp. 484-485, URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0032-3195%28195212%2967%3A4%3C481%3A%22SAAAS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R, accessed on 25.05.2018.

[23] Philipe Borbeau, "Resilience and International Politics: Premises, debates, agenda", *International Studies Review*, 2015, p. 2-3, URL: https://doi.org/10.1111/misr.12226, accessed on 21.09.2018.

[24] *** OECD, *Guidelines for Resilience Systems Analysis. How to analyse risk and build a roadmap to resilience*, 2014, pp. 6-7, URL: https://www.oecd.org/dac/Guidelines%20for%20Resilience%20Systems%20Analysis%20-%20Landscape%20Facilitation%20Guide.pdf, accessed on 10.10.2018.

As can be deduced, the three dimensions of complex social systems' resilience are *resistance*, *adaptation* and *transformation*. Resilient social systems are those *organizations capable of learning* and becoming more efficient in situations of exposure to adverse environmental conditions. The novelty of the approach focused on resilience is the symbiosis between the preventive and the reactive side of security. *Resilience* aims both to prepare the response to the different types of inter-connected threats and to assess the probability of the adverse systemic effects generated by these threats.

The application of this model at national level implies the implementation of specific measures on the identified dimensions of resilience, *resistance*, *adaptation* and *transformation*, on three interconnected levels, *institutional*, *social* and *critical infrastructures*.

On *institutional level* it is necessary to adapt the security strategies in order to enhance a *strategic culture* at the institutional level (with implications in terms of the common understanding of the current threats and challenges), to calibrate related security policies, as well as to optimize decision-making mechanisms of response in crisis and conflict situations (in a *whole of government* approach) and strengthening the *security culture* at the society level, by coopting and empowering all social actors (in a *whole of society* approach) in activities aimed at knowing and raise awareness on the emerging threats forms of manifestation. The measures implemented on this level have a pronounced preventive character. The objective in this phase is to design an intelligent, flexible and capable institutional aparatus that can learn from its own experiences.

On *social level*, the objective to be considered is to limit the effects of misinformation. The pace of technological changes evolves rapidly and in ways that expose us more and more to the actions of influencing and exploiting emotions derived from one's behavior and beliefs. The manipulation of information fuels the inherent divisions and tensions within our societies. The complexity of the forms of manifestation of the

current threats and their hybrid character test the responsiveness of public institutions and the existing relationship between society and authorities. Therefore, in the pre-manifestation phase of the threat, awareness of the danger and strengthening the partnership between public institutions and civil society are paramount for increasing the social resilience.

Above all, the responsability of civil society is to develop its own resistance towards information aggression. Information is a "*common good*", the protection of which is the responsibility of all citizens interested in the quality of public debate[25]. A comprehensive study (applicable on 74.000 respondents from 37 states) conducted by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism in 2018, on the manipulation in the information area, revealed that the primary responsibility in thefight against manipulation lies upon the media (75%) and digital platforms (71%) and then upon the governments, in Europe (60%), Asia (63%) and US (40%). With regard to the accountability of digital platforms for promoting measures in the field of reducing the exposure of Member States to misinformation actions in the online environment and extending the *fake news* phenomenon, it is remarkable the progress made at the end of 2018, at EU level, by adopting the *code of practice on disinformation*[26], through which measures have been established in a wide spectrum of commitments, from promoting transparency in electoral advertising, to closing fake accounts and denouncing disinformation vectors[27] – a project that companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and Mozilla have joined. Regardless of the institutional measures implemented, societal resilience depends first and foremost on media mobilization, civil society and each member of the society, which is why it is absolutely necessary to encourage the development of projects in the field of *media literacy*, *fact-checking* for verifying the

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[25] Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, Alexandre Escorcia, Marine Guillaume, Janaina Herrera, *op.cit.*, p. 13.
[26] *** *Code of Practice on Disinformation*, 2018, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=54454, accessed on 11.11.2018.
[27] *Ibidem*.

information presented in the media and those launched in the public space and educating audiences in the spirit of strengthening critical thinking.

Finally, the security of *critical infrastructures* is indispensable for ensuring the normal functioning of the activity sectors of the state. The first step to be taken in this direction is to identify those critical infrastructure systems (e.g. telecommunications, transport, electricity distribution networks, etc.) that can be targeted in case of hybrid aggression, starting from evaluating the operational potential of the imaginary aggressor in relation to itself. Beside cyberspace, future hybrid confrontations could extend into space and into the maritime area, where satellites, fiber optic cables and energy pipelines could be targets of potential attacks.

Conclusions

The increase of geostrategic competition represents an indicator of the "pressures" within the international system, meaning the redefinition of a new arrangement at global level, in which the balance will be ensured by the systems formed around several poles of power. In this context, the major emerging powers will act in order to legitimize this new polycentric arrangement, by actively engaging in *gray zone* conflicts (or globally challenged areas), and by promoting actions in confrontation areas insufficiently regulated by the current normative international system, such as cyber and information domains.

The limits and shortcomings of the international normative system favor the perpetuation of hybrid behavior, as an expression of the new type of aggression in the security environment, at global and regional level. The natural predisposition of the exponents of hybrid aggressions, to act according to the principle "all that is not forbidden is allowed", determines mutations in the threat spectrum that tends to include mainly techniques, tactics and procedures in the informational sphere of confrontation. In the new type of (hybrid) confrontation, the actions of the aggressors

(state and non-state actors) are adapted to the operating environment conditions and in order to achieve the target objectives in relation to the established target entities, with reduced operational and political costs. In this context, establishing the responsibility and intentionality of the aggressor's actions is necessary to ensure that the shattered actor's response is legitimate and proportionate. However, this is not always easy to implement, due to the limitations of international law, the operational constraints that make it difficult to attribute attacks (such situations are very common in the cyber domain) or the "transfer" of responsibility for actions carried out from the aggressor to different *proxy* entities (most commonly, to non-state actors), as a subterfuge to ensure the conditions of plausible deniability and to avoid the responsibility for the actions.

The exponents of the hybrid strategies aim to explore the innovative possibilities of expanding the influence in the areas considered of strategic interest. The power of these actors derives not so much from the extended operational potential that they have, but especially from the innovative capacity to successfully exploit this potential, by synchronizing the means and methods of action in a way that helps to set a new favorable security context for them. The way in which they act is not the traditional/consecrated way in which *power* is associated with the idea of force and armed violence, but with the ability to influence beliefs, attitudes, preferences, opinions, expectations, emotions and/or predispositions and to alter the way in which people cooperate and interact with each other by promoting narratives and myths that describe alternative realities. These actors act by intelligently balancing the available various instruments of power in order to identify an optimal formula, adapted to the conditions in the security environment, that leads to the achievement of the set objectives.

Hybrid strategies allow the exploitation of the operational potential in the so-called "gray zone" conflicts – at the interference between war and peace, civil and military, conventional and unconventional, truth and lie etc. – without

drawing international responsibility for their own actions. For example, the actions of armed groups without military insignia (following the model of the "little green men" in Crimea) make it difficult to establish their belonging to the aggressor's armed forces and, consequently, to sanction the acts committed in accordance with the regulations of international humanitarian law. Also, the use of *proxy* elements in hybrid actions generates effects beyond the borders of the parties in conflict, emphasizing regional or even global rivalries (as seen in the 2014 crisis in Eastern Ukraine or in the crises in Syria and Yemen from the same year onwards).

Subsequent to the crisis in Ukraine (2014), the level of concern at EU and NATO level has increased, in the sense of identifying an adapted and efficient framework for reacting / responding to hybrid aggressions, that can be implemented by European institutions and allied command structures, as well as by the Member States, and might support them to strengthen their security. This framework is based on increasing resilience at European / allied and national level, through measures taken at different levels – institutional, societal, critical infrastructures – as a strategic approach complementary to the efforts undertaken to ensure European/allied and national security.

The hostile actions carried out in the cyber and information areas and their high profile within the hybrid strategies demand the implementation of actual measures of response, by involving all the relevant actors from the society (as part of a *whole of society* approach) – institutions, media, IT platforms, civil society etc. The development of public-private partnerships, through which the government and industry can work together to ensure security in the Internet environment and to promote better online behavior is imperative. Establishing such partnerships is essential, but it is also difficult to materialize, often on the basis of the divergent/competing interests of the parties. If, for authorities, eliminating *fake news* content, for example, responds to the need for national security, IT companies do not like the idea of setting up content quality arbitrators (good or bad), as long as they consider that their mission

is strictly limited to provide the opportunity for displaying informational content.

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EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA
IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROXY WARS

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According to Osmańczyk, a proxy war defines an armed conflict between states instigated by other parties who do not wish to become directly involved in the hostilities. The conflicts and proxy wars of the Middle East in the 20th century were mainly represented by hostilities between Saudi Arabia and Egypt manifested in other countries. The article brings forward the relationship between the two countries, mainly their ideological, economical and geopolitical opposition. Also, the article describes the Yemeni conflicts and the Syrian Civil War and deals with the political realignment after the Arab Spring which changed the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, each seeking new political and economic solutions.

Keywords: *proxy war; buffer zone; leading powers; civil war; Saudi Arabia; Egypt; Syria; Yemen; Middle East.*

Introduction

Jan Edmund Osmańczyk defines (in the *Encyclopaedia of the United Nations and International Agreements*) the notion of proxy war as an "international term for a war fought by states acting at the instigation of other states that do not wish to become directly involved in

the conflict"[1].

Proxy wars have special forms in the Middle East at macro level, which means that the region is both strategically (Suez Canal, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Aden, etc.) and economically the site of rivalry of the wolds' greatest powers, and at mezzo level, which refers to the fact that these critical centres in the Middle East are used as buffer zones by the regions leading powers.

One of the best examples in this regard is the civil war in Syria, where signs of a new kind of cold war can be traced between the United States of America and Russia. This is a proxy war at macro level, while the oil powers, the leading powers of the region - Saudi Arabia and Iran - also prefer to solve their conflicts in this area.

The paper will address the proxy wars of the Middle East, stressing the dimension of the local war, with special emphasis on the involvement of one of the regional leading powers, Saudi Arabia, and also an important strategic power, Egypt.

1. Proxy wars in Middle East

Often, the local conflicts in the Middle East take the form of proxy wars, since the participants

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[1] Jan Edmund *Osmańczyk, Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Agreements,* Abingdon, Routledge Books, 2002, p. 1869.

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seldom dare or want to take charge of open tensions, conflicts or wars. On macro level, USA, China or Russia do not want to increase tensions that might lead to a global war. On mezzo level, their Middle East strategic allies, like Saudi Arabia, Iran or Egypt, are not facilitated to start open wars. Therefore, these powers reassign their conflicts on a strategically and economically less important territory, that is on micro level.

On the one hand, the great powers (USA, Russia or China), which have great interests in the oil industry, would not let wars happen, while, on the other hand, the countries of the region have a rather elaborated and complicated relation system, that is often neither coherent, nor consistent. Many countries are officially allies, while they support forces that are fighting against each other; it is also noticeable that while they are adversaries as far as certain local conflicts are concerned, in other cases they are allies.

A good example is the relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Egypt has officially backed up the government forces in the civil war in Syria since 2017, while Saudi Arabia is supporting the Syrian Opposition[2]. At the same time, in the Libyan civil war case, both countries support the House of Representatives, backed up by General Khalifa Haftar.

The regional powers of the Middle East use proxy conflicts to evaluate the strength of others, to try to place themselves in a dominant position; however, we consider that they do not support the idea of an open war which would destabilize the region and would threaten the oil production and, consequently, the economic wellbeing of their population.

Also, proxy wars seem to represent a suitable tool having the purpose to release the pressure, to manage tensions due to different religious, cultural, economic and geopolitical conflicts, like the Shiah-Sunni conflict or the tension between the Gulf countries that are rooted in economic rivalry.

2. The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Egypt from the beginning of the 20th century up to the present

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Egypt is dated back to the end of the '30. Modern Saudi Arabia was founded by ruler Ibn Saud in 1932, when the kingdoms Hejaz and Najd were affiliated. A few years later, oil production has started, and it made Saudi Arabia one of the leading oil extracting countries.

From a geopolitical and cultural perspective, Egypt has always been one of the most influential countries in the Arab world, and under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the country was an independent and important power factor in the rise of Arab nationalism.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt are the two strongest Arab countries in the Middle East considering both the military and territorial criteria.
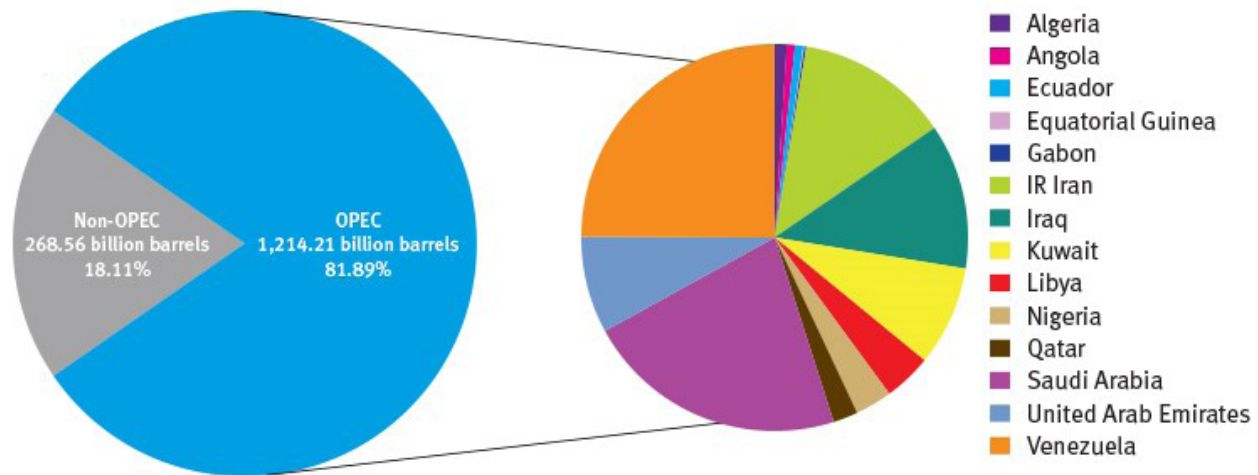
Saudi Arabia is an oil superpower, the biggest and strongest country in the Arab Peninsula, the real leader of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (see Figure no. 1) and has a very solid influence on the politics of the Gulf countries, as it can be seen in case of the diplomatic conflict with Qatar or the Yemeni civil war.

Egypt is one of the strongest countries in the Arab-African region, 12th globally (Reda 2018)[3]. In Libya, Muammar Gaddafi made serious attempts to gain greater control in Africa, and the country became stronger, military and economicaly, due to oil extraction, but it lost its influence after the civil war. Egypt, although not rich in oil, has the greatest army of all the North African countries, an important economy, and it represents a cultural centre of the region. This role is played in the Gulf region by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

The idea of Pan-Arab thoughts and nationalism is also rooted in Egypt, therefore the cradle of movements to integrate the Arab states was in Egypt, like the United Arab

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[2] Oren Kessler, "Egypt Picks Sides in the Syrian War", *Foreign Affairs*, 12 February 2017, URL: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2017-02-12/egypt-picks-sides-syrian-war, accessed on September 10, 2018.

