

"Those who have the privilege to know, have the duty to act." — Albert Einstein

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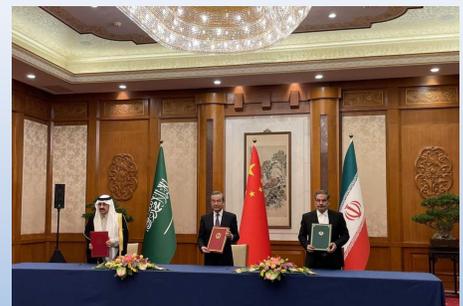
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I. EDITORIAL



Africa Entered an Extensive Process of Developments and Changes of the New World Order

PhD. Eng. Stelian TEODORESCU

"Conviction is often more effective than force."

Aesop

All the countries in the world have seen China as their main competitor in Africa – but now they perceive a new reality, more and more clearly, observing with deep anxiety the assertive return of Russia. The presence of the Wagner Group mercenaries in Africa is notable in countries such as Mali, the Central African Republic (CAR), Libya and northern Mozambique.

As a result, it is imperative to draw attention on the fact that on July 27-28, 2023, the second Russia-Africa Summit took place at the Expo Forum in Saint Petersburg. This international event has been rescheduled after a postponement, originally scheduled for October 2022 at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. In the totally sensitive context of the evolution of the whole world, it is necessary to mention here that on July 26, 2023, so only one day before the start of this summit, a coup d'état took place in Niger, an event that turns out to be a great risk to the stability of Africa and the whole world.

It should be highlighted here that Vladimir Putin declared the St. Petersburg Summit a major event that contributes to strengthening ties with a continent inhabited by 1.3 billion people. V. Putin emphasized in a statement published by the Kremlin that “today, Africa asserts itself more and more confidently as one of the poles of the emerging multipolar world”, and “the Forum provides an additional impetus to their political and humanitarian partnership for many years from now on.”

Africa's 54 nations, which make up the largest bloc of voters at the United Nations (UN), have again proven they are more divided than any other region when it comes to criticising Russia's actions in Ukraine.

An eloquent proof is that, at the mentioned summit held in Russia, 49 delegates attended, but only 17 heads of state compared to the 43 who attended previously in 2019, in Sochi (Russia), the political background between Russia and the African states changing significantly. In such a context generating immense debates and analyses, V. Putin's foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Viktorovich Ushakov, sought to justify by pointing out that while only 17 heads of state will attend the summit, another 32 African countries will be represented by senior government officials or ambassadors.



Source: <https://www.news.ro/externe/moscova-si-tari-africane-s-au-angajat-sa-promoveze-o-ordine-mondiala-multipolara-fara-neocolonialismul-occidentului-anunta-putin-1922401029002023071221269261>

It is significant to mention here that this summit was also attended by the leader of the Wagner Group, Yevgeny Viktorovich Prigozhin, in his first public appearance in Russia since the launch of a so-called unsuccessful rebellion, especially since his mercenaries supported the interests of the Russian government in certain African countries, and intensified their activity throughout Africa. We must also highlight that V. Putin has already emphasized that Russia has canceled the African debt of 23 billion dollars.

Considering China's statement on the coup in Niger, which was as neutral in tone as we are used to and emphasized first and foremost its concern for the safety of its citizens, Russia's reaction to the coup by A. Tchiani was a striking exception. While the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed a vague support for the restoration of "constitutional order" in Niger, he accused the US of so-called double standards used to condemn A. Tchiani's coup, but also for supporting the February 2014 "coup" in Ukraine, which removed the former president, Viktor Yanukovich.

For his part, despite the recent dispute with the Kremlin, the former head of the Wagner Group, E. Prigozhin described the coup in Niger as a victory against Western colonialism and offered the Nigerian army the services of his private military contractors. Although Russia also condemned the coup in Niger, the Wagner Group welcomed the military takeover. We must not forget that E. Prigozhin and his fighters played a significant role in many African states, to the dismay of the West, and most recently reached the Central African Republic (CAR) before a constitutional referendum. Despite E. Prigozhin's apparent conflict with V. Putin, this would certainly help the Kremlin's effort to expand its ability to influence events taking place in Africa according to its own interests, especially in the extremely fragile region Sahel.

When the Wagner Group moved into the CAR after President Faustin Archange Touadéra sought Russia's help to overcome the UN arms embargo and rebuild its military in 2017-2018, it initially appeared as a plea for attention, designed to convey the message that "Moscow is back" after more than two decades of reduced presence following the collapse of the Soviet Union. But when the Wagner Group arrived in Mali in 2021 at the invitation of the military that had seized the power the year before, the role played by this private military contractor in Russia's security agenda was viewed with much more distrust. Most other West African governments saw him as a direct threat to their region's security. Thus, with the passage of time, their relations with Mali worsened dramatically, and the subsequent coups d'état in Guinea and Burkina Faso, in which pro-Russian youth demonstrated on the streets of the capital Ouagadougou, they have only deepened the focus of elected African governments on Moscow's strategy in Africa.

Although it does not have the resources to compete with the US, France, Germany and Japan or China as a donor of development resources in bilateral relations, Moscow has something up its sleeve that will surely use in a fierce competition. For example, last year it was the largest supplier of chemical fertilizers in Africa, supplying 500,000 tons. It is of course a significant power in providing oil, gas and mining resources. However, we must not overlook the fact that for Russia the extremely important commercial sector at the moment remains the grain export sector. But nevertheless, it can be appreciated that it will be difficult for Russia to significantly rely on Africa to export the additional supplies needed – and thus demonstrate its reliability as a partner – unless there is a restored Black Sea traffic agreement that to also allow Ukrainian transports to circulate for export. We say this because the summit took place after Russia withdrew from a deal that allowed Black Sea exports, vital to many African countries, a move that was strongly condemned around the world and activated new threats to food security global.

In one of his speeches, V. Putin claimed that Russia delivered almost ten million tons of grain to Africa in the first half of this year and insisted that it can continue to supply the African continent both on a commercial basis and free of charge.

However, even if arrangements to ship safely from Black Sea ports can be restored, there is little to suggest that Moscow is genuinely willing and interested in becoming a major food donor on a scale comparable to the European Union (EU) or the USA.

Just days earlier, Russia announced it would suspend its participation in the Black Sea Grains Initiative, which allowed food exports to flow through Ukrainian ports, a decision that immediately prompted warnings from international aid agencies about the impact on poorer countries. The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on African leaders to demand answers from Russia. "They know exactly who is to blame for this current situation", A. Blinken said during a visit to New Zealand. Under the Black Sea Grain initiative, 57% of Ukraine's grain went to Africa and Asia, according to the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul, making these countries particularly vulnerable. So its no surprise that some leaders have urged Putin to revive the deal on grain exports. In this context, it is worth noting that, in the opening session of the summit, V. Putin wanted to announce that he will provide approximately 27,000 to 52,000 tons of grain in the next few months to six

African nations: Burkina Faso, Mali, Zimbabwe, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Eritrea, and as expected, he absolved Russia of responsibility, justifying that Western sanctions imposed during the war prevented Russia from supplying fertilizers to other states.

In conclusion, we can say that the increased international interest in this year's Russia-Africa summit in Saint Petersburg is not difficult to explain. The effects of the war in Ukraine had serious consequences for Africa, the most obvious being the disruption of grain exports through the Black Sea corridors (before the war, fifteen African states received more than half of their grain imports from either Ukraine or Russia).

It is no coincidence that Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba recently made his third visit to Africa since the start of the war. His talking points were alternative supply routes for the continuation the export of Ukrainian agricultural products, after Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea grain agreement. For his part, in his speech at the Russia-Africa summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin not only promised free shipments of grain to Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Mali, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Eritrea, but presented Russia as an ally of African nations.

It is therefore not surprising that many of the African leaders who attended the 2019 summit in Sochi did not come to the 2023 summit in St. Petersburg. Why? Because then, in 2019, V. Putin said that Russia and Africa would try to double their trade volume in the next four to five years, and the organizers later boasted of dozens of agreements and memoranda of understanding that had been signed, worth an estimated \$15 billion.

However, four years later, that is, in 2023, in St. Petersburg, even political experts loyal to the Kremlin concluded that the positive momentum of relations between Russia and Africa in 2019 was not achieved. The volume of trade not only did not double, but actually decreased, and Russian direct investment in Africa now accounts for about 1% of the total flow. Could this be the driving force behind Russia's actions to enter into fierce competition with the other international actors present in Africa? Or after the actions in Ukraine, Russia is also trying to control the exploitation process in Africa and harnessing all kinds of resources and dominate this part of the world too?

II. WORLD ORDER - BRICS



The Evolution of BRICS and of the World Order

PhD. Eng. Stelian TEODORESCU

"Time is the currency of your life. It's the only currency you have, only you can decide how you spend it. Be careful not to let other people spend it for you."

Carl Sandburg

In the context of the deep transformations taking place at a regional and global level, of the connections and interactions that are being developed between state actors, but also between them and non-state actors, new models of political and economic interdependence emerge, in particular, but also military, cultural, informational, social and demographic, all of which inevitably lead to new types of relationships international and transnational which are often categorized as atypical.

Carefully analyzing the transformations that have taken place or continue to take place at a global level, we can observe that all of these are taking place with an increasingly accentuated dynamic and are marked by deep changes in terms of the states' ability to achieve areas of influence.

Thus, in an era of integration and interdependence, organizations like BRICS can play a significant role internationally as well as regionally, producing real and significant changes in the world order.

As a result, we cannot overlook and dissect and analyze the event that took place on August 22-24, 2023 in Johannesburg, South Africa, this being the 15th BRICS Summit. The 14th annual BRICS summit was held on June 23, 2023, in Beijing, China, and the 16th annual BRICS summit will be planned in 2024. The summit was attended by South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, President of China, Xi Jinping, Brazilian President, Luiz Lula da Silva, and Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

In fact, this summit is an international relations conference attended by the heads of state or government of the five member states: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. But here, the South African president, Cyril Ramaphosa invited to the summit organized by South Africa, also the leaders of 67 other states, from Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Caribbean, as the Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Naledi Pandor, made known. It is significant to mention that among the participating states were also the 53 African countries, part of the latter participating, during July 27-28, 2023, in the second Russia-Africa Summit, at the Expo Forum, in Saint Petersburg. Other countries were also invited, a-



Source: <https://www.infofinanciar.ro/opinie-forbes-brics-in-noua-ordine->

mong which Bangladesh, Bolivia, Indonesia and Iran. 20 dignitaries were also invited, including the UN Secretary General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Chairperson of the New Development Bank. Business leaders were also expected to be present.

Vladimir Putin's participation in the event was questioned long before, because in March 2023 the International Criminal Court (ICC)¹ issued an arrest warrant against him for war crimes and the invasion of Ukraine, South Africa being obliged as a signatory to the ICC to honor and implement the warrant arrest.

However, we must not omit the fact that in May 2023, the South African government, led by the African National Congress (ANC), granted diplomatic immunity to all the invited leaders. It was not clear whether this would also favor V. Putin from being arrested should he attend. According to the Department of International Relations and Cooperation, it was standard practice in South Africa to grant such immunity to participants in international conferences held in that country. In response, the opposition Democratic Alliance initiated legal action to force V. Putin's arrest.

Until the beginning of June 2023, it was also considered to move the summit to China to avoid the special problems that could be generated. In this context, in mid-July 2023, V. Putin announced that he would not participate in the summit "by mutual agreement" and that he would instead send the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, however, the Russian president would take part virtually in the event via video conference. But here it is, we can say that it was surprising not to see the Chinese President Xi Jinping at the BRICS business forum, where he was scheduled to speak, especially when he met the host of the great event, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, a meeting that had taken place earlier in the day, and then he also attended the BRICS dinner afterwards.

Analyzing the situation on a global level, we can note that while the conflict in Ukraine and the deepening geopolitical tensions between the US and China serve as a backdrop for this summit, the BRICS meeting is likely to bring to the fore this dominant group of forces that seems to keep on changing the world order where the USA seems to have the lead.

In this context, the BRICS expansion has long been expected to be a key objective on the agenda, with numerous requests so far from Algeria to Argentina, with at least 40 countries showing interest in joining this group of states, with 23 states formally applying to become new BRICS members, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Argentina, Indonesia, Egypt and Ethiopia, in the context of BRICS representing more than 40% of the world's population. The main attraction of the group is its economic growth, with the five BRICS states now having a combined gross domestic product (GDP) higher than that of the G7 group of states in terms of purchasing power parity. In nominal terms, the BRICS countries are responsible for 26% of global GDP. Despite this, they only get 15% of the voting power at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

However, along with discontent over existing imbalances, there are growing concerns in BRICS that the USA could empower the dollar through sanctions, as it did with Russia. This has led the BRICS nations to individually and collectively try to reduce their dependence on the US currency while increasing trade in their own currencies. Agreeing that something needs to change is one thing, but agreeing on how to work together is another. For example, the Indian and Chinese border has been known to witness tensions since May 2020. Meanwhile, India, South Africa and Brazil want warm and friendly relations with the West as much as they do with China and Russia.

As a result of the current situation, will BRICS emerge as an alternative economic and geopolitical pillar for the US and its allies? Or could it be that their significant internal differences on several fronts limit the BRICS' capabilities to face competition?

The answer could be a very clear one, especially if we take into account that the influence of the BRICS nations is likely to increase, but it is very likely that the bloc will offer economic and diplomatic alternatives to fragmenting the global order rather than replacing it with another, all the developments that will follow and may be accelerated and generate dramatic effects for other states. We say this because to remain efficient, BRICS will have to manage including their disparate priorities of all the nations that will join them, which is a challenge that will not be easy for BRICS to address and manage. White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said he does not see BRICS turning into a geopolitical rival of the US, noting that, "this is a very diverse collection of countries ... with differences in viewpoints on critical issues".

It has become abundantly clear that the expansion of BRICS has long been and remains China's goal

¹The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals accused of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of aggression. The Court participates in a global struggle to end impunity, and through international criminal justice, the Court aims to hold those responsible for their crimes accountable and help prevent the recurrence of these crimes.

which hopes that the accession of more countries will create a favorable environment for it to increase its influence in a significant group of countries. A potential BRICS expansion has long been subject to discussion, but now it has become a reality and the group's commitment to become a champion of the developing world and to offer an alternative to the new world order already finds resonance throughout the world.

For example, China is a dominant force in the global economy as well as a military power to be reckoned with. Ahead of the BRICS summit, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Riyadh and met with the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, taking a new step towards the normalization of relations between the traditional rivals in the Middle East, this process being mediated by China.

Russia is eager to show to the West that it still has friends, but India is turning more and more towards the West, as is Brazil under its new leader. However, we must not overlook the fact that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the subsequent strengthening of relations between Moscow and Beijing - in the face of Western criticism - have further accelerated the BRICS split.

India, Brazil and South Africa have kept their balance, refusing to join Western sanctions or other actions against Russia, but also distancing themselves from Moscow's justifications for the war and the huge disillusionment generated worldwide.

We submit to attention these conclusions even in the context in which the President of China, Xi Jinping, has pledged to support Cuba's defense and its national sovereignty, opposing foreign interference and the US economic blockade, and at the same time pledged to expand strategic coordination with Havana. Xi made the remarks in a meeting with Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel.

According to a press release from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated August 24, in the context of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg, on August 23, Chinese President Xi emphasized: "China highly appreciates Cuba's consistent firm support for China on issues involving China's core interests and will continue to firmly support Cuba in defending its national sovereignty, opposing foreign interference and blockade, and doing everything possible to provide support for Cuba's economic and social development". During the talks, Diaz-Canel labeled Cuban-Chinese relations as "an all-time high". "The Cuban people greatly admire President Xi Jinping and sincerely thank China for its valuable understanding and support for Cuba's just cause", Diaz-Canel said at the meeting, which was also attended by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. The meeting between the two leaders comes after a few months after a media report emerged that China had reached a secret agreement with Cuba to facilitate the deployment and commissioning of an electronic interception system. However, the US and Cuban governments strongly doubt the report and the information presented. China quickly denounced the media reports, claiming that what it called inconsistent information had been released, calling the allegations false.