[3] Lolwa Reda, "Egypt's military strongest in Arab-African region, 12th globally: Report", *Egypt Today*, 21 December 2018, URL: https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/62329/Egypt%E2%80%99s-military-strongest-in-Arab-African-region-12th-globally-Report, accessed on 22.12.2018.

Figure no. 1: OPEC share of world crude oil reserves in 2017

Republic in alliance with Syria, or the idea of the United Arab States, which lived a short and mainly formal life.

The Arab people living in the Arab Peninsula and those living in the Maghreb countries distinguish themselves from each other from several points of view: they are culturally different, they speak different dialects and follow different Sunni teachings. Bearing all these differences in mind, the cultural and religious demarcation is not that great, as it is the one between Sunnis and Shiites or Arabs and Iranians, where cultural, social and religious differences cannot be eliminated. „The governmental territory of Egypt is in a wider sense adjacent to the Maghreb territory, in which states' strong regional and local identity was formed against the eastern Arab territories"[4].

The political organization of the two states is also different. Although Egypt was never the paragon of democracy, since the declaration of its independence, it has a Constitution, it is a secular country that had not changed much even during the short rule of Morsi government.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is an autocratic, absolute monarchy, where the king's power can only be abridged, formally, by the Sharia, the Islamic law. Since the Saudi-Wahhabi pact[5] the government and religion became inseparable. Saudi Arabia essentially is a theocratic state, as it is explained by Al-Atawneh[6]. The king has absolute power, his legitimacy is given directly by Allah, thus his grandiose title, and he is officially the Guardian of the Two Holy Shrines (Mecca and Medina).

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[4] János Besenyő, Miletics Péter, *Országismertető Egyiptom*, Az MH Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság Tudományos Tanács kiadványa, (Country Review Egypt, Publication of the Science Council of the MH Headquarters), 2013, p. 13.

[5] Muhammad Al-Atawneh, *Is Saudi Arabia a Theocracy? Religion and Governance in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, Middle Eastern Studies, 2009, vol. 45(5), p. 721-737, URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40647150, accessed on 22.12.2018.
[6] *Ibidem*.

There is also a geopolitical tension between the two states; it is the question of who controls the shipping route on the Red Sea from the Suez Canal - which is under Egypt control - to Aden Bay, where the Yemeni conflict as well as the Somali pirates threaten commercial transport and trading. The conflict in Yemen is a good excuse for the increased Saudi military presence which also ensures the Saudi supervision of the southern entrance to the Arabian Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

3. Islamism and the Arab nationalism – Saudi-Wahhabi system as opposed to the ideology of Nasser's Egypt in the first half of the 20th century

After the fall of the British colonial empire, Saudi Arabia and Egypt chose a divergent path, though both sought independence and cultural identity which were opposed to Western culture. While in Saudi Arabia the Islam fundamentalism was seen as a way out, in Egypt, being more secular and economically developed, the Arab nationalism and Pan-Arabism were the most influential theoretical movements.

Nowadays, the best known Salafi movement is the Wahhabi movement. The aim of Wahhabis is to return to the purest form of Islam, purging it from impure practices and traditions. Wahhabis states that only the Quran and the authentic traditions of Prophet Muhammad must be followed verbatim without trying to adapt them to contemporary societies.

Saudi Arabia has become a great oil power, and the strongest state in the Gulf area. Egypt tried to unify some of the states of North Africa, partly as an answer to the Baghdad Pact in 1955, partly as an answer to the Gulf states economic growth. Gamal Abdel Nasser entered a military alliance with Syria, and also with the rhetorically anti-colonialist Saudi Arabia. The latter, though economically tied with thousands of threads to the USA, that backed the Baghdad Pact (later the CENTO), did not want oil-rich Israel, Iraq and Iran to strengthen their position with the help of the West.

The Islamist movement also appeared in Egypt at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, as a possible political alternative to colonial dependency. The most important figure of the movement in the 20th century is the thinker Sayyid Qtub, who stated that Islam was more than a religion, it was and it is a complex, indivisible, all comprehensive system, and there is no way to separate the religion from the government as it is done in Western cultures. Though Qtub studied in the USA, this fact did not alter his views. In his work, *The Religion of the Future,* he wrote that although he accepts the results of the technical and industrial development of Western civilization, the industrial civilization destroys the most important virtues of humanity[7].

As for the ideology of the Arab nationalism, the most prominent cohesive force is to be an Arab. The Pan-Arab movement is the global form of the Arab nationalism, somehow similar in its impact to the socialist internationalism, except that the cohesive device here is not the identity of being a worker, but the identity of being an Arab. The radical socialist form of the Arab nationalism is Nasserism, based on the ideas, ideologies and politics of the former Egyptian president, Gamal Abdel Nasser.

Nasser created a secular one-party system, the government and the mosque were strictly separated, although he often made refferences to the Islam values. This is an explicable approach, since Islam is an organic part of the Arab identity, therefore religion was not suppressed like in the countries where governments were based on the Marxist ideology. Religion in Egypt was used as a mean of political legitimization, while everything was done to rule it out from the political life.

During the times of Nasserism, Egypt became increasingly hostile towards the West and colonization, which then culminated in the Suez Crisis, which was one of the most serious conflicts during the Cold War, and was also the hotbed of one of the most worrying proxy crisis in the Middle East. The Suez Crisis strengthened Nasser's anti-American and pro-Soviet politics. Nasser, envisaging the future of the Arab

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[7] Sayyid Qutb, *Islam: The religion of the Future*, Chicago, Kazi Pubns Inc., 1992, p. 114.

world in the Arab unity, took advantage of his popularity gained amongst the Arab countries during the Crisis, and at the beginning of 1958 he founded the United Arab Republic, a political union between Egypt and Syria. Following the referendum held in both countries,Nasser was elected the president of the new federation.

Nasser tried to widen the federation when in the same year, the Kingdom of Yemen (North-Yemen), joined the new state (the United Arab Republic), forming the United Arab States, Egypt and Syria acted as one sovereign state. The United Arab States was only a formal covenant, the two member states had their own foreign policy and home affairs. After Nasser's death, in 1970 Anwar Sadat was elected as president. At the beginning, Sadat followed the steps of his predecessor as far as his anti-Israel, Arab nationalist politics was concerned, but at the same time he tried to break away from the Soviet Union while seeking connections with the United States.

After the Yom Kippur war (1973), Sadat realized that his only chance to stabilize economy is to conciliate with Israel and allowed foreign capital flow go into the country. The "permanent state of war"[8] ended with the Camp David Accords, which meant that Israel traded the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt for peace, in exchange that Egypt become the first Arab state that recognized the state of Israel. In return, Egypt got 21 billion $, economic aid and 25 billion $, military aid from the United States[9]. After the Treaty was signed, the Soviet influence decreased and its place was taken over by the USA, since "during the diplomatic mediation most of the cards was held by the USA, Moscow had only a marginal role"[10].

However, making peace with Israel placed Egypt in a hostile position in relation to most Arab states. Diplomatic relations were broken off, Egypt was suspended from the Arab League, and it became accepted only ten years after. Even its former ally, Libya, declared war to Egypt, but was quickly defeated. Sadat lost his popularity at home as well, and not only because of the Camp David Treaty, but because of the deteriorating economic situation, which led to his assassination in 1981.

Thus the ideologies of the Arab-nationalist secular Egypt and the Islamist Saudi Arabia were in opposition, but this opposition was mainly formal andfunctioned as a kind of puffery, while the factual reason of the opposition was due to geopolitical and economic conflict of interests of two boosting countries.

4. The Yemen conflict

In the following we will argue that the most important proxy conflict between Egypt and Saudi Arabia was the seven year-North Yemen civil war.

The Shiah Mutawakilita Kingdom of North Yemen was a theocratic state, and since its emergencein 1919, it had territorial claim against Saudi Arabia and the British protectorates in South Yemen of those times[11]. Though these claims sometimes developed into armed conflicts, however, the first serious civil war situation emerged in 1962, when in North Yemen young officers under the command of Abdullah Al-Salal, and with the help of President Nasser, carried out a coup d'etat against Imam Muhammad al-Badr.

The main reason of the Egyptian intervention was the fact that while the young Imam refused to show approval toward the anti-imperialist powers as was requested by President Nasser, he − as it is known from his telegrams − was more than eager to show cooperation with the king of Jordan and of Saudi Arabia for the sake of good

[8] János Besenyő, Péter Miletics, *Országismertető Egyiptom*, Az MH Összhaderőnemi Parancsnokság Tudományos Tanács kiadványa (*Country guide - Egypt*, Publication of the Joint Science Command Council), 2013, p.123.

[9] Denis J. Sullivan, "American Aid to Egypt, 1975-96: Peace Without Development", *Middle East Policy Council*, Number 4,Volume IV,Winter, URL: https://www.mepc.org/american-aid-egypt-1975-96-peace-without-development, accessed on 22.12.2018.

[10] Gazdik Gyula, "Amerika közel-keleti hatalmi építkezésének múltja és jelene", *Nemzet és biztonság*, (America's Middle East Power Building Past and Present ", *Nation and Security*), February, 2008, p. 66.

[11] János Tomolya, "Jemen: Quo vadis?" 1st section, *HADTUDOMÁNY*, (Jemen: Where are you going?, *Military Science*) 2018, URL: http://real.mtak.hu/77917/1/tomolya2.pdf, accessed on 22.12.2018.

neighbourly relationships[12].

Following the coup d'etat, Yemen was declared a republic (YAR Yemeni Arab Republic) under the presidency of Abdullah Al-Salal. And thus began the civil war between the republicans, supported by Egypt and the Soviet Union and the royalists, supported by Saudi Arabia, Jordan, US and Great Britain. After the Six-Day War, Egypt got weaker so it gave up its ambitions concerning Yemen, and in 1967 it withdrew its forces from the country.

Meanwhile, in South Yemen, after the success of the "Aden Emergency" uprising in 1963, the British withdrew from the territory. The rebellious forces, the Marxist militia, the National Liberation Front (NLF) and the national military organization, the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) declared the People's Republic of Southern Yemen. After strengthening the Marxist wing of the NLF, the new state was reorganized, and on 1st of November, 1970, the Marxist People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDEY) was declared.

The emergence of the socialist South Yemenite state regrouped the members of the proxy conflict: the West, which so far supported the Southern Yemenis, now together with Saudi Arabia stood by YAR, while the Soviet Union helped PDRY.

After the Camp David Agreement, foreign policy strategies were changed. One of the reasons of this change was that Egypt, after its commitment to the USA and recognition of Israel, stood isolated in the Arab world. Egypt decided to support YAR together with Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Jordan, in order to ease the situation.

In 1990, North and South Yemen were finally unified by Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of North Yemen.. Except the 1994 short Yemenite civil war – when the South wanted to gain independence under the name of Democratic Republic of Yemen – he relatively peacefully led

the country until 2011.

There have been some separatist outbreaks (like the Houthi upraise in 2001), corruption impacted economy and bureaucracy, the Al-Qaida cell got very strong, yet the situation was not that of a civil war.

However, in 2011 the Arab Spring reached Yemen as well. All over the country there were protests against corruption and the President Ali Abdullah Saleh. During the two year-revolution there were no considerable interventions, not even at "proxy level". The uprising ended with the fall of President Saleh, who in 2012 fled to US. His successor, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi managed to curb the civil war situation for only two years.

The state ended the fuel supply in 2014, due to which the prices were almost doubled[13]. There were protests all over the country, the leaders of which were the Zayidi-shia Houthis under the leadership of Abdul-Malik al-Houthi. The Houthi leaders could successfully agitate great masses of people, and on 21st of September, 2014, they occupied the capital Sanaa with the help of the militias. They established their own government, the Supreme Political Council (SPC) thus Yemen had two operating governments, both declared themselves legitimate.

Next to the Shiita Houthi and the Sunni Hadi governments there was a third actor, who fought against both governments and that was Al-Qaida, which was still very strong in Yemen, and controlled territories in the middle of the country.

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[12] Zoltán Prantner, *Jemen és a Szocialista Országok* Szegedi Tudományegyetem, Bölcsésztudományi Kar (*Yemen and the Socialist Countries*, University of Szeged, Faculty of Arts, 1955-1970 – Doctoral Thesis), 1955–1970, Doktori Értekezés URL: http://doktori.bibl.u-szeged.hu/1214/1/prantnerdoktori.pdf, accessed on 22.10.2018.

[13] ***, "Report No. 102151-YE The Republic of Yemen Unlocking the Potential for Economic Growth A Country Economic Memorandum" p. 99. October 2015 – Document of the World Bank URL: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/673781467997642839/pdf/102151-REVISED-box394829B-PUBLIC-Yemen-CEM-edited.pdf, accessed on 22.10.2018.
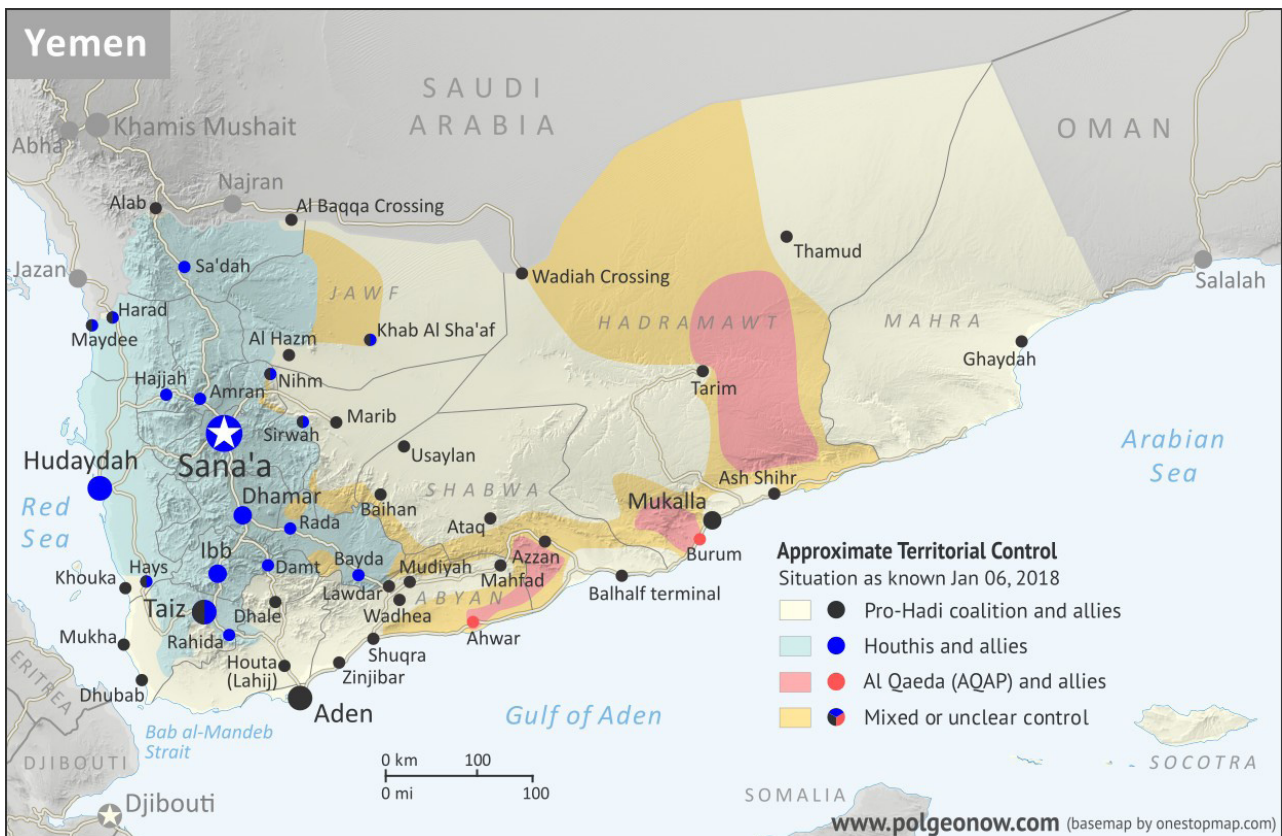
Figure no. 2: Territorial Control of Yemen in 2018[14]

The Hadi government was supported by Saudi Arabia, the USA, the UK, France and Turkey, while the Houthi leadership was supported by Iran, Russia and China.

Egypt had its own problems in 2011, thus had no time and energy to engage in Yemen situation. The Egyptian government supported the Hadi government, after restoring the power which, for a while, was concentrated in the hands of the Islamist government. However, its own revolution weakened Egypt's economy so much that the country did not afford to intervene in the conflict.

The country tried to stabilize its economy, it needed partners, mainly the GCC countries and most of all Saudi Arabia, but it was not the only reason why Egypt supported Hadi government. After the Arab Spring, for a short while, Egypt

was ruled by an Islamist government[15]. This is the reason why the country was very sensitive to the strengthening of radical Islamism on the one hand, on the other, because of the fact that the Copts in Egypt do not like the idea of aspiration of independence as far as the minorities in the Arab world are concerned. This also emerges from the fact that in the Syrian civil war, Egypt sides with the Syrian government forces, unlike the USA and Saudi Arabia, which support the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria.

As against earlier in its history, Egypt now is far from being a dominant actor either in Yemen or in Syria, so these two countries have become the site of another mezzo-level proxy-conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Since the Iraqi civil war (2003-2011) put back for decades the economy and oil production of Iraq, only two great oil powers remained in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Naturally, all the other Gulf States are involved in oil production,

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[14] ***, "Yemen Control Map & Report - January 2018", *Political geography now*, URL: https://www.polgeonow.com/2018/01/who-rules-yemen-map-houthis-control.html, accessed on 22.10.2018.

[15] A.N.: 2011-2013 Morsi's government.

however, their economic and military importance is far from that of the above mentioned two countries. With the fall of Iraq, two blocks were formed, on the one hand the Sunni block led by Saudi Arabia which is supported by the USA and the EU, while on the other hand, there is the Shiah block led by Iran which is supported by Russia and China[16].

Although Iran is not an Arab country, both Iraq, where 70% of the population is Shiah, and Bahrain, where the majority of the population is also Shiah, practice an Iran friendly politics. In Yemen, Iran supports the Shiah Houthi, and in Syria, it supports the Alawites government forces. Alawites is a Shiah branch of Islam compared to Sunni.

In case of Yemen, the main aim for Iran is to help create a Shiah government next to Saudi Arabia. This is not only ideologically important, but is also vital to Iran, since this would assure a strategically significant ally at the Aden-Bay, the exit of the Red Sea. It would also serve Iran if there was "an armed non-state, non-Sunni actor who can pressure Iran's adversaries both politically and militarily (akin to Hezbollah in Lebanon)"[17] which with permanent border conflicts would destabilize Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi led Sunni coalition and together backed up the Hadi government, except some minor conflicts, like the Battle of Aden in 2018, where the UAE supported the South Yemeni Houthi Southern Transitional Council against the Hadi government.

The Yemeni proxy conflict clearly illustrates the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran as well as that of the USA, Russia and China, however these rivals are also in opposition in a more serious and significant conflict, and that is the Syrian civil war.

5. The Syrian civil war

As far as proxy wars are concerned, Syria is mainly interesting from perspective of the relations between Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, China and their allies. As it has already been mentioned Syria does not belong neither economically, nor geopolitically,to the great powers of the region, thus it is the place on micro level that hosts the great powers conflicts . Egypt does not have an influential position, since its military and economic role is not significant enough to enable the country to have a say in the conflict. However, we should observe how Al-Sisi is going to develop an ally-system in the future. No matter the problems Egypt has to face at the present, we always have to bear in mind that its location, its size, population and raw material supply makes it a strategically valuable site. It matters who its allies are, as also it is of great consequence for the Al-Sisi government, who supports its endeavours.

Egypt is largely economic dependent on the USA and the EU; yet because of China economic expansion and of the growing influence of Russia in the Middle East, Egypt tries to keep a balance and maintain a good relationship with both parties, without seriously committing itself to either side.

Uo to 2015, in the Syrian civil war, Egypt supported the Syrian Opposition, as Morsi's moderately Islamist government was the outcome of the revolutionary Arab Spring. However, in 2015 Egypt jumped sides, and the Al-Sisi government ensured the Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad that Egypt would support his regime[18]. Thus, Egypt, if not actively, picked sides in the Syrian Civil War together with Iran, Russia and China.

As it was already mentioned, it is not in Egypt's interest to confront with any of the world-powers or with the Sunni Arab countries, so in the case of Syria, Al-Sisi's government does

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[16] Ellie Geranmayeh, "Regional Geopolitical Rivalries in the Middle East: Implications for Europe", *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, 2018, URL: https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaip1818.pdf, accessed on 09.10.2018.

[17] Jeremy M. Sharp, "Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention", Updated: August 24, 2018, p. 11, URL: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf, accessed on 10.10.2018.

[18] Oren Kessler, "Egypt Picks Sides in the Syrian War", *Foreign Affairs*, February 12, 2017, URL: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2017-02-12/egypt-picks-sides-syrian-war, accessed on 14.09.2018.
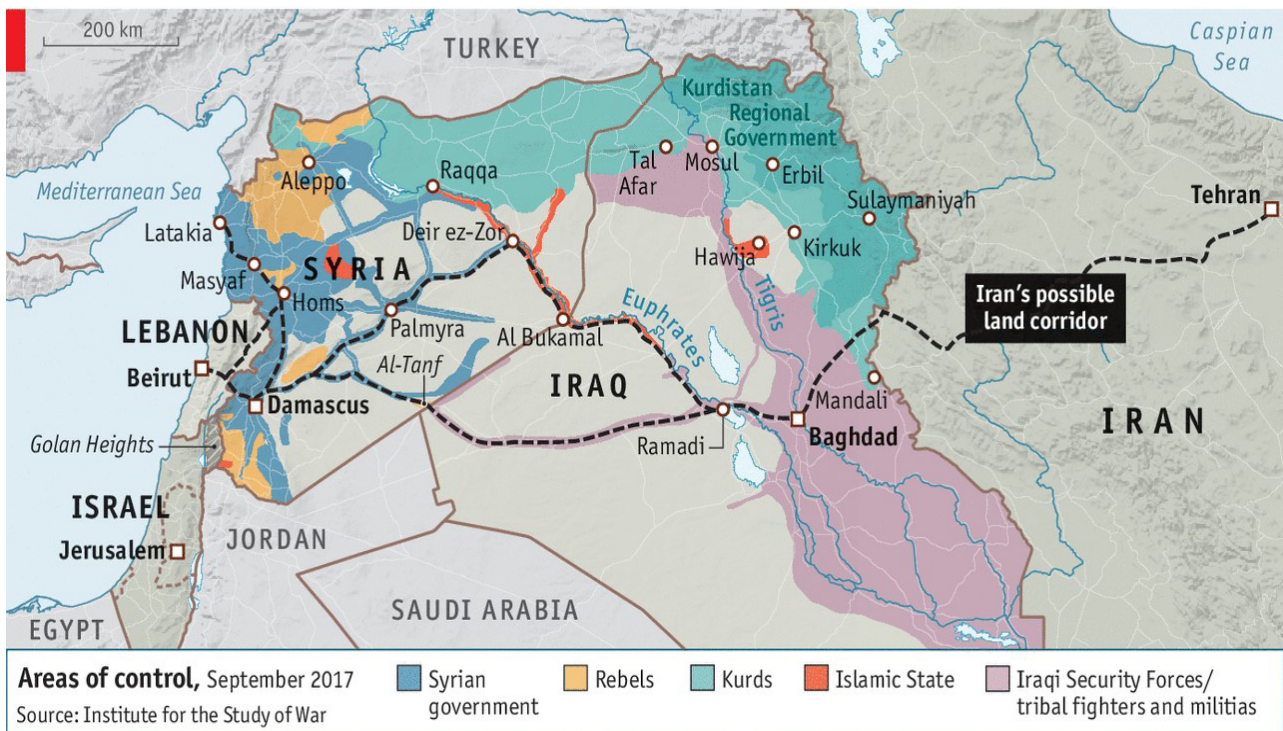
Figure no. 3: Iran's possible land corridor[19]

not have many choices. After the Morsi regime was overthrown, and the Muslim Brotherhood was practically crushed and forced underground, the Egyptian government had to follow this route with the Syrian Sunni, moderately Islamist revolutionary forces that were also the result of the Arab Spring.

Thus, Egypt does not play a significant role in the Syrian proxy war. Like in Yemen, here also the Saudi-Iranian and the Russian-American rivalry defines the conflict. But unlike Yemen, in Syria there is too much at stake for both parties. In case of Yemen the only risk is a certain level of destabilization in the Saudi leadership, and the strengthening of extremist armed militias, but in case of the Syrian civil war serious geopolitical-strategic situations have to be taken into consideration.

After the war, the Shiah government of Iraq was Iran friendly, and if in Syria the Assad regime supported by the Alawites-Christian-Siita forces is stabilised, then the Siita crescent might be united into one sphere of influence by Iran, thus having an open land corridor to the Mediterranean Sea.

Saudi Arabia tries to do all in its power against the Iranian economic and strategic expansion, just as the USA is worried because of the increasingly strengthening Russian influence.

After Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Ghaddafi's Libya and the events of the Arab Spring, now the only rival of Saudi Arabia in the area is Iran. If Saudi Arabia wants to maintain its leading role in the Gulf, it is not enough to keep in line its rivals, the economic and political reforms are also inevitable.

6. The economic opening of Saudi Arabia and its influence on the Saudi-Egyptian relationship

In 2015, Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz died, and his brother, Salman, succeeded him on the throne. Although the present king is in poor health, nominally he leads the country, however, the real power is in the

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[19] ***, "The growing power of Iran and Hizbullah worries Israel", *The Economist*, URL: https://www.economist.com/briefing/2017/09/14/the-growing-power-of-iran-and-hizbullah-worries-israel, accessed on 10.09.2018.

hand of his son, Muhammad bin Salman al Saud, second in the line of succession. The young crown prince is presently the Saudi Secretary of Defence, and supervise the Saudi ARAMCO, the Saudi Arabian national petroleum and natural gas company, one of the largest companies in the world[20].

Muhammad bin Salman has taken several steps to reform the Saudi Arabia economy, but has realized the fact that "the petroleum sector accounts for roughly 87% of budget revenues, 42% GDP, and 90% of export earnings"[21] and it makes the country economically vulnerable. Therefore, following the example of the UAE and Qatar he wants to widen the economy, so the country would not depend solely on the petroleum sector. To gain capital he wants to put ARAMCO shares on the market, and he announced "Vision 2030", a comprehensive plan[22] as well as the NEOM plan, a construction and investment project in which the Saudi government has invested 500 billion USD[23]. The latter will extend 460 km on the coast of the Red Sea with a total area of 26,500 km^2 [24]. It would be a kind of a mega city, a state within the state, where most of the strict religious rules would not be in force, and it would be much easier to get a visa to enter the area. The city is planned to be a bank and tourist centre, something like a new Saudi Dubai.

Since the Saudi Royal Family is composed of 15,000 royals, many of whom rivals of power,

the Crown Prince, Mohhamad Bin Saliman, tries to consolidate his power by purging during which many crown princes and former ministers, such as the deputy defence minister Fahd bin Abdullah, were taken into custody[25].

Except for the economic opening, the foreign policy of the Crown Prince is very aggressive, he is responsible for the proxy conflict intensification in Iran, he has also increased the role of Saudi Arabia in the Syrian conflict, and he has started the Saudi-Yemeni military offensive. The GCC embargo against Qatar to increase pressure on the country is also linked to him, however in this case he did not succeed, as the mini-state of outstandingly strong economy and informal network could not be broken.

To gain the sympathy of Western societies, the Crown Prince initiated some quasi-reforms, since 24th of June, 2018, Saudi women are allowed to drive cars, but these measures are only for show, especially if we take into consideration the murder of the dissident Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi. The journalist disappeared in Ankara, in the Saudi Embassy building , and in the opinion of the CIA it was Muhammad bin Salman who ordered the murder of Jamal Khashoggi[26]. The murder has trigerred economic sanctions that jeopardize the Saudi economic projects.

Saudi Arabia is still the leader of the GCC and wants to remain the leading economic and military power of the region. The country competes with Iran, and during the Qatar conflict it went against Turkey. Therefore, it is crucial for Saudi to maintain good relationships with the surrounding Arab countries, especially with the UAE, Kuwait, Egypt and Jordan.

It is also in the interest of Egypt to maintain a good relationship with Saudi Arabia, since the former needs Saudi investments. Even the NEOM program was planned to be a giga-project

[20] ***, "The Aramco Accounts: Inside the World's Most Profitable Company", *Bloomberg News*, 13 April, 2018, URL: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-04-13/the-aramco-accounts-inside-the-world-s-most-profitable-company, accessed on 10.09.2018.

[21] ***, "Saudi Arabia", *Forbes*, URL: https://www.forbes.com/places/saudi-arabia/, accessed on 10.09.2018.

[22] Gere László, "Saudi Vision 2030 – Szaúd-Arábia fejlesztési koncepciója 2030-ra" (Saudi Vision 2030 - Saudi Arabia's Concept of Development for 2030), PAGEO, November 2018, URL: http://www.geopolitika.hu/hu/2016/07/25/saudi-vision-2030-szaud-arabia-fejlesztesi-koncepcioja-2030-ra/, accessed on 10.09.2018.

[23] Zahraa Alkhalisi, "Saudi Arabia wants to build a $500 billion mega-city spanning 3 countries", *CNN*, URL: https://money.cnn.com/2017/10/24/news/economy/saudi-arabia-mega-city-neom/index.html, accessed on 10.09.2018.

[24] *Ibidem*.

[25]***, "Middle East", *Ynet News*, URL: https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5038541,00.html, accessed on 10.09.2018.

[26] Julian Borger, "US senators: we're certain Saudi crown prince ordered Khashoggi's murder", *The Guardian* , 4 Dec 2018, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/04/jamal-khashoggi-saudi-crown-prince-senators-cia-briefing, accessed on 10.09.2018.

overarching borders of Saudi, Jordan and Egypt, where the main investor is Saudi, but the others have profit too. As to show its good intentions, Egypt assigned to Saudi Arabia two uninhabited, but strategically important islands, Tiran and Sanafir, on the Red Sea.

Conclusions

Overall, it can be said that rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Egypt that defined the political life of the Middle East in the 20th century has been replaced by new tensions and conflicts.

After Arab Spring, Egypt economically impoverished, following the uprising in 2011, Al-Sisi's government more or less managed to stabilize the country in 2015. The new form of the conflicts in the Middle East now is represented by the Saudi-Iranian tension which is being manifested in different proxy wars. The former Arab nationalism versus Islamic difference is now replaced by the Shia-Sunni opposition which is interwoven in global economic interests and the Russian - American confrontation.