However, there is extensive discussion in the international media about such an electronic espionage system, which would make it easier for Beijing to intercept US electronic communications. Cuba rejects such a report as "unfounded" and refers to China as having reached a secret agreement with the Cuban state to establish an electronic interception facility on its territory, about 160 km from Florida, but the US governments and Cuban strongly doubt the confirmation of such a report. Reference is also made to the fact that such a spying system would allow Beijing to intercept electronic communications in the southeastern US, a region that hosts many US military bases, as well as monitor ship traffic.

"I saw the report. It's not accurate", White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told Reuters, but did not specify what he thought was incorrect. He said the US had "real concerns" about China's relationship with Cuba and was monitoring it closely. Brigadier General Patrick Ryder², a spokesman for the US Department of Defense, said: "We do not know whether China and Cuba have developed a new type of spy station." In Havana, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossio dismissed the report as "totally false and unfounded", calling it a fabrication designed to justify Washington's decades-old economic embargo against Cuba, he stressing that however Cuba rejects any foreign military presence in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Here, at the BRICS level, on August 24, the very important decision to expand the group of member states was adopted, inviting six more countries – three from the Gulf, two from Africa and one from Latin America – to be full members. Announcing the outcome of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg, South African

²Brigadier General Patrick S. Ryder is an American officer of the US Air Force, who has served as press secretary at Pentagon since August 4, 2022. He has nearly 30 years of service as a communications and public affairs officer. In March 2023, Patrick S. Ryder was nominated for promotion to major-general.

President Cyril Ramaphosa said the leaders of the five original member states had reached a consensus on enlargement guidelines and agreed to the admission of six countries, emphasizing that they “decided to invite the Republic of Argentina, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to become full members of BRICS, with membership to take effect on January 1, 2024”.

C. Ramaphosa noted that this was only the first round of BRICS expansion. “As five BRICS countries, we have reached an agreement on the guiding principles, standard criteria and procedures of the BRICS enlargement process, all of which have been under discussion for a long time. We have a consensus on the first phase of this process and other phases will follow”. For his part, congratulating the new members, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “India has always supported BRICS’ expansion. India has always believed that adding new members will strengthen BRICS as an organization.” Official Indian sources emphasized that India’s objective during the negotiations was to give priority to its “strategic partners”. Of the six countries invited to join BRICS, India has strategic partnership with five: Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Iran, United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

China has shown significant support for BRICS expansion as it seeks more influence in international institutions, wanting to step up its dominance in the competition with the US and Europe, amid a race for global power and a new world order. In Argentina’s case, Lula stressed that it was “very important” for Buenos Aires to join the bloc, with Brazil being its neighbor Argentina’s biggest trading partner.

So, we can see that the major oil resource powers, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, have been invited to join BRICS, this being its first expansion after a period of over a decade. Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said the kingdom was awaiting details from the BRICS group on the nature of membership and would make “an appropriate decision” accordingly. However, bin Farhan said at the BRICS conference on August 24 that the kingdom would continue to be a “secure and reliable energy supplier”, adding that the total bilateral trade between Saudi Arabia and the BRICS countries exceeded \$160 billion in 2022.

In the context of accepting the invitation, we can say that the world’s largest crude oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, will be in the same economic block as the world’s largest oil importer, China. Such a development will also mean that Russia and Saudi Arabia - both members of OPEC, a group of major oil producers - will be together in another new economic bloc, with the two countries often coordinating their oil production, a fact that has called into question in the past the sometimes strained relations of Saudi Arabia with its ally, the US.

In conclusion, we can say that the expansion of BRICS is taking place at a time when some members of this group, namely Russia and China, are two states in growing tension with the West. In this context, it has been pointed out in some analytical circles that the choice to include in BRICS and other states that are openly antagonistic to the West, such as Iran, could influence the group even more towards increasing the sense of creating a anti-western bloc.

Built on a term originally coined by former economist Jim O’Neill to describe key emerging markets, the group persisted despite deep differences between the political and economic systems of the member states. “Economically, not many of the countries applying to join are particularly large”, O’Neill said, adding that the existing BRICS members “have had quite a bit of trouble trying to get to be agree only between the five of them”, and on the other hand that “beyond the very strong symbolism, it is not sure what will be achieved if there are many more countries there.”

In such a context, we can appreciate that, given the close relations of the US with several BRICS members, Jake Sullivan, the National Security Adviser of the White House, on August 22, expressed a real and balanced view that the Biden administration “does not see the BRICS as evolving into some kind of geopolitical rival of the US or anyone else.” He said the US has close relations with several BRICS members and “will continue to manage their relationship with China; and they will continue to repel Russian aggression”.

As a result, BRICS is clearly a platform or organization aimed at both political and economic alliances within a multilateral system, making it increasingly suitable for explaining and observing these new dimensions of regionalism and, implicitly, of the effects generated by multilateralism.

III. EUROPE - THE WAR IN UKRAINE



The War in Ukraine. Between a Nuclear Rhetoric and the Risk of Going over the “Red Lines” and Avoid a Direct Confrontation between the Great Powers

Prof. PhD. Hab. Constantin HLIHOR

Ukraine’s proxy war is being waged in the shadow of Russia and the West’s nuclear arsenals. The nuclear rhetoric was unleashed by Russia long after this conflict began and has caused concern around the world. The US and its allies have told Russia that they will respond strongly if nuclear weapons are used. A study published in early September 2022 by the German Research Centre estimated that until that date alone at least 90 “nuclear threats” had been launched in the public space between Russian officials and their counterparts in the US, NATO and European countries possessing weapons of mass destruction.¹ Since then, such signals have multiplied, causing a relative increase in the pacifist discourse both in the West and in the Russian Federation. In the joint statement of the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross Mirjana Spoljaric² and the president of the Japanese Red Cross Society, Atsushi Seike, signed before the start of the G-7 Summit, in May 19-21, 2023, drew attention to the fact that “the risk of using nuclear weapons is the greatest of after the consummation of the worst crises of this kind during the Cold War, amid heightened political tensions and new steps to expand the arsenals. Even the use of a so-called tactical or low-yield nuclear weapon would have devastating humanitarian consequences and break an 80-year-old nuclear taboo. The Hiroshima bomb had a yield of 15 kilotons which today would be described as a tactical/low power nuclear weapon. It killed 140,000 people”.³ On the other hand, in Moscow, on July 13, 2023, almost 30 of the 137 members of Russia’s Council for Foreign and Defence Policy (SVOP) signed a statement criticizing “calls to start a nuclear war”.⁴ In this document – which was signed by leading Russian nuclear arms control experts such as Alexei Arbatov and Pavel Zolotarev – it is emphasized that “The illusion that a limited nuclear conflict can be managed and the escalation into a global nuclear war can be prevented is the ultimate of irresponsibility. This means that the destruction of tens and perhaps even hundreds of millions of people in Russia, Europe, China, the USA and other countries is at stake. This is a direct threat to humanity in general”.⁵

The military developments that took place during the more than 500 days of war in the theatres of operations in Ukraine clearly indicate that the use of nuclear rhetoric was within the limits of the nuclear deterrence carried by the two superpowers - the US and the Soviet Union - during the Cold War. The history of this period shows us that when two actors possessing nuclear weapons engaged in a crisis or another, such as the one in October 1962, made rational decisions, the chance of using these weapons was almost zero. Each side respected a tacitly (sometimes explicitly!) established “red line” and maintained a minimal but credible channel of diplomatic communication.

¹Anna Clara Arndt, Dr Liviu Horovitz, *Nuclear Rhetoric and Escalation Management in Russia’s War Against Ukraine: A Chronology*, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Working Paper, NR. 03, SEPTEMBER 2022, online https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/arbeitspapiere/Arndt-Horovitz_WorkingPaper_Nuclear_rhetoric_and_escalation_management_in_Russia_s_war_against_Ukraine.pdf accessed on the 4th August 2023.

²Mirjana Spoljaric Egger is a Swiss diplomat. Since October 2022 she has been the President of the International Red Cross Committee.

³*Avoiding Catastrophe: We Must Act Now to Ensure Nuclear Weapons Are Never Again Used*, International Committee of the Red Cross, 17 May 2023, online <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/avoiding-catastrophe-we-must-act-now-ensure-nuclear-weapons-are-never-again-used> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

⁴*O prizyvakh k razvyazyvaniyu yadernoy voyny/Despre cererile de a se utiliza armele nucleare, Sovet po vneshney i oboronnoy politike/ The Foreign Policy and Defence Council*, 13.07.2023, online <https://svop.ru/main/48156/> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

⁵*Ibidem*.

The term “red line” entered the use of international political analysis through an English translation of the Hebrew phrase “kav adom”, which had this meaning. It happened then, the Israeli government declared that a “red line” must not be crossed by Syria which had become involved militarily in Lebanon in the 1976 crisis.⁶ Later the term was increasingly used, especially after the year 2000 when the clouds of a Cold War confrontation were increasingly visible.⁷ Although such “red lines” can also be found in many other situations on the international scene, such as those of a commercial or financial nature, the use of the expression does not have the same meaning as in security and defence studies.⁸ The decision to cross such a red line in security matters has devastating and long-term consequences.

A careful study of the behaviour of the major powers directly/indirectly engaged in the Ukraine War shows us that such red lines seem to be operating in this case as well. On the one hand, Ukraine receives crucial military aid from the US and its allies for its resistance against the Russian invasion only within mutually accepted red lines. So this aid is under the sign of a strategic dilemma for the donor countries: Too little could guarantee a victory for Russia. But too much could cause a direct NATO-Russia conflict. Most of the nuclear weapons in the world today would come into play in this equation of possible conflict. On the other hand, Russia is careful that in the military operations carried out against Ukraine, there are no incidents on the territory of NATO states that could be interpreted as a direct attack and would give rise to the activation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Transports and warehouses with military aid sent by various Western states to Ukraine were attacked by Russian military forces only on the territory of this country. A red line in the Washington-Moscow relationship seems to work, according to military analyst Edward Luttwak, also for geopolitical reasons. In his opinion, "it was not the fear of a nuclear conflict that led CIA Chief William J. Burns to hastily call his Kremlin counterpart, Sergei Evgenievich Naryshkin, to assure him that the US had nothing to do with Prigozhin's march to Moscow. That phone call is as good as any evidence that, contrary to the crazy fantasies of the left, the Biden administration (fully supported by most Republicans) does not want Russia to be destabilized by this war. For he knows only too well that only Russian power prevents the Chinese from absorbing vast swaths of Mongolia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – and that Russian arms still flow to the only countries that actually fight the Chinese in recurring incidents: India on land and Vietnam by sea".⁹ The well-known German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, wrote an article in the German press about the help of the Ukrainian state by the West, in order to face the Russian military invasion within certain limits, and it was widely taken up by other European publications.¹⁰ Habermas points out that nuclear weapons have created a new reality in the post-World War II world, and the Cold War superpower rivalry has made it abundantly clear that no military confrontation involving a nuclear power can be won in the sense of a traditional/classical war. It can be seen from reading this article that the famous philosopher supports any assistance that the West can provide to Ukraine in this unequal struggle, including weapons and combat equipment, but without crossing the red line that would make the donors considered part of the conflict. For the West, Habermas asserted, “having made the decision not to intervene in



Source: <https://www.mediafax.ro/tehnologie/ce-rachete-intercontinentale-vor-fi-folosite-in-cazul-unui-razboi-nuclear-dintre-nato-si-rusia-20646315>

⁶Ben Zimmer, *The Long History of the Phrase “Red Line”* in *The Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2013, online <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424127887323993804578612210634238812>.

⁷Bernard Gwertzman *Special to The New York Times*, *KISSINGER WARNS SYRIAN ACTS TEST ISRAEL'S PATIENCE*, April 15, 1976, online <https://www.nytimes.com/1976/04/15/archives/kissinger-warns-syrian-acts-test-israels-patience-says-that-despite.html> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

⁸Roff Smith, *Word in New: Red Line*, *National Geographic*, September 4, 2013, online <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/130904-red-line-syria-obama-chemical-weapons-sarin-gas> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

⁹Edward Luttwak, *Why No One Can End the Ukraine War*, in *UnHerd*, July 7, 2023, online <https://unherd.com/2023/07/why-no-one-can-end-the-ukraine-war/> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

¹⁰Jürgen Habermas, *War and Indignation. The West's Red Line Dilemma*, in *Reset Dialogues*, 6 May 2022, <https://www.resetdoc.org/story/jurgen-habermas-war-indignation-west-red-line-dilemma/> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

this conflict as a belligerent, there is a risk threshold that precludes an unlimited commitment to arming Ukraine... Those who ignore this threshold and continue aggressive and self-confident to push the German chancellor to overcome him, they either overlooked or did not understand the dilemma in which this war plunged the West... because the West, with its morally well-founded decision not to become a party to this war, he tied his own hands".¹¹

Thus, from the very beginning of this war a crucial question continues to persist in the collective mind and has not found a firm answer either from analysts or from politicians and military strategists. To what extent will these red lines be respected in the future as nuclear rhetoric has intensified and threats to use nuclear weapons have multiplied? They are generated both by military developments with insignificant gains from a strategic point of view for both sides, in relation to publicly stated objectives, and by the prolongation of the war for a time that is difficult to specify. It is possible to increase the nuclear rhetoric and to force a change of public position of the leaders and make them accept diplomatic negotiations at a time when one of the parties considers it acceptable from the perspective of its geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Historians and some analysts have identified many such moments during the Cold War, and they are not missing from the landscape even today. Francis P. Sempa, for example, citing the renowned American military analyst Edward Luttwak, believes that "despite all the talk in Washington and other Western capitals about 'unwavering support' for Ukraine, Western leaders, including President Joe Biden, are looking for a negotiated settlement with Russia. The long-awaited Ukrainian offensive has stalled. The Russian government survived an attempted coup by the Wagner Group, and its troops are fighting better now than in the first year of the war. Historically, when Russia goes to war, its military always messes up in the beginning but as the war goes on the Russians fight better and this is happening now".¹² The American geopolitical analyst states that this aspect is also recognized by some officials of the Administration in Washington. CIA Director William J. Burns "advised Biden, accordingly, to tone down Ukraine's demands to join NATO".¹³

These aspects lead us to the idea that, both regionally and globally, the deterrence strategies of the Cold War have been brought back into practice by the great nuclear powers. A first element of these strategies identified by analysts and specialists in the field is the rhetoric of drawing attention to the possibility of using nuclear weapons/nuclear signalling.¹⁴ It is part of the nuclear deterrence policy that was practiced by both Soviet and American leaders during the Cold War. Analysis of Vladimir Putin's public speeches over the past year and those of Soviet leaders before Moscow intervened in Hungary in the fall of 1956 and Czechoslovakia in August 1968 shows us that the signalling rhetoric used by Vladimir Putin is not new. In his speech on November 30, 2021 held at an online investment forum, he stated that "the deployment of troops and weapons in Ukraine would represent a threat to Moscow and trigger a strong response. The alliance's eastward expansion has already threatened Russia's vital security interests, and NATO could use Ukrainian territory to deploy missiles capable of reaching Moscow in five minutes".¹⁵ The Russian leader's threat is very similar to that of Nikita Khrushchev before the Red Army intervened to quell the Hungarian revolution of 1956. The Soviet leader declared that he would defend socialism with all the means at the USSR's disposal if the West supported the "Hungarian reaction".¹⁶ As can be seen both leaders are warning Western leaders about future actions. The act of signalling a possible nuclear attack if the US and its allies had responded to the Soviet armed intervention in the fall of 1956 in Budapest was also researched by historian John Lewis Gaddis. He believes that this nuclear signalling led American leaders to be cautious in order not to reach a direct confrontation with the Soviets,

¹¹*Ibidem.*

¹²Apud, Francis P. Sempa, Edward Luttwak: *The U.S. Must End the Russia-Ukraine War "We Have a Dangerous Future Because of ... Xi Jinping."*, in *The American Spectator*, July 28, 2023, online <https://spectator.org/edward-luttwak-the-u-s-must-end-the-russia-ukraine-war/> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

¹³Apud, Francis P. Sempa, Edward Luttwak: *The U.S. Must End the Russia-Ukraine War "We Have a Dangerous Future Because of ... Xi Jinping."*, in *The American Spectator*, July 28, 2023, online <https://spectator.org/edward-luttwak-the-u-s-must-end-the-russia-ukraine-war/> accessed on the 4th August 2023.

¹⁴Sean M. Maloney, *Strategic Nuclear Force Signalling During the Russia-Ukraine Crisis: A Preliminary Analysis*, Centre for International and Defence Policy Queen's University Kingston, Ontario, Canada 2022, pp. 11-87; Benjamin Hautecouverture, *War in Ukraine: Nuclear Signalling, Coercion and Deterrence*, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, January 2023, online https://www.cgai.ca/war_in_ukraine_nuclear_signalling_coercion_and_deterrence#_ftnref1 accessed on the 5th August 2023.

¹⁵Vladimir Isachenkov, *Putin warns West: Moscow has 'red line' about Ukraine, NATO*, AP News, November 30, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-moscow-cd558699728e9ae935eaa9f940efeb18> accessed on the 5th August 2023.

¹⁶László Borhi, *Containment, Rollback, Liberation or Inaction? The United States and Hungary in the 1950s*, in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol.1, Issue 3, 1999, pp. 67-108, online <http://www.coldwar.hu/publications/rollback.html> accessed on the 5th August 2023.

which led to a paradoxical situation in security studies. The competition for supremacy in the balance of power became irrelevant if the nuclear arsenal was taken into account. “American nuclear superiority had been useless in the crisis. Eisenhower’s caution...illustrated very clearly the limits of nuclear superiority... Indeed, fear of the Soviet Union’s vastly inferior nuclear capability convinced Eisenhower of the need to appease rather than deter the Russians”.¹⁷

This comparative analysis is historically valid only if we refer to the decision-making calculation of the political leaders involved, but if we refer to the geopolitical contexts in which these nuclear threats occur, things are somewhat different. Nuclear deterrence during the Cold War was fought between the two superpowers in the context of political-military crises that did not go into the phase of open military conflict. The Cuban Missile Crisis was very close, but workarounds were found. Today the nuclear threat is taking place against the background of a limited war such as the one in Ukraine in which one of the belligerents possesses an impressive nuclear arsenal. Developments on the front, while predictable to military experts who provide advice to political leaders, can have unpredictable unfolding with unpredictable effects on how those engaged in war perceive their objectives, risks, and chances of survival. It is possible to reach a situation where “the calculation of the risk of escalation is replaced by the impulse to take risks”.¹⁸ Understanding this moment requires not only a good knowledge of military realities but also of what it means for a nuclear power to reach the threshold from which leaders and the population consider a threat to the state to be existential. In this case, the psychological factor becomes decisive in crossing the red line that separates the nuclear threat from the use of this type of weapon.

Professor Robert Jervis was one of the foremost specialists to study the role of the psychological factor in both nuclear threat and deterrence. He was among those who believed that this nuclear signalling-deterrence equation plays an important role in creating a tense security climate. To respect the red lines that the possessors of nuclear weapons make known.¹⁹ This conclusion was the result of a belief that the use of nuclear weapons did not ensure victory.²⁰ In the current international climate dominated by the Ukrainian conflict, the studies of Professor Robert Jervis should be carefully reread, especially those that refer to perceptual errors/misperception in decision-making and those that analyse the “compensatory strategy” identified by Robert Jervis against the background of the manifestation of nuclear rivalry between USA and the Soviet Union. This strategy was based on the premise that it was essential that the US and its allies be prepared “to meet and block Soviet forces at any level of violence”²¹ and “deal with potential Soviet threats on their own terms”²² but it also drew attention to a fact respected by the nuclear powers throughout the Cold War. That “nuclear weapons allow the state that loses a war to destroy the other side”.²³ The existence of the nuclear arsenal cancelled a strategic consideration that the military advantage allowed a state to cause serious damage to another state/enemy as well as to protect itself against its actions. In this strategic reality Professor Jervis stated that “protection is only possible with the cooperation of the other”, and “mutual vulnerability means that what deters now is the fear of the overwhelming costs of engaging in large-scale violence”.²⁴

These are just a few of the powerful ideas in academic studies and works that positively influenced the political thinking and practice of the political leaders of the major nuclear powers during the Cold War. Former French President General Charles De Gaulle, referring to the idea that someone would be tempted to use nuclear weapons, said: “After a nuclear war, both parties involved in the conflict would have no power, no laws, no cities, no cultures, no graves”.²⁵ Very relevant from this perspective is the position of W. Churchill. In the years immediately following the end of the Second World War, he agreed with the use of nuclear weapons.

¹⁷John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know. Rethinking Cold War History*, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 235.

¹⁸Carl Conetta, *Tempting Armageddon: The Likelihood of Russian Nuclear Use is Misconstrued in Western Policy. The probability of Russian nuclear use related to the Ukraine war is rising - but why? Neither Washington nor Brussels fully apprehend the risk, in Project on Defence Alternatives, 1 February 2023, online <https://hcommons.org/deposits/item/hc:51253/> accessed on the 7th August 2023.*

¹⁹Robert Jervis, *The Utility of Nuclear Deterrence*, pp. 221-222 online <https://www.iwp.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Jervis.pdf> accessed on the 7th August 2023.

²⁰Idem, *Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn't Matter*, in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 4 (Winter, 1979-1980), pp. 617-633, online <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2149629> accessed on the 7th August 2023.

²¹Robert Jervis, *Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1984, p. 11.

²²Ibidem, p. 20.

²³Ibidem, p. 12.

²⁴Ibidem.

²⁵Robert Jervis, *The Utility of Nuclear Deterrence*, p. 222.

He believed that a nuclear bombardment of Moscow would force I.V. Stalin not to install communist regimes in Eastern Europe. As the data and information about the consequences of an atomic bombing became more and more known, the British politician turned into a “pacific leader of the Cold War”.²⁶ Addressing Parliament in November 1953, W. Churchill stated that he looked forward to a time when “the advance of weapons of destruction will enable everyone to kill everyone else”, because only then “no one will want to kill anyone”.²⁷ In March 1955, in his last speech before resigning as prime minister, he pointed out in the House of Commons that if both Cold War blocs enjoyed comparable levels of destructive capacity, then, with “sublime irony... safety will be the sturdy child of terror and survival the twin brother of annihilation”.²⁸

It can be appreciated that during the Cold War, not weapons but nuclear deterrence in tandem with diplomacy, which in many situations became an art of signals in the noise of war propaganda, were the foundations of peace and coexistence between the great nuclear powers. Political leaders and their military advisers understood that if nuclear weapons were used the costs almost always outweighed the gains. Consequently, nuclear weapons have not been used on the battlefield since August 1945, but have only played a role as instruments of coercion and deterrence. Referring to this aspect, Thomas Schelling remarked that, in the age of the atomic bomb, military strategy can no longer be thought of only as a science of military victory, but also as an art of coercion, intimidation and deterrence, or, in a word a means of the “diplomacy of violence”.²⁹ The practice of such type of diplomacy has been present especially in the limited wars in which nuclear deterrence has been used within the limits of a good understanding of the relationship between risk-taking and tolerance towards the action of the other. The target of such a speech was the mind of the adversary who must be warned about the risks he is taking. Thomas Schelling showed that this aspect should not be absolute. Situations may arise where a red line may be crossed. An unscrupulous political leader may intend to create a risk of nuclear escalation, or the perception of such a risk, and use it to his advantage. Such a risk created by a leader with dictatorial/authoritarian vocations can materialize/consume without him intending to get there.³⁰ These moments can occur as a result of a perception error in the decoding of the signal given by a nuclear power to another nuclear power through nuclear signalling. The war in Ukraine may generate plenty of such errors amid rising mistrust, intensifying war propaganda, and a lack of credible communication between the nuclear powers committed to one side or the other.

Deterrence, therefore, depends on a rational process of calculating costs and benefits but also on perceptions of real/imagined adversary moves. Judging the intentions of others and creating an adequate perception of them is extremely difficult to achieve due to the fact that in the collective mind the true images of those leaders coexist with prejudices, psycho-fixations of historical order and cognitive biases. Robert Jervis appreciates that this is true even when scientific methods of investigation are used.³¹ For this reason, it is extremely important to analyse the errors of perception/misperceptions that can affect the perceptual field of the decision-maker/investigator, especially regarding the credibility of the transmitted signals. “Misperceptions of the target state’s values and fears are probably less important causes of deterrence failure than misperceptions of credibility”.³² In discourses on the security and promotion of a state’s vital interests, the credibility of its signals sets the course of geopolitical developments in one direction or another. “Actually, credibility is in the eye of the beholder: a threat or promise is only credible if the target sees it as such. The target makes this determination by assessing its adversary’s interests, its past behaviour, the nature of its regime, and whether its leaders have honoured their past commitments”.³³

²⁶Britain’s Nuclear Deterrent Development – Part Eight, online <https://vulcantothesky.org/articles/britains-nuclear-deterrent-development-part-eight/> accessed on the 10th of August 2023.

²⁷Ibidem.

²⁸The hydrogen bomb: Churchill's last major speech in Parliament, online <https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/privatelives/yourcountry/collections/churchill/exhibition/churchill-the-orator/hydrogen/> accessed on the 10th August 2023.

²⁹Thomas C. Schelling, *The Diplomacy of Violence*, in J. Garnett, eds., *Theories of Peace and Security*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1970, pp. 64-65.

³⁰Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence, With a New Introduction by Anne-Marie Slaughter*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 2020 p. 24-25.

³¹Robert Jervis, *Perceiving and Coping with Threat*, in Janice Gross Stein, et al., *Psychology and Deterrence*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Project MUSE 1985, p. 14.

³²Robert Jervis, *Deterrence and Perception*, in *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3, Winter 1982/1983, p. 8.

³³Robert Jervis, Mira Rapp-Hooper, *Perception and Misperception on the Korean Peninsula. How Unwanted Wars Begin*, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 97, no. 3, May-June 2018, pp. 106-107.

From this perspective, studies and research on the question of how credible is the Russian nuclear threat have multiplied exponentially, and the answers cover the entire beach from affirmation to denial. A simple search on one of the most popular search engines on the Internet - Google - shows us that no less than 7,150,000 articles, studies and papers have been published. Of these in only 2,390,000 the basic idea is that we are not dealing with an imminent danger of nuclear war. The analysis of specialists from the German Institute for International Affairs and Security, for example, is an optimistic one. The bottom line is that as long as NATO does not actually enter the conflict there will not be a red line crossed for the war to escalate into a nuclear one. “Despite Moscow’s threats, both conceptual considerations of nuclear strategy and historical experience suggest that, under current circumstances, the likelihood of an intentional use of nuclear weapons remains extremely low.” William Alberque, Director of Strategy, Technology and Arms Control was in early October 2022 even more firm: “Fears of the use of nuclear weapons by Russia are greatly exaggerated. We are probably no closer to a first use of nuclear weapons by Russia despite the concerns expressed by US President Joe Biden in his remarks on October 6.” Keir Giles of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London believes that “in reality, the ‘nuclear book’ is routinely at play in Russian concepts of crisis and war management and international relations in general”. As Dima Adamsky, a leading expert on Russian strategic thinking, said in 2015, the reference to nuclear weapons is an integral part of a set of tools that rely “to manipulate the perception of the adversary, to manoeuvre his process of taking of decisions and to influence its ‘strategic behaviour’ without actually going to war”.³⁵

The same Google search engine shows that the number of studies and analyses makes it known that the occurrence of a nuclear risk is not negligible, being much higher. Laura Grego, director of the Global Security Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, believes that “a nuclear-armed state that would continue to lose a brutal and protracted war on its borders would push it to a dangerous scenario of using nuclear weapons. Russia’s decision to station some of its nuclear weapons in Belarus further increases this risk. The potential for misunderstandings and miscalculations leading to a direct conflict between Russia and NATO with nuclear weapons is too great, especially given that Russian officials regularly invoke the spectre of using nuclear weapons. The guardrails we have built over the years are crumbling, and President Putin shows little interest in avoiding the total collapse of bilateral nuclear arms control”.³⁶ Professors Benjamin Schwarz and Christopher Layne also appreciate that the war in Ukraine has led to a risky geopolitical situation not only in the extended Black Sea region, but throughout the world. “The nuclear forces of the United States and Russia, always ready, are on high alert. With the exception of the Cuban missile crisis, the risks of a rapid and catastrophic escalation of nuclear confrontation between these superpowers are greater than at any time in history.”³⁷ Analysts Andrew R. Hoehn and Thom Shanker from the prestigious research and analysis centre RAND believe that the war in Ukraine has entered a new phase in which the ability to meet the frontline challenges from a logistical point of view and the ability to introduce fresh military forces is decisive. The question is to see who runs out first — Ukraine, NATO and the West or V. Putin. Either a victorious Putin or a beleaguered Putin is still a dangerous Putin. If he succeeds in Ukraine, his appetite for adventure may increase. If he fails in Ukraine, his temptation to attack may be irresistible. No serious policy can overlook the danger Russia poses to NATO and the wider international system.³⁸ The same divided opinions on the risk posed by the escalation of nuclear threats can also be found in Russian academia. Alexei Arbatov, head of the International Security Centre in Moscow, estimated in a recent article that “almost eight decades after the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the probability of a nuclear war is greater than ever. The only exception can be considered the days of the Caribbean missile crisis of October 1962, and this is not at all indisputable. In any case, that crisis is already in the distant past, it was resolved without a nuclear war. Whether the world will again be lucky enough to avoid

³⁴Liviu Horovitz, Lydia Wachs, *Russia’s Nuclear Threats in the War against Ukraine*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2022 online.

³⁵Keir Giles, *Russian nuclear intimidation. How Russia uses nuclear threats to shape Western responses to aggression*, Research Paper, *Russia and Eurasia Programme*, March 2023, Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, p.3.

³⁶Laura Grego, *What Political Uncertainty in Russia Means for Nuclear Security*, in *The Equation*, July 12, 2023, online <https://blog.ucsusa.org/lgrego/what-political-uncertainty-in-russia-means-for-nuclear-security/> accessed on the 8th August 2023.

³⁷Benjamin Schwarz, Christopher Layne, *Why Are We in Ukraine?* in *Harper's Magazine*, online <https://harpers.org/archive/2023/06/why-are-we-in-ukraine/> accessed on the 8th August 2023.

³⁸Andrew R. Hoehn, Thom Shanker, *It Should Not Have Been a Surprise: The Threat from Putin's Russia*, in *TheRANDBlog*, August 1, 2023, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2023/08/it-should-not-have-been-a-surprise-the-threat-from.html> accessed on the 8th August 2023.

catastrophe during the current conflict in and around Ukraine remains a vague future for now”.³⁹

The assessments regarding the risk of escalation of the war in Ukraine analysed in this study are from the perspective of how the working hypotheses were established from those borrowed from history (especially those of order compared to how nuclear deterrence worked during the Cold War) from geopolitics and geostrategy and or the psychosociology of international politics. But it is well to remember that “traditional nuclear deterrence, crisis stability, and strategic stability theorizing operates from the dubious premise that actors are rational and assume that they are therefore” capable of understanding their environment and coordinating policy instruments in ways to cut through the “fog of war”.⁴⁰ The danger of nuclear escalation can also arise as a result of a factor that escapes the rationality and risk calculated by decision makers. Beyond errors of perception, miscalculations by decision-makers, accidents and failure of communication where “events can easily spin out of control”⁴¹ the “fog”/psychosis of war created (un)intentionally by the media of the actors directly/indirectly involved in the conflict must also be taken into account.

The importance of media, both classic and communication platforms, has grown enormously due to the explosion of digital technology and artificial intelligence. The media and new media have become not only highly effective tools for manipulating public opinion, but also factors of cognitive pressure on the leaders involved in the conflict in Ukraine. Influencing public opinion in the direction of supporting the war at all costs and sacrifices in the society of each state involved in the conflict or the creation of anti-war currents exercises and greatly limits, on the one hand, the margins of the leaders to make decisions,⁴² and on the other, it narrows the freedom of expression of those who do not fit into the mainstream created by the discourse of the political elite and multiplied by the media and social media. Referring to this aspect, Stephen M. Walt wrote that although “war is an uncertain phenomenon and reliable information is scarce and no one knows how the war in Ukraine will play out (...) the debates about responsibility for the war and the correct course of course of action were unusually vile and bigoted, even by modern standards of social media vilification”⁴³. In Germany, for example, intellectuals have been divided into two camps, those who promote pacifism and those who support the provision of unlimited military aid to Ukraine. The first camp addressed a letter of protest to Chancellor Olaf Scholz after he decided to give the Ukrainian government military aid including heavy weaponry in which they stated that, “the delivery of large quantities of heavy weapons risks making Germany a co-belligerent, and a Russian reaction could then trigger the mutual assistance procedure provided for in the NATO treaty, creating the danger of a world war.”⁴⁴ The opposing side published an open letter in *Die Zeit*, also addressed to Olaf Scholz, in which he congratulated him for deciding, after weeks of delay, to deliver heavy weapons to Ukraine and demanded that Russia be sanctioned more severely. The initiator of this text was the essayist Ralf Fücks”.⁴⁵ The voices of prestigious intellectuals, whether they are in the camp of those who support the aid given by the West to Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion or in the one who reject the war, exercise, through the image they have in public opinion, a strong influence on the leaders involved in this conflict and must be seriously taken into account in assessing the course of events generated by the war in Ukraine.