Middle East in the modern history has always been a distressed area, center of conflicts, and the site of the global and regional powers fights. As in the 20th century Suez conflict, now, in the 21st century, in relation to the Syrian Civil War, the whole world observes the escalation of the conflict wondering if the powder keg will explode.

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3. ***, "Yemen Control Map & Report – January 2018", *Political geography now*, URL: https://www.polgeonow.com/2018/01/who-rules-yemen-map-houthis-control.html

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21. SHARP , Jeremy M., "Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention", p. 11, 24 August, 2018, URL: https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf

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WATER CONFLICTS.
CASE STUDY–LAKE CHAD CONFLICT

Akos TRESZKAI*

This paper provides a short presentation of the Lake Chad water conflict and demonstrates the dependency between water scarcity and security. The conflict shows the consequences and effects of climate change and overpopulation; furthermore, it highlights the link between global warming and armed conflicts. Despite the fact that the conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon is over, there is no satisfactory solution to the root of the problem. The Lake Chad conflict is an extraordinarily complicated situation, because Lake Chad is a transnational lake. Its shares borders with Niger, Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad. The water shortage unleashed an armed conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon. Finally, the United Nations International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered a judgement in the dispute in 2002. Although interstate conflicts and disputes were solved with the assistance of an intergovernmental organization, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, intrastate problems are still unsolved and this is an important social and security related issue. As a result of the climate change and the lack of the international cooperation in the field of water resource management, more and more disputes and conflicts are expected to occur in Africa.

Keywords: Chad Lake; Water Conflicts; Climate Change; Nigeria; Water Management; Africa.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the dependency between water scarcity and security related conflicts connected to Lake Chad. Currently, there is a humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin. The drought in the region has started 22-24 years ago. Altogether, 10.7 million people were affected in the crisis and 2.4 million people were forced to leave their home. In 2018, 5 million people were affected by malnutrition and food insecurity. In the Lake Chad Basin, 80-90% of the population depends on the agriculture, fishery, and livestock. In this fragile situation, every conflict is followed by dramatic consequences. As a result of climate change, people are forced to leave their home because they do not have access to water. They do not have another chance, therefore they are moving into IDP camps [1].

There are two different levels of conflict in connection to Lake Chad, an interstate and an intrastate conflict. One conflict which has already been solved is an interstate conflict. Armed conflicts existed between Nigeria and Cameroon and between Nigeria and Chad, regarding water provisions. Due to climate changes, the countries surrounding Lake Chad Basin have been forced to cooperate with each other. They have to solve their disputes peacefully and cooperate with each other in order to avoid further conflicts and

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[1] Camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) are for people forced to flee their own home but who remain within their country border.

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together find a solution to the results of changes in climate patterns. The affected countries have come to the conclusion that international negotiation and cooperation is the only way to find a mutual beneficial solution. Each riparian country is facing a humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad Basin.

Despite the fact that the interstates conflict has been solved, the riparian countries are cooperating with each other in order to avoid a war. All of them are interested in one thing and that is obtaining and maintaining peace in the region; however, the conflict has deepened into an intrastate level. The interstate cooperation does not touch the root causes of the problem. The regional and local tensions are still high in the region and water scarcity is intensifying these tensions. Although the direct link between the insecurity and poverty is relatively weak, the situation in Lake Chad region has provided an opportunity for armed militias, such as Boko Haram, to find supporters and recruit new members that are disappointed with the way things are turning in their country and who are hopeless about their future.

Nowadays, an Islamist insurgency is destabilizing the Lake Chad region. It is still an ongoing conflict, but putting an end to the Islamist insurgency is essential for solving the humanitarian crisis. Additional consequences of the instability, the education system is completely destabilized, and the healthcare system completely collapsed. The international and national aids cannot reach the indigents and the intrastate conflicts are still unsolved. One of the most import trigger factor is, evidently, water scarcity.

1. The potential security risk of water scarcity in Africa

Water is the most vital and the most precious resource for human existence and it covers 71% of the Earth's surface, but unfortunately 96.5% of the Earth's total water resources is salt water, which is unsuitable for human consumption. Only the remaining 3.5% is fresh water found in lakes

and rivers.[2] There are two categories of fresh water. One of these categories is non-renewable fresh water, which is found in the deep aquifer, the other one is renewable fresh water, which is found on the surface and has a vital role in the hydrologic cycle[3]. There is no life without fresh water. As one of the most essential resources, the role of water has been increasing.

Globally, some 1.2 billion people have no regular access to fresh water. According to forecasts, this number will rise in the following decades. It means that one fifth of the population of the Earth lives in areas where water scarcity is not only a theoretical, but also a real issue. Water scarcity is both a natural and a man-made phenomenon.

Africa is the second driest continent of the World, after Australia. According to the UN Africa Water Atlas, 69% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa has no proper sanitation facilities; furthermore, 40% of the people have no reliable access to safe fresh water. 15% of the global population lives on the African continent, and despite this fact, they only have 9% of the global freshwater resources.[4]

According to the Human Development Report 2006 of the United Nations Development Programme water stress is experienced in areas where the annual water supply drops below 1,700 m^3 per person. The population will face water scarcity when the annual water supply drops below 1,000 m^3 and absolute water scarcity means that water supply goes under 500 m^3 per year.

The largest number of water-stressed countries of all regions in Africa is situated in the Sub-Saharan areas. Today, almost 25% of the Sub-Saharan African population lives in a water-

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[2] Matt Williams, "What percent of Earth is Water?" in *Universe Today Space and astronomy news*, URL: https://www.universetoday.com/65588/what-percent-of-earth-is-water/, accessed on 09.10.2018.

[3] "Water Cycle", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, URL: https://www.britannica.com/science/water-cycle, accessed on 09.10.2018.

[4] United Nations Environment Programme, *Africa Water Atlas*, 2010. pp. 13-14.

stressed country.[5]

According to some forecasts, water scarcity in the 21st century will be one of the leading causes of future conflicts in Africa, the issue being rather complex. Until now, fresh water as a cause of wars or conflicts was only a secondary issue; the main reasons were religious, ethnic, economic and political ones.[6] There is a strong link between water and society – the lack of water could cause serious security challenges. The scarcity of water could cause radical reactions – such as armed conflicts – in the society in order to get control over water supplies. During the history of mankind, one of the fundamental causes of wars was seizing resources.[7]

The internationally accepted definition of the water conflict reads as follows: "Water conflict refers to any disagreement or dispute over or about water, where external social, economic, legal, political, or military intervention is needed to resolve the problem. A water war is an armed conflict that is fought between countries with the sole or primary purpose of gaining access to water, or where water forms the central weapon of offence in the arsenal of an aggressor".[8]

There are two significant causes of water scarcity in Africa: climate change and overpopulation.

2. Reasons and consequences of water scarcity

2.1. Climate Change

During the past 100 years the planet's average temperature has grown by about 0.9 centigrade. This process has been accelerating in the last 35 years. It must be emphasized here that 2016 has been the warmest year since the 19th century.[9]

There are countless consequences of global warming. These effects seriously affect the African continent. In Africa, the average precipitation is decreasing, which causes difficulties in providing sufficient amounts of high quality drinking water, essential for agriculture and food production. There is no life without water, it is fundamental to life. Water scarcity forces the local population to leave their territories and look for new places to live. This migration develops conflicts between the newcomers and the original local population.

Climate change generates serious challenges in Africa. The lack of resources, such as water and agricultural products, aggravates the tensions in the concerned countries. These countries are already facing challenges connected to social, security, and economic issues. Water scarcity, which is one of the consequences of climate change, and inadequate water management and overpopulation are capable of inflaming already existing conflicts. In general, water scarcity is not the primary cause of wars, but is undoubtedly one of the most important reasons. Water and food scarcity only add oil to the fire.[10]

This phenomenon is an important issue in Africa. The continent suffers from the consequences of climate change. It is especially arid territories that are involved in this situation.[11]

[5] United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report* 2006, pp. 136.

[6] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Human Development Report*, 2006, URL: http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/scarcity.shtml, accessed on 09.10.2018.

[7] Szalkai-Széll Attila, "Édesvízhiány hatása a világbiztonságra, különös tekintettel a Közel-Keletre", Doktori értekezés (The Effect of Freshwater scarcity on world security, with special regard to the Middle East, PhD dissertation), URL: http://archiv.uni-nke.hu/downloads/konyvtar/digitgy/phd/2012/szalkai_szell_attila.pdf, accessed on 09.12.2019.

[8] United Nations Environment Programme: *Africa Water Atlas*, 2010, p. 314.

[9] "Climate Trends Continue to Break Records", *NASA*, 2016, URL: https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2016/climate-trends-continue-to-break-records, accessed on 09.12.2018.

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2.2. *Overpopulation*

According to United Nations estimates, the population of Africa is 1.2 billion. This means that the African population makes up 16% of the total world population.[12]

There is a rapid population explosion on the continent. In recent years, the population has been growing by 30 million people per year. By the year 2050, approximately 2.4 billion people will live in Africa. According to estimates the annual growth of the population will be 42 million[13].

3. The Lake Chad issue

The Lake Chad issue, in other words, the Lake Chad conflict is also a very complex matter.

The Lake Chad region is one of the poorest regions of Africa. It experiences a swift demographic growth and is seriously vulnerable to climate change.[16]

In 1964 four countries – Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon – shared the water of Lake Chad. Nowadays it has dried out so much that actually only two countries – Chad and Cameroon – share it in narrow sense.[17]

In 1964, the above mentioned four countries and later, also the Central African Republic initiated the setting up of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The task of this regional body is to regulate the Lake Chad water and other natural resources, but this organization was virtually unable to save the basin.[18] The Lake
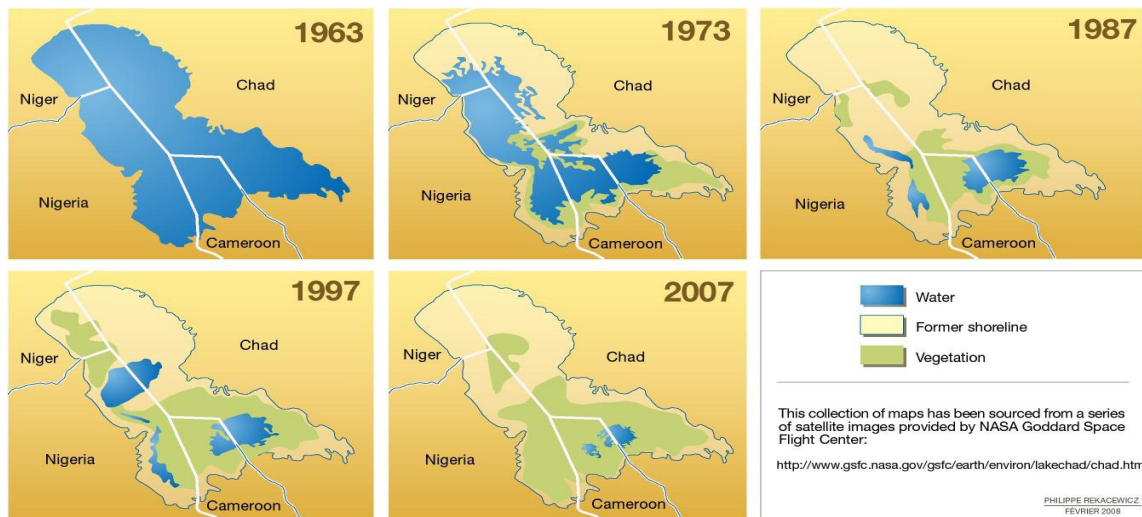

Figure no. 1: Lake Chad[15]

During the past 53 years, the lake has lost 90% of its water. [14]

Chad Basin Commission has the responsibility to work with stakeholders across the region to

[12] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *International Migration*, URL: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/, accessed on 10.01.2019.

[13] Joseph J Bish, "Population growth in Africa: grasping the scale of the challenge", *The Guardian*, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/jan/11/population-growth-in-africa-grasping-the-scale-of-the-challenge, accessed on 10.01.2019.

[14] United Nations Environment Programme: *Lake Chad: almost gone*, 2008, URL: http://www.unep.org/dewa/vitalwater/article116.html, accessed on 10.01.2019.

[15] United Nations Environment Programme: *Lake Chad: almost gone*, 2008. http://www.unep.org/dewa/vitalwater/article116.html, accessed on 10.01.2019.

[16] Géraud Margin, Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Crisis Development-The Lake Chad Region and Boko Haram", *AFD*, August 2018, URL: https://www.afd.fr/sites/afd/files/2018-08-04-37-14/Crisis%20and%20Development .%20The%20Lake%20Chad%20Region%20and%20Boko%20Haram.pdf, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[17] "Lake Chad in 2019", *Google Maps,* URL: https://www.google.hu/maps/place/Cs%C3 %A1dt%C3%B3/@13.0748444,14.2230142,88798m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x1110f0d2794b9cd9:0xf287fa499e9b3dd4, accessed on 10.01.2019.

[18] Ahmad SALKIDA: "Africa's vanishing Lake Chad", *Africa Renewal Magazine*, 2012, URL: http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2012/africa%E2%80%99s-vanishing-lake-chad, accessed on 10.01.2019.

address sharing, conservation and management of the lake resources and in engaging diplomatic options to resolve conflicts.

Nigeria built two monumental dams on the Yobe River. The Tiga dam was constructed in 1974 and the Challawa Gorge dam in 1992. As a result of inconsiderate water management the Yobe's runoff reduced by 60%, consequently only 1% of the Yobe water reaches Lake Chad. The two dams disrupted the natural balance which resulted in low water level;[19] therefore, this generates a continuous tension in the basin.

4. Previous conflicts in connection with Lake Chad

The conflict around Lake Chad is not a 21st century phenomenon. As a result of the disappearance of Lake Chad in the 1980's, Nigerian fishermen began to follow the disappearing water and started to migrate to Cameroon. Ten years later, Nigerian fishermen established approximately 30 villages in Cameroon. As it looks familiar in the context of African conflicts, the border between Nigeria and Cameroon has existed since colonial times. The tension grew when the Nigerian government insisted that the new villages belonged to Nigerian territory. Nigeria installed military and police forces, and established health centers and schools in the Nigerian populated villages. This situation caused several military encounters and clashes between the two countries. Finally, the case was brought before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2002. In accordance with the judgment delivered by ICJ Nigeria had to remove the public services and withdraw the military forces from the area.[20]

Border disputes have already existed in the region from the colonial times, especially

between Nigeria and Cameroon. The armed conflict in connection with Lake Chad began on 18.04.1983, when three thousand Chadian soldiers attacked and occupied nineteen islands and six villages.[21] There were complex reasons for the military operation. On the one hand, the reason was climate change, and on the other hand, the reason was overpopulation. In the 20th century, the Chadians and the Nigerians lived in peace and shared Lake Chad. As a result of climate change and careless water management, the lake has started to run dry. This changing phenomenon caused variations in the situation. Nigerian fishermen followed the shrinking lake and settled down in villages in the Chadian territory of Lake Chad.

The Nigerian army repulsed the Chadian attack and deployed four thousand Nigerian soldiers to launch a counterattack; and as a result of this counter-offensive, the Nigerian army broke into the territory of Chad and stopped at a 50km distance from the Chadian Capital, N'Djamena. Finally, Nigeria withdrew its forces.[22] As a consequence of this short war, the border between Nigeria and Chad was closed until 1986.[23]

Today, former enemies are in a military alliance. Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad created an alliance in 2015.[24] The outskirts of Lake Chad is the operational theatre of the Islamic terrorist organization called "Boko Haram". All the affected countries are making efforts to break down the organization which pledged allegiance

[19] "World Bank/Lake Chad Basin Commission", *Appraisal of the Safety of the Tiga and Challawa Gorge dams, Nigera*, 2002, URL: http://projects.inweh.unu.edu/inweh/display.php?ID=1269, accessed on 12.01.2019.

[20] International Court of Justice, *Land and Maritime Boundary between Cameroon and Nigeria*, 2002, URL: http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=294&code=cn&p1=3&p2=3&p3=6&case=94&k, accessed on 13.01.2019.

[21] Besenyő János, Jagadics Péter, Hetényi Soma Ambrus, Resperger István, *Országismertető: Csád* (Country Information: Chad), Székesfehérvár: MH Összhaderőnemi parancsnokság, p. 201.

[22] Perestroika, "Forgotten Facts: The three day war between Nigeria and Chad", *Defense Nigeria*, URL: https://defensenigeria.blog/2017/08/21/forgotten-facts-the-three-day-war-between-nigeria-and-chad/, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[23] Ethan L. Hall, "Conflict for Resources: Water in the Lake Chad Basin", School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, URL: https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a505231.pdf, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[24] Marsai Viktor, "Nigeria's Boko Haram – It will be a long war", *Panorama of global security environment 2015-2016, Stratpol*, Bratislava, 2016, p. 361.

to the Islamic State.[25]

Boko Haram launched its operation in Yobe State, Northern Nigeria in 2002. The aim of this insurgency was to fight against the government because of poverty and corruption. The main enemy of Boko Haram is "the West" and the so-called western culture. At the beginning, Boko Haram only attacked police and military targets, later, it occupied territories, as well.[26]

This ideology receives support from the poor population of the Lake Chad basin. Most members of Boko Haram belong to the Kanuri ethnic group which lives around the Lake Chad basin. As a result of the ethnic, religious and cultural links in Chad, Niger and Cameroon, Boko Haram spread its operation in the region. At the peak of its power, Boko Haram ruled territories in Borno, Yobe and Adamaswa states, and its base was the Sambisa Forest in 2014.

At the initiative of Nigeria, the Lake Chad Basin Commission countries and some international partners, such as the US and France, have launched a military operation against Boko Haram.[27]

As a result of the military campaign the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari announced that Nigeria and its allies "technically won the war" in December 2015 and Boko Haram is not able to carry out conventional attacks against the Nigerian and Cameroonian security forces and civilians.[28]

Nevertheless, Boko Haram still carries out occasional attacks even today and is an active actor in the Lake Chad crisis.

5. Background of the tensions in connection with Lake Chad Region

The spreading of radical ideologies and the growing influence of Boko Haram in the region cannot be explained by a single factor. It is important to understand the connection between the environmental, economic, social factors and the Islamist radical organization. In this paper, the environmental factor is highlighted, but the other factors are taken in account, as well.

One of the factors which are contributing to the operation of the Boko Haram is the *limited governance and power of the state*. The Lake Chad region is located in the peripheral territory of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon. People who are living in the territory have had limited interaction with state authorities throughout history – thus, we can state that the state does not have influence on their daily life.

When the state's representatives appear, *corruption and social injustice* come up as well. Traditionally, in the Lake Chad Region, people avoid the insufficient governance and mismanagement. As mentioned, according to the Transparency International Perceptions Index 2018, which ranks 180 countries by their perceived levels of public sector corruption based on experts and businesspeople, Nigeria' rank is 144/180[29], Chad's rank is 165/180[30] Cameroon's rank is 152/180[31], Niger is 114/180[32]. All of these facts demonstrate that ~~the~~ corruption is a serious problem in the region. The other factor which contributes to the hostile atmosphere between the local population and the state is the accusation of abuse against civilians committed by the security forces.

Another result of the poor governance is the presence of serious *organized crime networks* in the region. Smuggler and other kinds of organized

[25] "Nigeria's Boko Haram pledges allegiance to Islamic State", *BBC News*, 2015, URL: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31784538, accessed on 16.01.2019.

[26] János Besenyő, Ádám Mayer, "Boko Haram in Context: The Terrorist Organizations' Roots in Nigeria's Social History", *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, Volume 7, Number 1, Summer 2015, pp. 47-58, URL: http://www.coedat.nato.int/publication/datr/volume10/04-BokoHaraminContext_TheTerroristOrganizations_RootsinNigeriasSocialHistory.pdf, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[27] Virginia Comolli, "The evolution and impact of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin", *Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN)*, URL: https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-evolution-and-impact-of-boko-haram-in-the-lake-chad-basin/, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[28] "Nigeria Boko Haram: Militants 'technically defeated' – Buhari", *BBC News*, 2015, URL: http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35173618 accessed on 16.01.2019.

[29] "Nigeria", *Transparency International*, URL: https://www.transparency.org/country/NGA, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[30] "Chad", *Transparency International*, URL: https://www.transparency.org/country/TCD, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[31] "Cameroon", *Transparency International*, URL: https://www.transparency.org/country/CMR, accessed on 11.01.2019.

[32] "Niger", *Transparency International*, URL: https://www.transparency.org/country/NER, accessed on 11.01.2019.

crime groups operate in the Lake Chad Basin; banditry is also a frequent phenomenon in the region.

Beyond the criminal actors, – as a result of the lack of governance –, other *militias and armed groups* turned up in the basin. Nowadays, the most notorious group is the Boko Haram, but there are other less known groups as well. Terrorism is a really important challenge in the region.

Desertification and environmental pressure is yet another aspect, as the Lake Chad region has been suffering from the effects of insufficient water management and climate changes in the recent years. Water scarcity has impact on environmental degradation and on the livelihood, which generate migration. Some communities, which live at the shoreline of the lake, are forced to follow water in order to secure their livelihood. In the region, fishing and farming are essential in order to survive; another option is IDP[33] camps displacement.

As for the *Social and Religious Dynamics*, it has to be pointed out that Islam has significant influence in the region. The ideology of the Boko Haram is not a new phenomenon in the Lake Chad region. Throughout the history, several Islamist movements appeared around Lake Chad. Nowadays, one of the most infamous is the Boko Haram terrorist organization.

Recommendations

In the following, we are going to advance a set of recommendations, from the macro level (international) to the micro level (local). Thus, on international level, it is necessary to look for effective solutions for water scarcity, because, on one hand, it is an environmental and natural phenomenon, but on the other hand, it is man-made, artificial phenomenon as well.

On international and national level, it is necessary to develop the economy, livelihood, and to create new jobs in order to secure a

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[33] Camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) someone who is forced to flee his or her own but who remains within his or her country's border.

sustainable future for the locals.

On regional level, it is necessary to disarm the Boko Haram and other militias and reintegrate their members into the society.

On regional level, local people should be supported financially and, furthermore, public service and administration should be developed in order to keep them away from the radical ideology and criminality.

On local level, state's presence should be extended, and corruption should be tackled as well. Also, states should do every effort to build peace and support human well-being in order to reduce vulnerability.

Conclusions

As exposed in the article, there is direct link between the access to freshwater and security. Therefore, the European Union and other international actors should take water scarcity in Africa seriously as it is able to generate a significant security concern. As in every crisis, the most effective way is to solve them is prevention. Prevention of the conflict is nearly impossible without international cooperation and without the intention of the international community. Efficient negotiation is essential in order to avoid armed conflicts generated in connection with water. In case of a civil strife or interstate wars, international actors should be ready for intervention in order to prevent the escalation of violent incidences. Unfortunately, the Darfur conflict or Rwandan genocide are negative examples of crisis management, because the indifference of the international community has responsibility in its failure. In the light of these reasons, prevention of African water conflicts is relevant for Europe, as well.

As a result of climate change, inadequate water management and overpopulation, Africa's other regions such as Eastern-Africa or Northern-Africa might also be affected by potential conflicts.

Regarding to the Lake Chad crisis, it is important to highlight that the former interstate conflict became an intrastate conflict.

In the Lake Chad conflict, on account of climate change and water scarcity, the local people have been losing their livelihood. Some years ago, fishery ensured the livelihood in the area, but as a result of the disappearing of the lake, they have lost their workplace and they have been becoming impoverished. The unsatisfied and hopeless people are more vulnerable to radicalization. As a long term result of the water scarcity and impoverishment, Boko Haram has been gaining more and more influence and it able to destabilizing the region.

The geographic characteristic of the Lake Chad Basin, the porous natural and national borders, the historical, cultural and social traditions are all contributions to the complex situation, which is advantageous for the operation of the Islamist insurgent groups and other criminal and armed groups as well. The lack of state's presence, the decreased economic situation, water scarcity and other factors contribute to the high unemployment rate and underdevelopment and generate a poverty cycle. These economic and environmental factors contribute to the recruitment by the organized crime groups, and radical armed militias. The poverty, dissatisfaction of people and other factors assist the spread of radical ideology.

As proved in the paper, the accomplishment of interstate conflict was easier than solve the lower level, intrastate issue. It is important to clarify that the fight against the Boko Haram is not only a military campaign. Water scarcity is a trigger factor in the crisis, nevertheless the riparian countries should clear up several sensitive factors in order to solve the Lake Chad crisis.

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MENA – US MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM SYRIA. SIGNALS, MOTIVATIONS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES IN THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM

Mirela ATANASIU, Ph.D.*

The American involvement in Syrian policy has been present since the creation of modern Syria. In fact, initially, it was the United States that helped Syria gain its sovereignty, opposing the domination of France after World War II[1]. Later, for a short period of time, Washington balanced between conflict and cooperation in the relationship with Damascus. For example, in the 1967 Six-Day War, the US supported Israel against the regional coalition (Egypt, Jordan, Syria) and, in the 1991 Gulf War, both were taking sides with Kuwait. Relations worsen again when, after the sanctions taken against Iraq, Syria defied the international community and increased trade volume with it.

Subsequently, after the Arab Spring started in Syria, on April 29, 2011, the US extended the sanctions imposed on the Syrian government as early as 2004, motivating the decision with "the abuses of human rights, which constitute a tremendous threat to the US national security, foreign policy and economy"[2]. In the Syrian conflict, the Americans were involved by the two programs, initiated in 2013, in support of the rebels fighting the Bashar al-Assad government. The first was a military program aimed at training and equipping 15,000 Syrian rebels, cancelled in 2015 after spending $ 500 million and resulted only a few dozen of fighters[3]. The second was a $ 1 billion program, deployed and managed by CIA, aimed at providing weapons and supplies to Syrian rebel groups. The latter was more successful, but it was cancelled in mid-2017 by the Trump administration.

The US military direct engagement in the Syrian conflict, alongside France and the United Kingdom, began with the launch of an air campaign motivated by the use of chemical weapons by the Assad government's military forces in August 2013, near Damascus, against the Syrian population. Subsequently, in September 2014, the US became the leader of the multinational coalition for countering ISIS[4], consisting of more than 50 states intervening in

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[1] ***, "Seven decades, seven facts: US policy on Syria in brief", *Deutsche Welle*, 7 April 2017, URL: https://www.dw.com/en/seven-decades-seven-facts-us-policy-on-syria-in-brief/a-38346847, accessed on 20.12.2018.

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the Islamic anti-terrorist battlefield and providing military support[5], equipment and informational support, or just political support. In 2015, US military involvement was carried out directly in the Syrian territory by sending troops[6] to support the ground operations of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)[7] against the Islamist terrorist offensive. Also, since the beginning of 2017, the air strikes of the American and other anti-ISIS coalition partners have openly targeted the positions of the Syrian government and its allies. So, the US has positioned themselves in the Syrian conflict against the Islamic terrorists, the government of Bashar al-Assad[8] and its allies, but aligning to the Syrian anti-government forces and Kurdish militia (the Kurdish People's Protection Unit - YPG) objectives.

President Trump's decision in December 2018 to withdraw US ground forces from Syria has sparked controversy, and if this plan is completed, it will surely trigger a change in the fragile balance of forces in the north-east of the country and will greatly influence the conflict's end. We must wait and see how the remaining parties will play their cards on the Syrian

battlefield. This decision is not quite unforeseen because it was preceded by some American actions and decisions aiming at this direction. Moreover, the withdrawal was inevitable, but the decision was taken prematurely.

Thenceforth, there are presented some ideas that outline this decision to withdraw the American forces from the Syrian battlefield in terms of signals of its onset, pleas in law for this decision as well as some immediate reactions and medium and long-term consequences in the regional and international security plan.

Signals of US withdrawal from Syria

- The cancellation (in 2015 and 2017, respectively) of the two programs in Syria supporting the rebel forces;

- The absence of the US in the peace talks of November 2017 between the Assad government and the main opposition forces (initiated by Russia alongside Turkey and Iran), in Sochi, January 2018 (sponsored by Russia)[9], and neither at the 11th round of talks in Astana[10] in November 2018;

- The $ 230 million[11] diminution in August 2018 of the US aid for Syria's reconstruction;

- President Trump's more often public statements in recent months focusing on "bringing US troops home"[12], "ISIS defeat"[13], and "the

[5] A.N.: allies of the anti-ISIS coalition that provided military support include the U.S., Iraq, Jordan, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, or Australia. See details in: Diana Toea, *art. cit.*, 27 September 2014.
[6] A.N.: initially 50 soldiers, their number reaching about 2,000 in December 2018. See details at: "A look at US involvement in Syria's civil war", *Military Times*, 19 December 2018, URL: https://www.militarytimes.com/news/ your-military/2018/12/19/a-look-at-us-involvement-in-syrias-civil-war, accessed on 20.12.2018.
[7] A.N.: the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) is an alliance of Kurdish, Arab, Turkmen, Assyrian, and Armenian militia, formed in 2015, mainly fighting against ISIS, the Al-Nusra Front and other jihadist groups in the Syrian civil war. The goal of the alliance is to establish and protect the federal region "Rojava - North Syria". See details at: ***, "Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)", *Civil Syrian War Map*, URL: https://syriancivilwarmap.com/syrian-democratic-forces, accessed on 16.12.2018.
[8] A.N.: the opposition forces include the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the Islamic Front founded by Jaysh al-Islam, Ahrar al-Scham, Ansar al-Sham, Kurd Islamic Front, Liwa al-Tawhid, Suqour al-Sham and Liwa al-Haqq, the jihadist Al-Nusra/Jabhat al-Nusra Front, ISIS. See details at: ***, "Anti-Government Forces", *Syrian Civil War Map*, URL: https://syriancivilwarmap.com/antigovernment-forces, accessed on 12.12.2018.

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already achieved mission of US intervention in Syria"[14].