Foreign policy analysts and those in the field of security and geostrategy studies, regardless of which camp they are in, must not encourage the emergence of beliefs, more or less substantiated based on analyses of this conflict on the European continent, that conventional wars are possible, viable and manageable in the shadow of nuclear weapons. It should also be noted that even the so-called tactical nuclear weapons cannot be used in the hope of not using the strategic arsenals. Once war based on nuclear weapons is launched, the logic and reasoning that works in peacetime or worked in the Cold War era disappears. Nuclear balances must be preserved as well as the principle of not crossing red lines no matter how intense the rhetoric of nuclear deterrence becomes at any given moment. The war in Ukraine has so far shown that beyond the nuclear rhetoric the red lines have not been violated, which is a hope that this conflict will be able to end in the logic of the classics.

³⁹Aleksey Arbatov, *Yadernyye metamorfozy/ Metamorfozele nucleare, Rossiyskiy sovet po mezhdunarodnym delam (RSMD)/ Consiliul rus pentru afaceri internationale (RIAC)*, 7th August 2023, online <https://russiancouncil.ru/analytics-and-comments/analytics/yadernyye-metamorfozy/> accessed on the 8th August 2023.

⁴⁰James Johnson, *Inadvertent escalation in the age of intelligence machines: A new model for nuclear risk in the digital age*, in *European Journal of International Security*, no. 7, 2022, p. 346.

⁴¹Robert Jervis, *Arms Control, Stability, and Causes of War*, in *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 108, no. 2, 1988, pp. 81–110.

⁴²Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011; Martin Kaplan, Tatiana Wanshula, Mark Zanna, *Time pressure and information integration in social judgment*, in Ola Svenson, John Maule, eds., *Time Pressure and Stress in Human Judgment and Decision Making*, Springer, Boston, 1993, pp. 255–67; Carsten De Dreu, *Time pressure and closing of the mind in negotiation*, in *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, vol. 91, no. 2, 2003, pp. 280–95.

⁴³Stephen M. Walt, *The Perpetually Irrational Ukraine Debate*, Harvard Kennedy School, ANALYSIS & OPINIONS - Foreign Policy, Nov. 29, 2022, online <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/perpetually-irrational-ukraine-debate> accessed on the 7th August 2023.

⁴⁴Thomas Wieder, *Guerre en Ukraine : les intellectuels allemands se déchirent entre pacifisme et soutien militaire*, in *Le Monde*, 07 May 2022, online https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/05/07/guerre-en-ukraine-les-intellectuels-allemands-se-dechirent-entre-pacifisme-et-soutien-militaire_6125149_3210.html accessed on the 7th August 2023.

III. EUROPE - SECURITY AND DEFENSE



European Defence Since the War in Ukraine

PhD. Jean MARSIA (Belgium)

It has become very difficult to predict the likely evolution of Europe and the world, even in the short term. In 2019, when the first edition of my book “A federal constitution for the United States of Europe. Why and how?” was in preparation, some reasons for hope for a better future for Europe came to mind. Very few remain in 2023, for various reasons, of which I believe the following four are the most significant from a geopolitical point of view. The first is what Putin is making: war, of high intensity to Ukraine, of low intensity to Georgia and Moldova, hybrid to the West. The second is Mr. Erdoğan’s ambiguous attitude, which creates a rift within the Atlantic Alliance. The third is the will expressed by Mr. Xi that China takes the lead, economically, strategically, and ideologically, which makes conflict with the Americans inevitable. The fourth is the inability of Europe to cope with crises, because there is no political union in Europe. The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated it once again.



Source: <https://www.defencematters.org/ro/toate-stirile/bratislava-cooperarea-de-securitate-si-planul-franco-german/153/>

As our leaders consider, primarily their continued hold on power, and possibly the interests of their State, without admitting that these are incapable of solving the problems that affect Europe as a whole. The most important challenge seems me the maintenance or restoration of peace and security in our neighbourhood, both to the East and to the South. Europe is a fortiori incapable to make a valuable contribution to resolving global problems such as sea and air pollution, climate change, pandemics, and uncontrolled migration.

All these problems and our lack of security indicate the need of a more united and sovereign Europe. Unfortunately, we're going the other way. European Union (EU) is disintegrating because of its ineffective governance, its weakness, its inability to protect us. It is only an association of States. It has only political-military institutions. Therefore, the EU cannot have military capabilities, nor apply the principle of unity of command, one of the cornerstones of military art. As the armies of the European States, including those of France and the United Kingdom, are not sufficient to ensure our security, and tensions mount, European heads of State and governments are increasingly submitting to the United States of America, especially since the election of Mr. Biden, who is much less brutal and more skillful than his predecessor. He is our commander in chief.

As a result of the division and the military and geopolitical insignificance of the European leaders, it was without any of them that in January 2022, Russians and Americans were discussing security in Europe, but in vain.¹ If a President of the United States of Europe had been present, he might have been powerful enough to make the NATO Allies able to dissuade Putin from committing the irreparable on 24 February 2022.

The lack of political union in Europe explains why, despite substantial defence spending, European States generate only very limited military capabilities. The war against Ukraine has shown that our rulers, our military staffs, and our defense industrial base are not able to quickly fill our capability gaps. European leaders could only do so by uniting, but so far none want it, making impossible rationalizing European defence, and defragmenting the European defence equipment market. Both require a single European defence headquarters that communicates to a European defence minister the re-equipment needs of European forces, both federal and national.

The West provides material aid to Ukraine, with the aim of the withdrawal, attrition, or annihilation of the Russian expeditionary force. By doing so, by economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation, the West prevents a victorious Russian army from attacking another European country and weakens the Chinese coalition.

Everyone wonders how the war in Ukraine could evolve, knowing that the outcome of any war is uncertain. The Ukrainian counter-offensive launched on 4 June 2023 did not therefore benefit from a surprise effect. The Russians had time to perfect their defensive system. Liberating the Donbass and the South requires to break in the summer of 2023 through the very strong Russian defence lines, made of trenches, minefields, anti-tank ditches, dragon's teeth, held by a large infantry and well supported by a formidable artillery. This remains difficult, even after isolating Russian forces, striking their command posts, and cutting off their resupply lines with artillery fire, as Ukrainian ground forces have little air support.

Regarding the end of the war, a first hypothesis is the victory of Ukraine. The small Ukrainian advances towards the south observed in this summer could, if they were consolidated, allow the Ukrainians to cut in two the territory invaded by Russia, by retaking Tokmak then Melitopol, or even Berdiansk. However, the Ukrainians have not yet approached the best defended area, they are in the coverage area and the Russians are not only resisting, but they also carry out counterattacks.

To achieve a breakthrough, the Ukrainians would need fire support by artillery and air means, three times that of the Russians, while the Russians currently have a 2-1 superiority. As Ukraine will not have operational F-16 aircraft until 2024, it will not be possible for it to implement NATO's air-land combat tactics for the 2023 summer offensive.

Another hypothesis: neither of the two belligerents succeeds in breaking through the opposing lines, nor collapses. In this case, the war could continue into 2024 or even 2025. The armies that have opposed each other since 24 February 2022 seem to have been renewed almost entirely because of the losses suffered. Russian and Ukrainian tactics have been continuously improved since then, as well as weapons systems, some of which are quickly becoming obsolete.

It is unlikely that Putin and especially his entourage will take the risk of a military reaction from NATO based on Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Even the use of a tactical nuclear weapon against Ukraine would be unacceptable to the West. It would be risking the 4th World War if we consider the Cold War as the 3rd. It is not impossible, because Putin has become unpredictable. It takes little account of the loss of life and the opposing opinions of its own, and there are some. If his entourage supported his attempt to force the former satellites of the USSR and neutral States to non-alignment, he does not seem inclined to collective suicide. In January 2021, Mr. Biden and Putin extended for five years the *New START* treaty, acronym for *Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty*.²

Every day that passes drags Putin towards his downfall. He promised the Russian people greatness, stability, security, and erasure of the humiliation felt after the collapse of the USSR. He gave him war, sectarianism, and political instability. He was forced to scale back its war aims, which were the overthrow of Zelensky, the stranglehold on the industrial part of Ukraine and the weakening of NATO.

Russia is not able to and cannot win. It is a sclerotic, brutal, and badly governed State. Putin has made

¹See Piotr Smolar, Paul Gogo, "Moscou en position de force face à Washington lors de discussions-clés sur la sécurité en Europe" (Moscow in a strong position vis-à-vis Washington in key discussions on security in Europe) in *Le Monde*, https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/01/10/moscou-en-position-de-force-face-a-washington-lors-de-discussions-clés-sur-la-sécurité-en-europe_6108823_3210.html, 10/1/2022.

²See André Dumoulin, "Faut-il s'inquiéter de la menace nucléaire russe?" (Should we worry about the Russian nuclear threat?) in *La Libre*, <https://www.lalibre.be/debats/opinions/2022/02/28/faut-il-sinquieter-de-la-menace-nucleaire-russe-YR7UFS7HBZGKXOJY3C3VJ3QS7Q/>, 28/2/2022.

Russia even more subservient to China. Russia has maintained its presence in Syria and the eastern Mediterranean, but the level of its naval presence is historically low. The space controlled by Russia in the Black Sea has been steadily shrinking, due to naval losses, pressure from Ukrainian naval and air drones, and the closure of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits to all military traffic. Putin is no longer able to effectively moderate the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. He will have to leave power, but it is impossible to say when and how this will happen. If we know when a war begins, we never know when and how it will end. After its defeat in Afghanistan, after the Chernobyl accident, no one imagined that the end of the USSR was very close.

How can we change the course of things in Europe? By replacing our intergovernmental and technocratic governance with a federal democracy, based on a constitution.

The European Parliament, founded in 1952 and finally directly elected since 1979, has always neglected its duty: to provide Europe with a constitution and to guarantee equality between European citizens.

On 30 June 2009, the Federal Court of Karlsruhe ruled that: "The representation of citizens in the European Parliament is not linked to the equality of citizens of the European Union, in accordance with Article 9 of the Treaty on European Union, but to nationality, which is an absolutely prohibited criterion of distinction in the European Union. The latter thus finds itself in a contradiction of value with the foundation of its identity as a union of citizens, which can only be explained by the character of the European Union as an association of sovereign States". The Federal Court of Karlsruhe adds that: "Even after the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union lacks a political decision-making body resulting from an equal election of all citizens of the European Union and having the capacity to represent uniformly the will of the people."

Two paths could lead to a federal constitution: either an initiative of MEPs declaring themselves to be constituents or a decision of some governments establishing a Constituent Assembly.

Since the 1950s, it is unlikely that all European States immediately agree on any scenario or project. There is no shortage of examples, since the Soviets opposed the Central and Eastern European countries that they occupied benefiting from the Marshall Plan, joining the Atlantic Alliance or the European Communities. Today, the 27 are divided, notably on the question of EU enlargement to include Ukraine, Moldova and the Western Balkans.

With patience, however, it has been possible to achieve that 28 States adhere for example to a common definition of European values, despite their linguistic, religious, and other differences. This was achieved in 2000, by the Treaty of Nice. These values can be summed up in three words: humanism, universalism and progressivism.

To achieve consensus progressively, it is necessary to build a core of States, more motivated or more realistic or freer than others. The Benelux has paved the way for the Six, which were 28 and are 27 since Brexit. The Benelux abolished its internal borders in 1975. Ten years later, France and Germany joined to found the Schengen area, which today has 23 EU Member States, 4 Associated States and Gibraltar. The euro zone was initiated in 1999 by 9 States, it has 20 members since 1 January 2023.

An expandable core could strengthen Europe's sovereignty, by developing a European pillar of NATO and increasing our military capabilities, through more efficient defence spending. It could better shoulder our share of the burdens of our defence and better limit the risks. We know that those are higher if we simply follow our American allies, as we saw in Afghanistan or in Iraq. A European pillar of NATO could better balance the Alliance geopolitically and thus increase our sovereignty. It would complement the institutions of the EU, by setting up a European defence. This requires a European federal State. States have, since 1648, the monopoly on the legitimate use of force.

Today, it seems that the States that know they are the least sovereign, because they have joined the European Union, the Atlantic Alliance, the Schengen zone, the euro area and its deepening, and which have modest means, in terms of defence budget and defence industrial and technological base, will probably be the first members of the United States of Europe.

The United States of Europe should assume the part of Europe's international relations, security and defence, which would be ceded by the Member States. Competences should be divided between the levels of government in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. International relations should be managed as in Canada or Germany. The federal armed forces should coexist with the armies of the Member States. The current European Council should be succeeded by a Senate, representing the Member States. The European Senate and European Parliament should have the power to vote on the budget, levy taxes, adopt the corresponding accounts and take legislative initiatives, even if the technicality of the subjects means that most of the new texts today emanate from the executive powers and administrations.

Gradually, the United States of Europe, founded by a small core of small States could, without

unimbalance, absorb increasingly larger States, such as Spain and Italy, or even Germany, when the extended core would weigh as much as each of these States. The United States of Europe could finally integrate France, its nuclear strike force, and its permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

It has been 73 years since Robert Schuman gave his founding speech. The dramatic events taking place in Ukraine, Georgia, Asia and Africa, as well as those that we see on the horizon, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, require us to be lucid. The European Treaties cannot guarantee us and the next generations a good future. There is no reason to wait longer. Without a constitution capable of founding a federal, strong, sovereign, and democratic Europe, tomorrow it will be too late to restore Europe to its rightful place on the international stage.

On 21 August 2023, the European Society for Defence INPA (S€D - <https://www.seurod.eu>) commemorated the 174th anniversary of Victor Hugo's speech at the Peace Congress in Paris proposing the United States of Europe. His proposal went unheeded since that time, resulting in tens of millions of war victims. Putin's war in Ukraine should spur us on to demand that our leaders change course and start federating Europe, and that is so easy. Everyone has known how to do it since George Washington proposed the first federal constitution in 1787. All we need is the will to act as he did but taking account of Europe's specific characteristics. Political Europe can only be envisaged based on a hard, but extensible core, as it was made to create the Schengen and the euro zones. Once it will exist, it will be capable defining a European security policy, which is a prerequisite for the creation of European federal armed forces, to fill the capability gaps of the armies of the European States. The United States of America, where the US Army, US Navy, US Marines, US Air Force, Coast Guards coexist with the National Guards, can inspire the distribution of competences within the United States of Europe.

Federalism is the only mode of governance that suits Europe. It is the only way for Europeans to speak with one voice and to bring their full weight to bear on the international stage, but also to get effective and efficient defence and defence technical and industrial base. Diplomacy without arms is like a musical score without instruments.

III. EUROPE - WESTERN BALKANS



The Future of the Kosovo-Serbia Dialogue: A Prospective Study

Mona AGRIGOROAIEI

The dialogue process between Kosovo and Serbia started in 2003 with technical problems. Since 2003, no agreement has been reached. The recent tensions in northern Kosovo amid the war in Ukraine make us wonder: What will be the future of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue?

This prospective study analyses the broad trends and possible scenarios of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue in a medium-term analysis.

Key words: Kosovo, Serbia, Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, prospective study

Assessing the Real Situation

The history of relations between Kosovo and Serbia during and outside Yugoslavia has been marked by tensions, even wars, with Kosovo seeking as much independence from Serbia as possible. But we will not deal in this study with historical considerations and the ongoing regional discussion about who owns the territory, but instead we shall try to see what the future holds for the Kosovo-Serbia relations.

Following the end of NATO bombing Yugoslavia and the Kumanovo Agreement between NATO and Belgrade, Kosovo came under the administration of UNMIK (a UN-led mission) and KFOR (a NATO-led mission). They built local institutions in Kosovo before its status was resolved. “Standards first, status next” was the idea of UNMIK Administrator Michael Steiner, who proposed that a series of standards be finalized before the status was resolved.