Motivations

a) Invoked by the American President:

- the loss of the purpose of the US-initiated anti-Islamic coalition intervention, following the declaration of the Islamist terrorist organization's defeat;

- saving the US from "spending precious lives and trillions of dollars"[15].

b) Possible:

- The touch of a historical minimum of American public opinion support for the US administration because of the air strikes in Syria[16];

- Raising awareness that in Syria there is no viable government control alternative to Assad's formula;

- The Kurds' sacrifice in Syria (former allies in the Syrian battlefield against ISIS) and US-Kurdish mutual relations in order to save and reinforce US-Turkey bilateral relations and within NATO, and to eliminate the possibility of a direct collision between the US and Turkish forces against a possible attack against the Kurds at the border with Turkey;

- American awareness of the fact that foreign powers, including the US, have led to the prolongation and intensification of the Syrian conflict.

Consequences in the medium and long term

- The change of the forces' balance in the Syrian battlefield in favour of Syrian governmental forces;

- The Assad regime and its supporting states (Russia, Turkey, and Iran) in terms of image capital;

- Forcing the Kurds to fight on three fronts with: the Daesh jihadists, the government forces in Damascus, and the Turkish forces;

- A possible attack by the Turkish military forces on the Kurds (the US forces were acting as a buffer between them), motivated by fear of forming a Kurdish corridor along the Turkish-Syrian border;

- The increase of Iran's power in the region and the easement of the arms transfer to Hezbollah;

- The loss of US credibility as a loyal ally within the anti-ISIS coalition;

- The revitalization of ISIS amid the creation of a power vacuum in the regions where US troops are withdrawn;

- A possible initiation of a dialogue between YPG and government forces in order to conclude a direct agreement;

- The loss of US image capital by failing to honour the promises of contributing to Syria's reconstruction and by stopping the funding promised to the rebel forces[17];

- Possible reprisals of Syria and Iran over regional states that have supported US involvement in the Syrian conflict (for example, Israel);

- The creation of the possibility for other dictators to react as Bashar al-Assad, violating the fundamental rights of their own citizens, as it appears he remains unpunished for his actions;

- engaging government forces in more bloody attacks against rebels and civilians in northern Syria.

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[15] Twittering on American President Donald Trump's Twitter channel, 20 December 2018, URL: https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/1075721703421042688, accessed on 22.12.2018.

[16] Frank Newport, "U.S. Support for Syria Strikes Rates Low in Historical Context", *Gallup*, 10 April 2017, URL: https://news.gallup.com/poll/208334/support-syria-strikes-rates-low-historical-context.aspx, accessed on 16.12.2018.

[17] ***, "Trump administration to pull back funding for Syria reconstruction efforts", *The Washington Post*, 17 August 2018, URL: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/trump-administration-is-stopping-funding-for-syria-reconstruction-efforts/2018/08/17/1b6a097e-a23e-11e8-8e87-c869fe70a721_story.html?utm_term=.66f4a3b08669, accessed on 12.12.2018.

I think the biggest problem with President Trump's decision to withdraw US troops from Syria is timing. The decision would have been right if ISIS were totally defeated and there would not have been any Islamists bastions in Syria, but US officials (except for D. Trump's partisans), international analysts, and still fervent and frequent attacks of Islamist terrorists show otherwise.

Most likely, although the US President has the right to decide whether to withdraw the US troops from the Syrian battlefield in 2-3 months or not, the pressures exerted internally by Congress members or other US decision-making officials, but also externally, exercised by some allies of the anti-ISIS coalition, will lead to postponing this decision by using political "manoeuvres" and invoking different pretexts for the US not to lose their geopolitical influence in the Middle East or their credibility as a strong ally in the various international coalitions.

RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN IN AFRICA – RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS. THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN CONFLICT

Marius POTÎRNICHE, Ph.D.*

1. Russian campaign in Africa – results and implications

Russia's interests in Africa mainly aim at accessing resources, new markets, additional seaways and sea bases, in order to establish a new multipolar world order. Kremlin wishes to offset both United States of America's power, and China's power in Africa, and intends to become friends with other regional actors, that invest on the "green continent", like Turkey and the Arab states. Russia's intentions to generate influence on the "power brokers" whom they can influence in exchange for political benefits, including support from the African states regarding the vote on various U.N. issues.

Most likely, Moscow viewed the opportunities offered by Africa as excellent, against the backdrop of support in the area from the US and Europe. Still, Russia can not compete with the US and China in the light of the support that these states offer in this case. Instead, the Russian state is focusing on the advantage it has in certain sectors such as energy, mineral resource exploitation, weapons, as well as growth markets in agriculture, nuclear energy and hydrology[1].

Kremlin could make use of these revenue from these activities in order to fade out the negative economic effects of sanctions and to diversify the budgetary resourses largely dependent on oil exports. Russia is managing its expansions into Africa based on an old friendship datind to the former Soviet Union.

Also, Russia is seeking to establish military base in Africa in order to secure access to important trade routes and further project its military and economic power. Ultimately, Kremlin intends to gain access to key-points in the Suez Canal and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Russia reported the fact that it has plans to build several naval logistics centers in Eritrea on August 31[2], facilities that would put under surveillance important shipping routes through the Red Sea. The Russian Foreign Ministry is lobbying for sanctions relief for Eritrea, in an attemp to obtain certain facilitations and encourage further concessions to Kremlin[3]. Furthermore, Russia is in the middle of discussing building a

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[1] ***, "ROSATOM signs contract for small scale hydro facility in the Republic of South Africa", *Press Service of Rusatom International Network*, 29 January 2018, URL: http://www.rosatom.ru/en/press-centre/news/rosatom-signs-contract-for-small-scale-hydro-facility-in-the-republic-of-south-africa/?sphrase_id=620575, accessed on 27.12.2018.

[2] ***, "Russia In Talks With Eritrea To Set Up "Logistics Center" On Red Sea Coast", *RFE/RL*, 1 September 2018, URL: www.rferl.org/a/russia-talks-eritrea-set-up-logistics-center-red-sea-coast-lavrov/29464939.html, accessed on 23.12.2018.

[3] Salem Solomon, "Russia-Eritrea Relations Grow with Planned Logistics Center", *VOA*, 2 September 2018, URL: www.voanews.com/a/russia-eritrea-relations-grow-

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naval supply center in Sudan, and holds basing aspirations in Lybia[4].

Moscow can use the agreements on nuclear energy to market a wide range of related services including engineer training, fuel provision, sales on defensive radar systems in order to protect key points infrastructure[5]. In relation to the US and Europe, Russia holds a competitive advantage in these fields[6] and is trying to prevent a future expansion in the global nuclear sector by China. In 2018, the state-owned nuclear energy corporation, Rosatom, approached numerous states in Africa, and Nigeria confirmed that it intended to close a deal with this corporation[7]. Also, in 2018, Kremlin signed memorandums of understanding with Uganda, Morocco, Sudan, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and it holds deals to finance and build a nuclear power plant in Egypt[8]. Furthermore, Russia sets up the background for a future agreement by establishing Nuclear Science and Technology Centers that will promote nuclear energy and train workers throughout Africa.

In 2018, Russia signed agreements on

military cooperation with Guinea, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Madagascar and the Central African Republic[9]. These framework agreements allow the exchange of information on terrorist actions, as well as the training of military personnel in Russia. Also, in 2018, Moscow increased its military cooperation with Algeria, one of the largest weapon buyers in Africa[10].

Currently, Russia is aiming at accessing Africa's natural resources, mainly focusing on hydrocarbons and rare minerals exploration. Most probably, Moscow finds resource extraction in Africa to be more cost-effective than in remote regions in Russia. Rosgeologia, a state-owned geological exploration company, signed an agreement with Sudan regarding natural gas extraction in the Red Sea[11]. Gabon gave Zarubezhneft[12], the Russian oil

with-planned-logistics-center/4554680.html, accessed on 23.12.2018.
[4] Tom Newton Dunn, "Putin Troops in Libya", *The Sun*, 8 October 2018, URL: www.thesun.co.uk/news/7448072/russia-missiles-libya-warlord, accessed on 23.12.2018.
[5] ***, "Russia to supply radar for protecting nuclear power plant in Pakistan", *TASS*, 30 August 2018, URL: www.tass.com/defense/1019325, accessed on 23.12.2018.
[6] ***, "The world relies on Russia to build its nuclear power plants", *The Economist*, 2 August 2018, URL: https://www.economist.com/europe/2018/08/02/the-world-relies-on-russia-to-build-its-nuclear-power-plants, accessed on 20.12.2018.
[7] Darrell Proctor, "Russia Will Help Nigeria Develop Nuclear Plant", *POWER*, 7 January 2018, URL: https://www.powermag.com/russia-will-help-nigeria-develop-nuclear-plant, accessed on 23.12.2018.
[8] ***, "Russia discusses African nuclear power prospects", *World Nuclear News*, 8 March 2018, URL: www.world-nuclear-news.org/NP-Russia-discusses-African-nuclear-power-prospects-08031801.html, accessed on 20.12.2018; Nataliya Bugayova, Jack Ulses, "The Kremlin's Campaign in Egypt", *Institute for the Study of War*, 20 June 2018, URL: http://iswresearch.blogspot.com/2018/06/the-kremlins-campaign-in-egypt.html, accessed on 20.12.2018; ***, "Turkey grants Rosatom construction license for first unit of Akkuyu nuclear plant", *Reuters*, 2 April 2018, URL: www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-russia-nuclearpower/turkey-grants-rosatom-constructionlicense-for-first-unit-of-akkuyu-nuclear-plant-idUSKCN1H91OY, accessed on 20.12.2018.

[9] ***, "Russia has signed an agreement on military cooperation with Burundi", *RIA Novosti*, 23 August 2018, URL: https://ria.ru/20180823/1527113792.html, accessed on 23.12.2018; "Russia and Guinea signs intergovernmental agreement of military cooperation", *Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation*, 4 April 2018, URL: http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12169903@egNews, accessed on 20.12.2018; Daria Mikhalina, "Russia signed an agreement on military cooperation with Burkina Faso", *TV Zvezda*, 21 August 2018, URL: https://tvzvezda.ru/news/forces/content/201808211416-b0cl.htm, accessed on 23.12.2018; ***, "Russia, Madagascar sign agreement on military cooperation", *TASS*, 5 October 2018, URL: www.tass.com/defense/1024770, accessed on 20.12.2018; ***, "Russia Signs Military Cooperation Deal With Central African Republic", *RFE/RL*, 22 August 2018, URL: www.rferl.org/a/russia-signs-military-cooperation-deal-central-african-republic-vagner-investigation-russian-reporters-killed/29446656.html, accessed on 23.12.2018.
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[11] ***, "Russia and Madagascar will cooperate in the field of mineral exploration", *RT*, 24 May 2018, URL: https://russian.rt.com/business/news/516378-rossiya-madagaskar-pmef, accessed on 21.12.2018; ***, "Russia will cooperate with Madagascar in mineral exploration", *TASS*, 24 May 2018, URL: https://tass.ru/pmef-2018/articles/5229718, accessed on 21.12.2018; ***, "Rosgeo steps up cooperation with Algeria", *ROSGEO*, URL: www.rosgeo.com/en/content/rosgeo-steps-cooperation-algeria, accessed on 21.12.2018.
[12] Denis Davydov, "Gabon offers "Zarubezhneft" new fields", *Tekno Blog*, 15 July 2018, URL: https://teknoblog.ru/2018/07/15/91030, accessed on 21.12.2018; ***, "Putin declared that Russia and Gabon can work together on a

company, exploration rights, and Mozambique is considering a similar agreement regarding natural gas extraction with Russian oil company Rosneft[13]; the company signed an agreement with Lybia's National Oil Company in 2017[14]. Russia and și Zimbabwe had a discution concerning the cooperation reagarding the diamond sector, including a multi billion joint project on platinum exploition[15].

Russia is using private military companies to promote its interests on the African continent, and these companies train local security forces and support the acceleration for mineral resources acquisition in Africa. The Russian Embassy in Sudan confirmed the presence of such companies, and the president of Sudan as well[16]. These forces ensures the protection of the Russian activies connected to resource exploration.

Kremlin is setting the background in order to avoid sanctions in Egypt. Russia stated it began building an exclusive industrial area along Suez Canal before the Egyptian president's visit to Moscow. Kremlin seeks to become more and more influent in Egypt in order to ensure access to the strategic area of the Mediterranean Sea and to undermine the US position in North Africa. Russia can use the new industrial area as a means of evading sanctions from the West[17].

Kremlin wishes to use this advantage to trade in a currency other than the dollar and thus lessen the financial impact of future sanctions. If this proves to be a success, Russia is considering exporting this model to other emerging markets, such as Vietnam and Indonesia[18]. Kremlin can use all these actions to create a more aggressive foreing policy agenda and with lesser constraints due to the financial of Western sanctions.

Nevertheless, Russia has made remarkable progress in Africa, which is why Washington is closely monitoring these developments and prepering to counterbalance the Kremlin's efforts. The US has enough strategic interests on the „green continent" to remain employed in the area[19]. Russia's campain in Africa actually supports the major strategic goal of weakening the US globally and establishing a multipolar world order. Moscow can strategically win by positioning itself in two key maritime points, the Suez Canal and the Ba el-Mandeb Strait. Russia's actions also have long-term implications, aiming at reducing the impact economic, financial and diplomatic sanctions to which it is subject. Economic engagement in Africa will increase the political cost and complexity of future Western sanctions on the Russian state.

In conclusion, Russia pursues economic goals in Africa with geopolitical and geostrategic implications and conducts a campaign based on opportunity and neccessity, trying to strengthen military basis, capture the nuclear energy market and expand cooperation in the field of security.

2. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict

On the one hand, the Russian state continues to support the military capabilities of the Crimean Peninsula by air and naval means in order to create a credible force, capable of rejecting any

settlement in the CAR", *TASS*, 14 July 2018, URL: https://tass.ru/politika/5374075, accessed on 21.12.2018.
[13] ***, "Mozambique plans to sign gas agreement with Rosneft, ExxonMobil by yearend – Minister Pacheco in Russia", *Club of Mozambique*, 29 May 2018, URL: https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-plans-to-sign-gas-agreement-with-rosneft-exxonmobil-by-yearend-minister-pacheco-in-russia, accessed on 21.12.2018.
[14] Aidan Lewis, "Russia's Rosneft, Libya's NOC sign oil offtake deal", *Reuters*, 21 February 2017, URL: https://www.reuters.com/article/libya-oil-rosneft-oil/update-1-russias-rosneft-libyas-noc-sign-oil-offtake-deal-idUSL8N1G61XJ, accessed on 21.12.2018.
[15] MacDonald Dzirutwe, "Russia seeks military cooperation, diamond, platinum projects in Zimbabwe", *Reuters*, 8 March 2018, URL: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-russia/russia-seeks-military-cooperation-diamond-platinum-projects-in-zimbabwe-idUSKCN1GK2JK, accessed on 19.12.2018.
[16] ***, "Russia to help Sudan upgrade its armed forces", *TASS*, 23 November 2017, URL: http://tass.com/defense/977087, accessed on 19.12.2018.
[17] ***, "Russia approves draft agreement between the governments of Russia and Egypt on setting up the Russian Industrial Zone in the Suez Canal Economic Zone

and providing for its operation", *The Russian Government*, 3 May 2018, URL: http://government.ru/en/docs/32536, accessed on 22.12.2018.
[18] ***, "Russia plans to launch four industrial zones abroad in 6 years", *TASS*, 12 September 2018, URL: http://tass.com/economy/1021304, accessed on 22.12.2018.
[19] Emily Estelle, "America Ignores Africa to Its Peril", *The National Interest*, 23 July 2018, URL: https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/america-ignores-africa-its-peril-26596, accessed on 12.12.2018.

any potential NATO intervention. Also, Russia continues to threaten the resumption of military conflict with Ukraine and maintains a blockade on its ports in the Azov Sea. The possible long-term objective of Moscow is gaining full control of the Azov Sea and the port city of Mariupol. The asserted blockade maintains the economic discomfort among the Ukrainians in Berdyansk and Mariupol, and aims at reducing the trust in the Kiev government, a rather fragile one. On the other hand, Russia is fueling tenssions over the recent autonomy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian officials have warned that Russian security services (FSB) are organizing violent parades in Kiev, Odessa and other cities against the independence status of this church.

Russia is preparing its *proxy* separatist forces for a potential escalation of the conflict in Donbas, in eastern Ukraine. Kremlin has invaded the information space with fake news about the intentions of its military forces to attack Ukraine. Starting with October 2018, the Ukrainian military officials have confirmed the increase of the number of T-62 tanks along the Russian-Ukrainian border. Moscow continues to use subversive actions to ignite ethnic tensions and separatist feelings in the Transcarpathian region to induce suspicion between Ukraine and its neighbors, Poland and Hungary respectively. Moreover, on December 10, 2018, the Russian hackers attacked the computerized networks of more than one hundred state and military institutions in western Ukraine.

The Russian army is preparing for a more direct involvement, and Russia is strengthening the ground, naval and air forces belonging to the Southern Military District, which is responsible for military actions in Ukraine:

- *Ground forces*. Russia transferred a mechanized infantry regiment, with latest model tanks, and stationed it within 20-30 kilometers from the Russain-Ukrainian border. It is estimated that this regiment can support the advancement of ground forces along the northern coast of the Azov Sea, should Kremlin officials decide to undertake a major attack on Ukraine. Also, the numebr of armored vehicles along the common border has increased.

- *Air forces*. It is expected that Russia will integrate more aircraft units in addition to those existing within the Southern Military District, which have already begun training with the Marine Corps[20].

- *Naval forces*. Russia continues to support the capabilities of the Black Sea Fleet, adding a corvette equiped with cruise missiles[21] and, by early 2019, it is expected to receive four more fighter vessels, including patrol vessels and mine sweepers[22]. Moreover, the Russian army performed training drills with ships and missiles and involving submarines. Russia is also preparing the Central Military District so that, in case of conflict, to support the Southern Military District.

Moscow can expect that international public opinion will not react significantly, even if it will observe the increasing role of the Russian army in this war. Thus, Russia is trying to make the West an agrressor in order to set the grounds of eventual future conflict escalation. One of the Kremlin reports claims that the military personnel in the West are preparing to attack using chemical weapons the region that is currently controlled by Russia-backd separatists[23]. A separatists's spokesman in the Donets region claims that the Ukrainian armed forces will set an attack in the city of Mariupol. These fake news represent Russia's efforts to create a justification for any open military involvement. Moscow aims to create military confusion for the Ukrainian government,

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[20] ***, "Shoigu Stated Strategic Exercises "Tsentr-2019" Will Be Held in September", *Rambler*, 4 December 2018, URL: https://news.rambler.ru/army/41371557-shoygu-anonsiroval-ucheniya-tsentr-2019, accessed on 15.12.2018.

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[22] ***, "Russia's Black Sea Fleet to get four new warships", *TASS*, 3 December 2018, URL: http://tass.com/defense/1033966, accessed on 13.12.2018.

[23] ***, "Kremlin's persistent claim of "expected chemical attack by Ukraine Armed Forces in Donbas" worrying – MP", *UNIAN*, 10 December 2018, URL: https://www.unian.info/politics/10370694-kremlin-s-persistent-claim-of-expected-chemical-attack-by-ukraine-armed-forces-in-donbas-worrying-mp.html, accessed on 13.12.2018.

which would destabilize the announced meeting of proclaiming the independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the Russian one; that would represent a huge loss for Russia's social influence in Ukraine. Through this avalanche of „fake news", Kremlin is trying to make the Ukrainian state an aggressor, shortly before the vote of the UN General Assembly, which wants the official retribution of the militarization of Crimea, the Azov Sea and the Black Sea.

Moscow take NATO's lack of response regarding the aggression in the Azov Sea as an opportunity to bennefit from the clashes in Ukraine. The North Atlantic Alliance failed to adopt a unitary course of action in response to Russia's action in the Kerci Strait. Moreover, NATO memeber states have made public less convergent views and they had different stages of concern in the above mentioned case. The US strongly reacted to Russia's aggression, although not enough in order to prevent future offensive actions against Ukraine. The Washington administration intended to send a 6th Fleet battleship to the Black Sea, which, alongside Turkey, will prevent the the spread of the Russian threat to the Black Sea. The European Union was not able to reach an agreement on new sanctions against Russia, France and Germany, informing that it will not impose further sanctions, and that it prefers the diplomatic path to prevent further actions in Ukraine.

Russia has continued to divert attention from the features of an escalation of the situation to prevent stronger response from NATO. Most likely, Moscow uses oa mixture of incentives and pressure on the Turkish president to ensure that he will not be involved in a future expansion of the military conflict in Ukraine. The Russian army has already started this effort in Siria, where it uses aviation strikes nearby Turkish positions in western Aleppo region, under the false pretense that they retaliating against anti-Assad forces for using chemical weapons. Presumably, through these actions, Russia is also testing the reaction of international opinion to the fake chemical weapons attack and distracting from the conflict with Ukraine, and forcing the Turkis army not to get involved in the Black Sea.

Russia has proven its ability to carry out several simoultaneous campaigns against the West in multiple theatres of action. Thus, on November 25, 2018, Russia executed a cynical act of war against Ukraine in the Azov Sea. The Russian Coast Guard opened fire on Ukrainian vessels and detained the crews, under the pretext of violating several international laws. This conflict escalation between the two countries is part of a larger campaign, where Moscow intends to test the US and NATO's decision to intervene following such challenges and how the international community will get involved. For the moment, Russia is being encouraged to do so as a result of the North Atlantic Alliance's failure to respond, so it is mandatory for NATO to be prepared for any possible escalation actions of the conflict in Ukraine.

Russia is using various power tools, including military pressure, to threaten Ukraine, as it approaches a key political moment: the presidential elections. Kremlin has intended to use the threat on military conflict escalation in order to force the Ukrainian President, Petro Poroshenko, to implement and expand martial law, in the belief that this will erode the population support for the elections set for March 31, 2019. Poroshenko was not misled and, on December 26, 2018, dissolved the martial law, which is why Russia will change its plan, and is expected to take action to increase the instability in Ukraine[24]. This action can include a combination of military and non-military challenges, starting with the increase of cyber attacks, sabotage and even direct military aggression. One measere taken can be the announcement that Russia finished the construction of the border fence with the Crimean Peninsula on December 28, 2018, meant, according to the officials, to prevent the tresspasing of saboteurs from the Ukrainian territory[25]. This fence could also serve other

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[24] ***, "Poroshenko Ends Martial Law In Ukraine As Tensions With Russia Continue", *RFE/RL*, 26 December 2018, URL: https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-ends-martial-law/29677677.html, accessed on 29.12.2018.

[25] ***, "Russia builds border fence between Crimea and Ukraine proper", *Al Jazeera*, 28 December 2018, URL: www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/12/russia-builds-border-fence-crimea-ukraine-proper-181228145700919.html, accessed on 30.12.2018.

purposes, such as the need to secure an increase in the numeber of weapon systems deployed along the southern border of Ukraine.

In addition, Kremlin was trying to undermine NATO's intention to become a security guarantor for Kosovo. On October 18, 2018, the Parliament of Pristina approved a law to increase the numebr of its security forces from 2,500 to 8,000 people[26]. The Kosovo legislature did not give any reason for taking such a measure, but it seems that the latest interference between Serbs and Russians would be the reason for the decision. Moscow appears to be ready to exploit such tensions to destabilize the Balkans. Russia may try to link Kosovo Security Forces (KSF), with nationalist movements among ethnic Albanians to encourage the recruitment of ethnic Serbs into paramilitary forces, such as, for example, the Honor of the Serbs[27]. Also, the expansion of KSF may encourage Bosnia's newly elected Serb President, Milorad Dodik, to ask for an increase of military forces of the Srpska Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The dissensions could undermine any agrrement regarding the territory exchange between Serbia and Kosovo. Finally, Russia could use ethnic tensions related to the increase of the KSF to justify a request to end NATO's mission in Kosovo.

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[26] Muhamer Pajaziti, "Kosovo: Parliamentary debates on the creation of the army expected to start", *Independent Balkan News Agency*, 16 October 2018, URL: https://www.balkaneu.com/kosovo-parliamentary-debates-on-the-creation-of-the-army-expected-to-start, accessed on 30.11.2018; Die Morina, "Kosovo President Warns Govt Over its Army Plans", *BalkanInsight*, 13 September 2018, URL: https://balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-govt-approves-the-expand-of-competences-for-its-security-force-09-13-2018, accessed on 30.11.2018.

[27] ***, "Serbia puts military on high alert over incident involving 'Kosovo special forces'", *RT*, 29 September 2018, URL: https://www.rt.com/news/439920-serbia-troops-high-alert, accessed on 30.11.2018.

WESTERN BALKANS –
EURO-ATLANTIC ROUTE
AND DISENSIONS

Cristina BOGZEANU, Ph.D.*

The prospect of Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans has remained constant over time, and the recent dynamics in the relations between the political entities in this region and NATO/UE have undergone a number of positive developments. Here, we can include: Montenegro's accession to NATO, the settlement of the Skopje-Greece dispute over the name of the Macedonian state, the development of an EU strategy for this region.

On September 30, a referendum was held in Macedonia to validate the agreement with Greece from June 2018. With a vote attendance of 36.89%, 91.46% of Macedonians answered "Yes" to the question "Are you in favour of European Union and NATO membership by accepting the agreement between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece?"[1], only 5.66% gave a negative answer to the same question. This was the context where the relations between Greece and Russia became tensioned, the Greek side invoking Russia's attempts to undermine the agreement[2]. Moreover, the

intention of preventing Macedonia's accession to the Euro-Atlantic structures is also reflected in Moscow's official position: "The absorption of Macedonia in NATO by force confirms that the open door policy has become a goal in itself and an instrument to gain control over a geopolitical territory"[3].

Beyond the need to continue reforms to meet the accession criteria (the judiciary, corruption, organized crime), the start of the accession

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[1] A.N.: until the moment of writing this paper the proceeding for changing the name of the Macedonian state has not been finalized, the agreement will be the subject to the approval for the legislative forums in Skopje and Athens.
[2] V.M., "Greece criticises Russia for trying to undermine the agreement with Macedonia", *Hotnews*, 23 July 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22582102-grecia-critic-rusia-pentru-ncercarea-submina-acordul-

macedonia.htm, accessed on 23.07.2018; R.M., "Greece: Russian interference in Macedonian file, Athens will take "measures to guarantee national interest"/ "Kathimerini announces the expulsion of two Russian diplomats", *Hotnews*, 11 July 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22561552-grecia-ingerin-rusiei-dosarul-macedonean-atena-lua-suri-pentru-garanta-interesul-ional-kathimerini-anun-expulzarea-doi-diploma.htm, accessed on 11.07.2018; I.B., "Greek press: Russia influence's game in the Balkans", *Hotnews*, 17 July 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22571351-presa-greac-jocul-influen-rusiei-zona-balcanilor.htm, accessed on 17.07.2018; ***, "Greek Foreign Minister: Greece, ready to take action if the principles of national sovereignty and respect for the country are violated", *Agerpress*, 22 July 2018, URL: https://www.agerpres.ro/politica-externa/2018/07/22/ministrul-grec-de-externe-grecia-gata-sa-ia-masuri-daca-se-incalca-principiile-suveranitatii-nationale-si-respectul-fata-de-tara--148786, accessed on 22.07.2018.
[3] ***, "Briefing by Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, Moscow, July 12, 2018", The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/organizacia-po-zapreseniu-himiceskogo-oruzia/-/asset_publisher/km9HkaXMTium/content/id/3293994, accessed on 09.08.2018.

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negotiations with Skopje has been postponed to the EU level until June 2019; the decision was backed up by the European capitals either through the need for the EU to go across the internal reform process before a new enlargement (France), or through the fears of migration (the Netherlands).

In August, the President of Serbia proposed an initiative to normalize relations with Pristina, which involved an exchange of territories between Serbia and Kosovo. However, Aleksandr Vučić suggested including the request for extended autonomy for Serbian enclaves in Kosovo, protection of Orthodox monasteries, as well as financial compensation for property loss, including industrial property and energy facilities[4]. The Serb president's proposal not only was rejected by the Kosovo party, but was also followed by a series of decisions taken in the decision-making forums in Pristina, signalling that tensions between the two sides were maintained at high levels.

Towards the end of 2018, several developments have raised warning signals on the evolution of regional stability – Kosovo's decision to impose a tax of 100% on imported goods coming from Serbia and Bosnia (BiH), in response to Belgrade's efforts to prevent the separatist entity from joining international organizations, as well as the decision of the Pristine legislative forum to transform the Kosovo Security Forces into a national army (November 2018), being harshly criticised by NATO and the EU, and Serbia reacting virulently.

The Serbian Prime Minister's rough response in this context, which also suggested the possibility of a military-type reaction from Belgrade, not only supposes further delays in the process of normalizing relations between the two players and their European integration, but also constitutes a moment of escalation of tensions between the two Western Balkan actors which endangers regional stability.

Relations between Serbia and Kosovo remain a source of tension and regional destabilization, and the direct involvement of Euro-Atlantic players and the Russian Federation in maintaining regional stability or in strategic partnership, makes it possible to export destabilization throughout Europe. This is all the more so as the dispute settlement between the two entities is unlikely in the near future.

The separatist tendency of the Srpska Republic contributes to keeping BiH away from the challenge to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures, by preserving a general instability, but also by preventing the necessary reforms in this direction. Choosing Milorad Dodik in the presidential triad of BiH, as a representative of Serbs, in early October 2018, may lead to an instability increase of the state, as well as a strengthening of relations with the Russian Federation. For instance, as a member of the tripartite presidency of BiH, Milorad Dodik made public his intention to launch an initiative through which Sarajevo would recognize Crimea as an integral part of Russia. Moreover, its strong nationalist orientation could lead to deepening disagreements between the representatives of the three major ethnic communities and, implicitly, to accentuating the stability of the central authorities.

Despite the constant commitment of the Euro-Atlantic structures in the Western Balkans, the space remains a constant challenge, with reduced probability of integration in the EU and NATO, at least in what the actors with notable ethnic differences are concerned.

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[4] V.M., "Serbian President suggests a compromise with Kosovo", *Hotnews*, 09.08.2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22629742-pre-edintele-serbiei-sugereaz-variant-compromis-kosovo.htm, accessed on 10.08.2018.

BREXIT – THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG OF EUROPEAN CHALLENGES

Cristina BOGZEANU, Ph.D.*

The dynamics of the European security environment from the last quarter of 2018, was defined by the maintenance of tensions both inside and outside the European Union. During the analysed period, the main points in what security in concern were anchored in maintaining disputes between the western actors and the Russian Federation, in particular by the increasingly clear formulation of the exit perspective of the US and the Russian Federation from the Treaty on intermediate nuclear forces, but also in a new escalation of tensions in the context of the Azov Sea incident[1]. Another notable event was the NATO exercise, Trident Juncture, meant to test the Alliance's ability to support an ally attacked by the enemy. The exercise, which was thought to be the largest action of this sort since the Cold War, was followed by the Russian's party concerns about NATO activities, such as missile tests in the same region and strengthening of military presence in the adjacent space.