Martti Ahtisaari then proposed his famous package of provisions that were included in the Kosovo constitution, suggesting Kosovo should have a conditional independence. The M. Ahtisaari package included broad autonomy for the Serbian minority, the extraterritoriality of Serbian monasteries, the Serbian minority and other minorities included in the Kosovo parliament (20 seats reserved for minorities, 10 for Serbs and 10 for other minorities), an EU mission for the rule of law (which would be named after Kosovo’s independence as EULEX). Both “standards without status and M. Ahtisaari's package included the need for Kosovo-Serbia dialogue.

The Kosovo-Serbia dialogue had technical problems ever since 2003. There have been small steps and small agreements signed between them over the years. After Kosovo’s independence in 2008, technical agreements were overshadowed by the idea that they should accept an agreement to recognize each other. They still have firm positions. Kosovo will no longer accept Serbia’s sovereignty; Serbia will not accept Kosovo’s independence.

The “big step forward” was the agreement signed at the White House in 2020 in the Oval Office with the economic normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, which the former US President D. Trump advertised as his personal success.

The current regime led by the Prime Minister Albin Kurti should be analysed in terms of its trends. A. Kurti, the leader of the Self-Determination Movement (Levizja Vetevendosje!) came to power with a majority of over 50% of the votes (actually 50,280%). It was a major blow for the traditional parties in Kosovo such as the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK) and the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK). This blow is also consistent with our discussion regarding the major trends in the Kosovo-Serbia relations.

A. Kurti's first statements in power were that his government would accuse Serbia of genocide, so that any dialogue between them would fail.

The second statement was that he will not accept a community of Serbian municipalities and this may be a major setback in the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. This issue threatens the dialogue and has recently led to increased tensions between the Kosovo-Serb officials.

A. Kurti and Aleksandar Vučić verbally accepted an agreement in Ohrid this year. What happened since then was an increase in tensions in northern Kosovo after the elections of the four Serbian municipalities, which led to clashes between the Kosovo police and the Serbs in northern Kosovo, and between the KFOR and the Kosovo Serbs.

The tensions further faded after A. Kurti accepted the withdrawal of the Serbian policemen guarding the town halls of the four municipalities and after new elections. The question that remains is: will the leaders of Kosovo and Serbia understand each other in the negotiations and will they at least normalize their relations? What will be the future of the relations between Kosovo and Serbia?

Relative Certainties, Critical Uncertainties and Trigger Points

a. Relative Certainties

1. The First Relative Certainty is that the international presence in Kosovo will continue on a long term, even after the end of the political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. Recently, a NATO official said, when asked about the statement of Serbian President A. Vučić on May 13, 2021, that the country has received information from certain sources that one of the major powers will soon begin to formally request the withdrawal of KFOR and UNMIK forces in Kosovo. He also said that "the North Atlantic Alliance has contributed to the stability of the Western Balkans for many years and continues to be engaged in the region".

The occurrence of a "Black Swan" event – an extreme event that could initiate the need to move NATO troops from Kosovo to other regions, such as a possible conflict with Russia or China on a global scale.

2. The Second Relative Certainty is that Serbia will not recognise Kosovo's independence.

The "Black Swan" event may be the possibility that A. Vučić is just covering his Serbian nationalist rhetoric regarding Kosovo and, being of Albanian origin, could recognise Kosovo at a crucial moment in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue. The Croatian and Albanian media claim that he is the son of the Albanian journalist, Fahri Musliu, from an extramarital relationship.

3. The Third Relative Certainty is that the Albanian majority in Kosovo will not agree with a Serbian government in Kosovo.

The "Black Swan" event that opposes this relative certainty could be a crisis within the Albanian majority, like the one in 2020 (which came with the coming to power of A. Kurti), in which the Albanian parties failed to elect the president of Kosovo. The solution, declared by an Albanian analyst at the time, would be to elect a Serbian politician as the president of Kosovo. It could be a similar situation if a Serbian politician or party comes to power who could vote for a Serbian rule over Kosovo. It could even be a moderate politician like Rada Trajković,¹ as a Kosovo political analyst stated in an analysis.

4. The Fourth Relative Certainty is that the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia will continue, both sides being obliged by the Great Powers to do so.

The "Black Swan" event to this certainty is Kosovo accusing Serbia of genocide, which could stop any



Source: https://www.stiripesurse.ro/secretizarea-dialogului-dintre-serbia-si-kosovo-provoaca-noi-crize-expert_2757060.html

¹Rada Trajković, born 8 March 1953, is a Kosovo Serb politician, President of the European Movement of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, who served as Minister of Family Government Services in Kosovo and Metohija, and in Mirko Marjanović's second cabinet, from March 24, 1998 to October 24, 2000. Rada Trajković was born Rada Vujačić to a Kosovar Serb family on March 8, 1953, in Podujevo. Her father, Mato, was a merchant, while her mother, Radojka, was a housewife. He has a brother Radomir. He finished elementary school in Podujevo. After high school, she enrolled in mathematics studies, but after marrying Veselin Trajković, she transferred to the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Pristina. When he graduated, he got a job at the Oral Clinic in the Center of the Clinical Hospital in Pristina. After her specialization, she became the head of the department of laryngology. She received her doctorate in the early detection of throat cancer.

dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. As I said, the option was recently stated by A. Kurti and it could be a situation that can occur in the future.

Another "Black Swan" event could be a major incident (larger than before) between the Albanians and the Serbs in north Kosovo that would make the Serbians intervene. Northern Kosovo is a special region within Kosovo where the Kosovo authorities do not exercise their rule. The occasional intervention of the Kosovo Police special units caused a lot of tension between Belgrade and Pristina. Any incident between the Kosovo authorities and the Serb minority in the northern part of Kosovo could hinder the dialogue. One could imagine that Serbian paramilitaries may clash with Albanian paramilitaries, leading to an intervention by the Serbian army and, of course, an end to the dialogue.

b. Critical Uncertainties

1. A power shift in Pristina or Belgrade that could change Kosovo's view on the Pristina-Belgrade dialogue, with values of (1) a more favourable regime in Pristina and Belgrade open for dialogue or (2) a less favourable (or nationalist) regime in Pristina and Belgrade less open for dialogue.

2. Kosovo-Serbia dialogue result with values (1) a successful dialogue; (2) an unsuccessful dialogue or (3) undecided results.

3. The coming to power of the Self-Determination Movement in Albania which can lead to the unification of Kosovo with Albania, with values (1) will happen; (2) will not happen. In the last elections in the Republic of Albania, on April 24, 2021, A. Kurti Self-Determination Movement had three candidates in the parliamentary elections in Tirana (candidate Boiken Abazi), Lezha (candidate Ilaz Shehu) and Gjirokaster (candidate Kreshnik Merxhani) from Albania, while A. Kurti himself was campaigning and voting in these elections, having dual citizenship (Albanian and Kosovo citizenship).

4. The northern part of Kosovo will split, with or without a "territorial swap", with values: (1) not going to happen; (2) the north will split with a territorial swap (with Preshevo Valley), an idea first recognized by US MP Dana Rohrabacher in 2009 or (3) the north will split without a territorial swap.

5. Tensions will rise in the northern part of Kosovo (1) will happen; (2) will not happen.

c. Trigger Points are events that could "push" for a solution.

1. A possible trigger could be for Kosovo to accept the creation of the Serbian Association of Communities within itself, even with the decision of the Constitutional Court in Pristina. This would lead to a boost in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, but a decrease in Kurti's image, as in the eyes of the Albanian population he is perceived as an intransigent and nationalist figure.

2. Bosnia's accession to NATO would facilitate an agreement between Kosovo and Serbia.

3. Another possible trigger point could be an agreement between the US on one hand and Russia and China on the other, with these two Great Powers (Russia and China) agreeing that Kosovo and Serbia should normalize their relations or that Kosovo be recognized by Serbia.

Scenarios that Could Materialise

Low Probability

The Self-Determination Movement will come to power in Albania, Kosovo will unite with Albania; Albania's relations with Serbia will worsen. I believe this is a highly unlikely scenario, because the results of the Self-Determination Movement in the last elections in Albania were insignificant. It is highly unlikely that they should win during the next elections in Albania, because the traditional parties in Albania enjoy very popular with Albanian population, half voting for the Socialist Party (Partia Socialiste-PS), half voting for the current opposition, the Democratic Party (Partia Demokratike-PD) and the Socialist Movement for Integration (Levizja Socialiste per Integrim-LSI). The unification of Kosovo with Albania is a highly unlikely scenario because it is not supported by the international community, as seen in the overall reactions to the Slovenian non-paper in 2021.

The North will secede (consequently, the Republika Srpska of BiH will also secede from the Federation of Croat-Bosniac/FBiH); the Kosovo-Serbia relations will worsen. This is a highly unlikely scenario as this option is not accepted by the international community.

The North will split in a territorial swap; relations between Kosovo and Serbia will normalize. This is a very unlikely scenario, as territories changing is not supported by the international community.

Continuity Scenarios

The dialogue will resume and continue for an indefinite period on a medium term, without any result; Kosovo will continue to be independent, Serbia will continue to engage in the de-recognition campaign.

The dialogue will continue, resulting in the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia.

Black Swan Scenarios

A war between Kosovo and Serbia, following the withdrawal of KFOR troops from Kosovo.

Kosovo will become part of Serbia, following a crisis between Albanian parties that could lead to a Serbian president coming to power.

The Go-For Scenario

On a medium term, the dialogue will continue indefinitely without any result; Kosovo will continue to be independent and recognized by a number of states (unrecognized by others), Serbia will continue to engage in the campaign to withdraw recognition from states that have recognized Kosovo. The international presence in Kosovo will continue.

This is because, on one hand, the American involvement is encouraging for an agreement, on the other, Russia and China's position regarding Kosovo discourages it. The positions of the divergent Great Powers in the UN Security Council will remain diametrically opposed.

Kosovo and Serbia will continue to have no agreement until BiH fully joins NATO (BiH stops being tempted by the Serb leaders in the Republic of Srpska and stops being a thorn of Russian influence in the thigh of the Balkans); this is a long-term analysis.

Tensions may gradually arise during the administration of A. Kurti, followed by the de-tensioning of the situation. We see a cyclical tension-de-tension pattern of the situation after the war in Ukraine, but not a war-like situation.

Conclusions: Lessons Learned

The Balkans have always been a powder keg in Europe; a trigger of two world wars and ethnic conflicts of the 20th century that were incited by the Great Powers for their global interests and ignited due to the nationalism of the small countries and territories of the Peninsula.

As a result of the intensification of this issue on the international stage, Kosovo and Serbia now have the historic opportunity to reach an agreement with each other, and the divergent interests of the Great Powers should not "hijack" them, stopping them from having this historic opportunity and reaching bloodshed and wars and reaching the normalization of their relations.

There are lessons that all small Balkan countries should learn: that nationalism and ethnic hatred have led to bloodshed and conflict, the best thing they could do is integrate into the common European family.

And, there are lessons that the Great Powers should learn globally – to be in search of peace and reconciliation. The Cold War mentality that some of the Great Powers still have, should not exist in the 21st century. The world could be better!

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III. EUROPE -ROMANIA



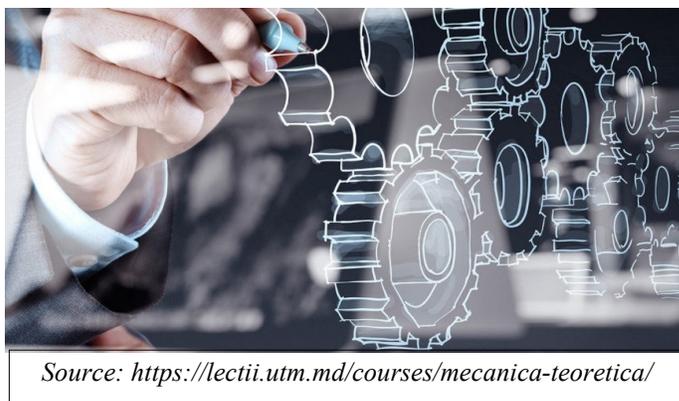
Multicultural Romania – The Impact of the Workforce Imported from Asia and India. How Will Romania Look in the Next Five Years?

Nicoleta Livia ANTON

Migration is defined as the process that implies the movement of people from one place to another, in order to settle in a certain location.¹

The reasons for migration are thus reflected in those motivational factors that make these people leave their country: demographic and economic factors, environmental factors and socio-political factors. As a result, the statistics of recent years show that many people flee to Europe due to conflicts, terror and persecution in their countries of origin.

In this sense, according to a report carried out in 2022 at the EU level, it was found that “out of the 384,245 asylum seekers who were granted protection in the EU in 2022, over a quarter came from Syria, a country devastated by war, followed by Afghanistan and Venezuela in second and third places, respectively.”²



Source: <https://lectii.utm.md/courses/mecanica-teoretica/>

In Search for a Better Living – Immigrants in Romania

According to the legislation in force, “entry on the territory of Romania may be allowed to foreigners who meet the following conditions:

- possesses a valid document for crossing the state border, accepted by the Romania;
- possess a visa or residence permit granted under the terms of GEO no. 194/2002 or, as the case may be, possess any authorization that gives the holder the right to transit or stay on the territory of Romania based on the normative acts of the European Union, binding and applicable for Romania, if international agreements have not established otherwise;
- present documents that justify the purpose and conditions of their stay and that prove the existence of appropriate means both for maintenance during the stay and for returning to the country of origin or for transit to another state where there is the certainty that they will be allowed to enter;
- present guarantees that they will be allowed to enter the territory of the destination state or that they will leave the territory of Romania, in the case of foreigners in transit;
- no alerts are entered on their names in the National Alert Information System for the purpose of refusing entry to the territory of the Romanian state;

¹<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/headlines/world/20200624STO81906/cauzele-migratiei-de-ce-migreaza-oamenii>.

²<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230427-1>.

- they are not reported by the competent authorities as posing a danger to national defence and security, order and public health;
- do not present a danger to national defence and security, order, health or public morals”³

Sociologist Barbu Mateescu states that “several types of immigration are developing in Romania. On the one hand, we are talking about immigrants who have been living in Romania for several months or years and who extend their residence permits for various reasons: they continue their studies, extend their employment contracts, etc. They are minorities that have a history of carrying out economic and social activities in post-December Romania. A good example would be Turkish citizens who have various connections and businesses or young people from the Republic of Moldova who come to study in Romanian universities, especially since they also have special seats allocated. The latter either stay only for the period of studies, after which they are replaced by other generations, or they build a future in our country.

On the other hand, we observe a significant increase in immigrants from distant Asian countries such as China or Vietnam. However, these people represent an important workforce for the Romanian state in the current context. Romania is going through a major crisis for qualified labour because many of the specialists have gone abroad where they receive better pay. On the other hand, for those who come from China or Vietnam, the salaries in Romania are relatively high”, explains Mateescu.⁴

In this broad picture of the prospects regarding the immigration of foreigners to Romania, the problem of the emigration of Romanians can also be distinguished. Somehow the jobs left vacant by the departure of the Romanians were occupied and replaced by workers from Asian countries, mostly from India.

“The continuous emigration, in successive waves, in large numbers, of certain categories of active citizens, who could have contributed to Romania’s development, represents, however we look at the statistical data, a significant loss, with unpredictable long-term consequences. Predictably, Romania falls far short of its real potential due to this exodus, which weakens the critical social capital of any country that needs to grow.”⁵

Romania – a Transit Country

From the perspective of immigrants arriving on the territory of our country, statistics confirm the increase in the number of migrants in transit in the last 10 years⁶. This is also favoured by Romania’s geographical location in the south-east of the EU, with access to the Black Sea.⁷

Whether we refer to Romania as a transit country⁸, or as a final destination, the increase of the number of immigrants, whether temporary or staying for a longer period in our country, raises several issues. We are talking, first of all, about a change in the cultural environment in which we live, an expansion of the understanding of globalization, but also of the impact that migration has on our country, ultimately reflecting a perfect global domino effect. “A migration further to the West” viewed globally, implies changes in the workforce, legal adjustments, but also a new reality in which we will live.

A fairly visible example, at least at the level of the capital, can be seen in the fact that now the majority of suppliers in the field of food consumption and shipping are represented by employees from Asian countries.