During the targeted period, the dynamics of the European security environment has also undergone other notable developments. On the one hand, the gradual decline in the popularity of the French President and the measures he embraced have reached a peak, manifested in the violent protests of the "yellow vests". Similarly, in Hungary, people protested against Viktor Orbán government policies. On the other hand, the

European Commission's decision to reject Italy's draft budget has led to an escalation of political disagreements between Rome and Brussels, thus continuing the trend of fragmentation of cohesion fragmentation at European level. Also, the decision of the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the leader of one of the main European post-Brexit engines, to stop running for the next round of elections for the presidency of the Christian-Democratic Party, adds to the factors that contribute to the image of European instability and dismantling of solidarity.

Near the end of the timeframe for negotiations between London and Brussels on the conditions under which the UK will exit the institutional framework of the European Union, the two sides have agreed on *the UK's withdrawal agreement from the EU*[2]. The date set for the Agreement to be put to vote in the British Parliament was postponed from December 2018 to January 2019, in the context of an opposition already being made in this context to the outcome of the Brexit negotiations.

The UK's withdrawal agreement from the EU has been harshly criticized by Brexit supporters

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[1] AN: on November 25, 2018, Russia opened fire and then seized three Ukrainian ships, accused of entering a temporarily closed area of Russian territorial waters in the Azov Sea.

[2] ***, *Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community*, as endorsed by leaders at a special meeting of the European Council on 25 November 2018, URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759019/25_November_Agreement_on_the_withdrawal_of_the_United_Kingdom_of_Great_Britain_and_Northern_Ireland_from_the_European_Union_and_the_European_Atomic_Energy_Community.pdf, accesed on 26.12.2018.

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for maintaining mechanisms and levers to connect London to the EU. Among its main content elements are the following:

- *The United Kingdom will remain in the European Single Market and in the EU custom union until December 2020,* without being able to take part in the decision-making process. During the transitional period, which may be extended, London will comply with all Community rules and decisions in the field of internal and foreign policy, and will be part of the international treaties to which the EU is a party.

- *Protecting the citizens' right of residence.*

- *The United Kingdom will remain in the EU custom agreement until a better solution is found to keep the Northern Ireland border open.* Therefore, no new taxes and custom duties will be required between the EU and the United Kingdom. Also, throughout the transitional period, the British state will apply the fares policy of the European community and will not be able to conclude free trade agreements with EU third states. Northern Ireland will continue to comply with the rules of the single market, so that it is not necessary to impose custom checks at the border with the Republic of Ireland.

The parameters in which the economic and trade relations between London and Brussels will take place during the post-Brexit period, as well as the issues of the UK border with Ireland were among the main sensitive points of the negotiations. *The UK withdrawal agreement also includes a Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland*, also known as "the safety net". It was created having the purpose to avoid forming a "hard border" between the two entities, even when between London and Brussels wasn't identified a mutually acceptable solution after the end of the transitional period (December 31st, 2010). Basically, this means both Ireland and Northern Ireland will remain part of the EU – UK custom territory, without any new taxes, listings and custom duties. The deadline set for the UK's exit from the EU is March 29, 2019. Given the harsh criticism of the negotiations outcome for Brexit, if this will happen on the set date and under what conditions, it remains in the plain of

uncertainty. If the Withdrawal Agreement does not pass the vote in the UK legislative forum, then we will either witness a "hard" Brexit, without an agreement, or extend the negotiation period.

In view of the profoundly adverse consequences of a separation without agreement, in our opinion, most likely, at the end of March 2019, London and Brussels will agree to an extension of the negation period. We also consider relevant the frequency with which topic of the referendum resumption appeared during the period when the two political entities were reaching the conclusion of negotiations on the conditions of separation[3].

Near the publication of the UK's Withdrawal Agreement from the EU, the topic of creating a European army returned to the public speech of the French President, supported by the German Chancellor[4]. The proposal of the leaders of states

[3] I.B., "The Independent: According to a poll, only 4% of voters want UK to have a "cold and distant" relation with the EU after Brexit", *Hotnews*, 15 October 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22757410-the-independent-potrivit-unui-sondaj-numai-4-dintre-aleg-tori-vor-dup-brexit-regatul-unit-aib-rela-rece-distant.htm, accesed on 15.10.2018; V.M., "UK: Dozens of business leaders demand in a letter a pupular vote on the the final terms of Brexit", *Hotnews*, 3 November 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22794297-marea-britanie-zeci-lideri-mediului-afaceri-cer-ntr-scrisoare-vot-popular-privind-termenii-finali-brexitului.htm, accesed on 03.11.2018; A.Z., "Putin: A new Brexit referendum would undermine confidence in British democracy", *Hotnews*, 21 December 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22878864-putin-nou-referendum-tema-brexit-submina-increderea-democratia-britanica.htm, accesed on 21.12.2018.

[4] D.G., "Macron insists that Europe needs its own army: Russia can be a threat, we can no longer count only on Americans", *Hotnews*, 6 November 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22798731-macron-insist-europa-are-nevoie-armat-proprie-rusia-poate-amenin-are-nu-mai-putem-conta-doar-americani.htm, accesed on 06.11.2018; V.M., "Angela Merkel also supports the creation of a "genuine European army. The German Chancellor also proposes a "European Security Council" with a rotating presidency", *Hotnews*, 14 November 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-22812043-angela-merkel-sustine-crearea-unei-veritabile-armate-europene-cancelarul-german-propune-consiliu-securitate-european-presedintie-rotativa.htm, accessed on 14.11.2018; I.B., "How could the European army wanted by Emmanuel Macron look like?", *Hotnews*, 7 November 2018, URL: https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-

viewed as engines of the EU in the post-Brexit period is shortly argued against by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini: "The European Union is not and will not turn into a military alliance, we are a political union. We also have some hard power. We deploy it, in full coordination and in full complementarity with the work that not only NATO but also the United Nations are doing, in most of the cases. There is no competition and there is no idea to substitute anyone. We are not building a European army. Nobody is doing a European army. We are investing to make sure that European Union Member States have the capabilities to provide more to their own defence and to be more credible, more reliable, more active security providers in our region and in the world"[5]. In our opinion, not only the security risks and threats are relevant in the re-emergence of speech on the European army, the tensions between the Western actors and the Russian Federation, or the specific challenges related to the transatlantic partnership in recent years, but also features connected to the internal dynamics of the European security environment – Brexit implications, the strength of the Franco-German core, the fragmentation of the European solidarity.

In the medium term, the evolution of the UK's withdrawal from the EU process will significantly influence the internal stability of the European community, especially in the light of developing liberal political orientation and wearing down the organization's credibility.

22799404-cum-putea-armata-european-dorit-emmanuel-macron.htm, accessed on 07.11.2018.
[5] ***, Remarks by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence), Bruxelles, 20 November 2018, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp/54123/remarks-hrvp-federica-mogherini-press-conference-following-foreign-affairs-council-defence_en, accessed on 09.12.2018.

COGNITIVE, ARGUMENTATIVE AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN INTELLIGENCE

Ruxandra BULUC, Ph.D.
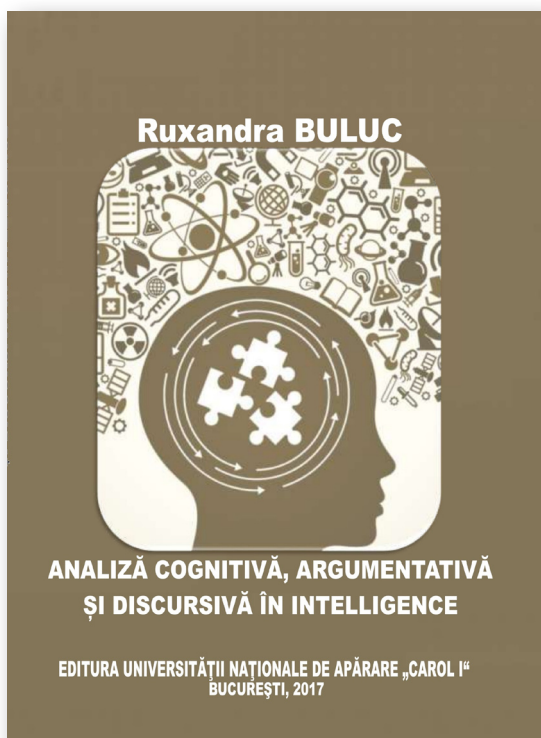
The central role of information represents a constant in security studies since the time when globalization, with its negative and positive effects, was one of the central subjects of analysis in this field. The dynamics of the international security environment following the action of the Russian Federation in the Crimean Peninsula, as well as the evolution of relations between Moscow and western players, has shaped the context in which the implications of the concept "war/hybrid confrontation" have become mainly a topic of interest and, at the same time, a concern in the security plan for both the academic and political environment, where security and foreign policy decisions are made. The importance of information in this type of confrontation can be seen from the definition given by the Russian Ministry of Defence,

namely: the ability to undermine political, economic and social systems, carry out massive psychological campaigns against the population of a State in order to destabilize society and the government, or to force a State to make decisions in the interests of their opponents[1].

In a historical period in which the abundance of information and the easy access to it create the premises so that it be equally an instrument to increase the security level or to deepen the vulnerabilities of a particular actor, researching the ways in which information analysis can be streamlined is at least a timely step.

Such a paper is *Cognitive, argumentative and discourse analysis in intelligence*, authored by PhD Associate Professor Ruxandra Buluc, issued at the Publishing House of the National Defence University "Carol I" in 2017. She teaches in the Strategic Communication Department within Security and Defence Faculty of "Carol I" National Defence University. The volume we bring to your attention comes to the fore by transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach of cognitive mechanism and schemes, with value in understanding, decoding and transmitting explicit and, above all, implicit messages.

In the introduction, the author mentions that the motivation behind this approach was to reduce the vulnerability of the Intelligence system in a time when the number of terrorist attacks is increasing and, implicitly, the resulting victims. In our opinion, this book is a scientific work that can be used in the analysis of any

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[1] Timothy Thomas, "Russia's 21st Century Information War: Working to Undermine and Destabilize Populations", in *Defence Strategic Communications*, Nr. 1/2016, p. 11, URL: https://www.stratcomcoe.org/timothy-thomas-russias-21st-century-information-war-working-undermine-and-destabilize-populations, accessed on 10.03.2019.

type of security risk or threat, especially those involving the processing of a large amount of information. The value, usefulness and timeliness of the research results gathered in the 162 pages of this paper were recognized through the Award for military writers "General Alexandru Budis", granted by the Synergetic Foundation and by "Carol I" National Defence University, in 2018.

Divided into seven chapters, *Cognitive, argumentative and discourse analysis in Intelligence* revolves around the term "mindset", a concept that "brings together cognitive mechanism and schemes, from several perspectives, to be able to suggest viable models analysis, which can help manage and anticipate possible security threats" [2]. The first chapter is meant to clarify the theoretical framework from this perspective.

In the second chapter, the author examines the role that culture and ideologies play in the formation and identification of "mindset". The argument concludes that, in order to avoid distortion of perceptions by reflecting their values in information analysis, analysts should "focus and study not only the target culture, but also their own culture to identify those conditions and mechanisms of the latter"[3]. Also, given that ideologies are of particular importance in the analysis of information, in that they represent actual, militant elements of culture and, on the other hand, they are one of the forces that animate people and determine them to undertake actions, "a better understanding of the claims components, the emotions linked with these ideologies can help information analysts spot weaknesses, risks and threats that appear even in the European and North American space" [4]. In this respect, the author draws attention to the fact that two ideologies manifest themselves violently in the public sector, both having an identity nature – nationalism and religion.

Chapter three investigates how the research methodology can be used in the analysis of information for forecast and Intelligence prevision. The author assumes that the methodology of scientific research cannot be applied as such, as it was used in the scientific field of origin, but only after being adapted to the field of Intelligence. Therefore, it is carried out a review of the most important methods of scientific research to identify the solutions through which they can be transferred to the information analysis field. From this perspective, we can conclude that the reviewed methodologies are reflections of the two components of the previously identified mindset: the knowledge system and the development of hypotheses.

Further, in the fourth chapter of the volume in which the author develops the role of discourse in information analysis, she suggests the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in information analysis. The author points out that when applied at the interpretative level (decoding information transmitted in various discursive forms), CDA can not only contribute to the rapid and correct identification of mindsets operating in the cultures from which the data arise, but also to analysts' recognition of mindsets particular to their own culture. As a result, the analysis products will be "less affected by incongruities specific to the ideological and cultural differences"[5].

In chapter five, the direction of the research points to the extent in which developments in the digital environment influence information analysis. Following the analysis, it appears that the Internet can be a primary source of information regarding culture, ideologies, beliefs, values and courses of action of the targets of analysis. Also, developments in the technological area can support the information community in order to process large amounts of data. In addition, the virtual space favours information sharing, discussions, even contradictory ones, adding value to information reports. This the more so as the interaction between specialists can highlight the mindset, thus avoiding the cognitive pitfalls they cause.

The last but one chapter of the paper brings to attention the tensioned relation between the analyst community and the decision-makers.

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[2] Ruxandra Buluc, *Analiză cognitivă, argumentativă și discursivă în Intelligence*, "Carol I" National Defence University Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017.
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 47.
[4] *Ibidem*, pp. 47-48.
[5] *Ibidem*, p. 88.

To that effect, the author wants to investigate what types of tensions, misunderstandings and communication walls exist between analysts and decision makers, such as unrealistic demand, information politicisation, and ambiguity of information reports. This study reflects that the source of these inconsistencies lies in the specific mission of each party – the investigation in the case of analysts, respectively the action in the situation of decision makers. There are also highlighted risks related to the relation between analysts and decision makers (trying to politicise information analysis in order to facilitate the decision-making process, the possibility that analysts lose their objectivity if they are involved in the decision-making process). The second purpose of this section is to identify possible solutions to improve and enable the cooperation between the two communities. This research direction ultimately reflects that one of the most effective ways to improve the relation between analysts and long-term decision makers is to adjust the two-way educational process: educating analysts in practical scenarios to increase the efficiency of the analysis and reporting process, respectively educating decision makers on the purpose and role that information analysis has in the decision-making process.

In the end, the suggested mechanisms are tested within a case study on the London terrorist attacks from July 7, 2005. Following the review of the involved actors and events, these are analysed using the developed research mechanisms: the impact of the mindset of analysts and decision-makers in the analysis information, the use of scientific research methods in generating working hypothesis, the use of critical discourse analysis for the identification and analysis of the relation between the various structures involved in the information collection and analysis, but also in the decision-making process.

Having a comprehensive bibliographic foundation and benefiting by an optimally structured analysis, the volume *Cognitive, argumentative and discourse analysis in Intelligence* can result to be a useful tool not only for Intelligence providers and beneficiaries of Intelligence products, although they are the main recipients of the paper, but also for all who, in one way or another, provide or receive security information. Moreover, despite the motivation stated above, the research practicability is not limited to the phenomenon of international terrorism, which can be extended to the level of other security challenges.

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