Migration, a Security Issue

In a new geopolitical context, with a constant and at the same time continuous, growing immigration, the image of the society we live in changes from day to day. We will thus get accustomed to meeting in areas such as hotels, building sites, food and service sectors an increasing number of labour forces represented by immigrants from countries in Asia, mostly India.

At the same time, we are all adapting on a daily basis to the new cultural environment where we live, which will require the creation of new legal norms regarding border security, conditions of entry, verification and stay in the country, but also new directives that should effectively monitor, report and manage this increased flow of immigrants in order to guarantee and maintain a stable security climate.

³<https://igi.mai.gov.ro/category/diverse/migratie/Strain - persoana care nu are cetatenia romana, cetatenia unui alt stat membru al Uniunii Europene sau al Spațiului Economic European ori cetatenia Confederației Elvețiene>.

⁴<https://adevarul.ro/stiri-interne/societate/analiza-de-unde-vin-cei-mai-multi-imigranti-si-ce-1905886.html>.

⁵<https://www.revistasinteza.ro/emigratia-si-declinul-romaniei-possible-cauze-si-consecinte>.

⁶Bogdan Alexandru SUDITU, Gabriela PRELIPCEAN, Daniel Celu VÎRDOL, Oana Ancuța STÂNGACIU, *Perspectivile politicii de migrație în contextul demografic actual din România*, București, Institutul European din România, 2013, p. 42.

⁷Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Migrația ca problemă de securitate: studiu de caz – România*, București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare “Carol I”, 2014.

⁸<https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/romania-tara-de-tranzit-in-drumul-spre-visul-european-perchezitii-simultane-in-romania-si-germania-la-traficantii-de-migranti-2361641>.

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IV. MIDDLE EAST - ISRAEL



Israel - Total-War Combat Scenario Analysis

Don DAVIS (SUA)

Countries can have what they think is the best military equipment, enormous budgets, large armies and assorted ground, air and sea devices for combat; and still lose the war.

For instance, excluding the mercenary, Wagner Group, Russia learned the hard way in Ukraine about the reality of inexperience, equipment, the hyped but combat untested vehicles and platforms, and the battle untested Russian soldier's mentality, behavior and willingness to fight and perform.

Furthermore, the ferocity and intense reaction from Ukrainian soldiers versus invaders.

Initial army mobilization shock and awe can quickly descend into a messy abyss of quagmire because of overconfidence and poor intelligence, evaluation and anticipations of local culture, behavior and territorial challenges. Both of the enemy and one's own military.

When attacking or defending a nation in conventional warfare, the individual can make the difference.

Too many times, some of the how, what and why that makes the peak performing soldier effective which in turn magnifies the entire army into a successful machine is overlooked.

So, what is some of the data that can separate the Israeli soldier from the rest of the region's military personnel?

Israel is a tiny nation with a small population and considered by many as a superpower and an advanced nuclear triad. Although, that's merely part of the summary.

In 1948, when Israel became a State, they were immediately attacked by seven armies. Notwithstanding, the country survived and eventually expanded on more land.

Citizen demographics included people that were accustomed to non-stop friction, fighting and death. Living, generally, by each of their own standards and behavior and with diminutive or no organized limitations on actions and imagination.

Like many after World War II, orphans and partial families who endured appalling circumstances to survive and often making it on their own.

Little or nothing of military equipment, using what was available, creativity, secrecy and surprise. Preferring offensive to defensive, bold unanticipated engagement, applying out-of-the-box battle tactics, resourcefulness and equipment.



Source: <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/deciziile-cabinetului-netanyahu-sporesc-tensiunile-dintre-statele-unite-%C8%99i-israel-/32330515.html>

Size or remoteness from Israel was not a component in their attempts and results. Operational limits were overcome.

The years have accelerated this method or combination dramatically.

Seventy-five years later, Israel is the most combat experienced nation in the Middle East. Decades of continuous regional conflict, learning through wars, clashes, terror, inventing, upgrading, adjusting and on steadfast ready-alert on multiple fronts. While maintaining long established behavior, training, tactics, prevailing clandestine tech, stealth and surprise. Even though being surrounded, alone, outnumbered, out-gunned, smaller budgets and boycotted. In various instances, overcame great distance and obstacles with deadly accuracy.

This is reinforced by their historic education, holocaust, and annihilation fears. Leading to designing national educational programs and performance testing to guide youth growth, no matter sexual orientation, in preparation for mandatory military service. Reflecting further the vital importance and necessity of security and the need for instantaneous action-behavior-and-mentality due to relentless spans of dangers.

At any type of emergency or threat an Israeli will spring to action. With weapons if essential. Many citizens are licensed and trained weapon holders.

Violent regions have other distinct drawbacks. In the Israeli case, one may be an unfortunate or unwanted but crucial benefit.

Whether living or traveling abroad or domestic, the Israeli can live as if they are going to die, anytime; some term as edge-living, thrill-seeking, feat oriented, just do, reckless or party-attitude. This is sometimes reflected in seamless behavior. And, in war.

Mental and physical acceptance of untimely death is a tremendous advantage, due to the unceasing conflict and no hope of realistic change. In Israel it can appear in the young mainstream society, thus in some of their soldiers.

Likewise, a strong culture of mandatory military service expectations. Huge, nearly unanimous nationwide support and nurturing of soldiers, mental and physical testing and placement for military duties, peer pressure, widespread competition, youth indestructibility syndrome or youth bravery, pride, and highly disciplined, ongoing and steady combat training and exercises.

In addition, jobs, great jobs, based on military responsibilities and performance can be obtained after service. Others, stay in the military or go into the tech, intelligence, security or police.

Security and related venues, including tech also provide Israelis worldwide opportunities.

Regional nations have this too. Nevertheless, advancement or opportunity, on occasion, can be very limited to certain families, clans or tribes, religious sects, or via money or influence. It can be argued as well, that none of the regional nations display the same consistent backing for their soldiers and military compared to Israel.

There is a fundamental importance and stature of Israeli combat experience. Their battle weapons usage, nearly unequaled intelligence, superior battle-tested arsenal, custom Israeli tech and software - inside their equipment and ongoing training. Possessing nuclear triad capacity, verified battle willingness, mentality and performance, and cohesiveness of the Israeli soldier both male and female. Crafts the Israeli Army, Air Force and Navy into an extremely formidable military force. In spite of this, Israeli combat qualities are ignored while enemy countries and groups aggressively 'poke or stab the Israeli nest'. Prodding for weakness, willingness, or luck.

This will eventually have consequences. Possibly regionally. Maybe not what enemies expected.

If basically explained, envision a personal fight or wrestling match. The more you compete in an actual, direct scuffle with the genuine threat of injury, loss, humiliation or death, the quicker, smarter, stronger, fearless, calmer, and in turn experienced performer one becomes. In which Israel excels. Same is true with teamwork in battle. But it has to be real or chances of survival against experience are reduced.

Training and short exercises are excellent. But not enough when besides, behind, and in front of you, bodies of your buddies are getting torn apart by sub and supersonic projectiles, explosions, flame and unstoppable platforms like columns of Israeli soldiers firing, tanks, combat bulldozers, artillery and missile impact and air vehicles destroying everything in their path.

Then, there is the USA. The Americans have promised Israel security. That additionally, is a stout deterrent to enemies. Or should be. For example, did you hear the saying "who or what enemy hears, sees or tracks a B-2, F-22, F-35 and shortly a B-21 on an incoming attack bomb run? – no one does!"

Here is a good place to also comment that Israel wants USA participation in an attack against Iran. But Israel will act alone if their deadline, timeline, nuclear-line or USA expectations are transected. Israel does not have to destroy the nuclear and related facilities, merely contaminate them. This can be done by conventional

or clandestine tech and methods Israel keeps secret. Israel has options that overcome equipment deficiencies and operational distances.

Nonetheless, there are those that ignore what's written in public defense material, historical documentation and displayed in events about the potential power of Israel and the undisputed power of USA.

USA and Israel may not like this comparison, and circumstances may have contributed, but it's hard to refute in lieu of history. USA and Israel are nations of war. Born out of war, prominent educational establishments or structures for war, continuity of warriors, battle legacies and retain outstanding-performing weapons. Tangling with either of them will result in repercussions. Immediately or later, war or shadow, up close and personal or from a remote vehicle. Guaranteed, it will come.

Consider, Israel persists hunting Nazi War Criminals and terrorists. There is no statute of limitations on enemies of Israel.

As a side note, several of Israel's leaders, counting the Prime Minister, were/are personally experienced in combat, close combat, clandestine operations and some have been wounded in combat. Group combat and single or team special ops require distinctively different training, behavior, bravery and action. Not many regional leaders can claim any or all of those Israeli traits.

Moreover, regardless of rumors and articles about military fragmentation and civil disruptions over politics, both are intact and functioning. Do not let the localized grandstanding, speculations and the party-division semi-panic of collapse persuade contrarily. Attacking Israel would instantaneously unite all Israeli factions.

I would venture that an internal disintegration of the State of Israel, or to be more precise, the Jewish State of Israel into a country for anyone/everyone is more of a feasible scenario than total destruction from external forces at this point in time.

Therefore, in the Middle East, the cradle of civilization, which collectively contributed much to humanity. Known for intellectuals, scholars and wise men and women. Why would some seemingly disregard glaring dangers in attacking Israel?

I'm very concerned that aggregate war against Israel has not been thought out to its final conclusion. This is my attempt to provide conceivable illustrations and hopefully warn against the hostilities-chasm.

Rational leadership needs to consider the evidence before descending into irreversible regional chaos. Which Israel increasingly believes is unavoidable and is extensively preparing for. Particularly, against Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Gaza. It is absurd to assume or submit that Israel will endure the unrelenting, alternating attacks from Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and internal terror assaults indefinitely.

In the past till now, Israel has been fighting conventional, limited and clandestine warfare. Regulated by their own ethical beliefs, behavior, laws, and many times influenced, restricted or stopped by USA or world opinion.

But if Israel is attacked in a major or coordinated assault, this could soundly give them the legitimacy they need to justify using every method and every weapon in their possession to protect Israel or preempt to stop their extinction. Similar to Israel's 1967 Six-Day War scenario but with much more intensity. And, enlarging their borders farther.

In addition, it is logical to presuppose that during an assault against Israel, Israel could use the opportunity of total war to permanently expel Palestinian Arabs. Because, the present Israeli government appears to envision zero path forward in concrete peace with the Palestinians. As there is Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Fatah and abundant splitter groups. Meaning instead of one treaty there would need to be multiple treaties and sovereign Palestinian country-locations with their militias spread across Gaza and the West Bank. The West Bank is known in Israel as Judea and Samaria.

Signifying as well, Israel using war as a major assault against Hamas and their associates to push them completely out of Gaza. No longer employing typical Israeli military limited action. This time not stopping for anyone or any country protesting until military incursion is victorious. Israel feels they were significantly betrayed and 'burned' when they disengaged from the Gaza territory in 2005.

In the meanwhile, expelling some Israeli Arabs and northern Druze that have been a participant or support in terror or not supportive of the State of Israel.

Anyone that does not believe the collective prognosis and launches a major war campaign against Israel is taking a monumental gamble against their life, personal fortunes, clans, territories and their country's devastation.

Though other regional nations and enemy groups have chemical, bio, and suspected dirty bombs. Iran may have a covert nuke or two without a substantiated ballistic delivery system. Yet, keep in mind the game-changer - Israel's active nuclear superiority.

I'm not suggesting Israel will escape total war clean; they would suffer horrifically. However, after Israel has won, or after USA intercedes and crushes the aggressors, then Israel and the USA will, as standard operating procedure, search out the war criminals and execute them. In parallel with WWII, the post war years, Israel executing Adolf Eichmann, and the coalition hanging Saddam Hussein after the Gulf War.

Make no mistake, it is vastly unlikely USA will stand by and allow enemies to eradicate Israel. And, USA can move its military and fight internationally at will. On top of that, USA allegedly has scores to settle with a few Middle East nations that have deceived USA trust. Both USA and Israel will bring the war to, and inside, any aggressor's home, territory and country. Coupled with, confiscating any suspected, illegal wealth.

Saddam Hussein probably never thought what happened to him, his sons, ministers, generals, country and his illicit riches would happen. Regrettably, King Hussein bin Talal of Jordan believed Egyptian Field Marshal Amer, rather than the Israelis, and joined the war against Israel in 1967. That, didn't go well.

Don't count on China to intercede directly in the Middle East against the Americans. Although, they will flex in the Pacific.

The Russian ground forces have already shown they are spent in Ukraine. Unless Russia re-engages the Wagner Group. Russia might posture, use their famed computer warfare and maybe limited scuffle tactics out of Syria. If Syria along with Lebanon isn't on-fire from the Israelis, USA and if Türkiye takes opportunity. Russia will raise rhetoric, global ferreting games with ships and aircraft and the usual repetitive threats of their nuclear weapons. Which is how intelligence services know Russia has an army running-on-empty; Russia keeps threatening with nuclear weapons because there is little or no other Russian military option.

In theory, any nation in the Middle East that joins the total-war aggression against Israel would be at risk for reprisals. This hypothesis is based firmly on the combined and perpetual Israeli war history, experiences, performance, patterns, weapons and uninterrupted Nazi/enemy-hunting behavior. Along with the overwhelming Israeli fear of extermination which can extend to a potentially volatile or over-reactionary quality in anyone or nation during threats or war.

More, it's reasonable to surmise that Israel's small population and country size would add to the acute stress and Israeli aggressive and proactive actions in a total war or to prevent war.

Don't take my word or analysis for it. I always write or tell people; search and study the data for yourselves. It's an open-book of info available in libraries and online provided by civilian, educational, intelligence, military related organizations and news and media industries. To touch a few; Janes, Global Firepower, INSS, culture, religion & behavior study institutions and regional newspapers. Trustworthy newspapers and their archives are a superb source of local statistics. If you speak, understand and read Arabic and Hebrew even better as many times substance or accuracy is lacking due to translation. Living in the region for longer than six months is ideal, as living is learning.

Now, I'm not Jewish or Muslim and don't belong to an organized place of worship.

Subsequently, I would advise; don't analyze Israel as the State of Israel. Separate the name of the country from the research, don't evaluate as the enemy. Otherwise, it can inflame individual patriotism, culture, race and color friction causing prejudice in analyzing. Inducing cloudiness, anger, political or religious agenda or complete analytic blindness.

Plus remember, some countries and informants have inaccuracies and alternative motives, paid informants embellish and prophecies can be misinterpreted. Prophecies, whether admitted or not, are a big deal in the Middle East.

Consequently in retrospect, if carefully and logically evaluated without the interference of the name of the country or the religious, cultural, geographical and demographical hatred; declaring war on a country with uninterrupted patterns of combat experiences; constant threat and conflict proficiencies; fighting on familiar, equipped and prepped turf; the primary mentality for action and self-preservation; national robust zeal to protect it and armed citizens along with the army that presently do this; youth military-related education and testing and preparation, family and peer pressure for extraordinary military expectations; historical military and clandestine strategical and tactical surprises, extreme tech, a superpower, a nuclear triad, and on ceaseless nationwide ready-alert; backed by USA with their soldiers, air, water, space and ground platforms in place in the region, and the promise to intercede; declaring war on such a nation or nations that factually has and maintains these abilities and it's stark realities and repercussions would customarily be declared...ill-advised.

Author footnote: my assessments entail background that I commonly don't publish. My research, studies and analysis are material for reinforcement of precise facts and statistics. Behavior, culture and religion are sometimes deemed as open to opinion, conjecture or ambiguous, fluid and at times what we term as taboo. Because it can appear as prejudice or hateful. But it is not, if used properly, respectfully and to avert war and save lives.

IV. MIDDLE EAST - ISRAEL - SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS



Exploring the Possibility and the Implications of a Normal Relationship Between Israel and Saudi Arabia

Andreea Cristina STANCA

A Historical Background

Historically speaking, between Israel and Saudi Arabia the tensions started since the creation of the Jewish state. The proclamation of Israel's independence in 1948 marks the creation of an alliance of Arab states against the United Nations' (UN) proposal for the division of Palestine, the "two-state solution" meant to create a Palestinian and a Jewish state.

In this context, Saudi Arabia along with other Arab states reacted violently against Israel, which unilaterally accepted the UN proposal. Their motivation is closely related to the Palestinians' right to self-determination, the Arabs being against the document that offered the Zionists part of the Palestinian territory under the British mandate. So, Saudi Arabia was part of the pan-Arab union, these states sharing a common history, culture and language. The partition plan represented a threat to unity that could have fragmented the Arab world.

The Arab-Israeli conflict has lessened in intensity over time, with the Camp David Accords of 1978 marking the beginning of the cooperation between Egypt, an Arab state, and Israel. Therefore, the acceptance of Israel's right to exist may mark the transformation of the direction of the geopolitics of the Middle East, other Arab states, including Jordan, the United Arab Emirates or Bahrain following Egypt's example. An important aspect worth mentioning in this regard is the recognition of Israel by the Palestine Liberation Organization, a moment that led to the recognition of the Palestinian organization by Israel and finally to the signing of the Oslo Accords, these being the only agreements concluded between the two actors in order to resolve the conflict.



Source: <https://www.dailysabah.com/world/mid-east/israel-saudi-normalization-may-not-come-soon-experts-say>

The Dynamics of the Interaction – Challenges and Perspectives

If we are to compare the time of the first interaction and the present, when it comes to the relation between Israel and Saudi Arabia, we notice the fact that premises changed. Firstly, the conflict deescalated, the possibilities of cooperation and the occurrence of a bilateral relation is way likely than during the middle of the last century.

Nevertheless, the creation of a Palestinian state and Israel's withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 pose a major challenge to the normalization of Israeli-Saudi relations. Over time, the Palestinian cause has been constantly affirmed within Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, for the Arab state being an important aspect in building a bilateral relationship with Israel. So, to what extent can an agreement similar to the Abraham Accords, be concluded between Israel, on the one hand, and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, on the other? The success of the Abraham Accords can be illustrated by the will and sustained effort of the signatory states, as well as by the active involvement of the United States of America (USA) in facilitating dialogue and negotiations.

However, although there is a close relationship between Saudi Arabia and the US, the Arab state has often stated that the normalization of the relationship with Israel depends on the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories occupied by Israel following the Six-Day War. In this sense, the Saudi Foreign Minister, Faisal bin Farhan, claimed in June 2023 that the state he represents is open to normalizing the relationship with Israel, this success having benefits for both parties¹. His statement was outlined by the reiteration of a sensitive aspect, namely the Palestinian cause. In this sense, the Saudi official emphasized the condition that Israel should meet: "But without finding a way to peace for the Palestinian people, without addressing this challenge, any normalization will have limited benefits. And so I think we should continue to focus on finding a path to a two-state solution, on finding a path that gives the Palestinians dignity and justice."²

His statement does not exclude a possible normalization of relations between the two states in the absence of a solution to the Palestinian problem, a fact that may leave open the way to dialogue. However, the Palestinian cause is constantly reaffirmed, which proves Saudi Arabia's interest in solving the problem. In this regard, to what extent is Saudi Arabia willing to waive this precondition or accept future negotiations regarding the Palestinian issue, in order to normalize the relationship with Israel?

Normalizing Israeli-Saudi relations would mean changing the geopolitics of the Middle East and the Gulf. Even if the negative effects include the dissatisfaction of the population of Saudi Arabia for reasons that are easy to understand, or the deterioration of the relationship with the Arab states that have not yet concluded agreements with Israel, could there be positive effects that counterbalance the negative ones?

In terms of regional security, the two states share a common adversary, Iran. The normalization of Israeli-Saudi relations would increase their influence in the geopolitical area of the Middle East to the detriment of Iran's rise. The creation of bilateral relations would not only diminish Iran's influence, but would contribute to the security of the two states, with normalization transforming the dynamics of regional power centres. Military and intelligence cooperation would have benefits for the two states, as they could analyse and respond more quickly to common threats from Iran and beyond. So, the threats of non-state actors supported by Iran could be countered by the cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Israel, especially since the actions of these actors destabilize neighbouring states and are also a threat to regional security.

And if we look from an economic perspective we can see that normalization would have numerous benefits. The collaboration of the two states in the field of technology and innovation, trade and so on, would contribute to the development of the economies of the two states. Israel is recognized for its success in the technological field, being an important global high-tech centre, while Saudi Arabia's financial resources could support major projects with a beneficial impact on technological development.

Security and economy represent elements of particular relevance, but to the same extent, the cultural and religious aspects that a normalization would imply must also be taken into account. In this note, a question arises regarding how the creation of a bilateral relationship between Israel and the state on whose territory Islam was born would be perceived by the Arab world and especially by the Palestinians. So, the issue of Islam's holy places and how Saudi Arabia relates to them could be raised. It could be argued that the Arab state's action to normalize relations with Israel would imply the application of a double standard regarding the holy cities of the Muslim world. In this sense, the indirect acceptance that one of the most important cities in the Islamic religion, Jerusalem, is part of the Jewish state could be controversial. Jerusalem represents one of the most sensitive aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, being always the unresolved issue that contributes to the deepening of the conflict. Therefore, if Saudi Arabia were to normalize relations with Israel in the absence of agreements that would change the status of the city of Jerusalem, riots could arise in the Muslim world, and tensions would increase in the climate of the Middle East.

¹Hélène Sallon, Louis Imbert, *Normalization with Israel: Saudi Arabia Shows Signs of Openness*, *Le Monde*, August 1, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/06/13/normalization-with-israel-saudi-arabia-shows-signs-of-openness_6031069_4.html.

²Idem.

At the same time, from a cultural point of view, the normalization can have beneficial effects in terms of understanding and accepting a different culture or religion. States can promote their culture, traditions, values and more through public or cultural diplomacy, their image being improved. So, even though there are many stereotypes that the two cultures may have of each other, the normalization of Israeli-Saudi relations could help change the perception in a positive way.

Promising Signals for Normalization – the Event on the 28th August

Israel and Saudi Arabia's recent political speeches outline the prospect of being open for negotiations, but the event of August 28 brings to the fore the possibility of the realization of the first bilateral agreements between the two states, due to the way in which the sensitive situation was handled.

This moment refers to how the Saudi authorities reacted to an exceptional situation, namely the emergency landing at Jeddah airport of a plane carrying Israeli citizens. Despite the absence of formal relations between the two countries, Saudi Arabia has displayed a surprising attitude of hospitality, thus paving the way for potential normalization.

One of the Israeli citizens described his experience as remarkable: "The welcome from the Saudis was really unexpected [...] and they assured us that we were welcome."³ The gesture of greeting Israeli guests in Hebrew further emphasized the Saudis' openness and willingness to interact more closely with Israeli culture. In this context, the first direct commercial flight between Saudi Arabia and Israel took place, with the destination Tel Aviv.

This moment represents a significant stage in the evolution of relations between the two states, underlining the changes in the dynamics of their interactions and the openness they have demonstrated not only at the declarative level.

Conclusions: Regional Stability or Further Tensions?

The potential normalization of Israeli-Saudi relations is as promising as it is complex. This could serve as a model for other Arab states seeking peaceful coexistence with Israel, thus contributing to regional stability. However, it is essential to state that such normalization without substantial progress on the Palestinian issue may raise concerns about the prioritization of agendas. In this sense, the Palestinian cause would occupy a secondary place on the agenda of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, the normalization of the relationship with Israel being a priority for the Arab state. With this in mind, Saudi Arabia could face the displeasure of a population that might see its own state's actions as ignoring the Palestinian cause and prioritizing cooperation with the Jewish state. However, as Saudi Arabia navigates the path of normalization in order to manage its foreign policy objectives, it also needs to remain in tune with the sentiments of its population.

With all these considerations in mind, it is important to state that it is a complex situation without clear answers. It rather presents a framework for analysis and debate. Looking ahead, the implications for normalization remain a hotly debated topic within both Saudi Arabia and Israel, creating the possibility of exploring a topic that shapes the direction of the Middle East.

³Israeli PM Netanyahu thanks Saudi Arabia after emergency plane landing, Al Jazeera, 28 August, <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2023/8/29/israeli-pm-netanyahu-thanks-saudi-arabia-after-emergency-plane-landing>.

IV. MIDDLE EAST - IRAN - SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS



The Background of the Iranian-Saudi Understanding

Eva J. KOULOURIOTIS (Greece)

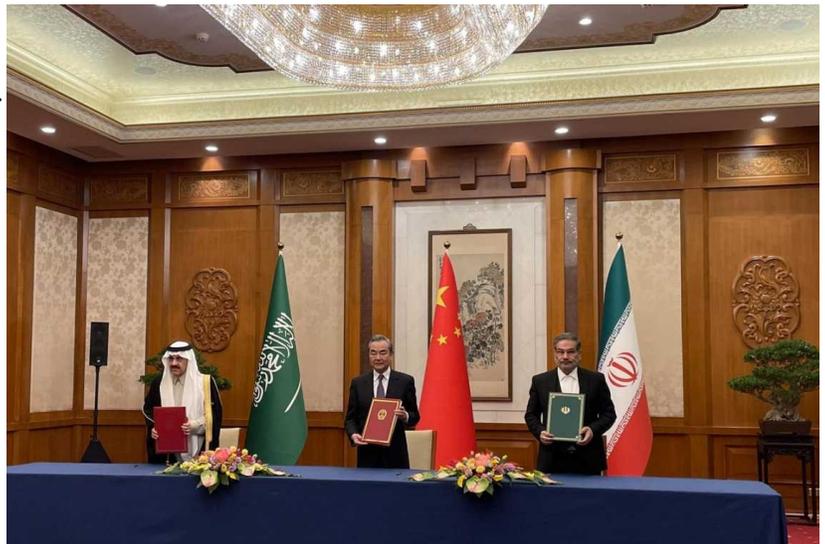
More than two months after the announcement of the Saudi and Iranian sides regarding their signing of a Chinese-brokered memorandum of understanding, it can be said that the Middle East seems calmer with many files still pending. This understanding was a sudden event for the Americans due the secrecy of the three parties responsible for this agreement, and US politicians began to raise questions about the size of the Chinese role and Beijing's dreams in the Middle East in general after this mediation. Some even went on to warn that Washington may lose its influence completely at the expense of China if this understanding succeeds.

So, what led Riyadh from being a strategic American ally, and Tehran, which has spent almost two decades negotiating with Washington, to sitting at a table in Beijing? And what is the American position on this understanding? These questions require from us, as researchers in the affairs of the Middle East, to redraw the reality of the region in a pragmatic language.

On the 17th of August, Iranian Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian arrived in the Saudi capital Riyadh, who is the first Iranian Foreign Minister since 2015, and came about two months after the visit of the Saudi Foreign Minister to Tehran. Abdollahian participated in the reopening of the Iranian Embassy in Riyadh and met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in an atmosphere that seems positive between the two countries. However, despite this exaggerated optimism, it cannot be denied that there are still many sensitive files stuck between the two countries, which include the maritime borders and Syria, Yemen, and Lebanon. These files need more than a memorandum of understanding, they need, above all, trust. So, what does Riyadh expect from this understanding?

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Riyadh began a while ago to rearrange its priorities and policies internally, regionally, and internationally. Saudi Arabia, led by the Crown Prince, is internally putting as a priority the transformation from being a purely oil country to being the most important economic and investment centre in the Middle East. This



Source: <https://www.cronicadiasporei.ro/geopolitica-pagina/iranul-si-arabia-saudita-au-semnat-un-acord-istoric-de-pace-si-cooperare>

internal goal primarily needs security and stability for its success. Yet in light of the Yemen war and the threats of the Houthi militia supported by Tehran to the Saudi geography, all these dreams and plans remain ink on paper. On this basis Riyadh went to Beijing.

Before talking about the details of what happened in Beijing, it should be emphasised that Saudi-American relations have entered a dark tunnel since the arrival of US President Joe Biden to the White House. The Democratic president adopted a policy of appeasement with Tehran clearly at the expense of his relations with Saudi Arabia. He removed the Houthi militia from the US terrorist lists without providing protection for Saudi security, and then entered rounds of negotiations with Tehran to resolve the nuclear file without any significant results while Iran continued to develop its nuclear and missile program at a steady pace.

Moreover, in Iraq, the Biden administration did not introduce anything new, so it supported the formation of an Iraqi government affiliated with Tehran. In Syria, Washington ignored the growing influence of militias backed by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards without a clear policy for the future of the Syrian war. This negativity by the Biden administration towards Riyadh's concerns was reflected on relations between the two countries and translated through the adoption by Saudi Arabia of a number of decisions in the OPEC Plus Group, ignoring American requests. The result, within about a year, was that the relations between the two countries reached their worst point in about six decades prompting Saudi Arabia to look east.

The Islamic Republic of Iran

Although American politicians confirm that the economic sanctions imposed on Tehran are effective and harsh, the reality is saying something else. According to the latest analysis of Iranian oil production, Tehran's exports reached 3 million barrels per day in July, which is more than its oil production before the sanctions. Washington's policy could not stop Tehran's uranium enrichment, but rather raised above 80%. Not even a month goes by without Tehran announcing a locally manufactured missile or a new suicide drone. In parallel with this internal military development, Tehran has raised the capabilities of its militias in the region, led by the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, which has increased its threats to the northern borders of Washington's Israeli strategic ally.

This new reality, where sanctions no longer frighten Tehran and its militias in the region have become dominant, was reflected in the failure of Iranian politicians to engage in negotiations with the Europeans and Americans to return to the nuclear agreement or any new and more agreement. The most that the Iranian side conceded recently was a verbal understanding based on the step-by-step principle without affecting Iran's nuclear capabilities or its influence in the region. The West is no longer attractive to the Iranians, and eyes there are turning east.

As for the Americans, after the politicians in the White House absorbed the shock of the Saudi-Iranian understanding mediated by China, Washington began to rethink some of its policies in the Middle East. The talk today in the corridors of the US State Department indicates a great effort led by US national security adviser Jack Sullivan to achieve a normalisation deal between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Within the terms of this deal, Washington will make important security promises to the Saudi side, through which it may restore some of the trust that has been lost between the two countries in recent years. As for the Israeli side, Washington promises to prevent Tehran from manufacturing a nuclear bomb.

In parallel with this move, the White House announced an exchange deal with Iran, through which the Iranian authorities would release five American citizens, in exchange for Washington releasing seven billion dollars of Iran's frozen funds as a result of the sanctions. There is the possibility of Tehran temporarily freezing its uranium enrichment in return for Washington lifting part of the economic sanctions.

These American moves can be linked to the upcoming US presidential elections next year. On the one hand, the Biden administration does not want to allow China to be an important player in the Middle East on the one hand, and on the other hand, it does not want Israel to be dragged into a war with Iran before the elections.

As a result, Riyadh has found on the Chinese table some of what it needed, while through this table, Saudi politicians are sending a message to Washington that Saudi Arabia has alternative options in light of China's growing international influence. Tehran also found in China a strategic ally that supports it economically and makes investments without asking for democracy and respect for human rights, or imposing nuclear conditions on it, or limiting its regional influence. This development was produced by an American policy that is, to say the least, random and unbalanced. Even if the Saudi-Iranian understanding fails, China has already set foot in the region and is waiting for the next American fall there.

IV. MIDDLE EAST - GEOSTRATEGIC



Geostrategic Blitz: The Great Powers and the Middle East

Univ.Prof.PhD. Cristian BARNA

Foreword

The Middle East is no longer as central a concern to the national security of the United States of America (US) as it once was, particularly because the US is no longer dependent on the region's oil. The main threats to regional security and stability are internal, stemming from weak states and dysfunctional governance.

The US decision to use military force to fight against the terrorism in the Middle East over the past two decades did not work, and the influence of the US, traditionally the biggest power broker in the region, has declined because of the decision to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, because of the fractious relationship with Saudi Arabia, and mostly because of its prolonged military presence, followed by the chaotic withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In this geostrategic context, as Russia and China become more economically involved in the region, the US must reconsider its security cooperation, economic assistance programs, diplomatic engagement, and ensure that these efforts have the desired results.



Source: https://www.stripesurse.ro/lovitura-pentru-sua-dupa-iran-arabia-saudita-se-pregateste-sa-si-reia-relatiile-cu-siria-negocierile-au-fost-mediate-de-rusia_2847330.html

Hence, the Pillars of the Current US Strategy in the Middle East Are

- maintaining strong alliances and ensuring stability in the region;
- focusing on the relationship with Israel, which was and remains the most reliable partner in the Middle East;
- providing assistance to Jordan for development, education, infrastructure, agriculture and humanitarian aid for hosting refugees from Syria;
- although disagreements related to regional conflicts and human rights violations have produced

tensions in the relationship with Saudi Arabia, the focus is on ensuring regional stability, „containing” Iran, and maintaining solid economic relations, the US being Saudi Arabia’s largest trading partner, especially in arms sales, and Saudi Arabia is the main source of oil in the region;

- re-discussing divergent political priorities and perspectives, in the context of Turkey’s increasingly obvious ties with Russia, with Turkey hosting two major US air force bases;
- the relationship with Iraq, the second main source of oil for the US in the Middle East;
- protecting the Kurds, key partners in building democracy in Iraq and Syria.

The Pillars of Russia’s Current Strategy in the Middle East Are:

- preventing the spread of instability or extremism from the Middle East to Russia;
- drawing red lines against what Russia perceived as a regime change orchestrated by the West in the region, especially after the Libyan crisis in 2011;
- maintaining a permanent presence in the region, especially in Syria, in order to operationalize an arc of deterrence against NATO;
- sale weapons, the construction of nuclear power plants, grain exports;
- increasing alignment with Iran, driven in part by the need for weapons for the war in Ukraine.

The Pillars of China’s Current Strategy in the Middle East Are:

- ensuring the security of the free flow of energy at the lowest cost;
- increasing the prestige of a responsible international actor;
- brokering a rapprochement between long-time regional rivals – Saudi Arabia and Iran;
- encouraging the resumption of Israel-Palestine talks;
- establishing itself as a key economic partner, increasing own investments in the region.

Instead of Conclusions...Predictions

The US will continue to interfere with the region’s security issues, even though the Arab states have pursued their economic, security and political interests in relation to Russia for years now, so they have their own reasons for not antagonizing Russia.

The non-alignment of the Arab states in this Great Power competition will be long-lasting unless Russia decides to use nuclear weapons in the war in Ukraine or to support the Iranian nuclear weapons program.

China still does not have the capacity to replace the US in the Middle East. So far, it can wield extensive diplomatic and economic influence, being Saudi Arabia and Iran’s main trading partner, and is the largest buyer of oil from the two states, as well as the largest investor in the Middle East.

The Arab states’ favourable view of the relationship with China is favoured not only by the fact that China does not interfere in their affairs, but also by the fact that China does not behave in a way that could be perceived as threatening.

V. SOCIAL NETWORKS - INFORMATION SOURCES



The Impact of the Social Networks on How the War is Perceived – How Do We Get Rid of Sterile Information and How Do We Discern the Quality and Truthfulness of Our Sources of Information?

Nicoleta Livia ANTON

“Knowledge is the most democratic source of power.”

Alvin Toffler

In a communicational age, where countless pieces of information are just a click away it remains with-in our responsibility to filter sterile information and chose our sources.

From Connection to Connectivity, From Information to Knowledge

From simply connecting through social media, most of the time it comes to human connection which involves knowing, opening up, disclosing and developing a communication relationship. We thus want to know, but most of the time we want our perception of reality to intertwine with the informational sources we choose. Both personal preferences and each’s proclivity towards a certain type of show, editorial and communication channel will therefore form the basis of our perception regarding the society in which we live and the way things evolve around us.

This communication filter, more often than not, will reflect nothing more than what our projection and inclination towards our chosen news sources. Of course, in this flow of news, where we also encounter the fake-news phenomenon, the willingness of the individual to distinguish the informational quality and to go to safe, verifiable and trustworthy sources will also be determined.

“With millions of people around the world using technology platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to monitor the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, social media has become one of the most effective tools – used by both sides – on the cyber battlefield.



Source: <https://www.ceccarbusinessmagazine.ro/printeaza-articolul-242/>

Social media has thus become one of the most effective tools today and has played a significant role in shaping the narrative of the conflict, while providing a platform for sharing information around the world.”¹.

Propaganda and Disinformation. When Do We Chose What We Prefer Instead of the Truth?

Starting from the words of Albert Einstein that *Information is not knowledge. The only source of knowledge is experience*, we could add that insufficient, precarious or incomplete information is not knowledge and that only that amount of relevant knowledge leads to the understanding of a coherent value system in which we live our experience.

This spider’s web, viewed as an eco-system of values and as a chain of events, can be understood only by filtering information through the prism of its truthfulness, confirming it with reality, multi-source analysis and evaluating each situation by reference to already existing or historically assimilated data, in a way that could be passed on effectively and later shown to be correct.

We can also take into account that “Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has been described as the first fully-fledged *social media war*. It also breaks new ground in other ways thanks to digital transformation. **This is the first all-out cyber war and the first hacker war, featuring both state and non-state actors attacking combatants’ information infrastructures**”.²

“Wartime information, regardless of why it is provided, can affect decisions taken by power agencies and influence national or global public opinion. It can raise or lower the morale of troops and civilians caught up in the fighting. Social media advances previous technologies, radically increasing the speed of information delivery and the size of its audience, and empowering individuals to share their own versions of events – whether good or bad.

As for the course of the fight itself, there is always more to the picture than information, no matter how much it is pumped. The way a war is waged can be influenced by the competence of the leadership or troops, equipment, supply lines, weather, or even luck. As generations of propagandists have already discovered, facts on the ground can ultimately disrupt even the most carefully constructed analysis.”³

Can the Social Networks Change the Course of the War? What is a Social Media War?

“Social media warfare describes the use of social media as a kind of weapon with the aim of causing lasting damage to certain actors, such as governments or companies. Various strategies and tactics as well as technological means are used to advance a political, economic, social or cultural agenda. Social media warfare is usually aimed at manipulating the perception, and therefore the opinions, emotions and behaviour of a particular target group, thereby harming the actual target of the attack. Examples of means in social media warfare include the dissemination of (false) information in social media networks, the use of social bots, and influencing defined target groups through micro-targeting.

The social media war is therefore about a battle for attention, to be won by generating viral content and exploiting the mechanisms of the Internet’s prevailing attention economy. Thus, attackers create narratives and content that are meant to emotionally appeal and polarize online users in order to stand out from the oversupply of content on the social web and achieve the greatest possible impact.”⁴

When It All Starts from Trust and When the IP Deceives You

We want to build social relationships based on openness and communication. But how can we coordinate this openness in the New Media age, how do we filter whether the source of information means well, and how do we check whether the source can deceive us?

Such a complex but also largely global issue requires we protect both the personal data we expose online and the way we connect to Wi-Fi internet networks in public places⁵ and the USB connectors we use.

In this sense, “digital media education and knowing how to identify intentionally false and misleading information becomes a basic thing that all Internet users should strive to learn”.⁶

¹<https://cybernews.com/editorial/impact-social-media-russia-ukraine-war/>.

²<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/social-media-warfare-is-being-invented-in-ukraine/>.

³<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/apr/25/the-big-idea-can-social-media-change-the-course-of-war>.

⁴<https://prevency.com/en/what-is-social-media-warfare/#1-what-is-social-media-warfare>.

⁵<https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/cyber>.

⁶<https://www.f-secure.com/en/articles/what-is-disinformation>.

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V. SOCIAL NETWORKS- TERRORISM



The Proliferation of Terrorism Through Social Media

Nicoleta Livia ANTON

"The key to terrorism is not the act itself, but the fear of that act."

Keith Olbermann

The New Media Era brings us with the development of social networks and communication platforms the certainty and clear proof that both without communication and without connection, the notion of individuality in the online sphere cannot be realized in the virtual environment without belonging to a certain group of specific interest. Thus, most of the time, the human need for communication in the information age that we are going through, shows us that through small but staged steps, communication relationships and implicit connection can develop by themselves using online social networks and social communication platforms. According to the definition given by the European Commission, "radicalization processes are based on social networks, where contacts are initiated and subsequently maintained".¹

The Road from Online to Global, from Follow to Community, from Local to Follower and the Radicalization Process

Starting from the hypothesis that through a device connected to the Internet, we can access communication networks that can facilitate our connection with anyone on the globe, thus having the possibility to get in touch with different people, known but also unknown, the exposure places us under the umbrella of vulnerability. Behind the virtual identities, built with landmarks and interests that can nevertheless be reflected in everyday reality, the appearance of different profiles or avatars can hide or disguise different concerns or targets and can aim to attract a certain type of user of the communication platform.

In a fluid game of information exchange, computational algorithms, and techniques for influencing the



Source: <https://arte-media.ucv.ro/master-media/>

¹<https://www.europol.europa.eu/publications-events/main-reports/european-union-terrorism-situation-and-trend-report-te-sat-2020>.

masses will find the vulnerability, the weak point of the exploitation of the individual's identity and the way in which this data processing can be fruitful, depending on the interest, purpose, method, technique and tactic of social influence will be sifted. Inevitably, the role of globalization in this context is reflected at the limit of all the possibilities of connection and the various reasons by which communication is achieved and why. According to Anthony Giddens, globalization reflects "the intensification of social relations throughout the world, which connects distant localities to such an extent that events that take place locally are seen through the lens of similar ones that took place many miles away and vice versa".²

In this dilemma, from a globalization that wants to encompass everything and homogenize values, opinions, precepts, beliefs and even cultural, local and regional identity there is a struggle for knowledge, and for appropriating values. Thus, we could probably assume that it is the responsibility of each individual to draw a line that will define and weigh how much of the globalization process can be assimilated in a constructive way, but without forgetting the fact that we come from an authentic cultural environment, which, at least in Romania's geopolitical sphere also means that a large part of the population belongs to the Christian-Orthodox faith, and in time came to inherit traditional values .

Going the Wrong Way on a One-Way Street

We thus encounter an Internet that can take us far, both informationally, socially, economically, but which can equally distance us from our values and traditions. Staying open in a world that seems to it is an open book, it can be an adaptation or a normal slippage in the sphere of social communication in the virtual environment, but it can dress and disguise a form of masking intentions, of homogenizing the masses through opinions, influences, people, who can exploit vulnerabilities or who are waiting for the opening, not as a normal act, but as an act of weakness, a vulnerability that sooner or later will be exploited, and in the worst situations, used.

Most of the time, if the individual will not place himself on a correct position of knowledge and understanding, he remains at the attitude of those who are influential or able to identify certain weak points, "to hunt" certain vulnerabilities, to exploit the need to belong and to correctly distinguish certain needs for human recognition and social validation, falsely inducing an image of good, a saviour status or "a hook" through which so-called justice can be achieved, in a totally misinterpreted and misunderstood way.

Somehow, a process of radicalization will be able to take place which, although it will develop in stages, the act of wanting to belong to a certain group can arise spontaneously, under different triggering factors. Once this door is opened, the layers of radicalization will overlap, from pre-knowledge, curiosity, inclination and focus on certain topics, to connection and eventual co-optation.

Ideology is an intrinsic part of the radicalization process, with religious fundamentalism often at its core. However, radicalization is rarely fuelled solely by ideology or religion. It often starts with people frustrated with their lives, society, or the domestic and foreign policies of their governments."³

Thus, "The Internet is one of the main channels for spreading extremist views and recruiting followers. Social media platforms have amplified the impact of jihadist and far-right propaganda, facilitating access to a wide target audience and giving terrorist organizations the ability to use narrow distribution to target recruits or create veritable "troll armies" "to support their propaganda".⁴

A Fluid Scenario Where Countering Becomes Niche

From the Munich Olympics, to the 9/11 attack, terrorism is not a recent phenomenon, nor can it be pinpointed.⁵

According to a report prepared by the Rand Corporation, there is, however, a pattern through which violent-extremist behaviours manifest themselves in the online environment. For this purpose, the vigilance granted and the analysis vectors will be done respecting certain agreed norms.⁶

In addition to these analyses, several programs have been established globally in the field of counter-terrorism through which cooperation between states is sought, in order to diminish possible threats and to prevent the spread of extremism.⁷

²Giddens, Anthony, *Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping Our Lives*, Profile Books, London, 1999.

³<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/headlines/security/20210121STO96105/radicalizarea-in-ue-ce-este-si-cum-poate-fi-prevenita>.

⁴<https://www.europol.europa.eu/about-europol/european-counter-terrorism-centre-ectc/eu-internet-referral-unit-eu-iru>.

⁵<https://www.rand.org/topics/terrorism.html>.

⁶https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA2773-1.html.

⁷<https://www.state.gov/bureau-of-counterterrorism-programs-and-initiatives/#TSI>.

A struggle that “includes efforts to strengthen law enforcement capacities and judicial norms in the field, expanding aviation and border security, deepening global intelligence sharing, combating terrorist financing, improving crisis response and countering violent extremism.”⁸

Also, in the fight against radicalization, at the level of the European Union, since 2011, the RAN Center of Excellence (Radicalisation Awareness Network) was established, which includes practitioners and professionals in the field of countering terrorism in order to increase expertise and cooperation in the field of anti-radicalisation.⁹

In addition to these sustained efforts that will crystallize in a visionary perspective on the evolution of society, information campaigns among young people, increasing the awareness coefficient among the population regarding the risks we can expose ourselves to online in terms of using data and inter-institutional collaboration, all these approaches ultimately aim at the safety of the individual viewed as a citizen and have the goal that through prevention, awareness and information we can thus live in a safer world.

In addition to these sustained efforts that will crystallize in a visionary perspective on the evolution of society, information campaigns among young people, increasing the awareness coefficient among the population regarding the risks to which we can expose ourselves online in terms of data use and inter-institutional collaboration, all these steps ultimately aim at the safety of the individual viewed as a citizen and have the goal that through prevention, awareness and information we can thus live in a safer world. Like the fact that we cannot prevent it what we are not aware of it, and we cannot be aware of the things upon which we are not informed in a fair and complete way, it remains our responsibility to adapt and at the same time relate to the changes of the world in which we live, by clearly understanding the context in which we find ourselves.

⁸<https://www.state.gov/policy-issues/countering-terrorism/#:~:text=This%20includes%20efforts%20to%20strengthen,response%2C%20and%20counter%20violent%20extremism.>

⁹<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-area-of-justice-and-fundamental-rights/file-preventing-radicalisation.>

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Colonel (retd) Jean J. Marsia is President of the European Defense Society INPA (S€D). He graduated in 1975 from the Royal Military School in Brussels, obtaining a master’s degree in Social and Military Sciences. After several posts in the logistics corps of the land forces, he obtained an additional master's degree in Administrative Science. He was then selected for the School of Military Administration. He served in the General Staff of Defense in several positions related to the management of financial resources and procurement. In 1999, he became an advisor to the Minister of Defense, primarily responsible for military procurement, scientific research and education. In 2003, he was appointed director of the Royal Military School, where he served until his retirement in 2009. He then became a PhD student at the Free University of Brussels. From January 2013 to October 2014, he was Defense Adviser to the Belgian Prime Minister. In 2015, he became a Doctor of Political Science at the Free University of Brussels and a Doctor of Social and Military Sciences at the Royal Military School. Since late 2015, he has served as founding president of the European Defense Society, an international non-profit association working to reinvigorate Europe’s political union and achieve an effective European defense better suited to burden-sharing and the international risk inherent in NATO. He is fluent in French, Dutch, German and English.



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She participated in the YOUTHPASS The Youth Creative Academy project, in Cabris, France, which aimed to identify and apply creative methods of learning and expression that contribute to the development of young people’ skills in times when digitization and globalization are becoming increasingly the most present.

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Don DAVIS (USA)



He is an analyst and author of published books on the Middle East, who has been in the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean region since 1992.

For more than twenty years, most of its research material has been client-confidential and behavioral. But some of his abridged reports have been posted as articles or blogs.

Don Davis is also the author of the international spy and assassin thriller, “Children of Santiago”. The story is not a fuzzy, cute story. Instead, it is a serious, blunt and psychological account of a general, Santiago, who used children, teenagers and young adults as spies and assassins. He recruited from international families during active missions abroad in the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 1990s.



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He is an aviation engineer and during his doctoral studies he was admitted to the SmartSPODAS Project - “Transnational network for the integrated management of smart doctoral and postdoctoral research in the fields of “Military Sciences”, “Security and Information” and “Public Order and National Security” - Continuous training program for elite researchers - “SmartSPODAS”, in this context participating in various research activities, among them being those organized by CRISMART in Sweden. During the first part of his career, he performed various executive within the Air Force Staff, and in the second part of his career, he was an executive and leadership positions within the Ministry of National Defence. He participated in various cooperation activities at the national and international level, gaining professional experience in the field of international relations and geopolitics. He carried out teaching activities in the academic environment (undergraduate and postgraduate studies).



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